

THE ALDE & ORE ASSOCIATION



England Coast Path

Jonathan Clarke – Natural England



What is the England Coast Path?

Different things to different people



A well waymarked walking trail around the whole of the English Coast. When it is complete, it will be one of the longest coastal routes in the world.

Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 ("the 2009 Act") aims to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the English coastline by creating clear and consistent public rights along the English coast for open-air recreation on foot. It allows existing coastal access to be secured and improved and new access to be created in coastal places where it did not already exist.

Economic benefits of open sections of Norfolk coast path are worth £13-£17m and a further £34m from wider health and economic benefits. The proposed English coastal path will generate £2,572 million per year for the local economies and support 100,000 full time jobs

"What a wonderful thing: to walk the entire length of a country's coastline, to trace its every nook, cranny, cliff face, indent and estuary. How better to truly appreciate the shape - and soul - of a nation?" Rough Guide on Welsh Coast Path

How did it come about?



- The **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009**, (Part 9) establishes the *coastal access duty* - to create a **long-distance walking route** around the English coast, (the **England Coast Path**) and to identify land beside it, the **coastal margin**, which should be accessible to the public on foot.
- In discharging this duty we follow statutory guidance – the **Coastal Access Scheme** which ensures that a balance is struck between the interests of those who own the land and the public in having new access rights over the land.
- It also enables us to respond to coastal change through proposing '**roll back**' which will allow the path to be moved back as the coast changes.

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape, likely a salt marsh or mudflat, showing a network of narrow channels and paths. The terrain is a mix of brown and green, with a prominent path or dike running diagonally from the bottom right towards the center. The horizon is flat and distant under a cloudy sky.

“I’m pleased to announce today that the government will be putting the funding in place to ensure the path is completed by 2020.”

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister 3rd September 2014

What exactly are the coastal access rights?



Rights of access on foot for open-air recreation including walking, climbing and picnicking (does not include camping, horse-riding or cycling).

They are subject to **national restrictions** e.g. no access to houses and gardens, and may also be local **restrictions** or **exclusions** e.g. saltmarsh



How is the Coast Path created?



Stage 1 Prepare

- Define extent of coastal stretch, in discussion with local access authorities
- Ask key organisations about their ideas and concerns for this stretch
- Initial look at any issues for key sensitive features
- Assess problems, opportunities, constraints
- Consider existing access patterns and early route options

How is the Coast Path created?



Stage 2 Develop

- Contact owners of relevant land
- Do alignment checks on the ground
- Share our initial thinking with owners and occupiers and offer to 'walk the course' with them if they wish
- Plan protection of sensitive features (restrictions /alternative routes)
- Talk further to key interests as necessary
- Send details of preferred route to landowners and parish councils

How is the Coast Path created?



Stage 3 Propose

- Finalise our proposals and associated maps
- Publish them in a statutory report to the Secretary of State and advertise
- Invite any representations in 8 weeks on our report from anyone who wishes to comment
- Invite any objections in 8 weeks to our report from owners or occupiers of affected land

How is the Coast Path created?



Stage 4 Determine

- Receive any representations or objections
- Forward or summarise them to the Secretary of State together with any comments by us
- Independent planning inspector assesses any objections and advises the Secretary of State
- Secretary of State decides whether to approve our proposals, with or without modifications

How is the Coast Path created?



Stage 5 Open

- Establishment works done by Suffolk County Council
- Any agreed restrictions or dedications implemented
- Approved map published
- Order, submitted to Parliament brings new public rights into effect
- England Coast Path now exists on this stretch – maintained by Suffolk County Council

The nature of the coastal access rights - balancing public & private interests



Public interest

- Proximity of the trail to the sea
- Views of the sea from the trail
- Safety and convenience
- Continuity of the trail

Private interest

- Operational needs
- Income
- Privacy
- Changes of use

- Enjoyment and protection of the natural environment
- Responsiveness to coastal change – *'roll back'*

Margins – landward and seaward



The legislation gives a duty to create a walking route and a margin of land that also has access rights

Seaward. A general right of access except where that right has been restricted. Land on the seaward side that isn't restricted is called spreading room.

Landward rights includes the bank (unless restricted) and in other locations ECP may be slightly wider or narrower to coincide with something like a fence or hedge.



Land seaward of the Coast Path is in the margin (pink on the map) but exclusions meant that most of the area is not spreading room with a right of access

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Restrictions and exclusions



Access can be restricted for;

- Land management
- Public safety
- Fire prevention
- Nature conservation
- Heritage preservation
- Defence
- National security
- Saltmarsh and flat

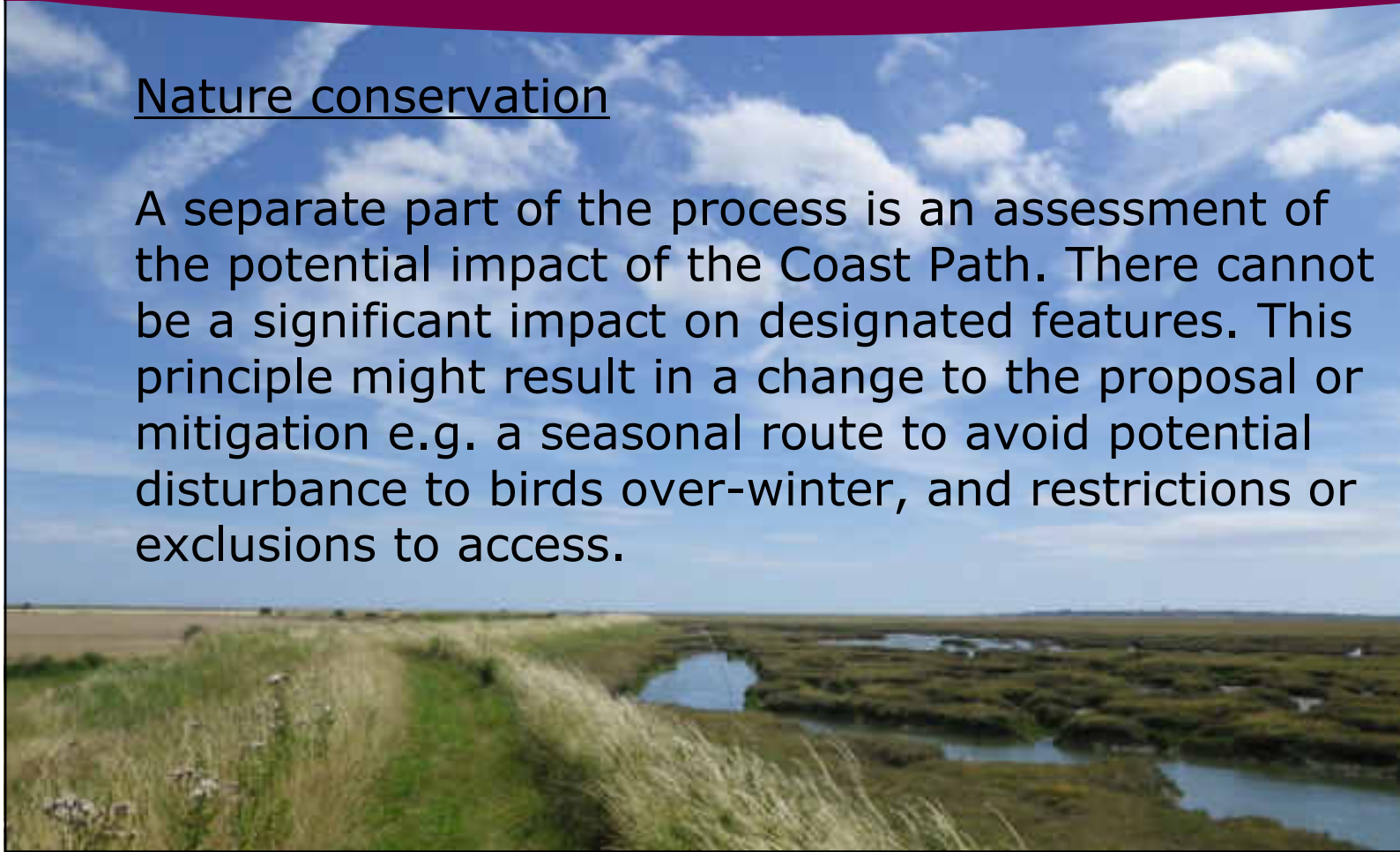


Restrictions and exclusions



Nature conservation

A separate part of the process is an assessment of the potential impact of the Coast Path. There cannot be a significant impact on designated features. This principle might result in a change to the proposal or mitigation e.g. a seasonal route to avoid potential disturbance to birds over-winter, and restrictions or exclusions to access.



Saltmarsh – south

This shows (red) the likely areas of saltmarsh that will not gain a new right of access. This does not have any impact on existing use or rights – no rights are being removed.

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Saltmarsh – middle

This shows (red) the likely areas of saltmarsh that will not gain a new right of access. This does not have any impact on existing use or rights – no rights are being removed.

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Saltmarsh – north

This shows (red) the likely areas of saltmarsh that will not gain a new right of access. This does not have any impact on existing use or rights – no rights are being removed.

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We work to a Programme Plan signed off by Defra and the Cabinet Office.

It sets out the delivery of 65 stretches to be completed between 2015 and 2020.

2,700 miles in total

Coast Path in East Anglia



1. North of Bawdsey Ferry preferred route, where known

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2. Hollesley to Chantry Point preferred route, where known

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3. Butley River preferred route where known

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4. Sudbourn to Snape and Aldeburgh preferred route, where known

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'It won't just be walkers that will benefit from this landmark project; it is a legacy for the entire nation. The England Coast Path will increase tourism and boost rural economies, it will connect communities, allow us to rediscover our national heritage, and create opportunities for people to enjoy the simple pleasures of being by the seaside.'



