



Spurn Newsletter

WELCOME

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) is embarking on some major development projects at Spurn over the next few years which we hope will bring a brighter future for the people and wildlife that share this important area. Following our consultation event in Easington in the spring, we have been waiting for one of our key projects to get the go ahead before continuing with our consultation work. We are delighted to say that we have had our funding confirmed by E.ON for the new Spurn visitor centre.

We've had some really positive feedback and some concerns. We hope this newsletter will address some of the concerns raised, and get the whole community up to speed on what we are hoping to do. We plan to issue newsletters periodically during this development phase to keep you informed of our progress. We also hope to feedback on questions or comments we receive, and ensure the dialogue between the Trust and local people is maintained.

Introducing Spurn

Spurn National Nature Reserve is a unique and iconic place, internationally renowned for its wildlife and heritage. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust purchased the site fifty-five years ago and since then has looked after the land for wildlife. Conservation work is done according to the management plan agreed with Natural England, the statutory body who ensures that important wildlife sites such as Spurn are managed correctly. A large part of this job has been to warden and protect this fragile and unique site, giving out information to the tens of thousands of visitors who enjoy Spurn's unusual landform, heritage, wildlife and location.



LEE BELL

Visitors to Spurn

Visitors to Spurn often enjoy the area so much they make regular return visits or even settle down locally. YWT is delighted that people visit Spurn but we also have to ensure that the fragile habitats of Spurn are kept safe from unintentional damage. Also, Spurn can be a hazardous place to visit and the Trust works hard to pass on health and safety messages to everyone. The Trust maintains records of visitors and these vary from thirty to seventy thousand visitors each year, depending upon the weather and other factors. The main reasons for our

development work is to better protect the site by ensuring we can cope with both existing numbers of visitors and any increase in the future by reducing impacts on the site and make visiting Spurn safer, more enjoyable and much more informative.

Key Projects

■ The Spurn Visitor Centre

The Trust is working in partnership with E.ON to develop a new visitor centre for Spurn. This is an essential development at Spurn, enabling us to better cater for the needs of visitors, reduce their

Spurn Newsletter

impacts on the nature reserve and to engage with the people visiting the area wishing to view the Humber Gateway Wind Farm. We are painfully aware of the way the coastline is changing and need to act now, consolidating our operations into a central focus to safeguard them, as well as those who work on Spurn (ABP, RNL and the Spurn Bird Observatory), for the future. Our partners are working closely with us on the centre.

We are currently appraising alternative locations, with our working favourite being to the south of the Canal Scrape, just before the entrance to the nature reserve in the Triangle Field. This location will provide views over the Humber and the North Sea and yet will be mostly hidden from Kilnsea behind the scrub and trees in the Canal Scrape Car Park area. The Trust is opting for a low building that will blend in with the local landscape and be more in keeping with the local environment than some of the initial designs submitted by architects. Little scrub habitat will be lost through a development in this area and there will be no impact on the birds of the nearby Special Protection Area.

This is an initial concept from Salt Architects of how the visitor centre may look in the favoured location.

Our design approach began with detailed assessments to avoid impacts



AMY LEWIS

naturally excited about how we can do this for the benefit of all. We have already established a constructive dialogue with Natural England, the Environment Agency, the RSPB, local councillors and the Spurn Bird Observatory Trust as part of this process, so if you have ideas about what you'd like to see happen, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can start to assess what is feasible and needed.

OUR HOPE IS THAT THE VISITOR CENTRE BECOMES THE STARTING POINT FOR ANY VISIT TO SPURN AND KILNSEA

where possible, and then reduce and mitigate any that remain. By locating the building in the Triangle Field, we are avoiding impacts to land covered by Special Protection Area, Special Area for Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest. By restoring grassland habitats and planting scrub habitat we will provide better areas for wildlife than found here currently. We are also designing the building to use the first floor for the main activities allowing the ground floor to cope with flooding from time to time. Our core aim as a Wildlife Trust is to enhance habitats for wildlife benefit, so we are

Given the wide range of people who live in and visit the area, the new visitor centre will need to do a lot of things at the same time. We've asked the architects to provide a classroom, visitor information, a café and shop, YWT offices, public toilets, good car parking and storage for the equipment used to manage the habitats of Spurn. Space for a new ringing laboratory has been offered to the Bird Observatory.

Our hope is that the visitor centre becomes the starting point for any visit to Spurn and Kilnsea, with maps of routes and features to see in the area so that whatever the weather or interest, visitors will be able to have a great stay in the area. This will bring clear benefits to local businesses who cater for the visitor trade. Having the facility to engage with all visitors to Spurn will ensure they enter the nature reserve understanding the fragility and importance of the site and how to minimise the impacts they have on the landscape and its wildlife.



SALT ARCHITECTS

■ **HLF Communities along the Sand**

The Trust has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project to celebrate the heritage of the Spurn area. A large part of this project will be to restore Matthews Lighthouse. The aim will be to make the building weatherproof and a fascinating place for visitors to learn about Spurn’s heritage and we hope to start work soon. We will also be installing new information signs, marked trails and view points over the next couple of years. Andy Mason is the Trust’s new Heritage Officer and he has started running a series of events at Spurn. Check out the Trust’s website www.ywt.org.uk for details of how to get involved.

■ **Access**

A large section of the road down to Spurn Point was washed away during the December 2013 tidal surge. To reinstate this road would only be possible once the beach and dunes have built up and stabilised and even then might be incredibly expensive. We are monitoring the beach height carefully, both to ensure safe access across the beach and to assess whether reconstruction is feasible.

To enable the Trust to continue to manage the site, we received a grant to purchase a large vehicle that will help us manage

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THE CENTRE WILL HAVE
A LOW IMPACT ON THE
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WITH THE ENVIRONMENT
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NEIL ALDRIDGE

Spurn into the future. For example, it will be used to transport materials for the Lighthouse restoration. The vehicle also helps us to allow visitors to visit the Point and we have also been piloting some public safaris. Obviously, running such a vehicle is expensive so we have to charge for these tours. We will not be running a regular shuttle service to limit the impacts on the reserve and its wildlife. Meanwhile, visitors are welcome to walk to the Point, providing close attention is paid to the warning signs which explain when crossing of the wash over area is permitted. A shelter has been provided on the far side of the wash over area should anybody not heed the warnings and need to wait for the tide to subside before returning. We are also exploring whether, in future, we could provide bicycles for those who wish to cycle.



MARGARET HOLLAND

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Consultation feedback
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At our Easington consultation event and subsequently, we have received a range of comments and questions:

■ **Will the new visitor centre impact on the village character of Kilnsea?**

We are working with Salt Architects of Beverley whose design will harmonise with the location, be mostly hidden from the village and therefore will have a minimal impact on the area’s character. We are hopeful the centre will add value to the local village. The centre will have a low impact on the skyline and will be designed to fit in with the environment.

■ **What about flooding?**

This area does occasionally flood, but only on exceptional tides. We are designing the building to withstand flooding with all the main facilities being above flood level.



ANDREW GIBSON

■ Won't our visitor centre scare the birds away?

Our primary starting point for the creation of the centre is to minimise the impacts of visitors on Spurn's wildlife, and as such we will design the building, access arrangements and activities to reduce disturbance to birds. The birds, for which Spurn is designated a Special Protection Area, will not be affected by the building. The site of the building will have minimal effect on the many migrant birds that use the area. Additional planting of bushes and trees will take place around the building and in the Warren area, which should increase the habitat for these birds. To reduce the current impacts, the Trust will be consulting with partners and the local community on the path which runs along the Humber bank down the Canal as the presence of people (and their dogs) here, and adjacent to the Warren, does appear to have an impact on birds using the Humber.

■ Why not use the existing Blue Bell Tearoom as a visitor centre?

This Blue Bell café is too small to re-work as a visitor centre and its location means it is difficult for the Trust to manage access to Spurn. It is served by a small car

park and pedestrian access is difficult due to a lack of footpaths. Also, most people want to visit Spurn itself and many would simply pass by without stopping.

■ Why not build our new visitor centre at Kilnsea Wetlands?

This location does not offer views over the Humber and Sea, and as with the Blue Bell location we would have little opportunity to engage with visitors on their way to Spurn. Moreover, the Trust doesn't own the land here.

■ The visitor centre will do nothing to protect the wildlife of the area. Surely that should be your focus.

The only guaranteed way to protect Spurn and the Outer Humber both from visitor pressure and major development is to engage with the public so that there is a groundswell of support for the environment and wildlife of the area. The proposed facility will ensure we can give information to all visitors so that they have respect for the site and its wildlife. In addition, we will be better positioned to manage the flow of people on to Spurn thus reducing the impacts.

■ Will visitors have to pay to visit the Visitor Centre or park at the car park?

Access to the visitor centre will be free, but car parking charges will apply. Parking will be free to members of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. We will also implement a scheme to enable local residents to park at a reduced rate.

■ How will we stop people from parking on the verges?

The provision of a car park should mean that there is no necessity to park on the verge. However, we will work closely with the Highways Agency and Parish Council to see how we could assist with overcoming this issue and encourage people to use the car parks provided, as YWT does not own the public highway.



DAVID NICHOLS

GET INVOLVED

Now that we have recommenced our consultation on these developments, if you would like to comment, please do so preferably before the end of September. If you want to feedback to the Trust your comments or ask a question, drop us a line at spurn@ywt.org.uk

If you would like to support or object to the Trust's proposals to build a new visitor centre at Spurn please contact the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Once we have submitted our planning application, we will let you know how you can support it or object to it in more detail.

If you would like to come along to one of Andy's heritage events, or take a trip on a Spurn Safari, have a look at the Trust's website for details.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Contact Details

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✉ spurn@ywt.org.uk. Visit our

🖱 www.ywt.org.uk

🐦 @yorkswildlife

📘 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

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