

Press release: 44 mile public path opens up North East coastline

Natural England will today open the latest stretch of the [England Coast Path](#), giving walkers uninterrupted access to 44 miles of beautiful coastline between South Bents and Amble and providing a boost for the local economy.

With walking one of the most popular pastimes at the coast, Tyneside and Northumberland's first open section of the England Coast Path will enable people to explore the coast around the river Tyne and into Northumberland, linking the wild beaches and dunes of Druridge Bay to the resorts and ports further south.

Visitors and locals will find improved access and signposting along the route to allow them to enjoy numerous towns, villages and historic sites such as North Shields, Whitley Bay and Druridge Bay. Walkers will also be able to access [11 bathing waters](#), eight of which are rated as 'excellent' including Blyth's South Beach.

The South Tyneside, North Tyneside and Northumberland stretch is the tenth section of Natural England's flagship England Coast Path project to open and offers local shops, pubs and hotels the opportunity to benefit from the £381 million spent each year by visitors to English coastal paths.

It coincides with new data from Natural England, showing that over 29 million leisure walking trips took place on English coastal paths in 2017 – supporting over 6,000 full time jobs.

Rural Minister Lord Gardiner, who is attending today's event at Souter Lighthouse, said:

England's stunning coastline is a national treasure. The England Coast Path is already playing a significant role in opening up access to our most spectacular sites, ensuring sensitivity to the environment while making a valuable contribution to our rural economy.

With Northumberland home to some of the country's most breath-taking coastal scenery, the new path makes it easy for all to access this beautiful area.

Natural England Chairman Andrew Sells said:

The England Coast Path brings people closer to our magnificent wildlife, landscapes and seascapes. I am delighted that it has now

reached Northumberland – one of our most beautiful and unspoiled counties.

South Bents to Amble is the tenth stretch to open and a significant milestone in our ambition to create the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world.

The new path takes account of the area's important coastal habitats, and was designed to complement the existing trails and management in place, providing a clear, well maintained and high quality route, whilst ensuring that the area's important bird species are safeguarded. An example of this is on the north bank of the river Blyth where the route was designed to avoid sensitive roost areas.

Natural England is working to establish a 2,700-mile path around the entire English coastline and work is now under way on all of the route. When completed, it will be the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world. It will also become a National Trail – the nation's finest and most popular long-distance paths.

The England Coast Path plays a vital role in helping the government fulfil its aim to connect more people with the environment and nature, as outlined in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#).