

There has been a settlement at **Walberswick** since at least the time of the Saxons. The name **Walberswick** is believed to derive from two Saxon words, **“Waldbert”** – probably the name of a landowner – and **“wyc”,** meaning shelter or harbour.



## Highlights



**1 Walberswick** is located on a spur of high ground, close to the natural haven of the River Blyth. Whilst the landscape appears unchanging, history shows that coastal change and tidal flooding were ever present. In 1328, a severe storm destroyed much of the ancient port of nearby Dunwich. The River Dunwich then forged a new path to the sea via Walberswick.

Walberswick became a centre for fishing and shipbuilding but its fortunes varied. St. Andrew’s Church fell into such disrepair that it was partially demolished. A smaller church was built within its remains. Today, Walberswick is a beloved village popular for its pubs, walks, beach and idyllic scenery.



**2 Southwold - Walberswick Ferry.** In 1885, following the formation of the River Blyth Ferry Company, a pontoon that could carry a horse and cart was used to cross the river. This was hand-operated by means of chains.

In 1911, a larger steam-driven chain ferry was commissioned. This ran until the outbreak of the Second World War, when the ferry was anchored midstream as part of anti-invasion measures. The ferry broke free and sank. Since then, a popular rowing boat ferry service operates between Southwold harbour and Walberswick. For up-to-date times and prices, visit [walberswickferry.com](http://walberswickferry.com).



**3 The Old Railway.** In 1879, a narrow gauge railway opened between Halesworth and Southwold and included a station at Walberswick. The railway followed the southern side of the Blyth valley then crossed the river via a swing bridge. The line connected to the East Suffolk Railway, serving holidaymakers and the fishing industry. A link was added to Southwold Harbour in 1914, but the decline of the fishing industry swiftly followed.

Increased competition from road transport and ageing equipment also took their toll and the railway closed in 1929. After the Second World War the Bailey footbridge replaced the railway swing bridge. This bridge provides pedestrian access between Walberswick and Southwold to this day.

**4 Grazing marsh and reedbed** characterise the coast between Walberswick and Dunwich. Dingle, Reedland, Westwood, Corporation and Oldtown Marshes lie in the Dunwich River valley where deep peat overlies river and marine alluvium. The area was used for fairs in the 1380s. Westwood Marsh was claimed from salt marsh around 1590.

The mid-20th century saw much re-flooding. This area is now part of the Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve. The landscape features grazing cattle on low intensity wet grassland and is dissected by a network of dykes that have some scrubby areas.

## The Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape

The Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape stretches from Kessingland near Lowestoft, down to Parkeston near Harwich on the Stour Estuary in North Essex. It is one of Britain’s finest landscapes, nationally important for wildlife and beloved by residents and visitors alike.

The National Landscape conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area through nature enhancement, landscape restoration, creating habitats for wildlife, volunteering activities such as beach cleans and hedge planting, and providing funding for community projects.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape or you can visit [coastandheaths-NL.org.uk](http://coastandheaths-NL.org.uk). Get in touch on **01394 445225**.

### Key to map

- National Landscape area  
Estuaries are also included
- Additional project area
- Town and villages
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Main roads
- Railways/stations
- Suffolk Coast Path
- Stour and Orwell Walk
- Sandlings Walk



# Walberswick Explorer Guide



Enjoy walks around beloved **Walberswick** village, open coastline, reedbeds and forest

## Visiting Walberswick

**Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No 231** (Southwold & Bungay)

**Car:** Walberswick is approximately 3 miles/5 km from the A12 at Blythburgh

**Bus information:** Visit [traveline.info](http://traveline.info) or [suffolkonboard.com](http://suffolkonboard.com)

**Train information:** The nearest station is Darsham (7 miles away). Train timetable at [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)

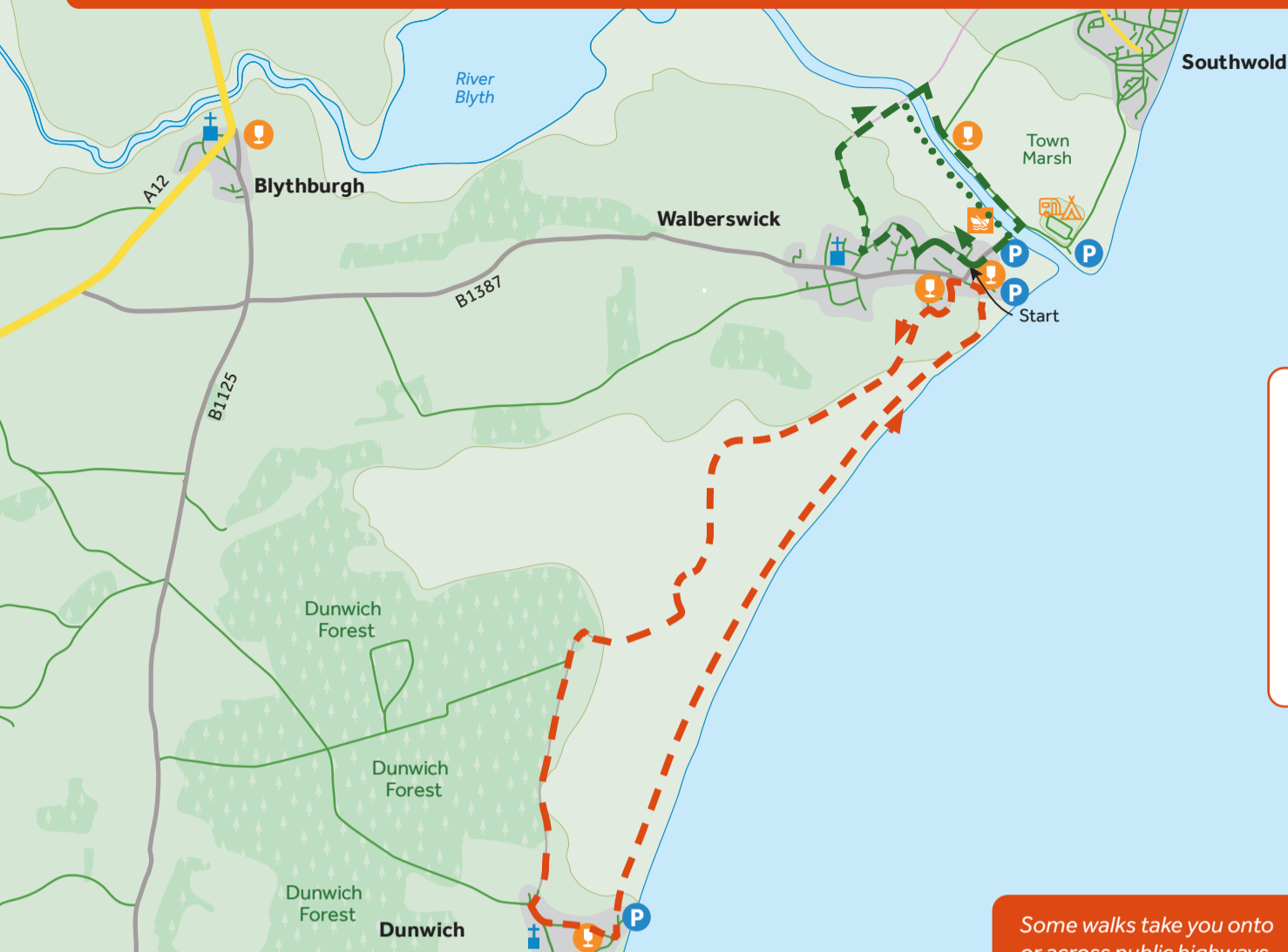


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# Walberswick Explorer Guide

Wander around Walberswick with its river, heath and marshes, or take a longer walk to Dunwich.



Please note this map is illustrative and does not show all roads and features

Some walks take you onto or across public highways. Please be aware of traffic



## Marshes, Coast and Forest

### Terrain:

Paths and tracks, some of which can be very muddy at certain times. Please be aware of tides when walking along the coastline.

Start on Walberswick village green, facing Ferry Road and turn right towards the village hall, following the road as it bears right onto The Street. Take the footpath on your left just before you reach The Anchor pub.

Take the right fork, then the left fork, then turn left again. You should now be on the Coast Path with the narrow Dunwich River immediately on your left (look out for the Coast Path marker discs).



Follow the Coast Path across marshes, passing the derelict Walberswick windpump. The marshes support scarce wildlife, such as the bittern, that depends on fresh water but these marshes are at risk of becoming saline if sea defences cannot be sustained.

Continue following the path to the edge of Dunwich Forest, then follow the track with the forest on your right and Dingle Marshes on your left. When the road is reached at Bridge Farm on the edge of Dunwich, turn left into the village.

From Dunwich, you can either retrace your route, or walk back along the beach to Walberswick. The top of the shingle bank provides the best views but the sandier shoreline makes for an easier walk.



**Distance:**  
6.8 miles (11 km)

**Time:**  
3 - 4 hours



## Walberswick Wander

### Terrain:

Paths and tracks. This walk takes you onto public highways. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Start on Walberswick village green facing Ferry Road. Turn left and then left again onto the road at the top (N end) of the village green (Leverett's Lane). Take the second track to your right, signed 'Bridleway'. Follow this track and bear right onto a Footpath when you reach the 'Footpath' sign.



Follow this path across Walberswick Common and bear right again down a track (Palmer's Lane) when you reach another 'Footpath' sign.

Bear right at the next 'Footpath' sign and head down towards the river and Southwold, following the route of the former Southwold Light Railway. Look out for the disused windmill across the reedbed.

Cross over the Bailey bridge and turn right, keeping the River Blyth on your right. Go past the boat yards, chandleries and fisherman's sheds of the Harbour and cross over the river on the foot ferry to bring you back into Walberswick.



**Distance:**  
3 miles (5 km)

**Time:**  
1 hour 30 mins depending on ferry crossings (Summer time only)



When the ferry is not running, it's possible to do a similar walk by keeping to the Walberswick side of the River Blyth instead of crossing the River on the Bailey Bridge.

On leaving the Ferry turn left. You soon reach Ferry Road which runs between the two car parking areas. Keep walking along Ferry Road which takes you back into the village and the green.



## Countryside Code

The Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape has a network of footpaths and bridleways.

To protect you, other people, wildlife, and the landscape, please make sure you:

- Stick to marked footpaths
- Leave things as you find them
- Do not light fires or BBQs
- Take all litter home with you
- Please keep dogs under close control at all times and on lead as advised

Scan the QR code to find more advice and visitor guides, or visit

[coastandheaths-nl.org.uk/exploring](http://coastandheaths-nl.org.uk/exploring).

