

Proposed changes to the King Charles III England Coast Path at Bosham, Chichester

Natural England's Variation Report to the Secretary of State

Coastal Access Variation Report VR29
January 2026

Part 1: Purpose of this report

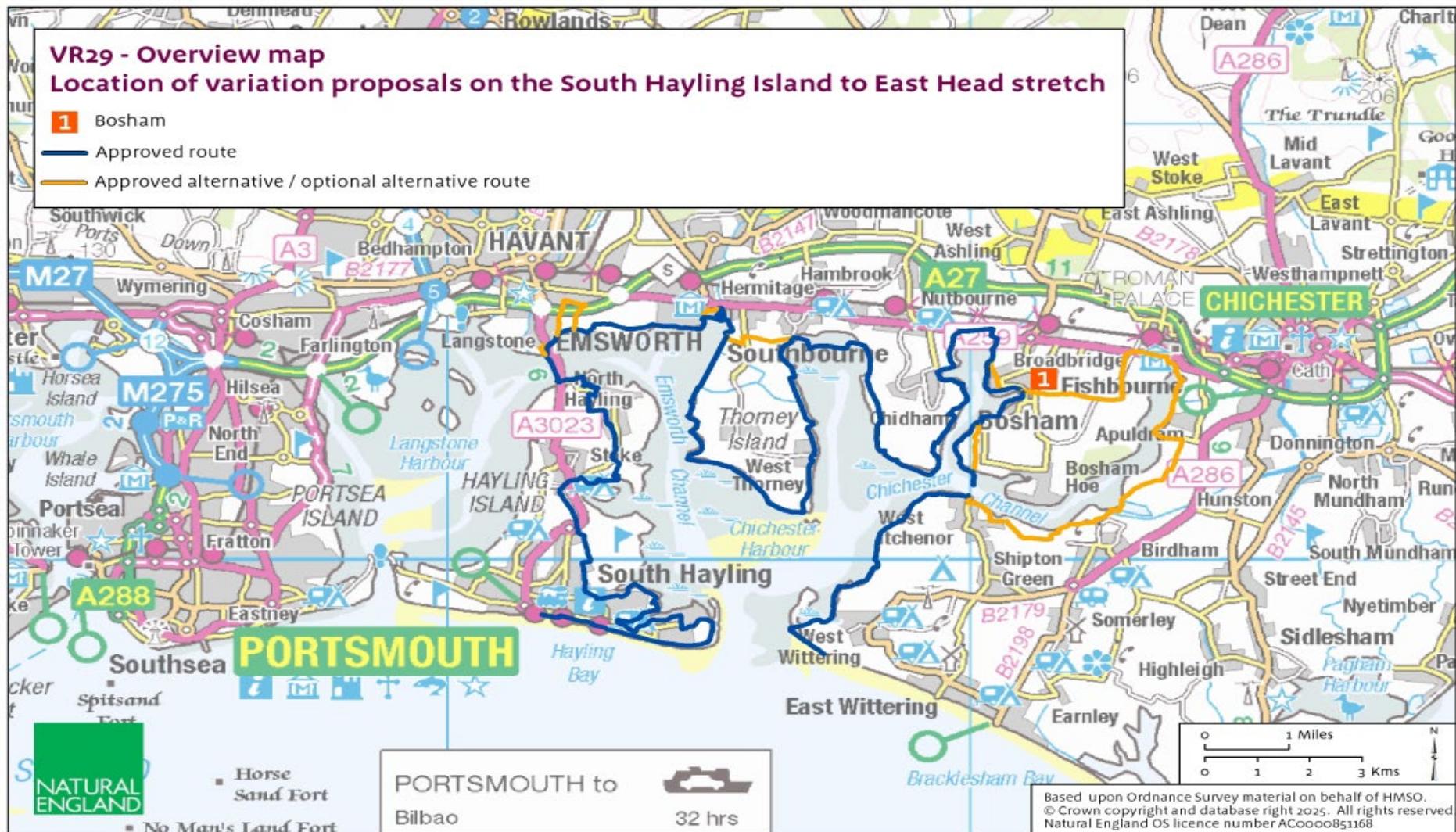
1.1 Natural England has a statutory duty under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to improve access to the English coast. The duty is in two parts: one relating to securing a long-distance walking route around the coast; the other to creating an associated “margin” of land for the public to enjoy, either in conjunction with their access along the route line, or otherwise.

1.2 On 9 July 2020 the Secretary of State approved Natural England's proposals relating to SHE 4: Bosham to West Itchenor which formed part of our proposals for the [South Hayling to East Head](#) stretch. Whilst the proposals have been approved, Natural England and the West Sussex County Council are currently working to prepare the trail for public use and as such the coastal access rights for this stretch have yet to commence.

1.3 Since the approval of the report, it has become clear that a change is necessary to the route of the King Charles III England Coast Path. This report contains Natural England's proposals relating to that change at Bosham, which is at the location shown on the Variation Location Map below.

1.4 In order for this proposed change to come into force it must be approved by the Secretary of State.

1.5 The original stretch overview: [Report SHE 4: Bosham to West Itchenor](#) provides vital context to the proposal set out in this VR.



Part 2: Proposed variation at Bosham

Start Point: Grid reference: SU 81015 03865

End Point: Grid reference: SU 81011 03825

Relevant Original Proposal Map: Map 4C: Bosham to Old Park Farm

2.1 Introduction

Reason for variation:

2.1.1 The approved alternative route in this location in Bosham includes a section of <20m that crosses a triangle of land that is now fenced and actively maintained as a wildflower meadow. This proposed small variation in the route of the approved alternative route will move the trail off this triangle of land and onto a neighbouring public right of way and reduce impacts on the land management. We do not consider this minor change will affect the enjoyment of the trail or coastal views.

Proposed variation:

2.1.2 The approved route sections SHE-4-A006 and SHE-4-A007 that are subject to this variation serve as part of an alternative to the ordinary route that runs along the Bosham Creek, for use when the Itchenor Ferry is not operating. The sections connect the ordinary route at the junction of SHE-4-S025 and SHE-4-S026 with section SHE-4-A008 of the approved alternative route. The approved sections currently cross the northern edge of a triangle of land and a private road (The Drive).

2.1.3 The proposed varied alternative route would connect the ordinary route with section SHE-4-A008 along a section of public right of way on The Drive.

2.1.4 As a result of this variation, the coastal and landward margins of the alternative route have been adjusted to follow the width of The Drive. These are minor changes that reflect the revised alignment.

2.1.5 The impact on user experience is minimal. The proposed change replaces a section of grass with a slightly longer paved route (~40m).

Considering the options:

2.1.6 No other obvious options were available in this area, and the new alignment will follow a nearby public right of way. We have worked closely with the access authority to determine this change.

2.2 Proposals Narrative

The Trail:

2.2.1

The proposed variation follows an existing public right of way along a paved, private road (The Drive) near to the approved alignment. It introduces a minor increase to the length of the alternative route of around 20m. No new path construction is required, and the alignment remains consistent with established walked routes.

Protection of the environment:

2.2.2 The national or international nature conservation or heritage designations present in this area are unaffected by this minor alteration of the alternative route.

Accessibility:

2.2.3

The proposed route offers a slight improvement in accessibility by replacing the original grass alignment with a paved road surface. This change provides a firmer and more consistent surface, which may benefit users with reduced mobility. However, unlike the original grass path, the new alignment along an existing public footpath may occasionally experience light vehicular traffic

Where we have proposed exercising statutory discretions:

2.2.4 **Landward and seaward boundary of the coastal margin:** We have used our discretion on this section of the varied alternative route to map the landward and seaward extent of the coastal margin to an adjacent physical boundary: the road edge, to make the extent of the new access rights clearer. These proposals are set out in columns 5a, 5b and 5c of table 2.3.1 below.

See part 3 of the Overview to the original report - 'Understanding the proposals and accompanying maps', for an 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.

2.2.5 **Restrictions and/or exclusions:** Access rights to the seaward margin would be subject to the excepted land rules and the national restrictions on coastal access rights. We do not propose any additional local restrictions or exclusions.

2.2.6 **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.

2.2.7 Column 4 of table 2.3.1 indicates where the roll-back power has been proposed in relation to a newly proposed route section. Where this is the case, the route, as initially determined at the time this report was prepared, is to be at the centre of the line shown on map VR29b as the proposed route of the trail.

2.2.8 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.

Establishment of the trail:

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

2.2.10 Our estimate of the capital costs for these works is de-minimus. Waymarking posts associated with establishing the existing approved sections of the ordinary and alternative route will only require minimal works to adapt to the direction of the new alternative route.

2.2.11 If the Secretary of State approves our report, West Sussex County Council will continue to liaise with the affected landowners and occupiers about relevant aspects of the establishment works and installation of new signs 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:

2.2.12 Ongoing maintenance of the varied sections of trail would be necessary from time to time. This variation would make no significant change to the annual costs associated with maintaining the approved route as set out in our original report.

Part 2.3: Proposals Table

2.3.1 Alternative route details – Map VR29b – Bosham

Notes on table:

1. Column 4 – ‘No’ means no rollback is proposed for this route section. ‘Yes – normal’ means rollback is proposed and is likely to follow the current feature (e.g. cliff edge/beach/road) for the foreseeable future as any coastal change occurs.

2. Columns 5a and 5b – An entry in either or both columns denotes a proposal to align the seaward or landward boundary (as the case may be) of this section of the alternative route strip with the physical feature(s) shown. No text in the column means no such proposal, meaning that the edge of the alternative route strip would be at the default width of 2 metres on the relevant side of the route’s centre line.

Table 2.3.1: Map VR29b - Bosham

1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6
Map(s)	New route section number(s)	Current status of route section(s)	Roll-back proposed? (See part 8 of 2017 report Overview)	Proposal to specify seaward boundary of alternative route strip	Proposal to specify landward boundary of alternative route strip	Reason for seaward and landward boundary proposals	Explanatory notes
VR29b - Bosham	SHE-VR29-A001 FP	Public footpath	Yes – Normal	Edge of road	Edge of road	Clarity and Cohesion	



Coastal Access - South Hayling Island to East Head - Natural England's Proposed Variation to Approved Route

Map VR29b - Bosham

