

Dear Coastal Colleagues,

Our next conference, on Coastal Access, is to be held in June. Whilst we are preparing the programme we thought you would appreciate knowing the date to keep your diary free. Here is a little summary of the conference with booking details to follow in a few weeks:



### **19<sup>th</sup> June, Durham Heritage Coast**

#### **CoastNet Conference: Coastal Access – a step too far, or a far-sighted step?**

**Context:** In September 2007 Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, announced that the Government intends to legislate so that the public will have the right to walk around the English coast for the first time.

In this one-day conference CoastNet will look beyond the detail of the forthcoming Parliamentary process, to explore the scope of possible community benefits that might arise from improved coastal access, and to question how people's legitimate concerns might be taken into account.

**Audience** **The conference will be aimed at coastal planners, land managers, conservation and heritage professionals, and countryside and access professionals.**

**Benefits of access** The benefits of local path networks and of national trails concern physical and mental health, and the extent of the contribution to the local economy through visitor spend. There is an anticipation of these benefits from coastal access, but what needs to be done to ensure that they actually materialise, and are sustainable?

**Content** **Britain's coast is highly regarded for its beauty, and for its diversity, ranging from rugged windswept cliffs to the wide open spaces and hidden creeks of coastal marshes. Therefore, changes to its management and use have to be carefully considered.**

***What is the right balance between accessibility and 'naturalness' to ensure that social and economic benefits are optimised?***

***How can new provisions for coastal access be used to enhance the conservation and enjoyment of this resource, and deliver wider social and economic benefits?***

***The dynamic nature of the coast presents unique management challenges, especially on rapidly eroding coasts. What mechanisms can be used to ensure sustainability of access, and to manage the health and safety implications?***



**We aim to address these questions through expert contributions and through examples from trails and path networks that have successfully met differing social, economic and environmental demands.**

**Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of Natural England, will open the event. We will also have an expert panel to answer questions from the audience in a ‘Question-time’ style format.**

**Venue The conference will be held in Durham. On the following day an optional tour of Durham Heritage coast will be made. This was one of the Natural England coastal access study areas.**

**Call for papers Do you have a good story to tell about your work? We are looking for case studies where an integrated approach to path and trail management has delivered benefits to community, local business, wildlife and users. Case studies may range from strategic initiatives to local action.**

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CoastNet is an independent sustainable development charity, working in the UK, Europe and beyond.

- \* We work with individuals and communities, to promote a just society and to encourage personal responsibility in caring for coastal communities and environments
- \* We provide practical knowledge, to promote excellence amongst those working in coastal policy and practice
- \* We influence policy through multidisciplinary research, to better understand coastal issues and to generate sustainable development solutions

Find out more about CoastNet at [www.coastnet.org.uk](http://www.coastnet.org.uk) and discover coastal news and information at [www.coastweb.info](http://www.coastweb.info)

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