

England Coast Path takes a step forward as Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne stretch is officially open

- The 33-mile (53 kilometre) route from Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne, linking west to east Sussex, is the first complete section of the England Coast Path in Sussex to open.
- This new stretch, the 17th full stretch to open, will form part of the 2,700-mile-long England Coast Path, which will become the longest walking route in the world.
- The route includes coastal towns, stunning sea views with the iconic back-drop of the white chalk cliffs, and rural landscapes created by the South Downs meeting the sea.

Spring has sprung with a new trail for Sussex residents and visitors to enjoy. The new section of the England Coast Path will help connect people with nature, and provides a wealth of health and wellbeing opportunities.

The easy to follow 33-mile (53 kilometre) walking route, which includes part of the South Downs National Park, along the west and east Sussex coast and passing seaside promenades and nature reserves, has been opened by Natural England today.

This route will eventually help connect the country's entire coastline into one long trail. The walk will take people through some of the finest landscapes in England, as well as the many coastal towns, cities and ports that have shaped this island nation. And for the first time in the history of footpaths, legal rights of public access will be secured to typical coastal land including beaches, dunes and cliffs, allowing walkers to access places they've never been before.

Jim Seymour, Natural England Area Manager said:

This trail encompasses the iconic white chalk cliff and sea views, the South Downs National Park with its abundance of wildlife, and the popular coastal towns.

At a time when the benefits of connecting with nature are clearer than ever, it's fabulous that we are opening up this 33-mile-long section of footpath across the South Downs and along the east and west Sussex coast.

I have personally felt the value of walking a section of this route

recently with my family, and I look forward to exploring more of this new route, now that it's open, on my next trip.

This new trail covers a wealth of unique environments. Setting off from Shoreham-by-Sea, you cross the River Adur estuary. Here migratory wading birds and waterfowl can be seen on the saltmarsh and mud flats. Other sights include the old lighthouse in Shoreham Harbour with views of its maritime use, including unique houseboats, traditional boat yards and large commercial ships as they pass through Shoreham Port.

The trail leads onto Hove Esplanade en-route to Brighton, where remains of West Pier can be spotted and the Brighton i360 viewing tower – the tallest structure in Sussex – can be seen. Walk along the bustling promenade on Brighton seafront up to Palace Pier then past Brighton Marina. Here you can follow the Undercliff Walk as far as Saltdean (there is also the option to take the clifftop route here).

Once reaching Saltdean chalk clifftop, the walk leads you to Peacehaven and on to Newhaven. In Newhaven, you can visit several nature reserves, including Castle Hill Local Nature Reserve and Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve. Look out for a host of wildlife including migratory and nesting birds such as lesser whitethroat and fulmars, wildflowers including birds' foot trefoil and thrift, and plenty of butterflies and insects.

There are also historical sites to see in Newhaven, including WWII gun emplacements and the 19th century Newhaven Fort. By the harbour, the quayside promenade offers great views of the fishing and leisure boats and the large Newhaven-Dieppe ferries that dock here.

Eastwards from Newhaven, the trail goes firstly around low-lying Seaford Bay including Tide Mills to Seaford esplanade, before reaching the Sussex Heritage Coast at Seaford Head. This famous and well-known stretch of coastline along the Sussex coast includes the iconic chalk cliffs of Seaford Head, Seven Sisters and Beachy Head, where the South Downs National Park meets the sea.

On this path you pass Cuckmere Haven, which is a popular visitor location for walkers, dog walking, bird watching, visiting the beach and for photography, as there are amazing views of the Seven Sisters chalk cliffs and Cuckmere River meanders.

On the eastern side of the Cuckmere River estuary is the Seven Sisters Country Park at Exceat, where the England Coast Path joins the existing South Downs Way National Trail. This follows the clifftop footpath along the Seven Sisters, Birling Gap, Belle Tout, Beachy Head and Eastbourne.

Beachy Head is another internationally famous site for both locals and visitors, with glorious views both seawards along the coast towards Hastings and on a clear day towards Dungeness and inland across the South Downs to Firle Beacon.

This stretch of the England Coast Path ends at Eastbourne Pier, where you can

walk along the promenade by the sea in this popular coastal town.

Andy Le Gresley, South East National Trail Partnership Chair said:

This new 33-mile stretch of the England Coast Path is fantastic news for visitors to the beautiful and varied Sussex coastline.

The trail links several iconic Sussex locations with a high-quality, well-signposted walking route. Walkers can enjoy a unique variety of urban and countryside coastlines, and a mix of different terrains and views – from steep hills to easy promenades.

This new stretch of trail is also a vital link in the South East section of the England Coast Path. Once complete, the whole of the South East Coast Path will provide a new route for walkers, running from Shoreham-by-Sea to the London Borough of Bexley.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank local authority access officers and Natural England staff for their years of hard work and dedication to design, negotiate and create this excellent new section of Coast Path.

You can find images for sections of the stretch [here](#).

The 33-mile (53-kilometre) route will become part of the [England Coast Path](#) – the 2,700-mile, long-distance walking route and England's newest National Trail currently being developed around the entire English coast by Natural England.

Natural England worked on the Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne stretch with a wide range of partners and landowners: Adur District Council, Shoreham Port Authority, West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

Our proposals were submitted to government in September 2018 and were approved in December 2019.

The stretch is easily accessed via public transport and there are plenty of locations along the trail for refreshments and with accommodation.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long-distance walking trail around the open coast of England, together with public access rights to a wider area of land along the way for people to enjoy. Natural England is working on the entire coastal route. A map showing a timetable for the work is here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-overview-of-progress.

As well as new sections of trail, there are improvements to existing access along the coastline that:

- identify a clear and continuous way-marked walking route along this part

- of the coast, bringing some sections of the existing coastal footpath closer to the sea and linking some places together for the first time
- allow the route to 'roll back' if the coastline erodes, shifts or slips, solving the long-standing difficulties of maintaining a continuous route along the coast

For more information, visit

www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast and www.nationaltrail.co.uk/.

The [Countryside Code](#), recently updated, is the official guide on how to enjoy nature and treat both it, and the people who live and work there, with respect.

Find out more about this stretch of the England Coast Path and Natural England on our social media channels: <https://twitter.com/naturalengland> (@NaturalEngland), <https://twitter.com/NESussexandKent> (@NESussexandKent) www.instagram.com/naturalengland/, <https://www.facebook.com/naturalengland>.