

2

WALK - STRENUOUS
CYCLE - STRENUOUS

THE SEFTON COASTAL PATH

The Sefton Coastal Path at 21 miles (33.6Km) is a journey through a wonderful variety of landscapes with a fascinating history. Sandy beaches, coastal marshes, pine woodlands, heathery heathland and tidal estuaries with invigorating vistas across the Irish Sea to North Wales, Snowdonia and even the Lake District on a clear day.

The Sefton Coastal Path can be walked throughout and most of it is now cycle-friendly. It can easily be completed over a weekend or it can be broken up into individual short routes as summarised below.

STAGE ONE - CROSSENS TO AINSDALE

The route starts at the Crossens roundabout at the north end of Southport and is flanked by the salt marshes of the Ribble; this section is also suitable for cycling.

If Cycling: Set off from the roundabout head up Banks Road, just after Skipton Avenue turn left and travel along the path (NCN62) until you reach Marine Drive. Turn right onto Marine Drive passing the Marshside RSPB reserve, under Southport's wonderful pier and the famous 'Seamark' obelisk that marks the start of the Trans Pennine Trail.

If Walking: Set off from the roundabout along Marine Drive and just past the water treatment centre take the path along the top of the embankment, this is the old secondary sea defence wall and will afford you views of the RSPB reserve on your right. On reaching Marshside Road go straight across and continue along the other embankment with the Hesketh Golf Club on your right. At the end of this embankment turn right along Hesketh Road to rejoin the route along Marine Drive.

The route is signposted from here and continues along the Coastal Road, through the roundabout at Weld Road and a further roundabout at Shore Road, until you reach the footbridge over the railway line at Ainsdale.

If you wish you can start this route at the Eco Centre, Southport's Park and Ride site opposite the start of the Trans Pennine Trail. Just next door to the Eco Centre is the Queens Jubilee Nature Trail which will lead you to the main route at to Shore Road.



Southport Promenade



Southport Pier Tram



continued overleaf

Keypoints

Distance - 21 miles (33.6km)

- 1 Marshside RSPB Reserve
- 2 Southport Pier & Pavilion
- 3 Eco Centre
- 4 Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- 5 Formby Red Squirrel Reserve
- 6 Alt Estuary
- 7 Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'
- 8 Crosby Leisure Centre
- 9 Crosby Lakeside
- 10 Adventure Centre



THE SEFTON COASTAL PATH

STAGE TWO - AINSDALE TO HALL ROAD

At the bridge over the railway there is a path on the left, take this path and follow it around, under the railway arch and onto the Ainsdale Sand Dunes Nature Reserve. On reaching the main path turn left and continue ahead through the pine woods with the railway line on your left. At Fishermans Path turn left to cross Formby Golf Course. **Cyclists must push their bikes along this section.**

Alternatively, if walking, you can turn right here towards the beach; follow the signed route throughout the Dunes until you rejoin the route at the National Trust car park.

After crossing the railway turn right, the railway is now on your right, and continue until you reach Freshfield Railway Station. This is an opportunity to catch the train back to the start if you wish. If carrying on, turn right along Victoria Road until you reach the National Trust property at Formby Point, known for its famous Red Squirrel Reserve; the site of the UK's oldest lifeboat station; magnificent sand dunes and pine woodlands.

Walk or cycle along the main access road until you reach the car park, part way along, on the left is a sandy track. Take this track and where it splits take the left hand route. You may have to push your bike along this section as it gets very sandy. Follow the route along a track past the asparagus fields. On exiting the woodland you will pass through flat fields, it was here that the asparagus was historically grown.

If cycling: Keep going ahead and pass through the car park, turning left onto Lifeboat Road. Continue ahead onto Bushbys Lane until you reach the railway line. Just before the railway line turn right, keep left

onto Andrews Lane and take the path straight ahead to reach a crossroads of paths. At this crossroads go across the small bridge and take the cycle track that bears right. Continue along this track until you reach the main path between the railway line and Altcar Training Camp.

If walking: Instead of going ahead onto Bushbys Lane turn right along St Luke's Church Road passing Cabin Hill nature reserve. At the end of the path turn left until you reach the crossroads of paths (before the railway line) where you turn right to rejoin the route to Hightown.

Both routes emerge onto the access road to the Altcar Training Camp. Continue along the road towards the railway station, turn right in front of the Hightown Hotel and then left into School Road that changes into Blundell Road. At the end of Blundell Road join the path through the dune area that features the site of an old fort and the only shingle beach in Sefton; until you exit the site at the Coast Guard Station on Hall Road.



Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'



STAGE THREE - HALL ROAD TO CROSBY MARINE PARK

The start of this section introduces you to the evocative sculptures of Antony Gormley's 'Another Place' - 100 iron figures stretching along two miles of the beach from the mouth of the Mersey to the River Alt. There are also the magnificent Georgian villas of the 20th century sea captains overlooking Crosby Marine Park and the port of Liverpool, with its towering container cranes, wind turbines and ships from all over the world.

Access the promenade just after the Coast Guard Station and ride or walk the route until it turns inland along the edge of the lake. The Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre (CLAC) is a great place to end your walk or ride, refreshments and toilets are available here. Check their website for opening times.

You can catch the train home or back to the start from Waterloo railway station, just a short distance away on South Road.

