

LOCAL SEA DEFENCES

WOLFERTON CREEK TO HUNSTANTON

SUMMER 2025 UPDATE

SOUTH HUNSTANTON TO WOLFERTON CREEK (UNIT C) UPDATE

2024-25 BEACH RECYCLING:

Annual beach recycling of the shingle ridge was completed between February and March 2025. This involved:

- 408 loads of beach material being moved from Snettisham Scalp onto the shingle ridge.
- 5,713 cubic metres of sand and shingle being moved from the beach back onto the shingle ridge.
- Re-profiling of the shingle ridge and beach.

The total cost of the 2024-25 beach recycling was £122,762.09. Financial contributions from the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy (WECMS) Funding Group towards this were:

Funding Source	Contribution
Environment Agency – Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid (FCERM GiA)	£49,899.99
Anglian Water	£20,000
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£5,000
Beach Huts	£1,080
East Wash Coastal Management Community Interest Company (CIC)	£44,056.54
Surplus funds from previous years works	£2,725.56

The WECMS Funding Group continue to meet on a regular basis and beach recycling is next scheduled to take place between February and March 2026. As part of the next beach recycling campaign, the Environment Agency will also be undertaking environmental monitoring which must be completed every 5 years. This means there will be some additional costs to the next recycling programme.

The East Wash Coastal Management Community Interest Company (CIC) continue to successfully raise funds from local businesses and landowners to contribute towards annual beach recycling. They have a surplus balance of approximately £1.4 million which can contribute towards future works as required.

Find out more:

If you would like to find out more about the WECMS Funding Group, you can do so on the Borough Council's website: west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/1142/wash-east-coastal-management-strategy-funding-group



SHINGLE RIDGE – INITIAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (RECAP):

Last year the Environment Agency commissioned an independent consultant to undertake an initial assessment of the shingle ridge flood defence between South Hunstanton and Snettisham. The purpose of this was to determine whether a review of current flood risk management activities, outlined in the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy (WECMS), was required.

This assessment concluded:

- Should a beach recharge be required in the coming years, the cost of this would exceed current funding limits, which means that the economic trigger for change and a review of management approaches set out in WECMS, has been met.
- As a primary defence, the shingle ridge needs to be protected.
- Annual beach recycling continues to be effective and sustainable.
- To the south of Heacham, sand has continued to accumulate behind the crest (top) of the shingle ridge towards the line of properties, and is likely to continue to do so.
- The need to review the WECMS due to adverse environmental impacts or an unacceptable level of flood evacuations have not been reached.

The outcomes of this initial assessment mean that a full review and update of the WECMS is required. This will include Unit C managed by the Environment Agency alongside Hunstanton Town (Unit B) and Hunstanton Cliffs (Unit A) managed by the Borough Council.

WECMS REVIEW UPDATE:

Undertaking a full review and update of the WECMS is a complex and time-consuming process due to the range of factors which will each need to be considered in detail. This will include:

- The standard of protection provided by defences
- Coastal processes
- Computational modelling
- Consideration of a wide range of options and their potential technical feasibility
- Stakeholder engagement
- Environmental impact assessments
- Funding calculations
- Climate change allowances

The current timeline for updating the WECMS is:



Find out more:

If you would like to find out more about the Unit C Initial Assessment or the review of the WECMS review, please visit the Borough Council website here: [west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/176/wash_east_coastal_management_strategy](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/176/wash_east_coastal_management_strategy)

HUNSTANTON TOWN (UNIT B) UPDATE:

2024-25 FINANCIAL YEAR WORKS:

Over the 2024-25 financial year we undertook a range of routine repair works to the Hunstanton sea defences. This included:

- Routine concrete repairs to the seawall, promenade, and slipways
- Replacement of joint sealant on the wave-return wall
- Extension to a handrail on a slipway
- Replacement of a handrail on the promenade
- Extension of beach access steps
- Health and safety works to timber groynes and concrete groynes
- Repairs to navigation markers
- Removal of redundant cliff top fence posts

Total cost of works undertaken during the 2024-25 financial year was £192,480.49.

2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR WORKS:

So far this financial year we have already completed and commissioned a range of routine repair works to the Hunstanton sea defences. This includes:

- Partial beach access step handrail replacement
- Routine maintenance and repairs to concrete sea defences
- Health and safety works to timber groynes

The total cost of routine repair works, as of May 2025 is £90,191.91.

Each year we undertake a visual inspection of all sea defence in Hunstanton. This year's inspection identified a total of 63 repairs required to different aspects of the concrete defences, alongside health and safety works to the timber groynes.

Repair works took place between the 2nd to 20th June 2025.



GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS:

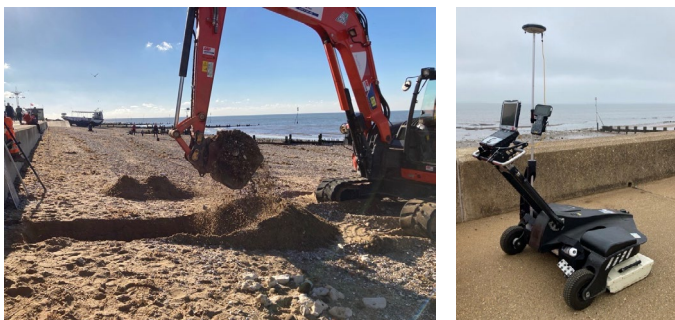
Last autumn, we commenced a series of geotechnical investigations to the Hunstanton sea defences.

Geotechnical investigations inspect the condition of parts of a structure which are located below the ground surface, and therefore cannot be visually inspected.

Outcomes of these investigations will be used to assess the current structural condition of the Hunstanton sea defences and inform future work requirements to maintain the standard of protection they provide.

On site investigations took place between October and November 2025 and work to analyse the results and produce a report of outcomes by an external consultant is ongoing.

We hope to have a final report of outcomes by Summer 2025.



Images of geotechnical investigations being undertaken (left trial pit, right ground penetrating radar)

Find out more:

If you would like to find out more about the routine works we undertake to the Hunstanton sea defences, or the geotechnical investigations, you can do so on the Borough Councils website here: west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/1088/current_coastal_works

HUNSTANTON CLIFFS (UNIT A) UPDATE:

2024 CLIFF EROSION MONITORING:

In 2020, the Borough Council commenced annual high-accuracy monitoring of the Hunstanton Cliffs using terrestrial LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging).

The purpose of this monitoring is to observe annual rates of erosion which is then used by the Borough Council to assess when assets on the cliff top could become at risk of erosion in the future.

The fourth annual survey was completed in 2024 and the main outputs from this were:

- The mean rate of erosion is 13.2cm per year.
- The most active area of cliff erosion was the middle section of cliffs. In the previous year, the northern section was most active.
- Some cliff falls, varying in size, occurred across all cliff sections between the 2023 and 2024 surveys.
- Overall, rates of erosion remain in line with previous surveys and Hunstanton Coastal Management Plan projections.

You can view the full 2024 report on the Borough Council website here: west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/385/coastal/851/hunstanton_cliffs_monitoring

CLIFF EROSION MONITORING GOING FORWARD:

In March 2025, our Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) Local Levy funding towards the production of four annual cliff erosion reports ended.

The 2024 report suggested that the frequency of survey and report production could be reduced from annual to biennial (every 2 years), with provision for post storm monitoring when required. This is because the data collection and analysis via terrestrial LiDAR undertaken since 2020 has improved our understanding of erosion trends and confirmed they align with projections.

We are now in the process of submitting a new application for RFCC Local Levy funding for biennial monitoring and hope to undertake the next survey and report in 2026.

