

YEAR OF THE ENGLISH COAST 2021

The entire length of the English coast will be made accessible for the first time through the implementation of a continuous and permanent public right of access - the new **England Coast Path** National Trail. This incredible new asset not only improves existing and opens new access routes, it will secure access rights to typical coastal land such as foreshore, beaches, dunes and cliffs and will physically connect coastal communities along its length. . The work will near completion in 2021 with all stretches of coast open or with establishment works under way. This provides the timely opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our amazing coastline, its people and environment.

As we come together to celebrate, the Year of the English Coast is a call to raise awareness of much needed solutions for our complex coastal challenges. The economies of coastal communities in England must urgently transform to benefit people and nature with more and better jobs, increased wellbeing and economic resilience, and a healthier coastal and marine environment. The aim is to support a programme of change that enables communities to work together to positively transform life at the coast.

Context

The creation of the England Coast Path with its new access opportunities prompts this celebration of our incredible coastal and marine nature, and of our culturally diverse coastal communities. But we are in the midst of a global climate crisis that is bringing about fast and deep changes to our natural environment, our economies and way of living.

Coastal communities are the most vulnerable areas in the country to the impacts of climate change, compounded by their lack of resources and support at the scale they need to face this complex crisis. There is a lot at stake, and communities must be supported at all levels to come together around a positive and possible vision for their future.

Year of the English Coast

A group of diverse coastal voices have come together to collaborate and help the co-development of a series of activities to mark 2021 as the **Year of the English Coast**. This group works in support of coastal communities demanding the change needed to enable them to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis and deliver a vision of prosperous communities and a healthier coastal and marine environment. **2021 is the year to give the English coast the attention it deserves!** We will work to build support and deliver change, so that millions of people on the coast can enjoy and make the most of the new England Coast Path as a celebration of their shared achievements and a commitment to their future collaborative efforts.

The need and urgency of this project cannot be overestimated. A number of community groups on the coast that have already identified the England Coast Path as a unique opportunity to build solidarity and generate ideas between them for social, economic and environmental renewal. **The Year of the English Coast is a positive catalyst for change in a time of crisis.**

Building a strong collaborative network

Communities, businesses, local authorities and national government need to come together to deliver and secure a sustainable future.

Together we can:

- Elevate the voices of coastal groups, businesses and residents and the needs of the coastal and marine environment as we respond to the climate crisis at a local, regional and national level
- Support people to come together at a local level to organise and plan activities for the Year of the English Coast, developing celebratory events, local solutions and campaigns for positive change
- Use our networks and communication channels to raise awareness of, and champion the England Coast Path and the many opportunities that it brings

Specifically, we think 2021 is the **Time to:**

- **Create** opportunities to improve the lives of those who live, work and visit our coast.
- **Connect** community, public and private efforts to build solidarity and power on the coast. Connect investment, policies and management to better support both land and sea. Seek commitment to invest in the physical and digital infrastructure to make our coast and our ocean more and better accessible to all - residents and visitors alike.
- **Cultivate** understanding and appreciation for the role our ocean plays in our lives. The coast is an amazing place and our gateway to the ocean. A healthy ocean means healthy people. It supplies the oxygen and water we need for life and the health and wellbeing we need to live well.
- **Challenge** our thinking and the way we are living. Coastal communities continue to face high levels of economic and environmental deprivation and lack the appropriate resources and support to address it. The status quo is no longer an option. Communities can and must come together.
- **Collaborate** to share best practice, build and implement solutions, especially through building new partnerships with those that are different. Places and economies can be redesigned to support sustainable activities, industries, jobs and climate resilience.
- **Change** the current economic incentives, policies and ways of managing the coast that are holding back communities working to reinvent themselves. Local areas must have more power and control over the resources and decisions that affect their lives. Many solutions that benefit people, communities and nature on the coast already exist, but they are not valued by the way our economy is currently run, which acts as a barrier for their success and scalability. Resources, policies and investment must help shift power to those solutions, against business as usual.
- **Celebrate** our people and our nature; our similarities and our differences, our heritage, art and cultures; our landscapes and seascapes, our industries, our coast and our ocean; our future.

A year of **celebration and positive action for change** will **raise awareness** of solutions and demand the change that is still needed for even **more positive action**. Communities throughout England will be celebrating their coast and their coastal identity locally, as well as delivering collective action for national change. We will support their activities through coordinated media, aligned messaging and advocacy work to help amplify their voices.

By the end of 2021 we aim to:

- **Secure government commitment** through different local and national agencies. – Pledges on **key policy asks from coastal communities** that can give them a reason to celebrate and help them

work towards more resilient economies, more collaborative and collective action, healthier coastal and marine ecosystems and climate resilience.

- Help increase the accessibility of the coast to all communities – focused on increasing visits to the coast by children, especially those from deprived coastal communities and their families.
- Increase the number of visitors to the coast, particularly in the shoulder and off-peak period to build a more resilient and sustainable coastal tourism sector on which many areas depend.
- Have stimulated new projects and initiatives that bring together a range of actors - local groups, businesses, visitors, government - to help manage and use the new England Coast Path as a catalyst to shape better coastal economies that prioritise people's wellbeing, sustain our cultural and historic heritage, and help recover and look after our nature.

Find out more at:

www.englishcoast2021.com

Who Are We?

[The Coastal Partnerships Network](#)

[Coastal Communities Alliance](#),

[National Coastal Tourism Academy](#) / [England's Coast](#)

[Natural England](#)

[New Economics Foundation](#)

[Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group](#)