

South West Coast Path: Man Sands Beach, Kingswear

Report of the Director of Environment, Economy and Culture

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that no action be taken at this time with regard to the Coast Path at Man Sands Beach, but the matter be kept under review.

1. Summary

Councillor Hawkins has requested that the Committee be advised of the diversion of the Coast Path at Man Sands beach in South Devon following winter storms.

2. Background

In the Winter of 2003/04 the National Trust, who own and maintain this section of the Coast Path, removed gabion baskets along a shingle bar at Man Sands beach as they were breaking up and causing a hazard to walkers. Rather than go to the expense of replacing them and in line with NT policy on managed retreat, the shingle bar was left to revert to its natural dynamic state. Following the work a large lake formed in the meadow behind the shingle bar.

During storms in late February/early March 2007 the shingle bar was breached causing a dramatic emptying of the lake. Walkers were advised to use an alternative inland route via Mansands Lane and Woodhuish Lane shown on the accompanying plan ED/PROW/07/78. The diversion involved a lengthy detour of 1.7 miles along steep paths, but the flow of water across the shingle bar has now reduced substantially and it is once again possible to walk the Coast Path on its original line using stepping stones, except at very high spring tides.

Photographs of the Coast Path and the lake prior to the breach are shown overleaf.

3. Possible Long Term Diversion

The National Trust has indicated that it does not intend to re-establish the shingle bar as natural processes are likely to result in a similar breach. They will, however, be monitoring the situation to ensure that use of the Coast Path is not unduly restricted when the flow of water onto the beach increases over the Winter months. If the Coast Path does become impassable for long periods it may prove necessary to establish a more permanent alternative route, but it should be possible to create a significantly shorter route to that implemented immediately after the breach.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

The situation at Man Sands is not uncommon and diversions of the Coast Path are implemented regularly following erosion and storm damage. Indeed, there are a number of sections of the Coast Path which use high and low tide routes and several river crossings where restricted ferry services operate.

If it should become necessary to establish a permanent alternative route then full consultations will be undertaken with interested bodies.

5. Legal Considerations

No direct implications at this time.

Edward Chorlton

Electoral Division: Dartmouth & Kingswear

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
None		

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Coast Path prior to breach



Inland lake