



National Trails Annual Report 2019/20

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NATIONAL TRAILS 



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1 Summary

"The landscape unfolds as you walk and wonder. It deserves to be better known but I fully appreciate the peaceful sense of remoteness."¹

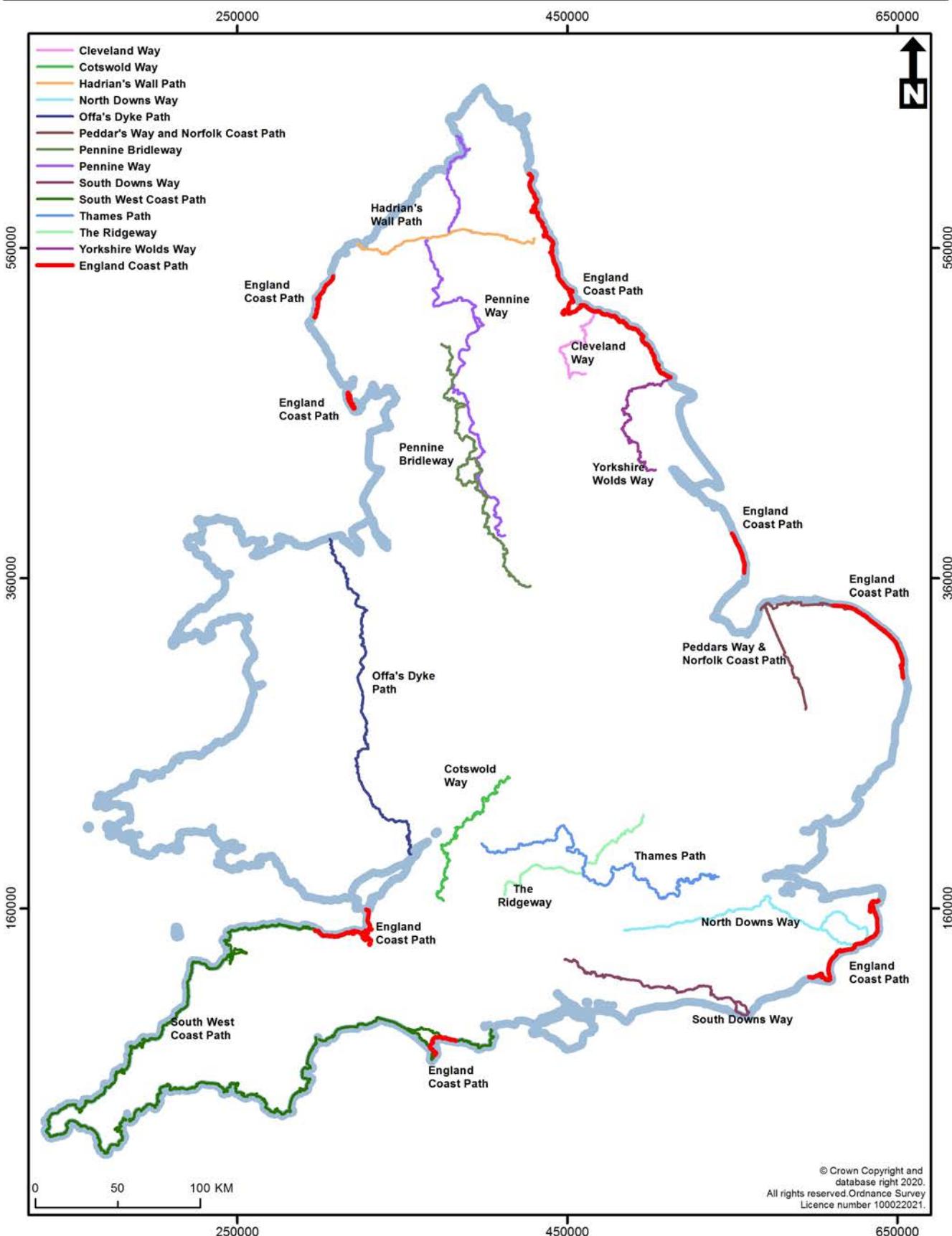
This report provides an overview of what has been achieved by the English National Trails in the 2019/20 financial year based on information supplied to Natural England by individual trails as part of their annual reporting. Although trails receive central government support specifically for maintenance, this is also used to lever in considerable amounts of additional funding to support wider objectives. This report highlights a selection of the successes and achievements across the full range of activities National Trails undertake and contribute to in England.

- The trails were successful in using Natural England core grant to lever in an additional £1.5 million over and above the required half a million match funding.
- The weather made managing the trails a greater challenge than ever during 2019/20. 25 coastal retreat incidents and 5 riverbank collapses were reported.
- Partnership working is key to the practical and financial success of the trails. Trail staff were increasingly involved in fundraising and strategic partnerships.
- Volunteers contributed record amounts of time maintaining, surveying and promoting the trails. For every £1 spent on managing volunteers an average of approximately £4 of work was delivered. On some trails this ratio was considerably higher.



Photo 1 - Trialling surface repair techniques on The Ridgeway in the World Heritage Site. Photographer Sarah Wright.

¹ Comment received in Yorkshire Wolds Way online completion survey



2 What are National Trails?

"I've thought about our time on the Cotswold Way every day since we completed the walk. The grand vistas, the epic hills and monuments - they were all special. But it is the little moments - the people that we met, the meals we shared, the pints we raised, the quiet, the laughs, the rain and the sun - those are what stick with me."²

National Trails are outstanding long-distance routes that provide access to our finest countryside. They are managed to an agreed set of Quality Standards and are waymarked with the distinctive acorn symbol. They include the 13 existing English trails and the newly opened sections of the **England Coast Path**.

One new 16-mile (26 km) section of **England Coast Path** opened in 2019/20 circumnavigating Walney Island in the north west.

3 Funding for National Trails

"They say the best things in life are free - well this is one of them."³

National Trails receive grant funding from Natural England. This is allocated using a nationally agreed formula and the amount (matched at a minimum rate of 3:1 by local authority and local partnership contributions) is provided to help sustain the trails in good condition and provide the basis around which all additional development works take place. The 13 original trails (excluding the **England Coast Path**) use this funding to employ a lead officer who, with support from the trail partnerships, is instrumental in securing this additional funding.

As in previous years the amount of required match funding (£563,000) was far exceeded as result of additional contributions. The trails used Natural England core grant to lever in an additional £1.5 million.



Figure 1 - Breakdown of National Trail funding

² Cotswold Way Hall of Fame member

³ Comment made by Offa's Dyke Path Hall of Fame member

- The **North Downs Way**⁴ was particularly successful in attracting additional funding. The total investment in the trail was £714,000, 12% of this came from Natural England's grant (£83,000) and 82% from external sources (£630,000).
- The **South Downs Way** managed to match Natural England's grant by a ratio of almost 1:3 (instead of the required 3:1). 72% of the trail's total budget came from non Natural England sources. The South Downs National Park contributed £71,000.
- The South West Coast Path Association continues to provide significant financial support to the **South West Coast Path**. In 2019/20 they contributed £3,400 towards a path realignment following a cliff collapse, £5,000 for construction of granite steps, £1,600 for embankment repairs and £3,300 for materials to improve accessibility. They also contributed approximately £100,000 towards 4 schemes delivered jointly with the National Trust, Cornwall and Dorset councils.
- The **Norfolk Coast Path** benefitted from the £16 million Sandscaping project which reinforced beaches with tonnes of sand. Although the aim of the project was to protect Bacton Gas Terminal and 300 properties from coastal flooding, the trail benefitted significantly in terms of flood alleviation.



Photo 2 - Brand new beach creation and replenishment as part of the Sandscaping project on the Norfolk Coast Path.
Photographer Rob Goodliffe.

- Derbyshire County Council contributed to two major schemes on the **Pennine Bridleway** through its Local Transport Plan; £48,500 to fund emergency repairs to the Hopton Tunnel on the High Peak Trail and £36,650 to complete the reinstatement of Monks Road to the Heather Field section to the satisfaction of the landowner.
- The **England Coast Path** between Samphire Hoe and Capel-Le-Ferne in Kent benefitted from a £500,000 Sustrans scheme to improve National Cycle Network Route 2. Access for pedestrians and cyclists was improved, with approximately £83,000 of the total sum spent on the Trail.

⁴ Figures rounded to nearest £1,000

- Cotswold Wardens spent over 600 hours repairing and reinstating a large section of dry stone walling running alongside the **Cotswold Way** at Leckhampton Hill. This was funded by the Wardens Countryside Fund, made up of donations from walks, together with financial support from Cheltenham Borough Council who contributed over £4000 to purchase new stone.



Photo 3 - Dry stone walling and step improvement work by Cotswold Wardens along the National Trail at Leckhampton Hill. Photo credit Cotswold Way National Trail.

Local agreements continue to raise funds for the trails including:

- £3,500 raised by event contributions to support **The Ridgeway**.
- The Spine Race organisers donated £3,000 towards works on the **Pennine Way** at Upper Booth.
- Edale Parish Council contributed £500 from the Parish Footpath Fund for materials to repair Peat Lane on the **Pennine Way**. The work was carried out by volunteers.
- The Offa's Dyke Association Passport Scheme was launched in 2019 with the aim of raising funds for the trail. £2,000 was raised to support **Offa's Dyke Path**.
- **Hadrian's Wall Path** raised over £14,000 through the sale of merchandise and trail passports.

4 Looking after National Trails

"I recently completed the walk and would like to thank those involved in making it a very rewarding experience, and making sure the path was well signposted., especially through Guisborough Forest, and well maintained."⁵

To improve the consistency of condition reporting in 2019/20, the trail managers agreed a set of definitions using a 5-point scale:

- 1 Perfect condition
- 2 Not perfect – may aspire to improve in the future
- 3 Not to Trail Quality Standards - replace/repair logged
- 4 Unusable, broken or misleading - replace as soon as possible
- 5 Dangerous/urgent need to close path or replace immediately.

Items falling into categories 3-5 are reported to Natural England as Out of Condition.

Item	Total number	Number out of condition	% out of condition
Stiles	813	93	11%
Gates	3,879	326	8%
Bridges	933	86	9%
Fingerposts	8,049	1,238	15%
Steps (flights of 10 or more steps)	2,221	326	15%

Figure 2 – Out of condition items on all National Trails

- As the method of reporting has changed it is not possible to directly compare these figures with previous years, however they are similar, for example the percentage of gates out of condition has varied between 7-9% over the past 6 years, stiles between 9-12%.
- 2,036 (92%) of the longer flights of steps reported to us are on the **South West Coast Path**.

It can be difficult to grasp the scale of the work required to maintain the National Trails. The length of paths needing to be cared for mean the task is huge. In 2019/20, 2,623 km of soft vegetation was cut and 6.4 km of scrub was cleared. This is equivalent to the distance between Land's End and John O'Groats - and back.

On just one trail, the **Pennine Bridleway**, 231 cross drains were cleared, 6.2 km of side drains were cleared, 4.5 km of trail surface was improved and 35 items of furniture were repaired or replaced.

The wet winter with unusually high numbers of significant storms resulted in 25 coastal retreat incidents and 5 riverbank collapses.

⁵ Comment from customer making a donation to the Cleveland Way through the Trails Shop

- On the **Cleveland Way** at Sutton Bank a considerable section of the White Horse Path was excavated back to its original width and top dressed. The work was carried out with the help of the National Park volunteers.
- On the **Cleveland Way** at Great Ayton Moor 150 m of badly eroded path was repaired. This task was complicated by the site having difficult access and additional consents were required due to its protected status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Scheduled Monument (SM). This is the first part of a larger project.
- On the **Cotswold Way** significant improvements have been made to the path surface at Shiners Wood near Bath. The work was carried out in partnership with Bath and North East Somerset Council.



Photos 4 & 5 - Before and after photos of work on Cotswold Way at Shiners Wood. Photographer Peter Clements.

- Several projects were delivered on the **England Coast Path** Camber to Ramsgate section including removal of shingle from approximately 3.5 km of coast path. The shingle was deposited on the path during a storm, impeding access for cyclists and wheelchair users.
- A long-standing illegal obstruction of the **Yorkshire Wolds Way** at Knapton Plantation was resolved. North Yorkshire County Council officers served legal notices and ultimately removed a caravan and charged the owner for its recovery.
- The **Thames Path** is working on improving waymarking in London, supported by the Thames Path National Trail Tidal Group and Abundance London. To date Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth have been rewaymarked. Discussions are also ongoing to improve the alignment of the route in places to bring it closer to the river.

- Recycled boardwalks have been installed at Pangbourne on the **Thames Path** to improve access. These improvements are more expensive than traditional timber boardwalks but are the most sustainable solution for improving access in wet areas such as water meadows.
- 180 individual maintenance issues were successfully resolved on the **South Downs Way**. In addition, 2 road crossings were improved. The work included clearing vegetation to improve sight lines, new highway signage, new larger safe waiting areas on either side of the road, new surfaced link paths and a new coloured anti-skid road surface.
- **The Ridgeway** is working to reduce damage caused by off-road vehicles. A new scheme that trialled traffic free areas and a Traffic Regulation Order in the World Heritage Site has been well received and compliance is good.

5 Accessibility

"Of all the walks this was the most surprising in that I thought I wouldn't like it, but I loved it in the end. I found myself on a beautifully surfaced path, which would be particularly lovely to disabled folk in a wild nature area. The walking either side of St Margarets at Cliffe is delightful, where there are also excellent facilities, there are good transport links and a wealth of things to see and do around Dover at the end of the walk."⁶

- The National Trails have been improving access for many years. The overall number of stiles has decreased by 42% since 2013 (from 1,411 in 2013 to 813 in 2019/20). The number of gates has only increased by 150 over the same period, suggesting that many stiles have been removed and have not been replaced by gates, thus creating more gaps.
- The **Yorkshire Wolds Way** was one of the first trails to remove all stiles and continues to make improvements to accessibility. In 2019/20, one of the trail's Easy Access Routes was reviewed with the assistance of a wheelchair user. In addition, 2 kissing gates near West Heslerton were converted to standard self-closing gates to improve accessibility.
- Work to improve the surface of the main section of the Runswick Bay Easy Access path on the **Cleveland Way** was completed in 19/20. **Cleveland Way** volunteers assisted in this work.
- The **Pennine Way** has introduced a proactive approach to improving accessibility. They have added a question about accessibility to their grant application and annual report form to encourage partners to think more about this area of work.
- An access for all route based around the **Cotswold Way** at Leckhampton has been established by the Cotswold Wardens in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council. A downloadable walk leaflet has been created. Additional routes will be developed in the future.
- The **South Downs Way** team resurfaced a section and removed an awkward step on the trail on Old Winchester Hill. The removal of this step and the covering of tree root steps has made this whole section accessible on an off-road disability scooter for the first time.
- Several trails have succeeded in replacing stiles with more accessible alternatives including the **Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path**, the **South West Coast Path**, **Offa's Dyke Path** and the **Pennine Way**.

⁶ Volunteer feedback on the England Coast Path circular walks in Kent



Photos 6 & 7 - Before and after images of the last stile removed from the Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path National Trail. Photo credit Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path National Trail.

- The **Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path** is working to improve accessibility. The final stile was removed during the summer. The Trail Partnership supported a series of access improvements in 2019/20.

The **England Coast Path** continues to deliver accessibility improvements:

- On the Camber to Ramsgate section, 230m path surfacing and accessibility improvements, including a new 8.5m bridge, were completed at Palmarsh (near Hythe). The work has been well received as it has created a durable year-round coast path surface.
- The newly opened Skegness section has improved access for all to the North Sea Observatory at Chapel St Leonards by constructing a new section of concrete walkway. This has been well received by many including wheelchair and mobility aid users as well as those with pushchairs/buggies.
- On the Minehead to Brean Down section, the picnic area and path from Chantry Down to Kilve Pill has been resurfaced and widened to make it easier for wheelchair access.



Photo 8 - Picnic area access surface improvements at Kilve Pill on the England Coast Path.
Photographer: Andy Coleman, Quantock & Exmoor Ltd.

6 Partnerships

"The sheer variety of scenery over the whole trail together with the people I met along the way made it very enjoyable and a great memory."⁷

All of the trails approved prior to the development of the **England Coast Path** have fully functioning partnerships, some of which are expanding to cover open sections of the **England Coast Path**. In addition, many trails play active roles in wider partnerships.

- Work continues to form new partnerships for the England Coast Path. Staff working on the Camber to Ramsgate section are working to establish a Trail Partnership for the London to Brighton stretch. They are also liaising with the South Downs Way, South Downs National Park, North Downs Way and Thames Path, providing opportunities to share best practice and discuss the management of the National Trails.
- The **Ridgeway** Trail Partnership aims to be innovative and ambitious. With the aim of engaging a new audience, the Partnership decided to hold an annual forum on a weekend and adopted an atypical theme of 'Creative Ridgeway'. Attendees and speakers were all new contacts and the outcomes stand the Partnership in good stead for future creative projects.
- The **England Coast Path** Camber to Ramsgate team worked in partnership with Explore Kent to produce high quality walking guides highlighting attractions and amenities along the coast. In addition, a partnership with the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway to highlight the available transport connections along the railway opened up large sections of the coast, enabling users to complete linear walks and return to their starting part using the train line.
- The **North Downs Way** worked closely with National Trust Estates in Surrey to resolve issues around the 'stepping stones' and steps to the popular Box Hill sites. This led to wider conversations regarding linking up National Trust estates with sites managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust to enhance the visitor experience and make the linear route more coherent.
- The **Thames Path** Trail Officer sits on a number of partnerships including the Port of London Authority (PLA) People and Places and PLA Sports and Recreation groups. He has applied to sit on the committee for the Upper Thames Trust.
- 2019 saw the 50th anniversary of the **Cotswold Way**, which provided good opportunities for partnership working. A working group was established with the Trails Officer, Conservation Board staff, Voluntary Wardens, Cotswold Way Association, Ramblers and Cotswold Trails and Access Partnership representatives to pull together plans for events, fundraising and corporate partnerships with John Lewis and Robert Welch.

Many trails entered into fundraising partnerships:

- **Hadrian's Wall Path**, in partnership with the National Trust, submitted a large application to the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative Fund for improvements to the trail within the National Park.
- The **Pennine Way** is working closely with a number of Landscape Partnership Projects including 'Revitalising Redesdale', 'Fell Foot Forward' in the North Pennines and the Tees-Swale project which is still under development.

⁷ Pennine Way – Visitor Satisfaction survey response

- The **South West Coast Path**, in partnership with the National Trust, Cornwall Council and Dorset Council, secured more than £500,000 to deliver 4 schemes totalling approximately £750,000 (with the SWCPA allocating approximately £100,000).

7 Volunteer data

“Thanks to those maintaining the trail, superbly signposted, I don’t think we put a foot wrong, well maybe after the occasional pint.”⁸

The role of volunteers on National Trails continues to grow in importance. Many of the trails have dedicated groups of highly trained and experienced volunteers who carry out tasks ranging from surveying to major path improvement works.

A number of the trails (which now include new sections of the **England Coast Path**) are collating information in a way that allows Natural England to carry out a Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) on their behalf. The overall figures from the 11 trails that recorded information showed that for every pound spent on supporting volunteering activities an equivalent financial return of approximately £4 was generated. Individual returns varied significantly though and on the **Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path** for every pound invested by trail managers an equivalent financial return of £13 was generated! Information from the **Cotswold Way** showed similarly impressive returns from their investment in volunteer activities, generating a figure of £9.46 for every pound they spent on this area of their work. In 2019/20 a record breaking 48,613 hours were worked by the Cotswold Wardens.

Hadrian's Wall Path Volunteer Days (recorded)

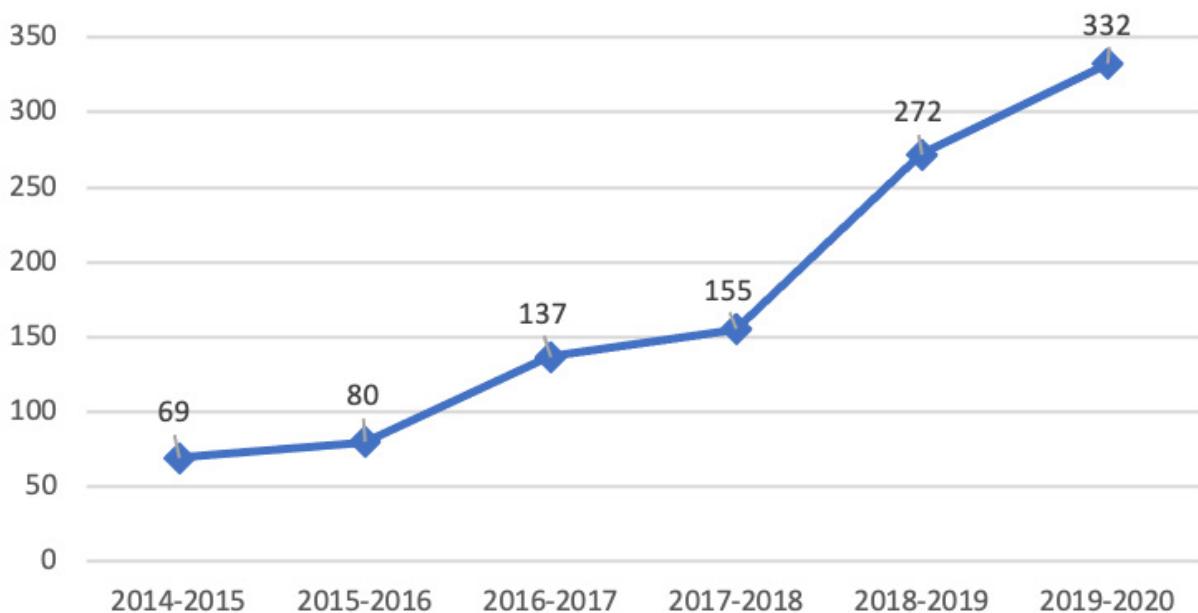


Figure 3 - Graph created by Hadrian's Wall Path team to show increase in volunteer days

⁸ Offa's Dyke Path Hall of Fame member

Hadrian's Wall Path has been involving volunteers for many years. 2019/20 saw the greatest number of volunteer days recorded to date – 332 days. Volunteers contribute in many ways including education, surveying, litter clearance and maintenance. In recognition of the vital role of volunteers, Northumberland National Park holds annual meetings between volunteers and staff and have issued new clothing and information packs to all volunteers. The trail also works with school placements and young ranger placements.

On other trails volunteer roles included:

- On the **England Coast Path** Camber to Ramsgate section volunteers ground-tested a series of new walking guides. Others completed survey and minor maintenance tasks.
- The **North Downs Way** created an online web portal and training materials for trail volunteers. They recorded 1,000 hours of volunteer time contributing £10,000 to the trail.⁹
- 98 volunteer days were spent on the **Pennine Bridleway** in Derbyshire. The tasks included drain clearance, gate repairs and replacements, fencing and signage.
- 258 days of volunteer time were spent on the **Pennine Way** carrying out a variety of tasks.
- Each section of the **South Downs Way** has its own volunteer lengthsman who carries out monthly trail inspections. Volunteers also carry out much of the trail maintenance work – a total of 420 days of volunteer time were recorded.
- The **South West Coast Path** relies on volunteers for annual infrastructure surveys and the condition survey. In addition, they have 3 retired planning officers who provide support advising on planning issues that impact on the trail, and 9 volunteer trustees.
- The **Thames Path** has a social media volunteer. Trail volunteers improved an area of riverbank included scrub clearance, willow pollarding and the planting of a new species-rich hedge.



Photo 9 - Volunteer on Hadrian's Wall Path. Photo credit Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail.

⁹ Using Heritage Lottery Fund volunteer valuations

8 Protecting landscapes

"Beautiful chalkland valleys, quiet most of the time, excellent views, would recommend to anyone."¹⁰

84% of the length of the National Trails lies within national or international designations for landscape and nature conservation. The trails are increasingly involved with innovative partnership projects that protect and enhance these important sites.

- The **North Downs Way** team helped 'No Mans Orchard' secure funding to manage an avenue of poplar trees that had become unstable. The trail team also worked on a similar project in the Old Wives Lees section of trail with a private landowner.
- The **Pennine Way** team worked with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and a community youth group from Fife to repair 30m of riverbank in Malham using a soft landscaping technique called 'willow spiling'.



Photo 10 - Working with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and a community youth group from Fife. Photographer Jo Boulter.

- The **South Downs Way** team are continuing meadow management at Itford Farm. They also have 2 new projects: 'Trees for the Downs' which is planting disease-resistant elms back in the landscape and BeeLines which is working to improve pollinator corridors across the National Park.

¹⁰ Yorkshire Wolds Way survey response

- A new tunnel in the White Cliffs of Dover was opened giving access to Langdon Bay. This is believed to be the first hand-dug tunnel at the White Cliffs of Dover in decades. The site carries significant historic interest, including coastguard stations and light emplacements within the cliff face, but public access was lost in 2013 following a significant cliff fall event. The restoration of this link is therefore a significant achievement and a welcome addition to the **England Coast Path** Camber to Ramsgate section.

9 Promoting National Trails

"This website is excellent. With the Wolds Way A-Z map book, and the facilities here, I have almost completed booking our accommodation and it's the easiest long-distance walk - planning-wise - I've ever organised. Thanks! And a big 'Well Done' to all concerned."¹¹

The trails have engaged with the new National Trail website, but many of them have found that social media is more successful for promotion and engagement with their visitors and prospective visitors.

National Trail	Length		Website sessions 2018/19	Website sessions 2019/20	Change from previous year
	Miles	Km			
Cleveland Way	109	175	103,747	105,292	+1.5%
Cotswold Way	102	164	250,876	239,411	-4.6%
England Coast Path	318	512	82,963	108,514	+30.1%
Hadrian's Wall Path	84	135	182,730	152,886	-16.3%
Norfolk Coast Path	78	126	94,382	92,341	-2.2%
Peddars Way	49	79			
North Downs Way	153	246	84,385	81,975	-2.9%
Offa's Dyke Path	177	285	118,332	117,369	-0.8%
Pennine Bridleway	205	330	41,193	40,718	-1.2%
Pennine Way	268	429	187,632	165,692	-11.7%
South Downs Way	100	160	270,399	263,733	-2.5%
South West Coast Path	630	1,014	61,230	56,797	-7.2%
Thames Path	184	294	191,452	193,538	+1.1%
The Ridgeway	87	139	160,777	152,030	-5.4%
Yorkshire Wolds Way	79	127	66,212	47,988	-27.5%

Figure 4 - National Trail website statistics

Overall, the number of sessions on the website are down by 2.8% on the previous year. There are a number of reasons for this. COVID had an impact at the start of 2020, with sessions in February down 17% and March down 40%. In addition, this year saw many changes to the website, as the site was merged with the newer DEF funded project site. These changes meant some sessions which would have been recorded on the old site were now carried out on the new site and have

¹¹ Comment sent by email to the National Trail website

not been included in the figures above.

Figures for the **Cleveland Way** show an increase, as expected, given the excellent promotion around their 50th anniversary celebrations. The **Thames Path** also showed an increase, possibly as a result of Tony Robinson's 4-part TV mini-series walking the trail.

The **South West Coast Path** has its own website which recorded 1,118,127 sessions. After the UK, the highest proportion of website visits were from the USA, Germany, and the Netherlands.

The **Cotswold Way** has its own website and recorded 178,000 users. They have set up a new 'lost and found' service on the site and successfully located the owner of a mobile phone that had been lost on the trail.

This year saw the 50th anniversary of the **Cleveland Way** – the second National Trail to be designated. The celebrations were wide-ranging and included an event in Helmsley for 100 invited guests including staff and former staff and landowners, some dressed in the style of the 1960's. A film of the **Cleveland Way** was made by students of Teesside University. HRH The Princess Royal unveiled a plaque at an event at Saltburn. An artist, Debbie Loan, was appointed and produced an outstanding exhibition. The highlight for many was seeing Natural England's Hazel Thomas speak about the trail and her faith on Songs of Praise. The celebrations were well covered by regional and national press.



Photo 11 (left) - Visit of HRH The Princess Royal to the Cleveland Way. Photographer Dave Charnley with permission of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council. Photo 12 (right) - 50th anniversary celebrations on the Cleveland Way. Photographer Charlotte Graham.

- **Hadrian's Wall Path** continued to build a social media presence – their Twitter audience grew to 5,228 in 2019/20 and the Instagram account increased by 486 followers.
- 8,000 copies of the **Norfolk Coast Path** Coastal Treasures book were given away free. The books featured new, improved, circular walks based on the trail. The annual walking festival was also centred around the book.
- **The Ridgeway** Trail Officer engaged with a variety of social media platforms including Flickr, Instagram and YouTube as well as Twitter and Facebook. A virtual walk from Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon proved particularly popular.
- **The Ridgeway** team also worked with Experience Oxfordshire to produce a double page spread about **The Ridgeway** for their 2020 brochure.
- A new leaflet was created for the **Thames Path**, sponsored by the River Thames Society. Over 1000 leaflets were downloaded in the first month of it appearing on the website.

- A 4-part mini-series featuring Tony Robinson walking the **Thames Path** was shown on Channel 5. It was watched by 3 million viewers, plus 3 million on the repeats, giving it the highest viewing figures for that night. Due to the success of the mini-series the production company are planning on returning to film along the Thames.
- The **Thames Path** team worked with a social media company and were successful in increasing their reach and brand awareness.
- The **Cleveland Way** and **Yorkshire Wolds Way** Officer organised the Yorkshire and Tees Valley stand at the two Fiets and Wandelbeurs Exhibitions in Ghent and Utrecht, which resulted in around 70 new contacts and many information guides being sent out.
- The **England Coast Path** Minehead to Brean Coast Path team produced a series of Storywalks which provide smartphone users with access to social and natural history information based around circular walks. The team also ran family engagement days and a Family Coast Ranger programme.



Photo 13 - Image from Minehead Storywalks website <https://minehead.storywalks.info/>

10 Looking ahead

"The storyline to our ride is one of total satisfaction with the vast diversity of terrain and scenery along the Way. In planning the ride, we were most grateful for the Streetview imaging available as that convinced us this was a ride worth doing."¹²

Whilst 19/20 will undoubtedly be another extremely busy year for National Trails, at the time of writing the impact of Covid 19 was being felt across the country. Whilst we don't yet know the full implications of this in relation to the quality standards, we will be able to report fully on this in our next report and also on the work that has been carried out to further develop the National Trail Alliance.

As the **England Coast Path** takes its place alongside the 13 established trails in England, we will continue to report on the many benefits this brings to the nation and the support being provided for **England Coast Path** managers to form new management partnerships.

In Sept 2019 the independent review into our protected landscapes (the Glover Report) was published and next year's report will provide more detail on how trail partnerships have come together and responded to a number of its proposals. This includes Proposal 15 which advocates joining up with others to make the most of what we have and bringing the National Trails into the national landscape family.

Finally, we will continue to provide details of how National Trails not only provide opportunities to sustain and improve our health and wellbeing but also continue to provide us with some of the finest long-distance walking, cycling and riding routes in the world.



Photo 14 - Grassland management on Hadrian's Wall Path. Photographer Gary Pickles.

¹² Received by North Downs Way National Trail Officer by email



Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

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