

## **Proposal by Natural England Statutory Access Team for exclusion of new coastal access rights on saltmarsh between Dunwich and Walberswick**

Natural England's Statutory Access Team is currently working with coastal access colleagues on the planned new coastal access rights between Aldeburgh and Hopton-on-Sea. Specifically, it is looking at where Natural England should use its powers to exclude new coastal access rights from areas of salt marsh or flat within the coastal margin, where such land is unsuitable for general public access.

Natural England's Statutory Access Team (NESAT) proposes to exclude new coastal access rights on saltmarsh within the margin between Dunwich and Walberswick. There is existing access in the vicinity for general recreation, therefore the decision is quite finely balanced, and the NESAT want to share its current thinking on where it might use such an exclusion (map attached). To ensure understand the local circumstances, NESAT would greatly appreciate the view of Walberswick Parish Council on its assessment here.

If you think NESAT current plan to exclude new coastal access rights on saltmarsh between Dunwich and Walberswick need adjusting, explain your reasons and indicate on a map where WPC thinks the boundary should be drawn for any restriction. Please note, restrictions on coastal access rights do not affect any public rights of way, or other permitted types of use that may currently exist at a local level.

### **Summary of evidence to support the need for an exclusion of new coastal access rights on saltmarsh between Dunwich and Walberswick**

The marshes between Dunwich and Walberswick are not subject to frequent tidal inundation. However, there are extreme events leading to inundation, and since 2006 the marsh has been inundated 4 times, with the water remaining in situ for a number of weeks each time. Generally, though, the saltmarsh characteristics of the landscape have formed from a percolation of saltwater through the shingle onto the marsh, creating upper saltmarsh habitat.

There is a network of deep channels and pools across the marsh area. The marsh is also highly vegetated in places, which can then hide smaller channels and pools. This is generally difficult terrain to walk on.

There is a high level of access along the shingle beach in front of the marsh, but the public don't tend to deviate onto the marsh area (other than along public rights of way). Those managing the site know certain routes across the marsh, but there is no obvious indication of how to navigate through the marsh area other than on the public rights of way. In summary, the saltmarsh is neither attractive nor suitable for public access, and NETAS therefore propose to use its powers under S25A of the CROW Act to exclude new coastal access rights from this area.

Because this is a moving landscape it is difficult to accurately map the boundary between the shingle and the marsh. The area of the restriction therefore corresponds with the boundary of saltmarsh identified within the Priority Habitat Inventory for saltmarsh on the understanding that this is indicative.

Note on proposal for exclusion of new coastal access rights for the purpose of nature conservation

The attached map also shows our proposal for a seasonal exclusion of new coastal access rights within the fenced areas that are put up on the beach each year to protect ground nesting birds. We will propose that coastal access rights are excluded from within the fenced areas to replicate the existing management here.

Members of the public are invited to contact Sarah Haigh  
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