

Home of the week
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SOLICITORS

Philippa
Rudd
Brief-Case



email: pgrudd@cozens-hardy.com

When you want to ramble on

I am a keen Rambler and have heard about "the England Coast Path". Can you tell me more please?

The England Coast Path is a new national trail along all of England's coast. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 placed a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance walking trail around the open coast of England - the England Coast Path - together with public access rights to a wider area of land along the way for people to enjoy.

There will also be new public rights of access to areas of coastal land such as beaches, cliffs and foreshore - in many places for the first time.

My family own a caravan park on cliffs overlooking the beach. How will these proposals affect us? Will the coast path go through caravan parks and camping sites?

If it is not viable to align the trail to the seaward of a caravan site or campsite, it may be aligned through the site instead along an "access strip". Owners and occupiers of affected land can make formal objections, which are considered by an independent "appointed person" - in practice a planning inspector. After the secretary of state has approved a new stretch of the path, any new infrastructure that is needed - such as gates and signs - are installed. Once these preparations are complete, the public will be able to use the new stretch of path by right.

Who will maintain the path?

Some two-thirds of the English coast is served by existing public rights of way. The key responsibility for maintenance will continue to rest with local highway authorities, which also have maintenance powers under the legislation in relation to new sections of the route.

Can you tell me what is happening locally please?

The Norfolk Coastal Path runs from Hunstanton to Sea Palling. Natural England is working on the route from Sea Palling to Hopton-on-Sea and is now looking to propose the route from Hopton-on-Sea to Aldeburgh in Suffolk. Natural England expects to complete work on the England Coast Path in 2020.

Philippa Rudd is head of conveyancing at Cozens-Hardy LLP solicitors, Opie Street, Norwich, NR1 3DP. You can contact her on 01603 625231.

You can tweet @PhilippaRudd If you have a question for Philippa, email caroline.culot@archant.co.uk

This column is not a comprehensive statement of the law and you should always seek legal advice.

