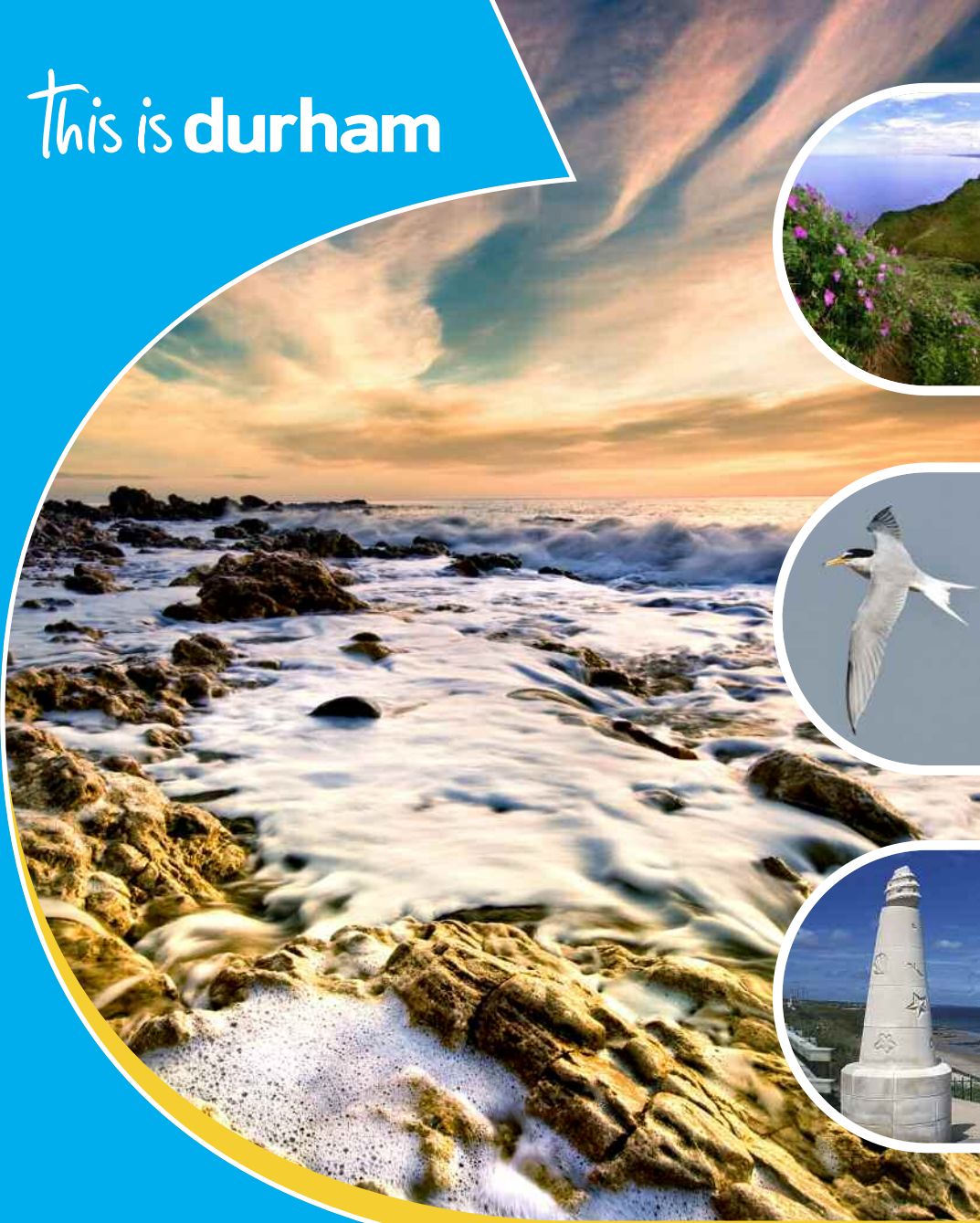


This is durham



The Durham Heritage

Coastal footpath



## The Countryside Code

Respect, protect, enjoy!

### **Respect** other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available.

### **Protect** the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under effective control

### **Enjoy** the outdoors

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Follow advice and local signs.



Scan the code  
to find out more  
about Durham  
Heritage Coast.



## Public Transport Information

For information on getting to the coast using public transport, please go to [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info), or telephone 0871 200 22 33.

# Introduction

Welcome to Durham's Heritage Coastal Footpath, an 11 mile walking route following the England Coast Path National Trail. Discover and explore spectacular grasslands, superb coastal denes and uncover the rich heritage that has shaped this coastline into a unique and fascinating place to be.

## Why is it so special?

Durham's Coastline is unique. Nowhere else in Britain has such a wonderful display of Magnesian Limestone Coastal Grasslands supporting a vast array of wildflowers and insects. The Northern Brown Argus butterfly can be found amongst these grasslands in the summer months and flowers such as orchids, Bloody Cranesbill, Thrift, Birds' Eye Primrose and Common Rock Rose are a characteristic sight on the grassy cliff tops. The sound of Skylarks and Lapwings in the summer are a musical treat not to be missed.

The coastal denes created at the end of the last ice age support some of the most natural woodland in North East England and provide a valuable habitat for mammals such as deer, foxes, badgers and bats. The woodland floors are seasonally adorned with Dog's Mercury, Wild Garlic, Bluebells and Snowdrops and birdsong echoes throughout the mature and elegant Oak, Ash and Yew trees.

Coal mining was the dominant industry in the area throughout the 20th century and the tipping of colliery waste onto the beaches was commonplace. This practice ceased with the closure of the colliery's in the 1990's. Major regeneration projects such as Turning the Tide along with the natural action of the sea have started to restore the 'black beaches' to their former glory.

Along with the improvements on land the water quality along the Durham Coast has improved; it now matches the standards found around the UK. We are also seeing a fascinating recovery of life beneath the waves, with kelp beds expanding and large populations of colourful anemones as well as seals and a little further off basking sharks are frequently sighted in the summer months.

Most of the coast is now designated as a National Nature Reserve with several Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It is looked after by Durham County Council Countryside Team, Durham Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.





# Coastal Footpath

The footpath from Seaham Hall Beach car park to Crimdon is approximately 11 miles. Waymarkers and finger posts mark the route with a variety of informative and interesting artwork along the way.



## Contents

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Route of coastal walk                | 5  |
| Seaham                               | 6  |
| Dawdon                               | 8  |
| Hawthorn                             | 10 |
| Easington Colliery                   | 12 |
| Hornden                              | 14 |
| Castle Eden Dene and Blackhall Rocks | 16 |
| Crimdon                              | 18 |





**SUNDERLAND**



Seaham

Dawdon

Hawthorn

Easington Colliery

Castle Eden Dene and Blackhall Rocks

Blackhall

Crimdon

**HARTLEPOOL**



Old Seaham can be traced back to Saxon times, but the port of Seaham was founded in the 19th Century by the mine-owning Londonderry family – principally to transport coal.



## Seaham

Seaham Hall Beach car park is situated at the most northern point of the Durham Heritage Coastal footpath. The café has a good selection of snacks, ice cream and drinks. Toilet facilities are available when the café is open.



The footpath continues south towards the town of Seaham past Terrace Green, and North Terrace passing an assortment of coffee shops, restaurants, ice cream parlour and a fish and chip shop. A good selection of shops can also be found on Church Street and Byron Place. The docks have now been transformed into a marina for 80 boats with further plans to develop buildings for commercial use.



**Other places of interest in Seaham include St Mary the Virgin Anglo Saxon Church, Londonderry Offices, Terrace Green.**







Seaham Hall car park (café)

Lord Byrons Walk

St Mary the Virgin Anglo Saxon Church

Train Station

Terrace Green

Londonderry Building

Seaham Marina


Church Street

Byron Place

Dalden Tower  
(remains of)

0 1/2 1km


7



The Coastal Footpath passes close by the site of Dawdon Colliery which ceased production in 1991 after which the site was reclaimed.



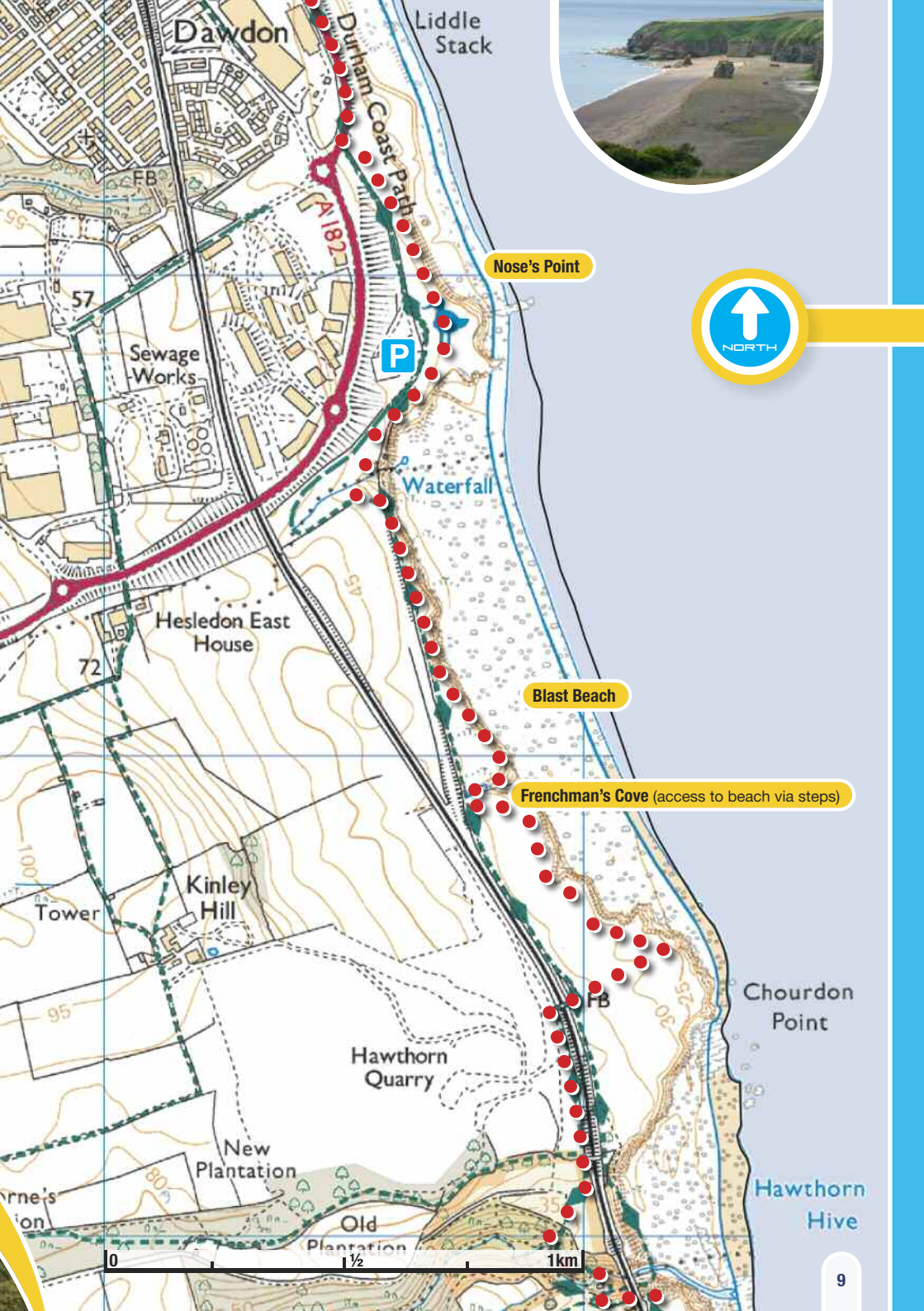
## Dawdon **Nose's Point**



Once the site of Dawdon Colliery, Nose's Point is now a popular destination for a whole host of visitors from walkers to sightseers. The Blast Beach is worth a visit via the steps at Frenchman's Cove, where evidence of coal mining still remains. The beach is popular with fossil hunters, where vestiges from the ice age can be found.










The Coastal Footpath here follows alongside the coastal railway. Constructed in 1905 by the North Eastern Railway Company it linked Seaham with Hart junction.




## Hawthorn

Continuing south the footpath leads to Hawthorn Dene a fine example of one the coastal denes found in the area. Ash, Sycamore, Oak and Yew dominate the woodland with shrubs including hazel, hawthorn and gooseberry. At ground level hart's tongue ferns and fragrant orchids are found in abundance.



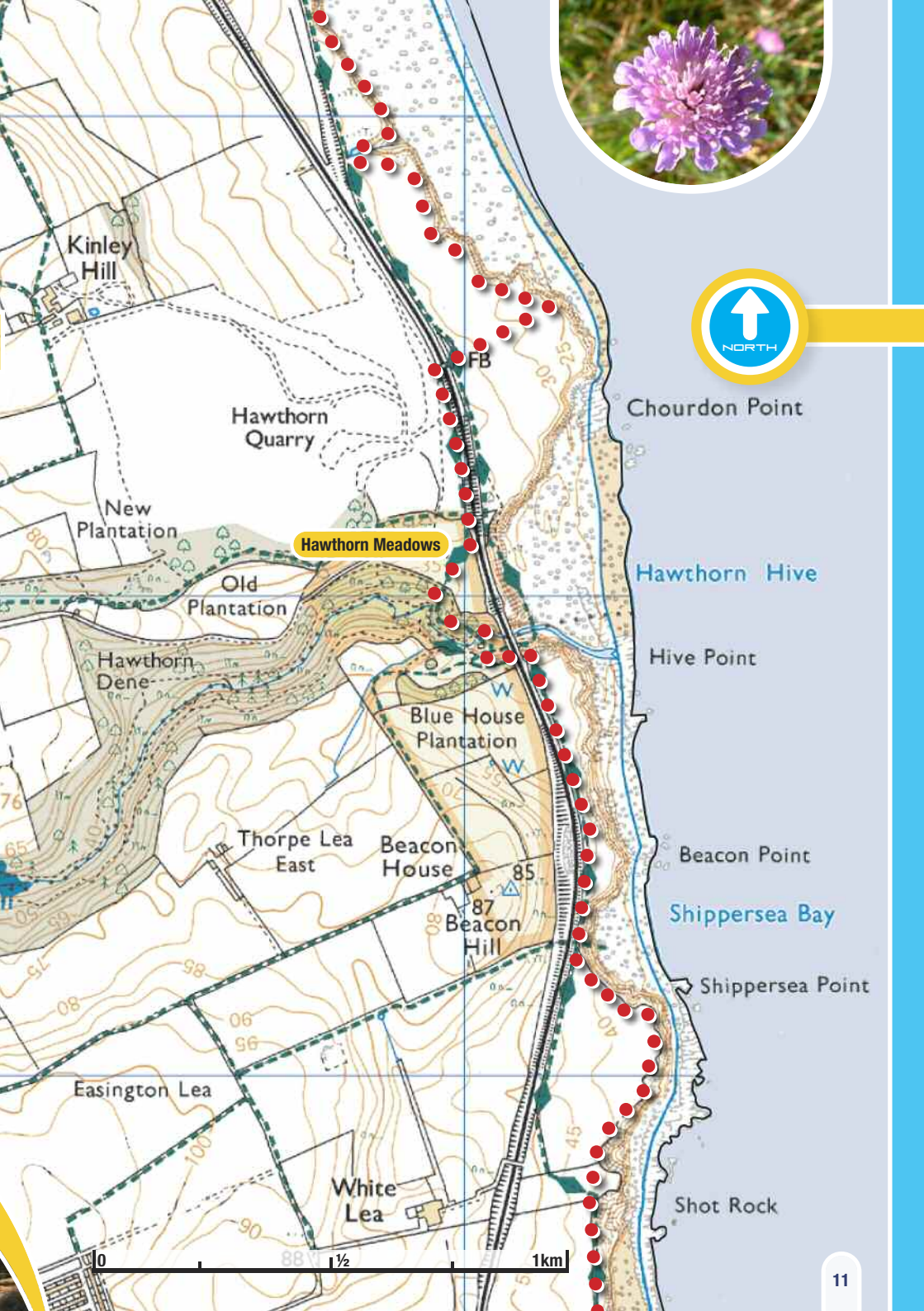
Hawthorn meadows is well worth a visit during the summer months for the stunning grassland meadows where wildflowers and an array of orchids can be seen.

The footpath continues over a footbridge over a magical Limestone Gorge where an impressive viaduct greets the walker with tantalising views of the sea. The footpath continues around until it reaches a kissing gate back on to the east side of the railway line heading towards Easington Colliery.



Hawthorn Village can be reached from this point (approximately 1 mile). The Stapylton Arms pub in the village is a welcome break for those seeking a breather.





Hawthorn Meadows





Once at the heart of the East Durham coalfield, this is now an exceptionally attractive part of the Durham Coastal Footpath



## Easington Colliery

From Hawthorn Dene along the Coastal Footpath the route passes Beacon Hill to the west which is the highest point on the Durham Heritage Coast. Beacon Hill is formed from an outcrop of what was originally a barrier reef laid down in a tropical sea hundreds of millions of years ago.

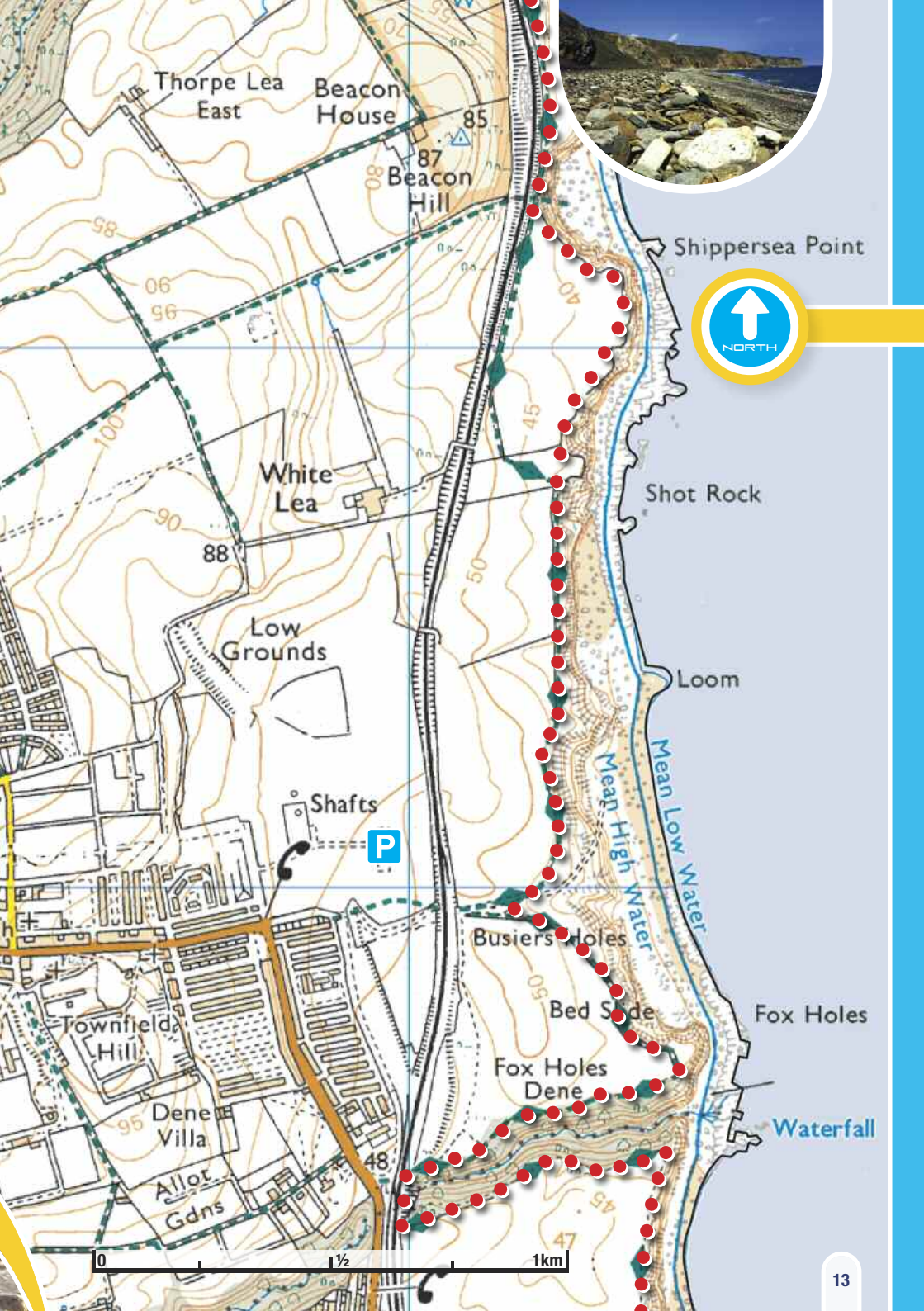


Easington Colliery was one of the last of the Durham Colliery's to be sunk and also one of the last to close. A timeline can be followed from the car park towards the pit cage, a landmark and lasting reminders to an industry that once shaped the whole of the landscape on this coast.



The footpath leads to Foxhole Dene, one of the steepest and deepest denes along coast. The name is thought to refer to the "the fox", a hermit who reputedly lived in the caves.





Shippersea Point



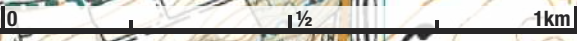
Shot Rock

Loom

Mean High Water  
Mean Low Water

Fox Holes

Waterfall







Popular once for seaside days out, the coast at Horden was very badly scarred by the tipping of colliery spoil. It is now returning to its natural beauty.



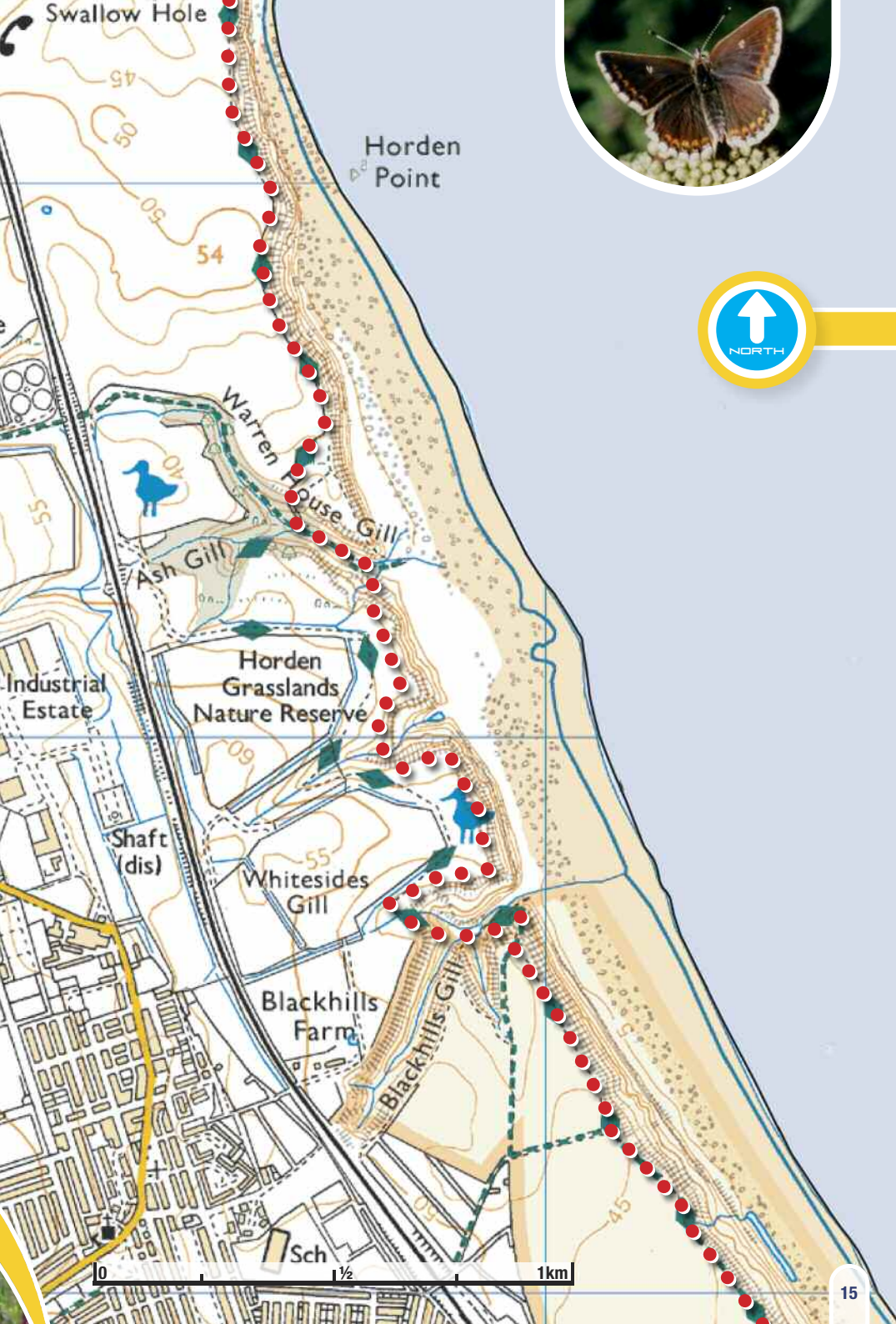
## Horden

Once the site of Horden Colliery, which was sunk in 1900 and closed in 1987. An enormous heap of black spoil was slumping down over the cliff onto the beach below. Its removal involved the relocation of 500,000 tons of material which was used to reclaim the 23 hectare colliery site and create the rolling grassland you can see today. Reed beds are now used to clean the polluted minewater.

The route cuts through Warren House Gill, a SSSI because of its geological importance, before skirting around Whiteside Gill and through Blackhills Gill. The Little Tern sculpture on the cliff top is a great place to enjoy the views.









The sinking of Blackhall Colliery began in 1909 and the pit was one of the most modern in the country at the time. Underground emergency shafts connected Blackhall, Horden and Easington.



## Castle Eden Dene and Blackhall Rocks



Castle Eden Dene is one of the most important natural areas in the North East. This is the only place in the world where you find Magnesian Limestone grasslands at the sea, they are carefully managed and conserved for their importance and rarity. The Dene is a four mile long steep sided valley cut into the Magnesian Limestone. It is owned and managed by Natural England and is a National Nature Reserve.

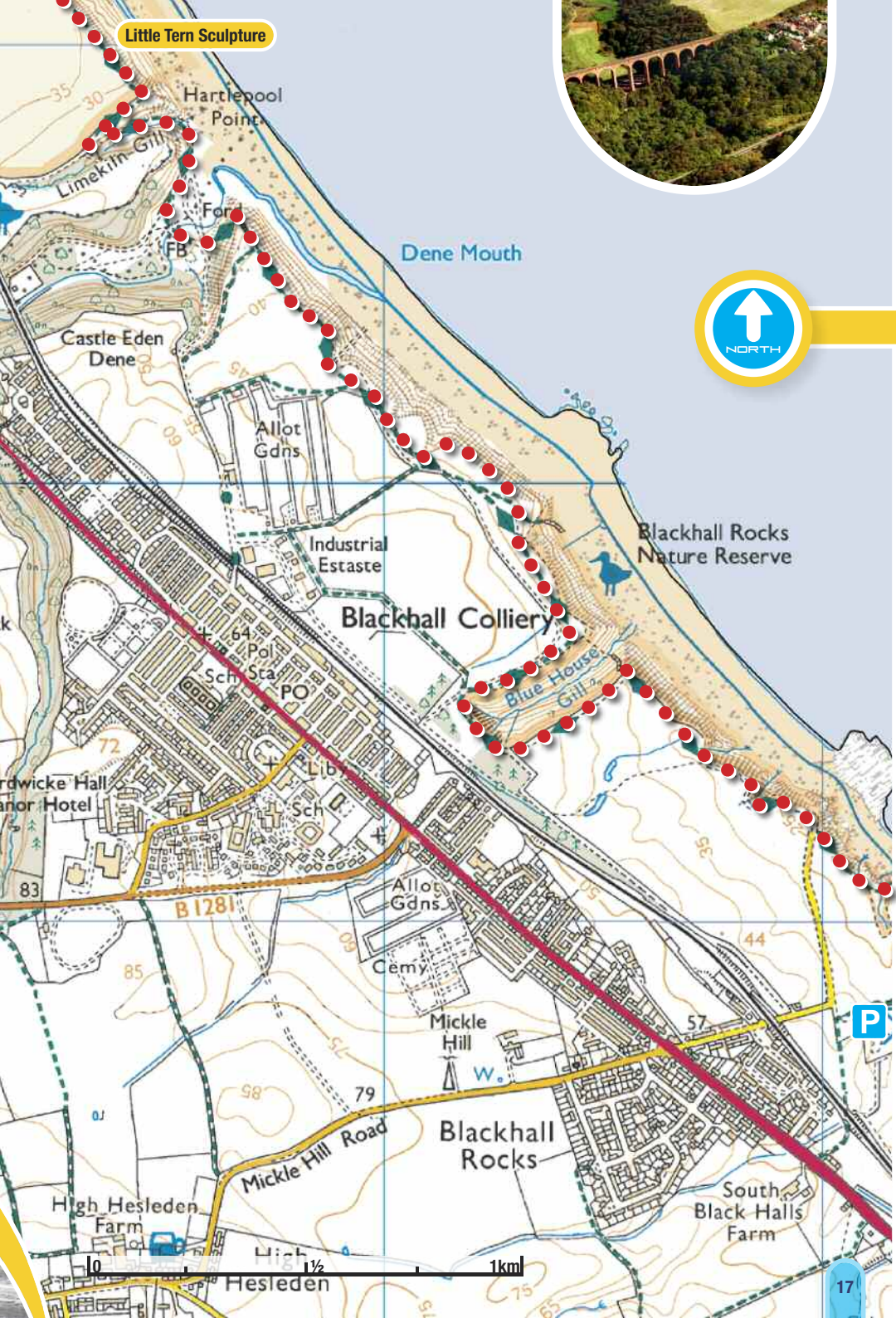


Look out for the Northern Brown Argus Butterfly on the south facing cliffs at Denemouth. The Coastal Footpath approaches Blackhall around Blue House Gill and onto Blackhall Rocks. Plants from the nearby cliff edges have now spread naturally onto the grassland area enriching them substantially.





Little Tern Sculpture







Crimdon caravan park was established in the 1920's and 1930's to cater for caravans and tents.



## Crimdon

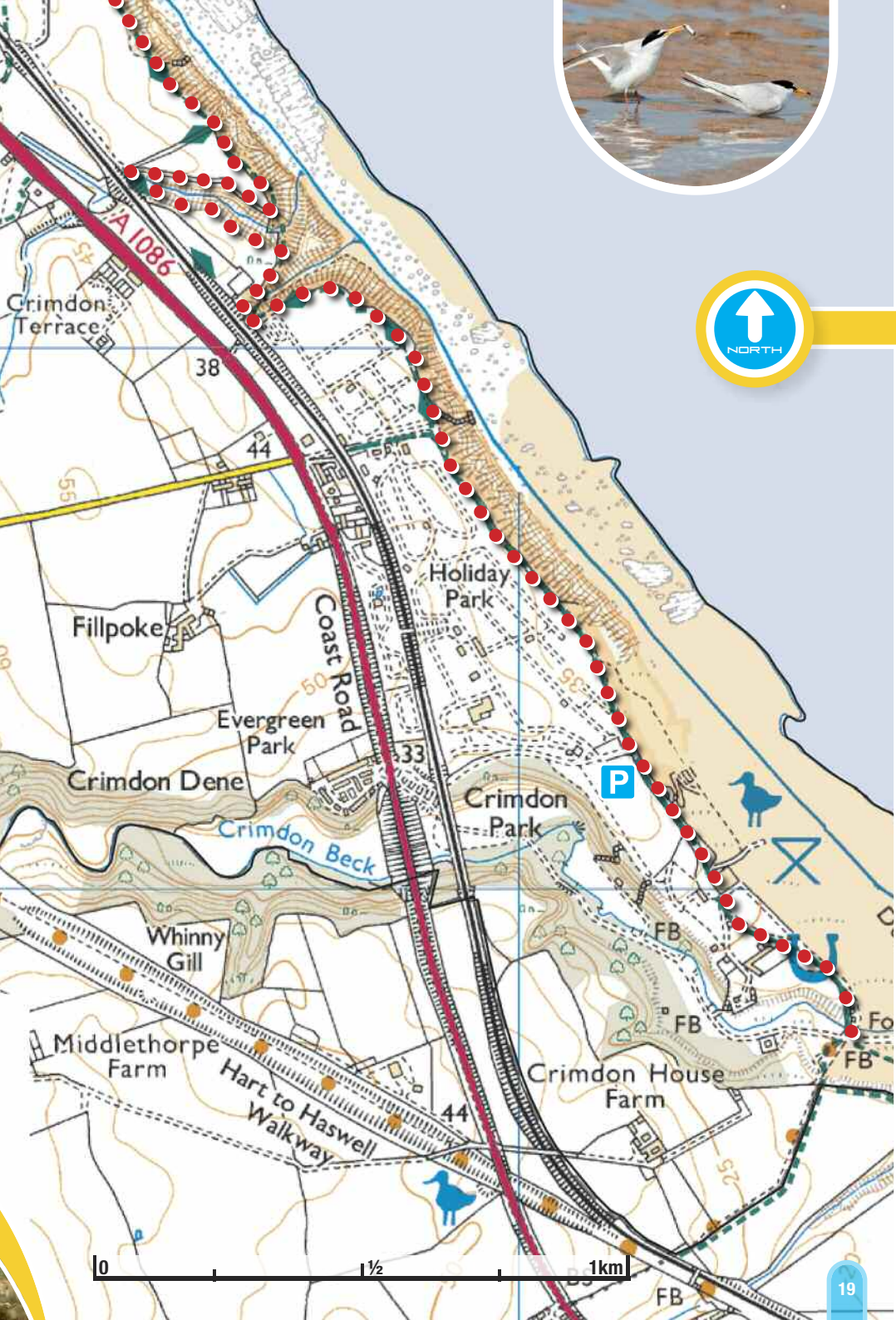
The final stretch of the Coastal Footpath leads to the wide sandy beaches at Crimdon. Views of the North Yorkshire coast and beyond can be seen on a clear day.

Crimdon is a complete contrast to the industrial beaches left behind. Here the beaches are wide and sandy, with the only sand dunes on Durham Heritage Coast. In the past, Crimdon was a thriving holiday destination for miners and their families from nearby villages.

From May to July, Little Terns arrive from West Africa to breed on the sand. Volunteer Wardens look after the birds during their brief stay.

The walk can be extended to incorporate Crimdon Dene, the most southerly section of the Durham Heritage Coast. The Hart to Haswell Cycleway, part of the National Cycle Network can be joined here.







County Hall Durham DH1 5UQ

**Telephone: 03000 268 131**

**E-mail: [heritagecoast@durham.gov.uk](mailto:heritagecoast@durham.gov.uk)**

**Visit: [www.durhamheritagecoast.org](http://www.durhamheritagecoast.org)  
[www.thisisdurham.com](http://www.thisisdurham.com)**

Sunderland Tourist Information Centre (0191) 553 2000

Hartlepool Tourist Information Centre (01429) 523 408

We have a number of village walks leaflets to download from our website. They are in PDF format but are also compatible to be read through the BLIO App on smartphones and tablets.



**DURHAM**  
Heritage Coast



The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development:  
Europe investing in rural areas.



**Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.**

**03000 268 131**

**[heritagecoast@durham.gov.uk](mailto:heritagecoast@durham.gov.uk)**

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Ordnance Survey 100049055.

**Photography:**  
Durham County Council  
Charlie Hedley  
Countryside Agency  
North East Wildlife  
Geoff Perry  
Colin Forster