



# Coastal Communities

# INFORMATION SESSION

**Topic: Year of The Coast 2023**  
**Wednesday 11th January 2023 - 09:00-09:40**

Chair: Sally-Ann Hart MP

Speakers:

Samantha Richardson MBE, Academy Director, National Coastal Tourism Academy  
Neil Constable, , Programme Manager England Coast Path, Natural England  
Eve Nicholson,, Wales Coast Path Marketing, Natural Resources Wales  
Dr Emma McKinley, Research Fellow, University of Cardiff

## HEADLINES & ACTIONS

- ◇ The Year of the Coast 2023 provides an excellent opportunity to showcase both the beauty of our coastline but also the excellent work that is being carried out in our unique coastal communities. All sectors should be involved to raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities faced by these communities.
- ◇ Agreed that MPs should raise awareness of the initiative within their local constituencies and the available resources: Year of the Coast 2023 Toolkit
- ◇ The England Coast Path is currently 30% complete and will be the world's longest route when finished. A number of events and engagements will be taking place in 2023 to raise awareness of the benefits it may bring.
- ◇ 2022 was the Wales Coast Path's 10 year anniversary which was marked through a series of celebratory events and activities including a review.
- ◇ The lessons learnt from the Wales Coast Path 10 Year Review should be considered by other coastal path networks to support development and enhancement of these routes, particularly around the need for sustainable transport to support access to coastal paths.
- ◇ The cross-border 2022 Ocean Literacy survey, distributed in England, Wales and Scotland, has shown the high value that the public place on the marine environment and attending MP's were provided with the key highlights in an UK perspective from this report as a precursor to the APPG's dedicated Ocean Literacy session to be held in March 2023.

## IN ATTENDANCE

Sally – Ann Hart MP – Chair  
Samantha Richardson      Tamsin Lodge  
Neil Constable              Eve Nicholson  
Dr Emma McKinley         Duncan Baker MP  
Liz Saville-Roberts MP     Lia Nici MP  
Caroline Ansell MP  
J Billenness  
Research for Selaine Saxby MP

## SECRETARIAT

Nicola Radford -Coastal Communities Alliance / Lincolnshire County Council  
Becky MacDonald-Lofts & Bethany Handson– LGA Coastal SIG  
Amy Pryor & Alice Watts– Coastal Partnership Network

## APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted.

## YEAR OF THE COAST 2023 - Samantha Richardson MBE, Academy Director, National Coastal Tourism Academy

- A video was shown to the APPG to provide some context of the initiative: [Explore, Embrace, Enjoy England's coast in 2023](#)
- The coast of England is stunning and varied, enjoyed by thousands every year.
- Year of the Coast 2023 is an initiative to open up the wider conversation around coast and highlight coastal issues and opportunities through various means of engagement.
- The Year of the Coast was originally set for 2021 but was delayed due to the Covid pandemic.
- A new coastal visitor economy report and strategy supports the need for coast to be more valued for its importance to the economy and wellbeing of people.
- 50% of people surveyed said that they are more willing to stay in England for holidays to save the environment.
- 2023 is also the [Year of the Pier](#) through the National Piers Society.
- The Year of the Coast is all about showing the full potential of the coast and tourism initiatives will be run year long and will include:
  - volunteering
  - walking/cycling routes
- The Seaside Heritage Network are relaunching with a programme of events and a "10 bucket & spade" list of the nation's favourite coastal experiences.
- There are many opportunities to get involved with a toolkit and other resources available on the [National Coastal Tourism Academy website](#).
- The year is split into different themes with the first being nature and wildlife.

Slides on this presentation are available from the Secretariat on request.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

- » Year of the Coast 2023 toolkit can be used across sectors to engage everyone with the initiative and can be found here: [Year of the Coast 2023](#)
- » MP's agreed that all MPs with a coastal constituency should be made aware of the initiative and circulate the toolkit where appropriate especially to local event providers.

## ENGLAND COAST PATH - Neil Constable, Programme Manager England Coast Path, Natural England

- The English Coast Path is listed in the governments' 25-year Environment Plan however its roots go back much further.
- The Path's creation is fulfilling a statutory duty to create a long distance walking route around 2700 miles of the English coastline providing people with a legal right to access the coastal margin.
- When completed it will be the longest managed coastal walking route in the world; it is currently 30% completed however the majority of the development proposals with landowners and local authorities have been completed.
- This process has involved engagement with 25,000 landowners/legal occupiers and the rate of rejection to proposals has been 2.4%.
- 40% of the route will be new legal access so there is a right to object.
- 53 coastal local authorities are involved in building the path and maintaining it as a national trail.
- To date 794 miles have been opened with further stretches to open this year. Delays have resulted from the pandemic.
- Expecting 80-90% of the coast path to be completed this year (2023) with the remainder being completed in 2024 as the ambition is to make it fully walkable by the end of this current government.
- An economic benefit baseline study has been carried out into the benefit of the South West Coast Path section which found that it is bringing in over £530million to the local visitor economy and supporting 11,000 jobs.

Slides on this presentation are available from the Secretariat on request.

## UPDATE FROM THE WALES COAST PATH - Eve Nicholson, Wales Coast Path Marketing and Comms, Natural Resources Wales

This update is also available in a 5-minute video.

[Watch the update](#) (Via WCP Google Drive)

### Background to the path:

- The 870-mile long Wales Coast Path was launched on 5 th May 2012. It is one of a few coastal footpaths in the world to follow a country's coastline and attracting both domestic and international visitors each year.
- Funded by the Welsh Government, it is coordinated by [Natural Resources Wales](#) working in close partnership with [16 coastal local authorities](#) and [2 national parks](#).
- Major promotional partners include Visit Wales.

### 2022 has been the path's 10th anniversary year

– with a programme of [celebratory events and activities](#) focussed partnership working:

- Visit Wales (Consumer) –10 th anniversary Task and Finish group (led by Visit Wales). [Delivered a year of high profile communications/marketing activity on all platforms](#).
- Visit Wales (industry) - ongoing proactive promotion to industry.
- Cadw – All year marketing activity including the [development of new walking itineraries linking Cadw sites](#) (castles and heritage sites) with the path.
- Transport for Wales –promoting sustainable transport to the path via [Rail to Trail](#) campaign
- Engaging the Arts sector in Wales – [Celf Coast Cymru project](#) connects the path with art and poetry.
- WCP/NT & local authorities - are

delivering stakeholder, business, community and consumer engagement.

- Focus on collaborating with under-represented audiences: i.e to co-development of accessible sections; partnerships with less represented groups including the [Muslim Hikers](#).
- Yearlong community engagement: series of guided walks and walking challenges.
- Extensive use of relevant influencers to reach new, diverse and under-represented groups
- Insights from latest Wales Coast Path Visitor survey 2019-2021 – Not yet available online.

### New products

- [Official merchandise](#) range/shop launched in May 2022
- [Comprehensive suite of educational resources](#) developed for schools and informal education providers (working with NRW Education, Learning and Skills team)
- [Creation of 80+ themed walking itineraries](#).
- [Launch of Wales Coast Path app](#)
- Citizen Science - in partnership with Welsh Coastal Monitoring Centre. A programme of activity focused on involving the public in recording changes to the coast.

### 10 Year Review

During 2022, a Wales Coast Path Review Group was chaired by Huw Irranca-Davies MS to reflect on the key achievements over the last decade and recommendations for future development. [Read the 10 year review](#)

A formal response to the review is currently being drafted and will be considered in 2023.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

- » Learning from the [review of 10 years of the Wales Coast Path](#) should be used to inform the development of other coast paths including the England Coast Path. Key recommendations include:
  - **Create stronger links with education sector about the path**
  - **Promote sustainable tourism opportunities in Wales**
  - **Use digital technology to increase accessibility to the path e.g Google Street View**
  - **Work with underrepresented user groups**
  - **Seeking best practise on biodiversity enhancements along the path**
  - **Contribute to modal shift towards sustainable transport**
- » Sustainable transport needs to be considered as a major element of coast paths therefore the Rail to Trail initiative should be considered by others.

## INTRODUCTION TO OCEAN LITERACY- Dr Emma McKinley, Research Fellow, University of Cardiff

This presentation was provided as a precursor to the Ocean Literacy Parliamentary Briefing Session planned for March 2023.

- We are currently in the UN Ocean decade running from 2021 to 2030.
- Ocean literacy is a mechanism for change by engaging and connecting people to the sea.
- It stems around the principle of understanding “the ocean’s influence on you and your influence on the ocean” where ‘ocean’ refers to oceans, seas and coast.
- There are 10 dimensions of ocean literacy which includes what people know, the challenges, peoples perceptions and attitudes; it is a complex construct that shows that literacy is more than just knowledge.
- Everyone has a different relationship with the sea depending on access, opportunities and education.
- Annual surveys are being carried out this looking at the national and UK-wide picture.
- This years’ survey has covered England, Wales and Scotland with each providing separate reports on this. These will be discussed in the March APPG session.
- The survey is being used to inform current research including a study into the relationships of people and sea at 3 distinct locations - Chepstow, Portsmouth and Shetland - chosen due to their very different interactions and coastal positions.
- Year of the Coast can influence how people engage with the coast and the diverse marine values that they hold.

### RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

- » Attend the APPG for Coastal Communities Parliamentary Briefing session on Ocean Literacy on 15 March 2023, 09:00-10:00

### Discussion - main points

- Need to be considerate of potential impacts of bring more people to the coast without effective engagement around behaviour and impacts to wildlife e.g. disturbance of seal pups.
- Difficulty in managing the balance between tourism and nature.
- Sustainable transport is key and need to ensure that all areas are better connected in a sustainable way that works for tourism and communities.
- Whilst tourism provides a significant contribution, must not forget about the local communities who should be encouraged to engage and use facilities.
- Year of the Coast 2023 is a very positive initiative.
- There needs to be MP support for the initiatives highlighted through this session.