

For immediate release

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The logo for National Trails UK, featuring the text "NATIONAL TRAILS.UK" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

England's entire coastline opens to the public for the first time with launch of King Charles III England Coast Path.

- **England becomes the first country in the world with a continuous waymarked coastal path**
- **Over 2,700 miles of coastline now accessible to the public, making it the world's longest managed coastal trail**
- **Marks culmination of a 16 year national effort to transform coastal access.**

National Trails UK (NTUK) has today welcomed the official launch of the King Charles III England Coast Path - a transformational milestone that opens up the entirety of England's coastline to the public for the first time.

Stretching more than 2,700 miles, the new National Trail is now the longest managed and waymarked coastal path in the world, connecting some of the country's most iconic landscapes - from rugged cliff tops and sandy beaches to saltmarshes, estuaries and historic seaside towns.

The milestone marks the culmination of more than 16 years of work to transform access to the coast. Over 1,000 miles of new route have been created, alongside new infrastructure including bridges, boardwalks and upgraded paths, opening up areas that were previously inaccessible or difficult to reach.

Delivering the trail required sustained collaboration across organisations and sectors. Expertise from across the National Trail network has played a vital role, including contributions from National Trail Officers and established coastal routes such as the South West Coast Path, Norfolk Coast Path and Cleveland Way - alongside countless partners, land managers and local stakeholders. And while today marks the official opening, as the coastline is forever changing, so is the National Trail. For the first time on a National Trail, the King Charles III England Coast Path includes 'roll back', the provision for the route to be moved inland as the coastline erodes and shifts.

Thanks to this ability to respond to coastal changes, this new trail ensures future generations of people will experience England's coastline, enabling them to connect with nature, heritage and landscape across a diverse range of environments, from estuaries and saltmarshes to headlands and sandy shores.

Polly Martin, Chief Executive of National Trails UK, said:

“This is one of the most significant public access achievements in a generation. The trail is not just about distance; it's about access. It opens up our coastline in a way that simply hasn't existed before, giving millions of people the opportunity to enjoy its beauty, nature, heritage and the wellbeing benefits of being outdoors.

The focus now must be on ensuring our 20 National Trails remain world-class, properly funded and accessible for generations to come.”

Maintaining the King Charles III England Coast Path and all the National Trails, relies on the ongoing work of National Trail officers, Partnership Managers, Public Rights of Way professionals, National Parks, National Landscapes and many others who care for them day in, day out.

Ensuring that the King Charles III England Coast Path and all National Trails remain open, accessible and of the highest quality will depend on continued investment, strong policy support and greater public awareness of the vital role they play.

This is why National Trails UK exists: to champion these Nationally significant routes, support the people behind them, and ensure they continue to deliver benefits for nature, communities and the millions who walk them every year.

Alongside the launch, National Trails UK is highlighting the opportunity to go further, using the new trail as the backbone of a wider, nature-rich corridor through its Coastal Wildbelt programme.

The completion of the King Charles III England Coast Path creates a unique opportunity to establish a connected Coastal Wildbelt – strengthening climate resilience, supporting local economies and connecting more people with nature. Almost 11 million people in England, around one in five, live within 5km of the coast, yet access to and engagement with these environments remains unequal.

Kate Jury, Coastal Wildbelt Programme Manager, added:

“This is a once-in-a-generation moment for our coastline. We can't wait any longer. Our coastline is changing before our eyes. The time for a bold, national initiative that reflects the dynamism of our coast is now. Coastal Wildbelt brings together projects, partners and communities to unlock the full potential of this incredible national asset.

By thinking about the trail as part of a wider coastal corridor, we can ensure that access, nature recovery and community benefit go hand in hand - creating a coastline that works for people and nature long into the future.”

National Trails UK is calling for continued ambition to match the scale of the coast path, ensuring the coastline is not only accessible, but also better protected and delivering greater benefits for communities and nature.

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Notes to Editors

For more information, interview requests and images please contact Kate Conway, Senior Communications Manager, National Trails UK via email at katec@nationaltrails.uk or tel: 07471 127826

About National Trails UK

National Trails UK (NTUK) is dedicated to preserving and promoting the stunning National Trail network across the UK. NTUK believes that everyone should have access to these incredible natural landscapes, regardless of their background or abilities. NTUK is dedicated to strengthening and advocating on behalf of the UK's 20 National Trails, and inspiring everyone to use the this extraordinary network of National Trails.

More info at: nationaltrails.uk