

England Coast Path Stretch: Southend-on-Sea to Wallasea Island

Report SWI 2: Landwick Cottages to Little Wakering

Part 2.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Landwick Cottages, Great Wakering (grid reference: TQ 9585 8765)
End Point:	Little Wakering (grid reference: TQ 9316 8897)
Relevant Maps:	SWI 2a to SWI 2c

2.1.1 This is one of a series of linked but legally separate reports published by Natural England under section 51 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which make proposals to the Secretary of State for improved public access along and to this stretch of coast between Southend-on-Sea and Wallasea Island.

2.1.2 This report covers length SWI 2 of the stretch, which is the coast between Landwick Cottages and Little Wakering. It makes free-standing statutory proposals for this part of the stretch, and seeks approval for them by the Secretary of State in their own right under section 52 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

2.1.3 The report explains how we propose to implement the England Coast Path (“the trail”) on this part of the stretch, and details the likely consequences in terms of the wider ‘Coastal Margin’ that will be created if our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State. Our report also sets out:

- any proposals we think are necessary for restricting or excluding coastal access rights to address particular issues, in line with the powers in the legislation; and
- any proposed powers for the trail to be capable of being relocated on particular sections (“roll-back”), if this proves necessary in the future because of coastal change.

2.1.4 There is also a single Overview document for the whole of this stretch of coast, explaining common principles and background. **This and the other individual reports relating to the stretch should be read in conjunction with the Overview. The Overview explains, among other things, how we have considered any potential environmental impacts of improving public access to this part of the coast, and this report, and other separately published assessments we refer to, then provides more detail on these aspects where appropriate.**

Part 2.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

Generally follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along most of this length.

2.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, except at Mill Head (see below).

2.2.2 From Oxenham on map SWI 2a to Little Wakering on map SWI 2c, follows the coastline closely and maintains good views of the Roach estuary.

2.2.3 Passes through land that is excepted land under Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 by virtue of it being land subject to military byelaws; specifically route section SWI-2-S018 (map SWI 2a). The trail here follows an existing public footpath (FP30) which remains open during live firing exercises.

Protection of the environment:

2.2.4 In this part of the report, we explain how we have taken account of environmental protection objectives in developing our proposals for improved coastal access.

2.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast (See Overview Maps C1, C2 and D):

- Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone
- Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Foulness Ramsar site
- Foulness SPA
- Foulness Site of Special Scientific Interest designated for its wildlife interest
- Atomic Weapons Research Establishment Foulness Island, 1947 Explosives Storage Area: Scheduled Monument (SM)
- Romano-British burial site on Foulness Island (SM)

The following table brings together design features included in our access proposals to help to protect the environment along this length of the coast.

2.2.6 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
SWI 2a to SWI 2c	SWI-2-S002 to SWI-2-S031	At Oxenham Farm (SWI-2-S002) we would exclude access rights to the coastal margin on nature	Access exclusion at Oxenham Farm is needed because of the high value of this grazing marsh for the outstanding wetland plant assemblage, that assemblage

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
		<p>conservation grounds (see paragraph 2.2.18)</p> <p>In addition, we will install interpretation panels at Oxenham Farm and Fleet Head explaining the sensitivity of the sites and asking people to keep to the path and request they keep dogs on short leads around livestock</p>	<p>species are sensitive to changes in grazing regime, and that allowing public access risks disrupting the grazing and introducing trampling damage along paths, where these develop</p> <p>No specific measures are needed to protect Scheduled Monuments, as they are within the military byelaw areas (Foulness Island), with no coastal access rights</p>

2.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. In respect of cultural heritage, we have taken advice from Historic England and others before confirming this conclusion. For more information about how we came to this conclusion in respect of the natural environment; see the following assessments of the access proposals that we have published separately:

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment relating to any potential impact on the conservation objectives of European sites.
- Our Nature Conservation Assessment, in which we document our conclusions in relation to other potential impacts on nature conservation.

Part 6b of the Overview includes some contextual information about protecting the environment along this length of coast.

Accessibility:

2.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route, but there are places where it would be necessary to circumvent floodgates or gain access to the crest of the seabank via sets of steps (SWI-2-S004, SWI-2-S014 and SWI-2-S016 on map SWI 2a).

2.2.9 However, the natural coastal terrain may be challenging for people with reduced mobility because the trail would follow uneven ground along some existing public rights of way.

2.2.10 At Fleet Head, the existing stiles will be replaced with pedestrian gates, so as to make them easier to use whilst preventing livestock from escaping (map SWI 2b, trail sections SWI-2-S021, SWI-2-S023, SWI-2-S024 and SWI-2-S025). We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described below.

2.2.11 On the south side of Little Wakering Creek, the existing stiles will be replaced with pedestrian gates, so as to make them easier to use (map SWI 2c, trail sections SWI-2-S026, SWI-2-S027 and SWI-2-S030). We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described below.

See part 6a of the Overview - ‘Recreational issues’ - for more information.

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

2.2.12 **Estuary:** This report proposes that the trail should contain sections aligned on the estuary of the River Roach, extending upstream from the open coast. Natural England proposes to exercise its functions as if the sea included the estuarial waters of that river between Landwick Cottages and Little Wakering, as indicated by the extent of the trail shown on maps SWI 2a to 2c (sections SWI-2-S001 to SWI-2-S031).

See part 5 of the Overview for a detailed analysis of the options considered for this estuary and our resulting proposals.

2.2.13 **Landward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on some sections of the route to map the landward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary such as a fence line, pavement or track to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. See Table 2.3.1 below.

2.2.14 The Proposals Tables show where we are proposing to alter the default landward boundary of the coastal margin. These proposals are set out in columns 5b and 5c of Table 2.3.1. Where these columns are left blank, we are making no such proposals, so the default landward boundary applies. See the note relating to columns 5b & 5c [above Table 2.3.1] explaining what this means in practice.

See also part 3 of the Overview - ‘Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps’, for a more detailed explanation of the default extent of the coastal margin and how we may use our discretion to adjust the margin, either to add land or to provide clarity.

2.2.15 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** We have proposed to exclude access by direction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in certain places along this section of coast.

Exclusion of access to the saltmarsh and mudflats between Havengore Bridge and Little Wakering.

2.2.16 Access to the saltmarsh and mudflat in the coastal margin seaward of route sections SWI-2-S005 to SWI-2-S017 and route sections SWI-2-S019 to SWI-2-S031 to the extent shown on Directions Maps SWI 2A and 2B is to be excluded all year round by direction under s25A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is unsuitable for public access. The exclusion does not affect the route itself and will have no legal effect on land where coastal access rights do not apply.

2.2.17 The saltmarsh at this location is uneven and wet underfoot and contains many creeks and channels, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and which can pose a significant risk, or may cause walkers unfamiliar with the area to become cut off from the mainland.

Exclusion of access to the coastal grazing marsh at Oxenham Farm

2.2.18 Access is to be excluded all year round on the coastal grazing marsh adjacent to route section SWI-2-S002 under s26(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000); it is needed because of the high value of this grazing marsh for the outstanding wetland plant assemblage. The assemblage species are sensitive to changes in the grazing regime and allowing public access risks disrupting the grazing and introducing trampling damage along paths where these develop. See Directions Map SWI 2A.

2.2.19 These directions will not prevent or affect:

- any existing local use of the land by right: such use is not covered by coastal access rights;

- any other use people already make of the land locally by formal agreement with the landowner, or by informal permission or traditional toleration; or
- use of any registered rights of common or any rights at common law or by Royal Charter etc.

Any such use is not prohibited or limited by these arrangements.

2.2.20 The directions we give are intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the hidden dangers of mudflats and saltmarsh (section 25A) as well as the risks to the wetland plant assemblage on the coastal grazing marsh at Oxenham Farm (section 26(3)(a)).

See part 8 of the Overview - ‘Restrictions and exclusions’ - for a summary for the entire stretch.

2.2.21 **Coastal erosion:** Natural England is able to propose that the route of the trail would be able to change in the future, without further approval from the Secretary of State, in response to coastal change. This would happen in accordance with the criteria and procedures for ‘roll-back’ set out in part 7 of the Overview.

Natural England may only propose the use of this roll-back power:

- as a result of coastal erosion or other geomorphological processes or encroachment by the sea, or
- in order to link with other parts of the route that need to roll back in direct response to such changes.

2.2.22 We have chosen not to make any such proposal in this report. Accordingly the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps SWI 2a to SWI 2c as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

2.2.23 At this point we do not foresee any need for future changes to the access provisions that we have proposed within this report.

Establishment of the trail:

2.2.24 Below we summarise how our proposed route for the trail would be physically established to make it ready for public use before any new rights come into force.

2.2.25 Establishment works will only start on this length of coast once these proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The works may therefore either precede or follow the start of establishment works on other lengths of coast within the stretch, and detailed in their separate reports.

2.2.26 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £13,300 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Essex County Council, in relation to the management of the existing public rights of way and other walked routes;
- the conclusions of our deliberations in relation to potential impacts on the environment; and
- information gathered while visiting affected land and talking to the people who own and manage it about the options for the route.

2.2.27 There are three main elements to the overall cost:

- New Signs: A number of new signs (way-marking discs and fingerposts) would be needed on the trail, in particular on route sections where the proposed route differs from that of the existing public right of way network and new interpretation panels are required as part of the proposed mitigation detailed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Advisory signs will be erected to remind the public of exclusion of the saltmarsh and mudflats and the presence of livestock on some sections of the trail (e.g. seasonal grazing at Fleet Head). At Oxenham Farm (SWI-2-S004, map 2a), we will add signage advising the public to contact QinetiQ (01702 383211) for access to public footpaths on MOD Shoeburyness (east of Havengore Bridge).
- The surfaces of the existing paths and footways on the proposed route are generally of a suitable standard for the trail, but there are some places where vegetation clearance will be needed to enhance the convenience of the trail.
- New mobility-friendly access furniture will be needed where there are step-stiles or other physical restrictions; they will be replaced by pedestrian gates or similar items.

Table 1 shows our estimate of the capital cost for each of the main elements of physical establishment described above.

Table 1: Estimate of capital costs

Item	Cost
Signs & interpretation	£6700
Replacing stiles with gates	£5700
Vegetation Clearance	£900
Total	£13,300 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

2.2.28 Once the Secretary of State's decision on our report has been notified, and further to our conversations with land managers during the route planning stage, Essex County Council will liaise with affected land owners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the design, installation and maintenance of the new signs and infrastructure that are needed on their land. Prior to works being carried out on the ground, all necessary permissions, authorisations and consents will be obtained. All such works would conform to the published standards for National Trails and the other criteria described in our Coastal Access Scheme.

Maintenance of the trail:

2.2.29 Because the trail on this length of coast will form part of the National Trail being created around the whole coast of England called the England Coast Path, we envisage that it will be maintained to the same high quality standards as other National Trails in England (see The New Deal; Management of National Trails in England from April 2013: details at Annex A of the Overview).

2.2.30 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £5,643 (exclusive of any VAT payable). In developing this estimate we have taken account of the formula used to calculate Natural England's contribution to the maintenance of other National Trails.

Part 2.3: Proposals Tables

See Part 3 of Overview for guidance on reading and understanding the tables below

2.3.1 Section Details – Maps SWI 2a to SWI 2c: Landwick Cottages to Little Wakering

Key notes on table:

- Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 2.3.2: Other options considered.
- Column 4 – ‘No’ means no roll-back is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means roll-back is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.
- Column 5a - Certain coastal land types are included automatically in the coastal margin where they fall landward of the trail if they touch it at some point. The relevant land type (foreshore, cliff, bank, barrier, dune, beach, flat or section 15 land – see Glossary) is shown in this column where appropriate. “No” means none present on this route section.
- Columns 5b and 5c – Any entry in these columns means we are proposing to align the landward boundary of the coastal margin on this route section with the physical feature(s) shown in 5b, for the reason in 5c. No text here means that for this route section the landward edge of the margin would be that of the trail itself - or if any default coastal land type is shown in 5a, that would be its landward boundary instead.

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
2a	SWI-2-S001	Public footpath	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S002	Public footpath	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S003	Public footpath	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S004	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S005	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S006	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S007	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S008	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S009*	Other existing walked route	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S010	Public footpath	No	No			

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
2a	SWI-2-S011*	Other existing walked route	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S012*	Other existing walked route	No	No			
2a	SWI-2-S013	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S014	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S015	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Barrier			This section runs in front of a floodgate set into the bank
2a	SWI-2-S016	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S017	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2a	SWI-2-S018	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2b	SWI-2-S019	Public footpath	No	No			Public right of way crosses road leading to Potton Island
2b	SWI-2-S020	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2b	SWI-2-S021	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2b	SWI-2-S022*	Other existing walked route	No	Yes - Barrier			This section runs in front of a floodgate set into the bank
2b	SWI-2-S023*	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2b	SWI-2-S024*	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2b	SWI-2-S025*	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2c	SWI-2-S026	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2c	SWI-2-S027	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See Part 7 of Overview)	Landward margin contains coastal land type?	Proposal to specify landward boundary of margin (See maps)	Reason for landward boundary proposal	Explanatory notes
2c	SWI-2-S028	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2c	SWI-2-S029	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			
2c	SWI-2-S030	Public footpath	No	Yes – Bank	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
2c	SWI-2-S031	Public footpath	No	Yes - Bank			

2.3.2 Other options considered: Maps SWI 2a and SWI 2b: Landwick Cottages to Fleet Head

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
SWI 2a	SWI-2-S009, SWI-2-S011 and SWI-2-S012	We considered aligning the trail on the seabank public footpath around the southern and western edges of Mill Head.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The existing right of way is difficult to follow on the ground ■ It follows an existing walked route which is favoured by the public and is more direct and convenient ■ This alignment is supported by the access authority (Essex County Council) and the landowner <p>We concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme</p>
SWI 2b	SWI-2-S022 to SWI-2-S025	We considered aligning the trail on the cross-field public footpath (FP28) which runs between Potton Hard and Fleet Head, to save having to walk around the looping seabank (on the grounds of faster onward progress).	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is closer to the Roach estuary and maintains views of it. ■ The existing cross-field public footpath gives walkers the option to cut off this part of the route if they prefer, for example if they feel uncomfortable with livestock on the path. See Overview 6 e: Walkers and Livestock. <p>We concluded that overall the proposed route struck the best balance in terms of the criteria</p>

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			described in chapter 4 of the Coastal Access Scheme

Note: Any public rights of way not forming part of the proposed trail would remain available for people to use under their pre-existing rights.

Part 2.4: Proposals Maps

2.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
SWI 2a	Landwick Cottages, Great Wakering to Potton Island Swing-bridge
SWI 2b	Potton Island Swing-bridge to Fleet Head
SWI 2c	Fleet Head to Little Wakering
Directions Map SWI 2A	Directions for Report SWI 2: Landwick Cottages to Little Wakering
Directions Map SWI 2B	Directions for Report SWI 2: Landwick Cottages to Little Wakering

PROPOSALS

Trail Sections

- Trail using existing public right of way or highway
- Trail using other existing walked route
- Trail not using existing walked route
- Alternative route
- Trail shown on other maps
- Approved or open England Coast Path

Maps that show sections of the trail that follow the existing South West Coast Path as currently walked and managed use the following trail categories. Information on the existing status and infrastructure is not shown.

- Trail using existing South West Coast Path
- Alternative or optional alternative route using existing South West Coast Path

Trail sections which follow existing public rights of way or highways are indicated by a suffix:

BW - Public bridleway

BY - Public byway

CP - Cycletrack (pedestrian)

CT - Cycletrack (cycles only)

FP - Public footpath

FW - Public footway (Pavement)

RB - Restricted byway

RD - Public road

Coastal Margin

Explanatory note

Part 3 of the Overview to the report explains where the landward boundary of the coastal margin falls by default. Our proposals include any suggested variation of this default boundary. The purple wash on the map indicates where as a result of our proposals the coastal margin would extend significantly to the landward side of the proposed route of the trail. The coastal margin may include some areas where coastal access rights do not apply, either seaward or landward of the proposed route of the trail: the Overview explains more about this. The landward boundary of the coastal margin may in due course move inland, if the trail rolls back under proposals in this report to respond to coastal change.

Coastal margin landward of the trail

Coastal margin landward of the trail which is existing access land

Other Information

Other access rights and routes

- Public bridleways
- Public byways
- Public footpaths
- Restricted byways
- South West Coast Path
- Sustrans national routes
- Existing access land

Infrastructure types

For status of each, where shown on map, see colour codes below

- | Bridges: | Stiles: | Gates: |
|----------|---------|--------|
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

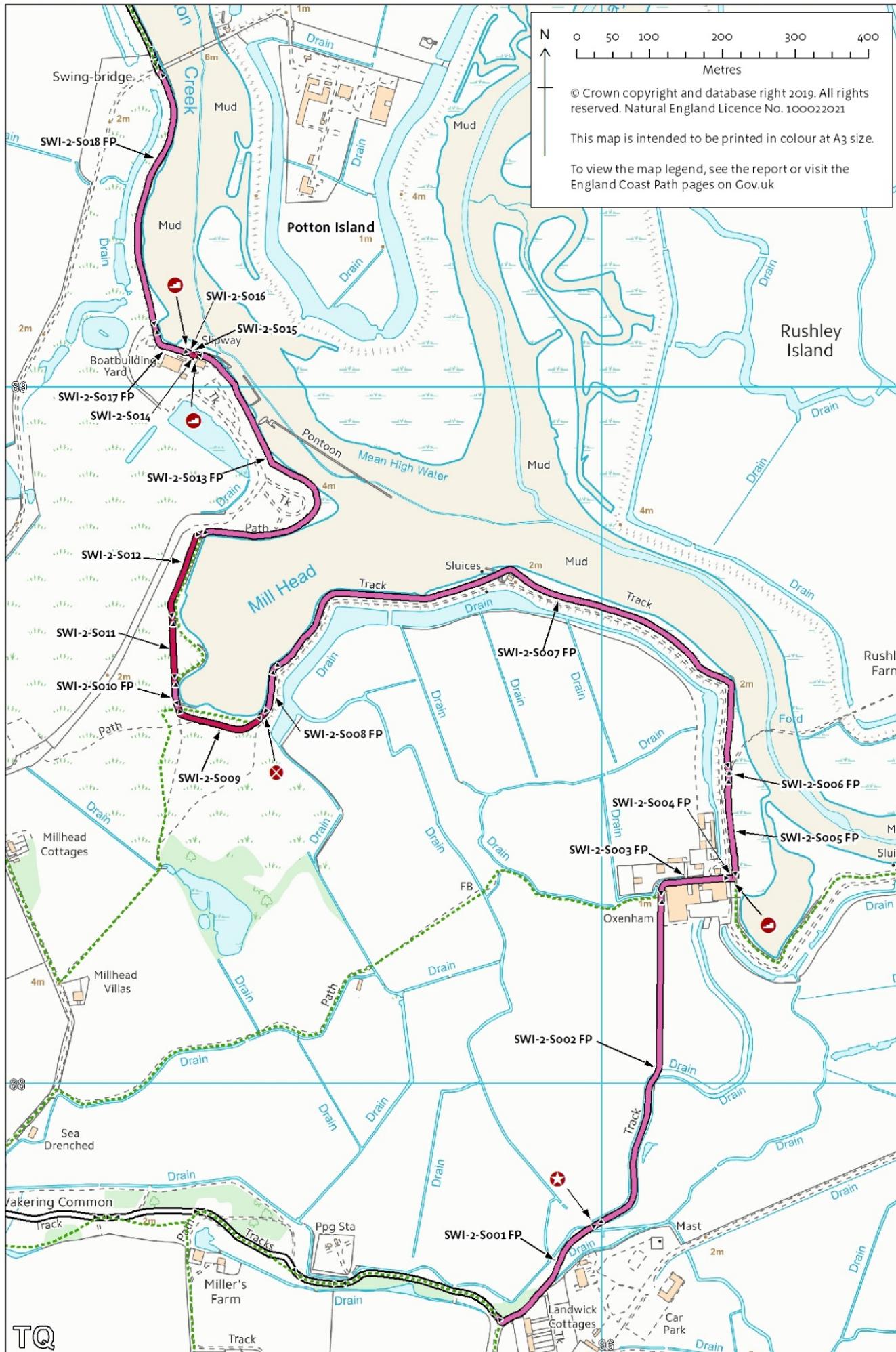
Miscellaneous:

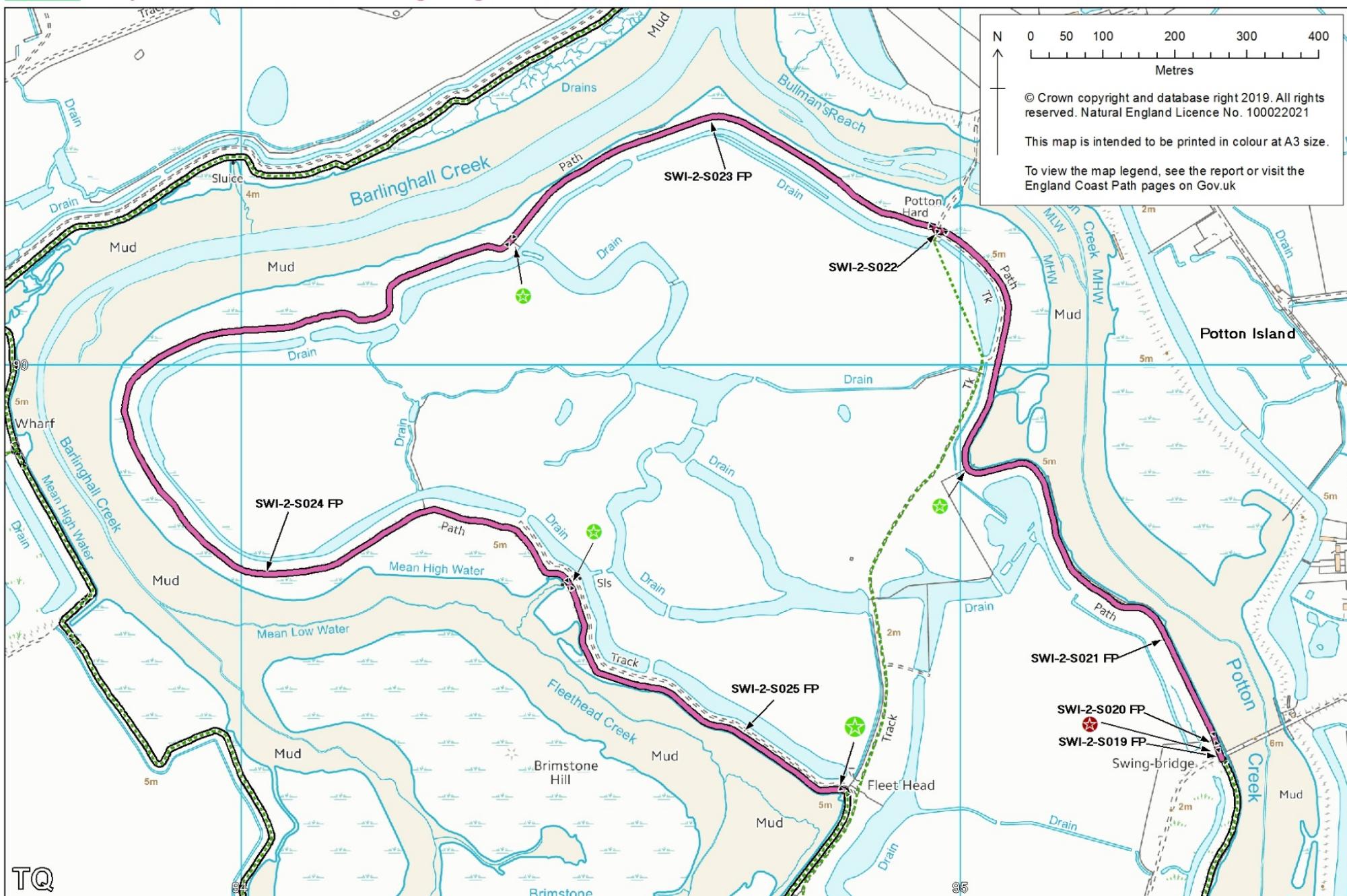
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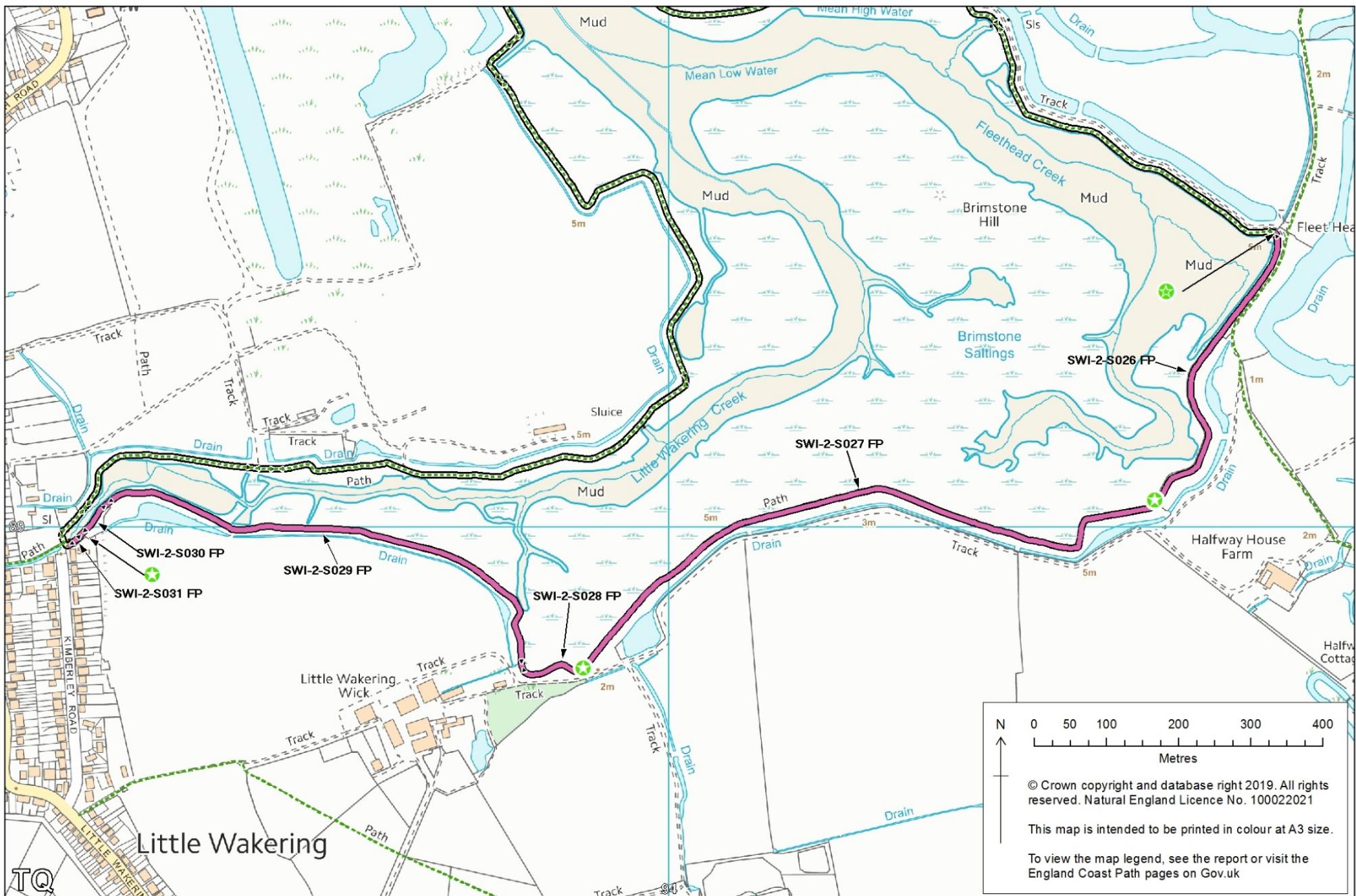
Infrastructure status

Each symbol shown on the map is colour coded as appropriate, as in this example for a set of steps:

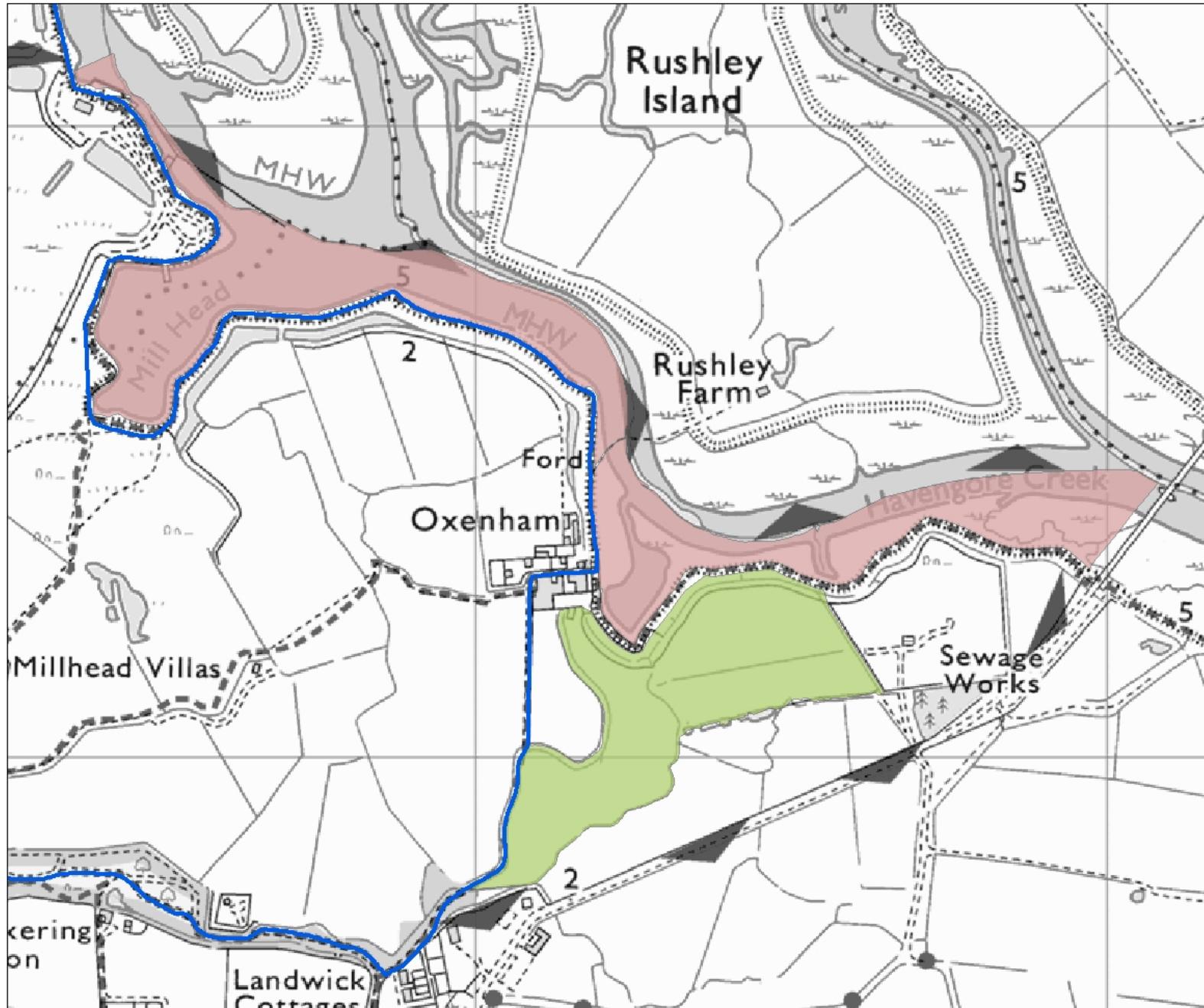
- Existing steps to be retained
- New steps required
- Existing steps to be removed

Map SWI 2a - Landwick Cottages, Great Wakering to Potton Island Swing-bridge**Map SWI 2a - Landwick Cottages, Great Wakering to Potton Island Swing-bridge**

Map SWI 2b - Potton Island Swing-bridge to Fleet Head**Map SWI 2b - Potton Island Swing-bridge to Fleet Head**

Map SWI 2c - Fleet Head to Little Wakering**Map SWI 2c - Fleet Head to Little Wakering**

Directions Map SWI 2A



These directions only affect land where coastal access rights apply and will not affect existing rights of access, such as on public rights of way.

0 160 320 Meters

Directions Map SWI 2B

