

Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path



Chairs report



Hilary Cox and Russell Wilson at Beeston Bump during the helicopter lifts

“What an exceptional year, exhilarating, exciting and expensive but worth every penny of every step.

Our aim to give opportunity to as many as possible to enjoy Norfolk's Trails has culminated in a year of determination, hard work and dedication by a team who have achieved so much.

I am proud of each one of them and look forward to working with them and others in the challenging years ahead.”



Picture of the wider Norfolk Trails team

Introduction

The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path are managed by Norfolk County Council as part of the Norfolk Trails brand. The work carried out on these trails creates an exemplar of countryside access improvement approaches and provides a template for work across the rest of the Norfolk Trails portfolio.

The annual report is produced by the National Trails Partnership and is aimed at highlighting and reflecting some of the work that has been undertaken by the Partnership and work that has been carried out along the National Trail.

The National Trails Partnership has been created as part of the Natural England New Deal for National Trails and has created a local delivery team for the National Trail in Norfolk.



National Trail Partnership members at Burnham Deepdale, managed by Partnership member Jason Borthwick.

The partnership is made up of a combination of local businesses, landowners, charities and councillors as well as members of the Norfolk Trails team and wider Environment Team at Norfolk County Council. The partnership meets quarterly and the meetings are structured around the New Deal with each of the key quality standards being discussed at individual meetings. The partnership agendas are discussed with the chair beforehand and often guest speakers or presentations are invited along to present on topics and projects that are of interest to the Partnership.

The annual report, in keeping with previous styles and approaches, will mirror the partnership meetings and the New Deal for National Trails.

National Trails Quality Standards in England from April 2013

Management Principles	Experience	Enhancement	Engagement	Economy
	Enable as many people as possible to enjoy a wide variety of walking and riding experiences along National Trails and through the English landscape	Make constant improvement to the Trail and its associated routes. Contribute to the enhancement of the landscape, nature and historic features within the trail corridor.	Build and sustain a community of interest in caring for the Trail and the landscape through which it passes.	Creates opportunities for local businesses to benefit from the use of Trails.

This report will focus on the highlights under the New Deal arrangement and will not cover daily and routine management and maintenance such as managing the grass and vegetation cutting contract, dealing with customer comments and reports, managing fallen trees and daily work activities.



Environment Agency vegetation management programme

Experience



National Trail users in the Cromer area

During the financial year 2017 / 2018 the National Trail has seen a significant rise in users.

The Peddars Way has increased 7% from 23,807 (2016/17) to 25,537 (2017/18) trail users*

The Norfolk coast path has seen an increase of 35% from 247,148 (2016/17) to 333,099 trail users*

These are the static data counters and represent an increase in the number of users on the trail.

During 2017/18 the Norfolk Trails team added an additional 2 permanent counters at Burnham Overy Staithe and at Beeston Bump and also an additional 3 portable data counters at Blakeney, Holkham and Horsey.

Added in, these data counters give an overall footfall on the Norfolk Coast Path of 712,111* this figure is closer to representing the overall annual footfall over the whole stretch of the coast path.

This means that more people than ever are enjoying the National Trail in Norfolk and the new stretches of coastal access are contributing towards this by offering new audiences the opportunity to use and enjoy the trail.

**actual counts used. Figures have not been downweighted*

The trails team have also used HEAT analysis to estimate the health benefits of using the National trail.

This is the Health Economic Assessment Tool and is a tool that estimates health benefits over a ten year time period. Using the data gathered from the data counters we can estimate the health benefits and contribution of the National Trail.

Peddars way

£10,312,000 over 10 years

Norfolk coast path

£210,264,257.95 over 10 years



During the previous year the National Trails team created a new National Trail Passport covering the whole of the National Trail. Following on from this success the National Trails team have now created a new junior passport aimed at a younger audience.



John Horlock enjoying the Junior National Trail Passport

The passports are available for purchase at a range of Tourist Information Centres along the route. This income from the passports and associated merchandise goes towards managing and supporting the trail and its use.



The National Trail Junior Passport and full size Passport

The whole of the Norfolk Coast Path and Peddars Way has been walked this year using the Google Trekker equipment. This has proven to be a mammoth task!! The pack itself weighed 25kg and we experienced a number of different technical issues resulting in delayed completion of the work.



Paul Thorogood with the Google Trekker at Walcott

It is planned to get the Google imagery back by October in order to allow this to be a focal point of the Walking Festival during October 2018.

The Google Trekker imagery will allow members of the public to access the National Trail remotely from their computer by looking at the images collected as part of the Google Trekker process.



Oli Gray with the Google Trekker at Trimingham

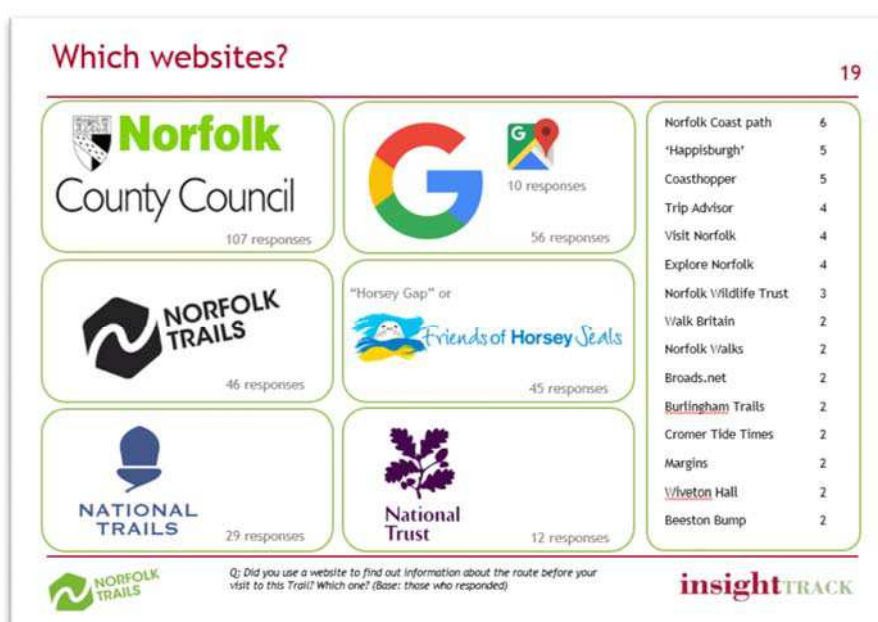
The National Trail web stats have reduced by 3% over the past year although other forms of social media have dramatically increased. Although over the past three years the web stats show an overall growth of 13%.

Web page visits	Jan-Dec 2014	Jan-Dec 2015	Jan-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2017
<u>Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path</u>	51,000	55,000	67,000	64,955
		+12%	+4%	-3%

Webpage visits from national trail

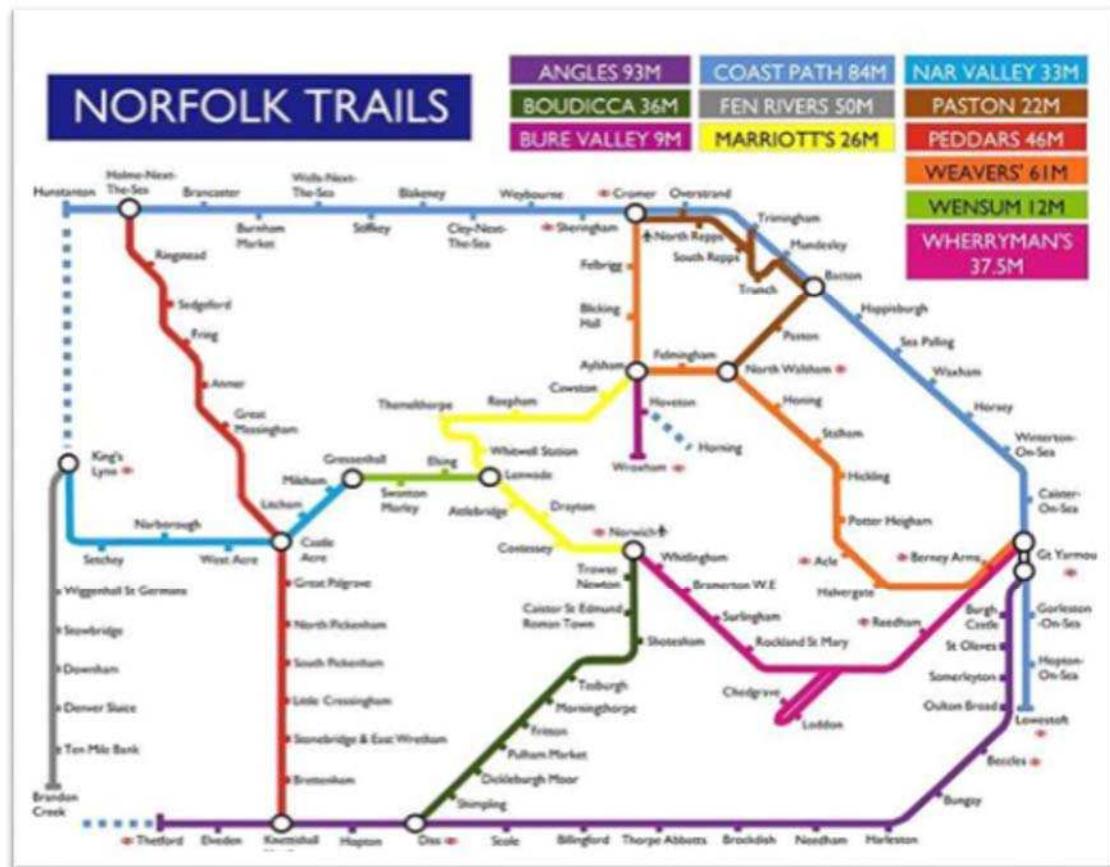
The Norfolk Trails Twitter feed has increased impressions from 4,000 per month to over 200,000 impressions during January 2018.

In addition the Norfolk Trails Twitter account has added over 1,000 new followers during the year. Instagram content and Facebook posts have also been improved during the past 12 months. This has had a significant impact on the social media footprint of the national trail.



Survey showing which websites are the most popular when searching for the National Trail

As part of the Insight Track report procured this year social media was looked at and in particular the ways in which people accessed information before visiting a trail. The NCC website was the most visited and council officers are currently looking at improving the Norfolk Trails profile on the NCC website to make navigation easier.



Norfolk Trails Tube Map

The tube map has been by far the biggest Twitter driver with more traffic than any other tweet we have produced to date. This map was retweeted across the whole country gaining over 75,000 impressions and reaching as far afield as New Zealand.

The tube map was also used as a news story in Eastern Daily Press newspaper and online at;

<http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/norfolk-trails-celebrated-iconic-london-tube-map-design-1-5341788>

Eastern Daily Press InBrief

TODAY'S LOCAL NEWS

Norfolk trails celebrated with design inspired by iconic London tube map

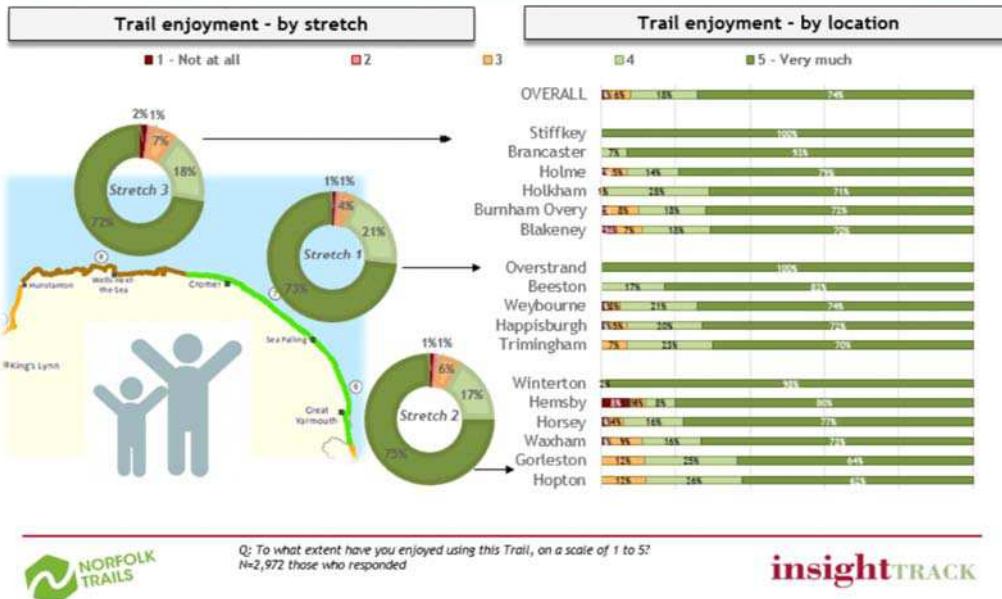
PUBLISHED: 15:34 03 January 2018 | UPDATED: 08:31 04 January 2018

Jessica Frank-Keyes

Enjoyment of the Trail

The trails are very much enjoyed by visitors, with only a small minority saying they didn't enjoy their visit

20



Insight Track report into the trail

The greener the graph the more they enjoyed their visit. We like lots of green!!

The vast majority of people surveyed enjoyed their visit would recommend it to others and would revisit the area. This feedback highlights the success of the access and improvement works that have been delivered over the past 3 years along the National Trail and we hope this success continues to grow with our next round of improvement works.

Engagement



Sophie, Edward, Shelley and Beatrice litter picking at Walcott

The National Trail has seen a huge amount of increased beach clean events running across the whole of the Norfolk Coast Path. This has resulted in significant increases in volunteering opportunities across the extent of the coast path.



Horsey Seals volunteers after a litter pick at Horsey

Volunteers carry out beach cleans from members of the public, National Trust, Friends of Horsey Seals and from a new initiative of 2 minute beach clean apparatus which is in place across the Norfolk Coast Path on beaches in North Norfolk.

There can be no better example of having a caring community for a Trail. To date there have been over 25 organised litter picks with a huge amount of waste removed from the beaches across the whole of the National Trail. These events have led to cleaner, safer beaches with over 13 beaches achieving a blue flag award in North Norfolk.



Lord Gardiner visiting Norfolk during September to highlight the work on Coastal Access

As part of the press announcement regarding coastal access being worked on across the whole of the England Coastline the National Trail hosted the Natural England press and publicity launch at Great Yarmouth focussing on this new stretch of coastal access and the access improvement works that the Trails Team have delivered.



Lord Gardiner checking on our finger posts

Lord Gardiner was out on site for most of the day looking at access improvements across the National Trail and meeting staff and users alike to look at the works that had been undertaken to create this new stretch of coastal access.

The National Trail Partnership records volunteer contributions through hours done and used the HLF valuation system of valuing time spent on the National Trail.

During 2017/ 2018 we had 607.5 days of volunteer time across the National Trails which equated to £50,525 value. This is an increase from £24,350 from the previous year



A large proportion of these volunteer hours were delivered by the Partnership chair and volunteers including Val who walked over 75 miles of the National Trail and associated circular walks and who has provided invaluable insight from a user's perspective on the management of the National Trail.



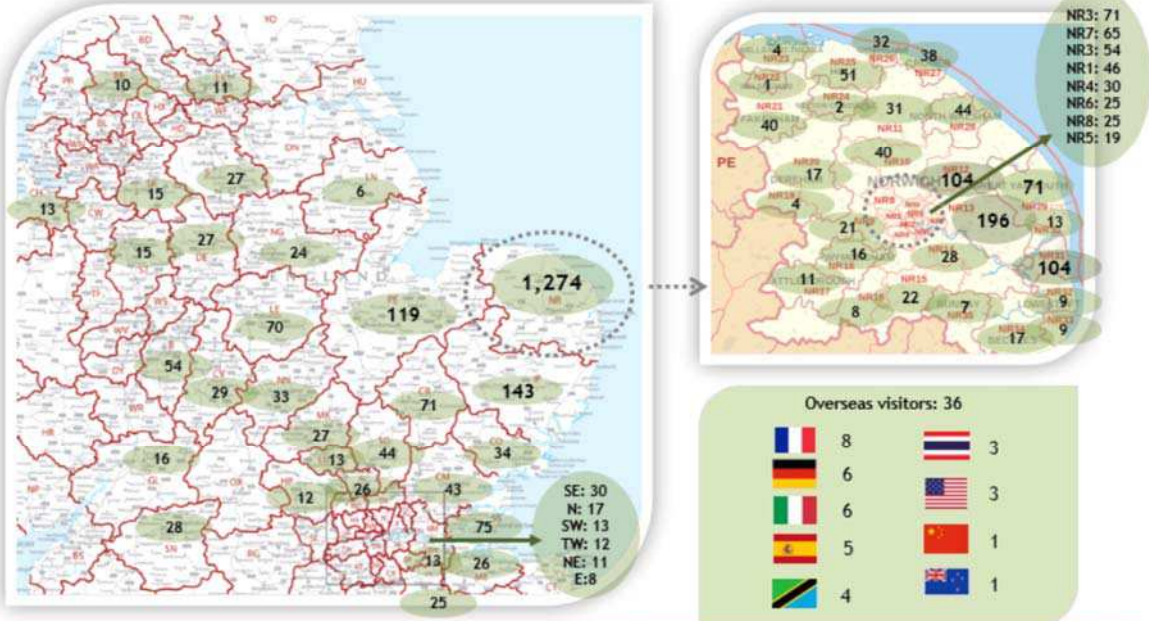
Val at Burnham Overy Staithe “checking” a finger post

Location of permanent address (key responses)

Locally, NR13, NR12 and NR31 are the key feeder postcodes for visiting the trail;

Visitors are most likely to travel to the trail from IP and PE postcodes; LE, CB and SS postcodes also feature strongly

26



Q: What is the postcode of your permanent address? If you are from overseas, which country are you from?

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Survey showing where people come from to walk on the National Trail

The survey carried out shows that geographically the National Trail has a wider engagement profile than previously thought. Visitors from Norwich, West Norfolk as well as local residents make up the largest user groups. This engagement with both local and overseas visitors helps understand the engagement profile when looking at future advertising and marketing ideas.

The work by the Agents of Change on the Marine Conservation Zone in North Norfolk will provide an opportunity to engage with new audiences going forward. The National Trail team are currently looking at the information provided as part of the National Trail and are seeking to improve interpretation of this aspect of the trail.



Hilary and Alice at Runton on the chalk reef

The MCZ may present a real opportunity in developing specific itinerary based visit options to extend visitors stays into multi day stays of in spreading along the Coast Path and using different areas. This combined with the Deep History Coast and Coastal Treasures project will be a real focus for the National Trail over the next 2 years. The Insight Track report has highlighted some options or considerations that the National Trail Partnership may want to investigate to make the most of these opportunities

Enhancement

The single largest project undertaken on the National Trail last year was the work to improve access on Beeston Bump. This work was largely funded by Natural England and matches with funding from Norfolk County Council.

The work was aimed at increasing and improving access to the highest point on the National Trail and would also protect the geological SSSI that forms the bump itself.

The work on the surfacing of the Beeston Bump followed on from the work already carried out previously in year by the National Trail team who repaired and replaced the handrail on Beeston Bump.

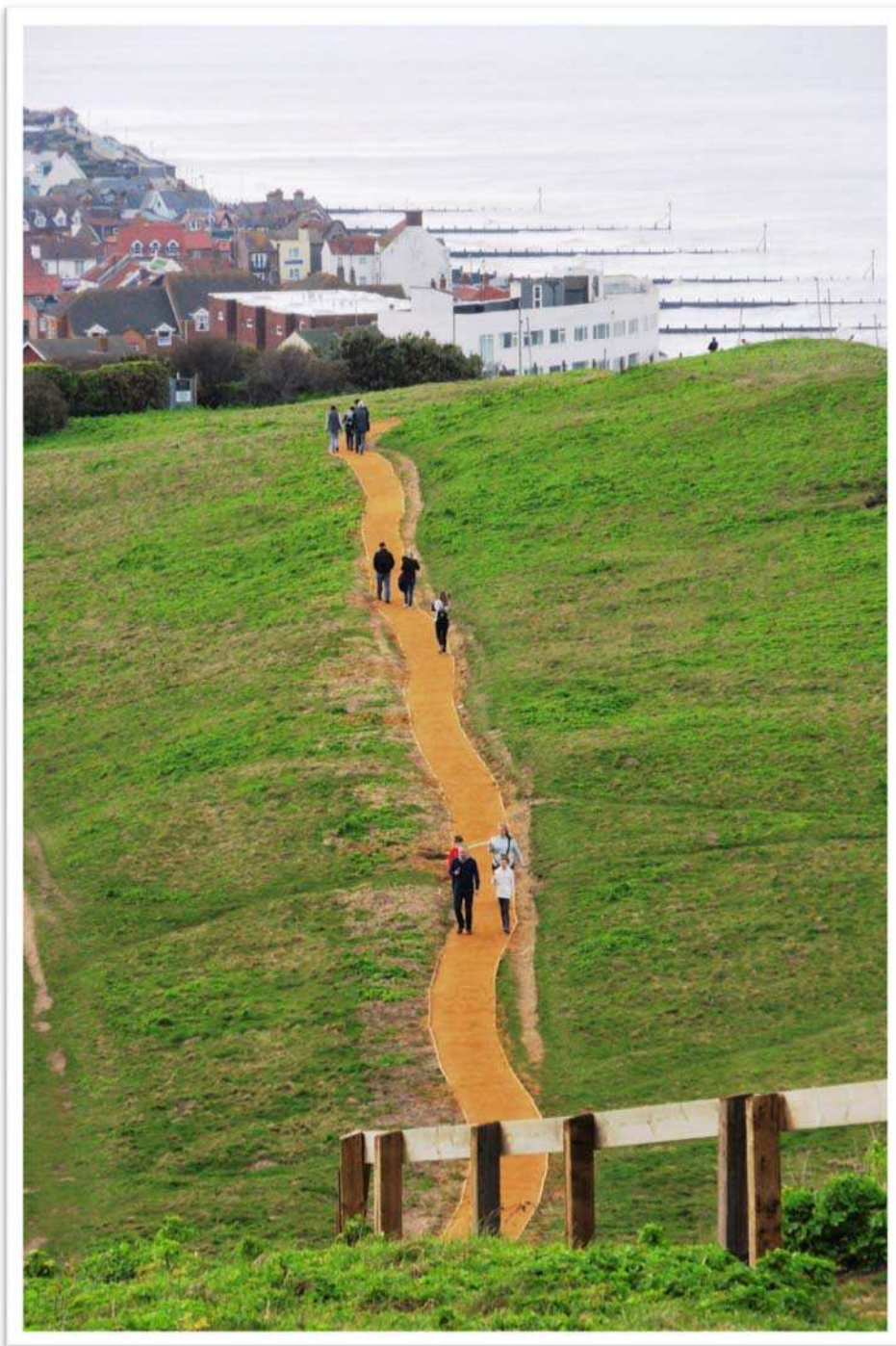


The handrail being replaced and enjoyed by the National Trail users

The issue was reported by our National Trail Chair, Hilary Cox, who with volunteers walked over 75 miles of both the National Trail and associated circular walks.



Beeston before surface improvements



Beeston after surface improvements. The project has created a single linear walked route which has created an improved walked route through a busy stretch of the Coast Path

The project was carried out during some of the worst weather seen in Norfolk over the winter time period and was named the “Beast from the East”. This meant that in order to meet deadlines and our timeline staff were required to work during blizzard conditions in order to get the preparation resolved.



Martin Caplin out on site preparing the route for improvement



Jack Davidson and Russell Wilson out on site during the "Beast from the East"



Materials being delivered onto site

The team completed all of the assenting, consenting and preparation processes prior to the delivery of materials to site. This was done for the very first time by helicopter on the National Trail.



Jack leading the delivery of materials

The reason this construction methodology was used was due to the nature of the amount of materials needed on site.

The Trails team carried out all of the construction works following the delivery of materials. This has resulted in improved access for increased numbers of walkers and has created a single walked route rather than a number of different routes that impact on the area.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from users with just a few quotes being included:

"I can bring the push chair up here for the very first time"

*"We were going to come along but we didn't think our grandma could make it.
Its great now"*

"Just a wonderful path to a wonderful view."

The data counts recorded since the improvement works has averaged around 1,000 visits over a weekend.

More enhancement work

As part of the ongoing work on the Peddars Way the Trails team have removed all of the stiles that existed on the route to make it stile free for the very first time since its creation in 1986.

Work continues to improve access and enhance the route through its entire length in order to create an improved National Trail offer for all users.



Before work carried out



Completed project



Environment Agency works completed on the Blakeney flood bank leading into Cley. This work cost £30,000 and presents a fantastic improvement for users of the Norfolk Coast Path

The Partnership works particularly well with the Environment Agency who are carrying out a series of improvements across the flood banks in order to better manage the banks structure. This has provided an additional benefit for users of the National Trail through the coastal access area.

The Environment Agency is a key partner in delivering improved access throughout the whole of the Norfolk Coast Path and during 2017/2018 contributed hugely to the success of the National Trail.

During 2017/2018 £50,000 was spent on grass cutting along the raised banks of the Coast Path and £30,000 was spent on the scoping and clearance works at Cley. This meant that during the 2017/2018 financial year the Environment Agency has carried out works valuing £110,000 on the Norfolk Coast Path.

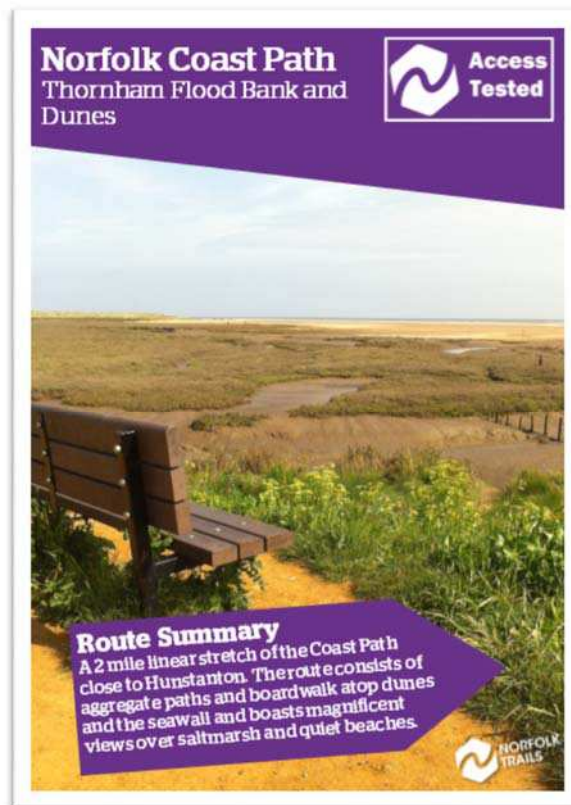


Example of mitigation works completed at North Denes

Following the construction of the boardwalks at North Denes the National Trail team then constructed post and rope fence lines on areas either next to the boardwalks or protecting areas of the SSSI. In addition the team worked on additional mitigation measures at Winterton to protect virgin dunes and existing dunes.

This work is starting to show its impact with additional marram grass populating what was recreationally impacted desire lines through the dune system.

Access for All



Example of access tested route

The Trails team have been involved in creating new access tested routes along the National Trail and associated circular routes. This has resulted in an improved offer for all users across the trail. These routes have been audited by wheelchair users and have provided an excellent resource in supporting people using the National Trail.

- Hunstanton (2)
- Heacham
- Thornham
- Blakeney / Morston
- Cromer
- Sheringham
- Gorleston
- Great Yarmouth

Circular Walk The Pingo Trail, Stow Bedon



Example of newly improved circular walk off the Peddars Way

As part of the Breaking New Ground project Norfolk County Council worked with the project to create a series of walked and cycled routes in the Brecks area.

The circular routes that were either improved, or newly created included a number that used the Peddars way as a spinal route creating improved interpretation through the whole area and encouraging new users to the National Trail.

The circular routes created off the Peddars Way have been:

- Heathland Trail between Knettishall and Wretham heath
- West Harling circular walk
- Pingo Trail circular walk
- Wildlife trail at East Wretham

Additionally new signage has been installed from Thetford railway station through to the Peddars Way for the first time. In addition new cycle routes have been created linking both Thetford and Brandon through to the Peddars Way.



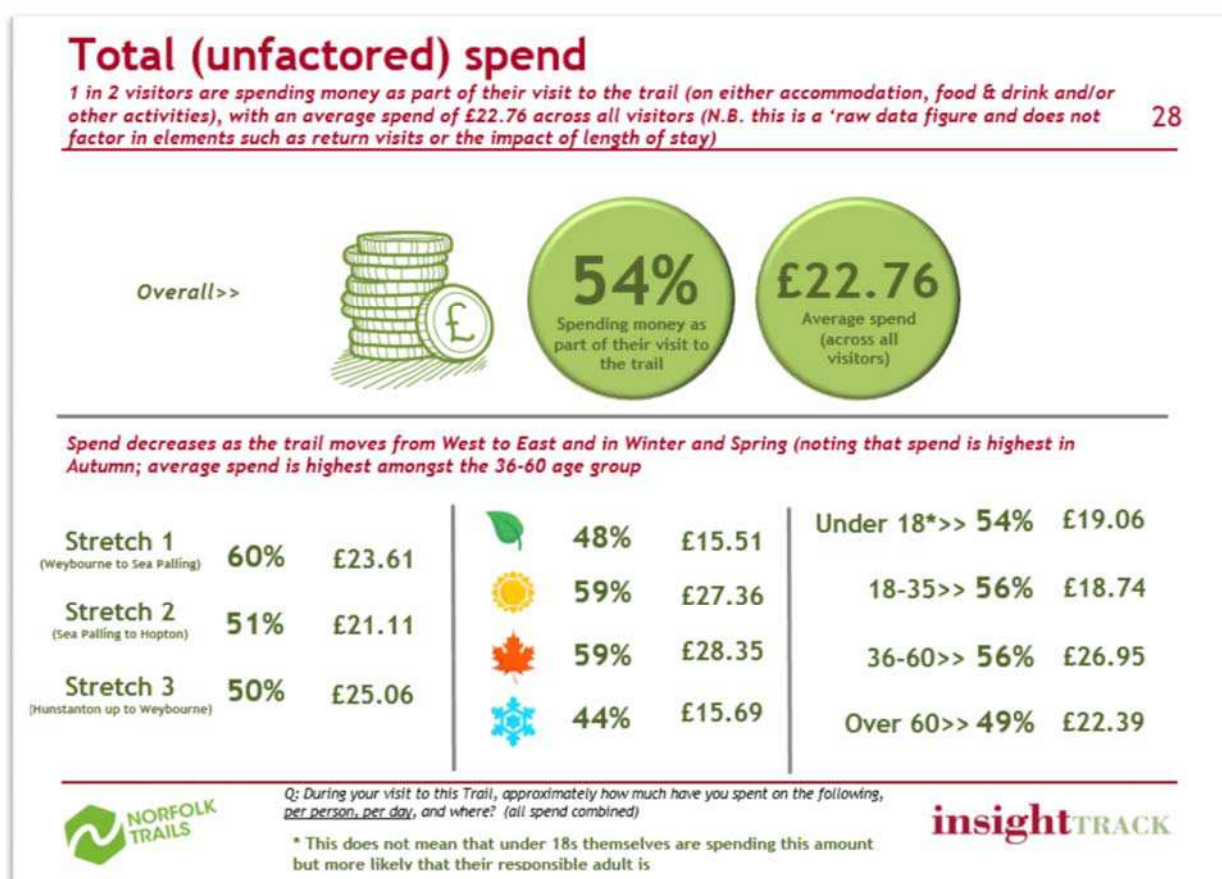
Trails Team out installing Breaking New Ground signage in the Brecks

Project installed new circular walks and cycle routes, new leaflets and new interpretation throughout the area.

Breaking new ground project delivered over £100,000 worth of new access opportunities throughout the Brecks area.

Economy

During 2017 / 2018 the National Trail Team worked with Insight Track to carry out a report looking at a wide range of usage of the Norfolk Coast Path. In particular, after speaking and presenting information to our National Trail Partnership previously, the businesses thought that the Natural England MENE figure of £18 for a coastal visit was an underestimate of the true economic spend on the Norfolk Coast path. A new report commissioned with Insight Track analysed over 3,000 surveys of trail users along the route the report has come up with a robust value of visitor spend along the Norfolk Coast Path.



Value of spend per head

Spend by length of visit

The value of longer stay visitors is evident when looking at spend by length of visit

32

				
Length of trip	Accommodation	Food & drink	Other activities	Overall
SHORT VISIT	21%	29%	12%	43%
	£9.86	£5.80	£1.49	£17.15
PART VISIT	20%	44%	15%	54%
	£10.39	£8.40	£1.78	£20.57
FULL DAY	31%	68%	14%	70%
	£16.78	£13.96	£1.68	£32.42
LONG DISTANCE	66%	72%	28%	83%
	£29.13	£18.92	£5.85	£53.90



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Value of visit from a day visitor to a long distance walker

This information highlights the value in encouraging people to use the National Trail (and indeed the trails network) for overnight stays and long distance walking. This changes the economics from spending £17.15 to £53.90. This is an area that the National Trail Partnership need to look at to maximise the economic value of the Coast Path and new coastal access.

Summary

41



DEMOGRAPHICS

- The gender profile is broadly evenly split between males and females
- The age profile for the trails is typically aged over 35, with 36-60 being the most represented age cohort; 18-35s are the least represented
- On balance, Stretch 3 has the maturest age profile, whilst Stretches 1 & 2 are slightly more appealing for families; popular specific locations for families are Hemsby, Hopton, Horsey, Beeston and Weybourne



VISITING REASON

- Walking, and specifically dog walking, are (by far) the main activities on the trails
- Dog walking is particularly popular in Winterton
- However, the range of activities on the trails is wide-ranging, with nature featuring strongly (particularly birds and seals) but also creative, educational, conservational and religious pursuits (e.g. painting, courses, litter picking, pilgrimages)



PARTY SIZE

- There are large differences in party size by location
- Stretch 2 has a higher proportion of 3+ party sizes, with Horsey, Hemsby, Beeston, Blakeney, Gorleston and Hopton having the largest party sizes
- Holme is significantly more likely to have party size of 1 (most likely to be bird watchers)



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Breakdown of who is coming and what they are doing when they visit the Coast Path

Considerations

44



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- The age profile for the trails is typically aged over 35, with 36-60 being the most represented age cohort; 18-35s are the least represented. There is no significant gender bias and party size is most likely to be 2
- It is also important to note differences by stretches and individual sites e.g. Stretch 2 (generally), Hemsby, Horsey, Hopton, Beeston and Weybourne all have a higher proportion of larger group sizes and under 18s (i.e. families)
- Whilst this is not new information, it is important to remember when communicating about the trails in terms of content (tone of voice, images used, calls to action, competitions)



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Who is using the National Trail?

Considerations

47



- North Norfolk AONB (Stretch 3) has so much to offer: it has a significantly higher proportion of repeat visitors (rather than first-time visitors) and average spend is higher per person - yet the further round the coast travelled, the less the average spend, the higher proportion of first-time visitors and proportion of 'incidental' visitors to the trail
- **BUT Stretch 2 has the highest proportion of families. Can this be turned into a positive? What else can be done to embrace families along this stretch? What partnerships with local businesses? E.g.**
 - ⇒ Access-tested, short circular walks for tots near
 - ⇒ Munzee trails/Treasure Trail style walks
 - ⇒ Geocaching
 - ⇒ Den-building hotspots
 - ⇒ Activities along the trails to create adventures e.g. brass rubbings, sculpture trails
 - ⇒ Circular family pub walks (with play areas?)
- With potentially minimal effort (e.g. adding and carefully developing a family section on the website), the east can really 'own' the space of being an adventure hotspot for children & families



Ideas and options about changing perceptions about stretch 2 of coastal access

Considerations

48



- The core age profile for the coastal path is ages 35+; However, consideration might be given to **new/different/growing audiences with different needs i.e. families**
- The increase in the number of 'Access tested' walks is a positive step and building on this in future months/years would be a positive step to ensure the needs of different audiences are catered for
- Things to consider for families:
 - ⇒ Is the walk accessible for a pushchair (are there any styles? Are gates/kissing gates wide enough?)
 - ⇒ Surfaces - are they hard or soft? Affected by the weather? Bumpy or smooth? Pushchair friendly or pushchair tolerable, or neither?
 - ⇒ Length - how long is the walk? People with toddlers will potentially be after shorter walks than those with a pushchair
 - ⇒ Parking - is there a car park, how easy is it to park and how much does it cost?
 - ⇒ Seating - are there any rest stops for breastfeeding?
 - ⇒ Facilities - is there a food or drink establishment nearby, does it have toilets and, specifically, baby change facilities? Is there a play area? Anything extra that is child-friendly?
- Finding this information via the council is currently challenging! Yet there is appetite for it amongst families

This slide highlights the approach that the National Trail Partnership could adopt to highlight accessibility of the Coast Path

Considerations

50



Overall economic benefit of the Norfolk Coast Path

The report has highlighted the annual economic value of the Norfolk Coast Path at being over £12million for 2017 / 2018