



Along the Coast

Dorset boasts one of the most beautiful and important coastlines in the world. This is a dynamic environment, constantly evolving and also under pressure. It is vital that we understand how the coast works and how it is changing so we can plan for a more sustainable future for coastal communities and environments.

A few facts

Dorset coast

The Dorset coast is part of the Dorset & East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, popularly known as the Jurassic Coast. Designated in 2001, it warrants this status because the cliffs and foreshore consist of rock layers that uniquely represent 185 million years of the earth's history. It contains a complete record through the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods of geological time. This varied geology has produced stunning headlands, bays and beaches, each with their own unique character.

Jurassic Coast

The World Heritage site team have set up a wide ranging high quality work programme along the Jurassic Coast including action for conservation, education, tourism, art and accessibility often in collaboration with or lead by local communities.

Litter

The presence of litter such as plastic bottles, crisp wrappers and fishing related debris on beaches and at sea is unattractive, has health and economic impacts on local communities, and is potentially harmful to marine wildlife. The Great Dorset Beach Clean in 2003 collected a massive 5 tons of litter from just 24 beaches. Plastic bags can take up to 20 years to decompose, cigarette butts up to 5 years and fishing line up to 600 years!

Marine reserves

Dolphins and other marine mammals are regular visitors to Dorset. There are important marine nature areas along the coast including a voluntary marine reserve. Dorset coast and harbours play internationally significant areas of seagrass beds, mud flats and maerl beds as well as important inshore and shell fisheries.

Congestion

Visitors arriving at the coast in cars can have a big impact on communities – pollution, congestion and ugly facilities. While this issue tends to be seasonal, there are lots of public transport opportunities which are underused and could be promoted more.

Health

The coast is good for your health! Over 1 million people walk part of the 95 miles of South West Coast Path National Trail in Dorset each year, while Dorset's 50 beaches offer a place to relax and enjoy the fresh air.

What you can do

• Think long term

It is important that your Parish or Community Plan considers the special issues that come with living on the coast. More than any other part of Dorset, the coast has always been dynamic and is constantly changing. Climate change is likely to increase sea level rise and coastal erosion. The challenge for coastal communities is to think long term and consider how to adapt to the changes that will take place.

Feed your local views into strategic plans being developed for the coast – perhaps the most significant being Shoreline Management Plans. These plans provide a large scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal processes and present a policy framework to manage these risks in a sustainable way. See how the existing Shoreline Management Plan relates to your community, but

also consider how you can get involved when the plan is revised.

Who can help: District / Borough Councils for information about Shoreline Management Plans, Dorset Coast Forum for general information about coastal management.



• Help visitors to keep your area special

The Dorset coast attracts many visitors who come to enjoy the beautiful scenery we are so lucky to have on our doorsteps. Tourism underpins our local economy and the facilities provided for visitors can often provide services for local people too. As coastal towns and parishes, it is worth considering the quality of what is being provided and how things could be improved. By making sure that people know how to get to places safely, what facilities are available and also ensuring that our local pride in our environment is clearly visible, we can encourage people to respect and support the area on their visit.

- See what information is currently available for visitors to direct them to places of interest, keep them safe and highlight local facilities they could use. How welcoming is the information? Does it give a sense of

local pride and distinctiveness? You may find a clutter of unsightly signs that needs improving.

- Encourage local tourism businesses to sign up to the Green Tourism Business Scheme to reduce their impact on the local environment.

Who can help: Improving local information – World Heritage Team, Sign clutter – Dorset AONB Team. Green Tourism Business Scheme – Dorset & New Forest Tourism Partnership



Courtesy of Devon County Council

• Keep track of changes

Dorset has some of the fastest moving areas of coastline in the world. Monitoring how the coast changes can provide valuable information that helps us to understand how the coast works and how we should be managing it.

Your local knowledge and observations are valuable. If you notice cliff falls or unusual changes in beach profile, report these to the

• Enhance the coastal corridor

A number of organisations in Dorset, including the AONB Team, Dorset Countryside Ranger Service, Dorset Coast Forum and World Heritage Team, are working together to enhance the coastal corridor – an area about one mile either side of the cliff top. This includes management of the South West Coast Path National Trail in Dorset, but also focuses on the land and facilities around it. This is a key area where coastal communities can play an active role in identifying issues and opportunities to enhance the corridor.

- Think about any environmental enhancements needed in the coastal corridor – perhaps a

• Clean up your coastline

Organising regular litter picking on your local beach can send a positive message that discourages people from leaving litter behind. The Marine Conservation Society have an 'adopt a beach' scheme which encourages groups to record litter levels in spring, summer, autumn and winter so they can track sources and campaign for waste reduction. The local Coastlink Centres may already organise regular clean ups on your beach which you can join in with like the annual Dorset Beach Clean or get advice on doing one on your beach. The National Trust also organise clean ups on NT owned beaches.

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World Heritage Team whose geologists can investigate them further. The AONB Team is keen to work with local communities to establish sites for fixed-point photography, to record change over time in a very visual way.

Who can help: World Heritage Team for reporting change, Dorset AONB Team for fixed-point photography

al corridor

heritage feature that needs careful management or restoration, or an eyesore that could be removed.

- Consider whether access could be improved – perhaps by better links between the coast path and other local footpaths, improvements to signage or gates or a co-ordinated scheme for a beach, car park or access point.

Further information: Dorset AONB Team



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Who can help: Coastlink Centres, National Trust

Further information: Marine Conservation Society
See Things to be aware of section overleaf.



• Record things of value

Coastal areas and communities can change a great deal over time and valuable parts of our coastal heritage can easily be lost – it is important to record what we know and look out for signs of new finds.

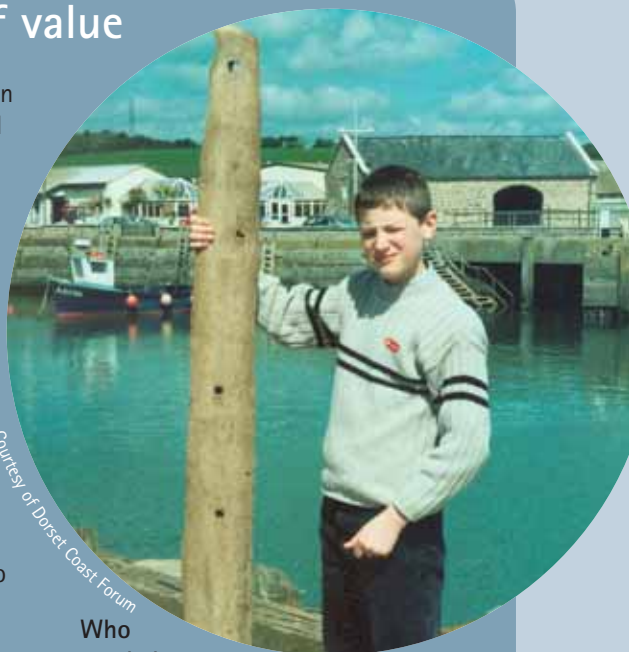
Watching wildlife: Recording wildlife such as dolphins and birds (both alive and dead) provides key information for organisations to guide action to help improve the coastal and marine environment if needed. Training is available if you want to become more involved.

Who can help: Durlston Marine Project for advice in joining in with existing groups or setting up own.

Ships timbers: Recording of ships timbers or other interesting artefacts that are washed up on our beaches can mean that we have a better picture of the history of our seas. It's easy and fun to do.

Who can help: Factsheet from the Dorset Coast Forum

Diving for a purpose: If you are a diver or know of divers in your community, consider adopting a wreck in your local area. Information on wrecks and wildlife is currently being gathered.



Courtesy of Dorset Coast Forum

Who can help: Nautical Archaeological Society have a recording system for wreck recording, Seasearch for marine wildlife.

Telling tales: Capture life in your parish by recording interviews with fishermen, lifeboat crews and long term residents.

Who can help: The Historic Environment Team at Dorset County Council can advise and Dorset History Centre will archive recordings.

See Things to be aware of section overleaf.

• Celebrate the coast

The coastline is one of Dorset's most inspiring areas and there's a great deal to celebrate. A number of communities and organisations already hold events to celebrate particular aspects of the coastline – such as the Fossil Festival in Lyme Regis. This can be a great way of bringing all the community together. The World Heritage Team has an arts strategy and an education programme that could provide ideas and opportunities to help you develop something in your parish.

Who can help: World Heritage Team



Who can help

Coastlink Centres

Charmouth Heritage Centre: 01297 560772
Chesil Beach and the Fleet Nature Reserve: 01305760579
Durlston Marine Project, Swanage: 01929 421111
Lulworth Cove Heritage Centre: 01929 400587
Fine Foundation Marine Centre, Kimmeridge: 01929 481044
Studland Study Centre: 01929 480609
Hengistbury Head, Christchurch: 01202 420909

Dorset AONB

Sue Mitchell on 01305 756783
susan.mitchell@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Dorset Coast Forum

Bridget Betts / Tony Flux 01305 224760
www.dorsetcoast.com

Dorset County Council

Historic Environment Team
Claire Pinder, Senior Archaeologist
01305 224921

Dorset History Centre

01305 250550
www.dorsetforyou.com

Durlston Marine Project

01929 421111
www.durlstonmarineproject.co.uk

Green Tourism Business Scheme

c/ o Dorset & New Forest Tourism Partnership
Theresa Salmon 01202 451151
dnftp@bournemouth.gov.uk

Marine Conservation Society,

FREEPOST HR391, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5ZZ
www.adoptabeach.org.uk

Nautical Archaeological Society (NAS)

www.nasportsmouth.org.uk/wreckrecordwreckinfo or 023 92818419

National Trust

Emma Wright, Visitor Services and Enterprise Manager
01929 450 259
Emma.Wright@nationaltrust.org.uk

Seasearch

www.seasearch.org.uk

World Site Heritage Team

01305 225101
www.jurassiccoast.com

Shoreline Management Plans....

See www.dorsetforyou.com

- **Bournemouth Borough Council**
www.bournemouth.gov.uk 01202 451451
- **Christchurch Borough Council**
01202 495081 coast.protection@christchurch.gov.uk

- **Purbeck District Council**
01929 556561
- **West Dorset District Council**
Technical Services Division
Peter Sunderland – 01305 252463
- **Weymouth & Portland Borough Council**
www.weymouth.gov.uk 01305 838000

Things to be aware of

Beach Cleaning: There are important health & safety issues related to the coast and carrying out practical activities there. Never work on the beach without full knowledge of the tides. Beware of hazardous materials such as chemical waste or needles – don't touch anything you're not sure of and always wear gloves. Lifting heavy bags and working alone can also be a risk.

Watching wildlife: Care is needed if watching for dolphins near a cliff edge. If a dead marine mammal is found then it is important not to go to close as they can potentially carry disease.

Ships timbers: Be careful if handling washed up artefacts – timbers may contain sharp and rusty nails.

Diving for a purpose: Diving has its own set of risks and rules. Always ensure you follow safety guidelines when diving and never dive alone.

Telling tales: There are guidelines for conducting oral history studies concerning people's rights and privacy – seek advice before you start.

Find out if there are any schemes that are already in existence before starting one up.

Further information

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Interesting pages on marine wildlife on:
www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset/marine/issues
01305 264620

Jurassic Coast

Very useful website with local information, strategies and good links
www.jurassiccoast.com

Useful Contacts

Emergency services – Coastguard

Dial 999

Pollution incidents

Environment Agency Pollution Hotline – 0800 807060

Oiled birds

RSPCA Hotline – 08705 555999

Stranded marine mammals

British Divers Marine Life Rescue – 01634 281680 or 01825 765546



Along the Coast

Dorset boasts one of the most beautiful and historic coastlines in the world. The coast deserves to be a source of local pride that we need to understand and care for so that we can hand it on to future generations to enjoy.

Ideas for Action

Go Jurassic

The Dorset coastline is part of the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site (aka Jurassic Coast) and plans are afoot to actively conserve, educate and celebrate the coast. There are plenty of opportunities for local people to help enact these plans.

Beach cleaning

Beach cleaning is vital to wildlife and to the local economy too. Litter on beaches comes from lots of different places but can be dangerous to marine wildlife and people ... and put people off visiting.

Watch and record

Watching & recording wildlife (dead or alive) provides a good indicator of health of the coastline and whether conservation work is needed.

Timbers & wrecks

Recording information about ships timbers gives a really useful insight into what wrecks lie out to sea. Divers are also encouraged to record any sightings of wrecks so that their histories can be pieced together.

Sustainable Tourism

'Green' visits to the coast will benefit your local community enormously. Looking at ways to help visitors use their car less, walk more, shop locally and recycle waste will help cut down on congestion and litter and help keep small businesses alive.

Think big

Strategic, long term plans such as the Shoreline Management Plans cover the coastline throughout Dorset and should be as relevant to your community as possible. Think about long term issues such as climate change and coastal erosion and how they might affect your local area and feed your thoughts into parish and strategic plans.

If you want to take up any of these ideas, there's a lot of help available. See over for how to get started.

Case study

Durlston Dolphin Watch

A team of volunteers set up through the Durlston Marine Project has been established since 1988 to observe the number of dolphins passing through Durlston and to look at their different behaviour. There is a hut where volunteers spend varying lengths of time observing dolphins. This information is put onto a large database, used for research and fed into national records.

Durlston is in the process of setting up new Dolphin Watch teams in Poole, Portland and at Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth. If you could spare one hour a week to record dolphin sightings in your local area then please contact Durlston Marine Project: 01929 421111.



Courtesy of Durlston Marine Project



Courtesy of Durlston Marine Project

If you are interested in taking up any of these ideas in your local area, we have more detailed information to help you.

For each topic in this pack, you can request our additional sheets which include more actions, a guide to who can help with advice and support, sources of funding available and things to be aware of before you start. These are all free and updated regularly.

For your free copy, contact the Dorset AONB Office:

01305 756782
dorsetaonb@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk