



England Coast Path Stretch: Isle of Wight

Report IOW 8: Thorness Bay to Gurnard Luck

Part 8.1: Introduction

Start Point:	Thorness Bay (grid reference 445475.208, 93377.83)
End Point:	Gurnard Luck (grid reference 447104.767, 95328.119)
Relevant Maps:	IOW 8a to IOW 8b

8.1.1 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 around the coast of the Isle of Wight coast.

8.1.2 This report covers length IOW 8 of the stretch, which is the coast between Thorness Bay and Gurnard Luck. 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.

8.1.3 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.

8.1.4 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 8.2: Proposals Narrative

The trail:

8.2.1 Follows existing walked routes, including public rights of way, along this length.

8.2.2 Follows the coastline closely and maintains good views of the sea.

8.2.3 Is aligned on the beach or foreshore at Thorness Bay (see Map IOW 8a).

8.2.4 Follows a route similar to the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path.

Protection of the environment:

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.

8.2.5 The following designated sites affect this length of coast:

- Solent and Southampton Water SPA
- Solent and Dorset Coast SPA
- Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar
- Solent Maritime SAC
- Thorness Bay SSSI
- Yarmouth to Cowes MCZ

Map C in the Overview shows the extent of designated areas listed.

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

8.2.6 Measures to protect the environment

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S002 to IOW-8-S005	<p>The following design features are described elsewhere in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The trail at Thorness Beach will be aligned off the beach into the adjacent pasture field. ■ The current metal bridge, which is in disrepair, will be replaced by a new, raised bridge into the pasture field. The nature, scale, timing and duration of works will be carried out in a way that is sensitive to the features present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To reduce the risk of the vegetated shingle being trampled by people walking along the shore. ■ To reduce the risk of disturbance to feeding birds on the mudflats by people walking along the shore. ■ To reduce the risk of disturbance to breeding ringed plover on the shingle beach by people walking on the shore.

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Design features of the access proposals	Reason included
		<p>In addition, we will install:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interpretation panels at each end of the beach explaining the environmental sensitivities and asking people to keep to the newly routed coastal path. 	

8.2.7 Natural England is satisfied that the proposals for coastal access in this report are made in accordance with relevant environmental protection legislation. For more information about how we came to this conclusion, 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:

8.2.8 There are few artificial barriers to accessibility on the proposed route. However, the natural coastal terrain is often challenging for people with reduced mobility and this is the case on sections of our proposed route because:

- The trail would follow an uneven grass and bare soil path
- The trail would follow a narrow cliff top path;
- The trail would follow a shingle beach at Thorness Bay;

8.2.9 At Thorness Beach, the existing three stiles will be replaced with kissing gates and a replacement bridge installed. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment work described below. Outside of high tide the beach is available for those unable to use the bridges or kissing gates. Due to the inherent physical constraints of this area, creating more accessible gaps at this point is not considered feasible due to significant construction and stabilisation works and associated costs.

8.2.10 Between Thorness Beach and Gurnard Luck, significant surface works to upgrade the current route with better substrate will be completed to improve the extremely muddy conditions and make the path easier to use. We envisage this happening as part of the physical establishment works described below. There is no scope to widen the cliff top path due to the inherent physical constraints of this area.

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

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

8.2.11 **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 8.3.1 below.

8.2.12 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 8.3.1. 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 8.3.1] 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.

8.2.13 **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.

8.2.14 *Natural England proposes to exclude access relevant to this length of coast, as follows:*

Access to the land in the coastal margin adjacent to route sections IOW-8-S001 to IOW-8-S012 is to be excluded all year-round by direction under Section 25A the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as it is mudflat and saltmarsh that 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. See Directions Map 8A

8.2.15 The mudflat in around the island is soft and sinking. It does not provide a safe walking surface and is subject to frequent tidal inundation. RNLI and Coastguard data indicates incidents of people being rescued from the mud. Areas of saltmarsh are often extensive and have deep channels and creeks, some of which would not be readily apparent to walkers and can pose a significant risk.

8.2.16 This direction 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.

8.2.17 The direction is intended to avoid any new public rights being created over the area in question in view of the hidden dangers to which new users of the land would be subject because of the nature of the mud and clay.

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

8.2.18 **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.

8.2.19 Column 4 of table 8.3.1 indicates where roll-back has been proposed in relation to a route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time the report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IOW 8a to IOW 8b as the proposed route of the trail.

8.2.20 If at any time in the future any part of a route section upon which roll-back has been specified needs, in Natural England's view, to change in order for the overall route to remain viable, the new route for the part in question will be determined by Natural England without further reference to the Secretary of State. This will be done in accordance with the criteria and procedures described under the title 'Roll-back' in part 7 of the Overview and section 4.10 of the Coastal Access Scheme. If this happens, the new route will become the approved route for that section for the purposes of the Order which determines where coastal access rights apply.

8.2.21 On sections for which roll-back is not proposed in table 8.3.1, the route is to be at the centre of the line shown on maps IOW 8a to IOW 8b as the proposed route of the trail.

Other future change:

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

See parts 7 - 'Future changes' of the Overview for more information.

Establishment of the trail:

8.2.23 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.

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.

8.2.24 Our estimate of the capital costs for physical establishment of the trail on the proposed route is £86,353 and is informed by:

- information already held by the access authority, Isle of Wight Council, in relation to the management of the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path;
- 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.

8.2.25 There are four main elements to the overall cost:

- A significant number of new waymarkers would be needed on the trail, in particular on route sections where the proposed route differs from that of the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path.
- Any interpretation signs and information boards with outdated information about the existing route of the Isle of Wight Coast Path would require replacement.
- Stiles will be replaced with kissing gates to make them more accessible to walkers. See paragraph 8.2.9 for further information.
- There is a need for a new footbridge and a significant amount of resurfacing works in order to bring the current trail up to National Trail standard and enhance the convenience of the trail. The remote location and narrow width of the cliff top path mean costs for these works are high. More significant items of establishment works are shown on the relevant maps accompanying this report.

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	£2,426
Kissing gates	£3,000
Footbridge	£3,000
Vegetation clearance	£3,000
Surfacing works	£55,000
Project management & variance	£19,927
Total	£86,353.00 (Exclusive of any VAT payable)

8.2.26 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, Isle of Wight 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:

8.2.27 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).

8.2.28 We estimate that the annual cost to maintain the trail will be £5,312.73 (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 8.3: Proposals Tables

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

8.3.1 Section Details: Maps IOW 8a to IOW 8b – Thorness Bay to Gurnard Luck

Key notes on table:

1. Column 2 – an asterisk (*) against the route section number means see also table 8.3.2: Other options considered.
2. 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.
3. Column 4 – ‘Yes – see table 8.3.3’ means roll-back is proposed, but refer to that table below about our likely approach to implementing it for this route section. This is because a more complex situation exists in this case and consideration must be given to how roll-back may happen in relation to excepted land, a protected site etc.
4. 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.
5. 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
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S001	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	Yes - Beach			
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S002*	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	Yes - Beach			
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S003*	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	No			
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S004 to IOW-8-S007	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	Yes - Beach			
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S008	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	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
IOW 8a & IOW 8b	IOW-8-S009 to IOW-8-S012	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	No			
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S013	Public footpath	Yes - See table 8.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S014*	Other existing walked route	Yes - See table 8.3.3	No	Fence line	Clarity and cohesion	
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S015*	Public highway	Yes - See table 8.3.3	No			

8.3.2 Other options considered: Maps IOW 8a & IOW 8b – Thorness Bay to Gurnard Luck

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S002 & IOW-8-S003	We considered aligning the trail to follow the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path on the beach for the whole route.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific sections of the beach at Thorness Bay is subject to coastal squeeze and small sections become inundated at high tide. The chosen route avoids these areas. The route has better and more enjoyable walking conditions at all states of tide
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S014 to IOW-8-S015	We considered aligning the trail down the coastal slope to the beach fronting Gurnard Luck, and around the closed public right of way landward of Marsh Cottage.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The considered route would have been aligned through land that is likely to be excepted due to nearby residential gardens.

Map(s)	Route section numbers(s)	Other option(s) considered	Reasons for not proposing this option
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The area is subject to high levels of coastal erosion and any route here would have been difficult to maintain. The current public right of way has been closed for similar reasons. ■ It is less disruptive to resident's privacy.
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S014 to IOW-8-S015	We considered aligning the trail down the coastal slope to the beach fronting Gurnard Luck, and around the closed public right of way landward of Marsh Cottage as a low tide route and having the proposed route as the optional alternative route.	<p>We opted for the proposed route because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. ■ The area is subject to high levels of coastal erosion and any route here would have been difficult to maintain. The current public right of way has been closed for similar reasons. ■ It is less disruptive to resident's privacy.

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.

8.3.3 Roll-back implementation – more complex situations: Maps IOW 8a to IOW 8b – Thorness Bay to Gurnard Luck

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IOW 8a	IOW-8-S001 to IOW-8-S015	Thorness Bay SSSI, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar. Specific features that could be impacted include Reedbeds and waterbird assemblage	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of a designated site (e.g. SSSI, SAC, SPA, SAM), or where the existing route already passing through such a site must be altered, we will choose a new route after detailed discussions with the relevant experts and with any potentially affected owners or occupiers, which will either (a) continue to pass through the site, if appropriate or (b) if necessary, be routed landward of it.
IOW 8a and IOW 8b	IOW-8-S009 to IOW-8-S014	Holiday houses at Whippance Farm, Dukes Farm and Cliff Farm	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.

Map(s)	Route section number(s)	Feature(s) or site(s) potentially affected	Our likely approach to roll-back
IOW 8b	IOW-8-S015	Residential properties inland.	If it is no longer possible to find a viable route seaward of the specified excepted land (e.g. buildings, curtilage, gardens etc), we will choose a route landward of it, following discussions with owners and occupiers.

In relation to all other sections where roll-back has been proposed, any later adjustment of the trail is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

Part 8.4: Proposals Maps

8.4.1 Map Index

Map reference	Map title
IOW 8a	Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge
IOW 8b	Gurnard Ledge to Gurnard Luck
Directions Map 8A	Thorness Bay: Proposed direction under S25A CROW

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:

- Clapper bridge
- Footbridge
- Quad bike bridge
- Sleeper bridge
- Vehicle bridge

Stiles:

- Ladder stile
- Lift-up stile
- Squeeze stile
- Step stile
- Stone stile

Gates:

- Bristol gate
- Field gate
- Gateway with no gate
- Kissing gate
- Pedestrian gate
- Wheelchair gate

Miscellaneous:

- Barrier
- Boardwalk
- Bollard
- Cattle grid
- Culvert
- Motorbike barrier
- Cycle chicane
- Drainage
- Drop-kerb
- Gap in fence
- Hurdle
- Roadside sign
- Interpretation panel
- Ramp
- Revetment
- Stepping stones
- Steps
- Advisory sign

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

* Please note that the items in this legend may not all be present on an individual map or report.

Map IOW 8a: Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge



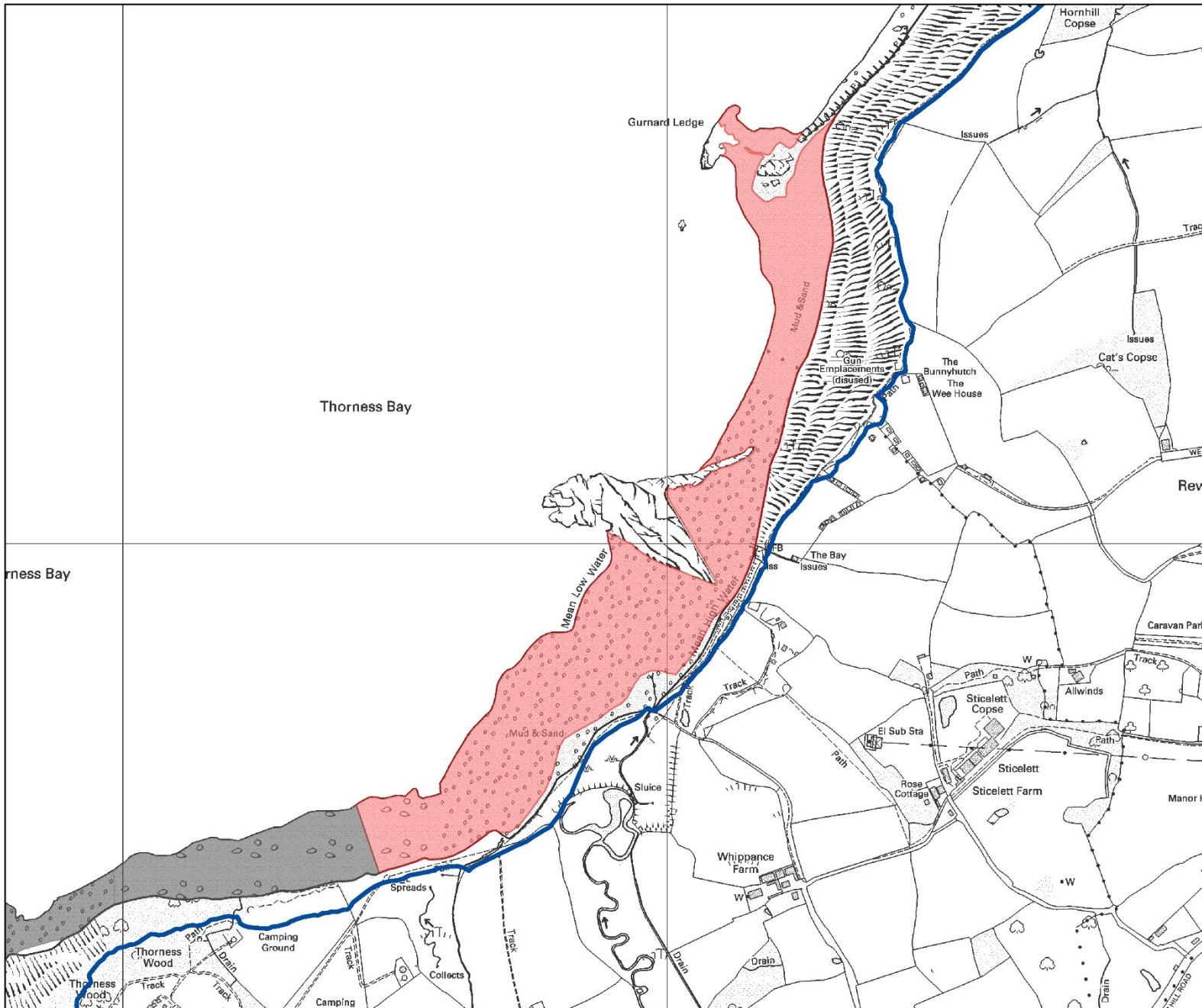
Map IOW 8a: Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge

Map IOW 8b: Gurnard Ledge to Gurnard Luck

N
 0 50 100 200 300 400
 Metres
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 This map is intended to be printed in colour at A3 size.
 To view the map legend, see the report or visit the England Coast Path pages on Gov.uk



Map IOW 8b: Gurnard Ledge to Gurnard Luck



Trail Sections

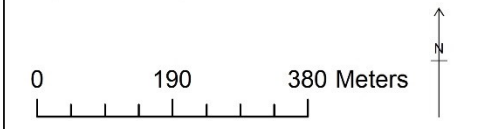
— Proposed route

Restrictions

Proposed long-term access exclusion, Unsuitable for Public Access, Section 25A, No Public Access, Year round

Directions shown in other IOW report

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.



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