

10km/6 miles **Approx. 3hrs** **Easy**
WALBERSWICK & DUNWICH CIRCULAR WALK

The area between Dunwich and Walberswick villages offers some of the finest coastal walking in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Add the option of a circular walk, taking in Walberswick National Nature Reserve, and you have the perfect combination!

The walk

START - This walk starts from the village green in the historic village of Walberswick. Stand in front of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Visitor Centre facing the road and turn R.

1. Walk towards the village hall, follow the road as it turns R, then take the footpath L before you reach the Anchor pub. As you leave the village, there are a number of footpath options. Take the R fork, then the L, then turn L again. Don't worry if this section seems a little confusing. Your aim is to end up on the Suffolk Coast Path with the Dunwich River immediately on your left. (look out for the blue and yellow Suffolk Coast Path way-marker discs). Once on the Suffolk Coast Path, the route is straightforward. You will probably come across areas where reed is being cut for thatch. This commercial use of the Walberswick National Nature Reserve helps to manage the water level in the reed bed for rare wildlife, including bittern and marsh harrier. In spring, listen for the bittern's low booming call - you're far more likely to hear than see one of these secretive birds. Follow the footpath through the marshes towards the disused windpump.

2. GR TM 487737 - Walberswick windpump, in the heart of the reed bed, is a relic of the time when these marshes were drained and farmed. Now a ruin, it provides a useful landmark in this wonderful marshland landscape. Continue along the Suffolk Coast path, keeping a look out for marsh harriers, which fly low over the reeds with their wings held in a shallow 'V'. Soon, you pass through two stock fences and then follow the edge of Dunwich Forest.



Walberswick windpump



Walberswick Green

3. GR TM 474708 - When the road is reached at Bridge Farm, on the outskirts of Dunwich, turn L. There are plenty of places to get refreshments in Dunwich village - once the largest medieval town in East Anglia before coastal erosion took hold and much of it was lost to the sea. Follow the road as it turns L into the car park next to the Flora Tea Room, then walk back along the beach to Walberswick. The top of the shingle bank provides the best views over the marshes, but keep close to the sea where it is sandier for an easier walk.

4. GR TM 486726 - In recent winters, the sea has broken through the shingle bank and flooded the freshwater marshes, with potentially disastrous consequences for the wildlife that depends on the area. In the longer term it may be impossible to protect these important coastal marshlands from the sea, and the search is already on for new sites to replace what may be lost. If you are planning to walk this route in the winter, it is worth checking whether the route is passable before you set off.

DETAILS
Country England
Region East Anglia
Nearest Town Walberswick
Length of Walk 10km/6miles
Time Needed 3 hours
Difficulty Easy

SUITABILITY
Terrain Coastal marshes may be muddy/flooded in winter and the beach can occasionally be breached by storms or very high tides. Otherwise, well drained footpaths and bridleways. Short stretch of road walking.
Steps none
Stiles not known

START/FINISH
Start/Finish Walberswick Visitor Centre on the village green
Start/Finish GR TM 498748
Parking Car Parks in village
Refreshments Cafés/pubs in Walberswick & Dunwich
Public Toilets Walberswick & Dunwich

GETTING THERE
By Train Darsham
By Bus Bookable 'Coastlink' bus service connects to Darsham railway station, Tel: 01728 833526
By Car Walberswick is approximately 5km from the A12, just south of Blythburgh

MAPS
Ordnance Survey OS Explorer 231

