

Blaxhall and Tunstall Commons are areas of heathland and other important wildlife habitats. They are part of the **Suffolk Sandlings** and partially surrounded by the mixed woodland of **Tunstall Forest**.



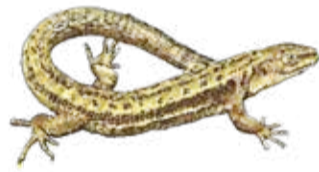
Highlights



1 Blaxhall Common is an ancient landscape with an Iron Age burial mound. The villagers of Blaxhall have a commoners' right to graze animals and take turf for fuel. Some of the ditches across the Common were dug during World War II to prevent enemy gliders from landing.

Today, Blaxhall Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The Common provides a habitat for many species of plant, fungi and animal. Birds you might spot include woodlark, nightjar, nightingale and goldcrest.

Reptiles such as common lizard and adder thrive on the dry sandy ground. The area is ideal for insects too. In 2007, the silver-studded blue butterfly was successfully re-introduced. This butterfly flourishes where bell heather grows.



© The Suffolk Coast



2 Tunstall Forest is a commercial forest planted by the Forestry Commission in the 1930s. The majority of the original trees have been felled, so today there is a mixture of new plantation, broadleaved trees and heathland.

Many trees were lost in the great storm of October 1987, which allowed planting to be diversified. Although the dense areas of commercial pine forest are not very wildlife friendly, the more open areas are ideal for nightjar and woodlark.

The 'rides' through the Forest are wildlife corridors linking the open heath of Blaxhall and Tunstall Commons. The forest is popular for recreation and you may meet walkers, mountain bikers or horse riders.

3 Tunstall Common is another great habitat for plants and animals. Tunstall and Blaxhall Commons are rare examples of the Suffolk Sandlings, lowland heath that once covered much of east Suffolk.

The plant species are distinctive, with bell heather, milkwort, speedwell and sheep's sorrel adding colour to the heath in summer. Some more invasive species, such as bracken and birch have to be controlled to prevent them smothering other plants.



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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. Get in touch on **01394 445225**.

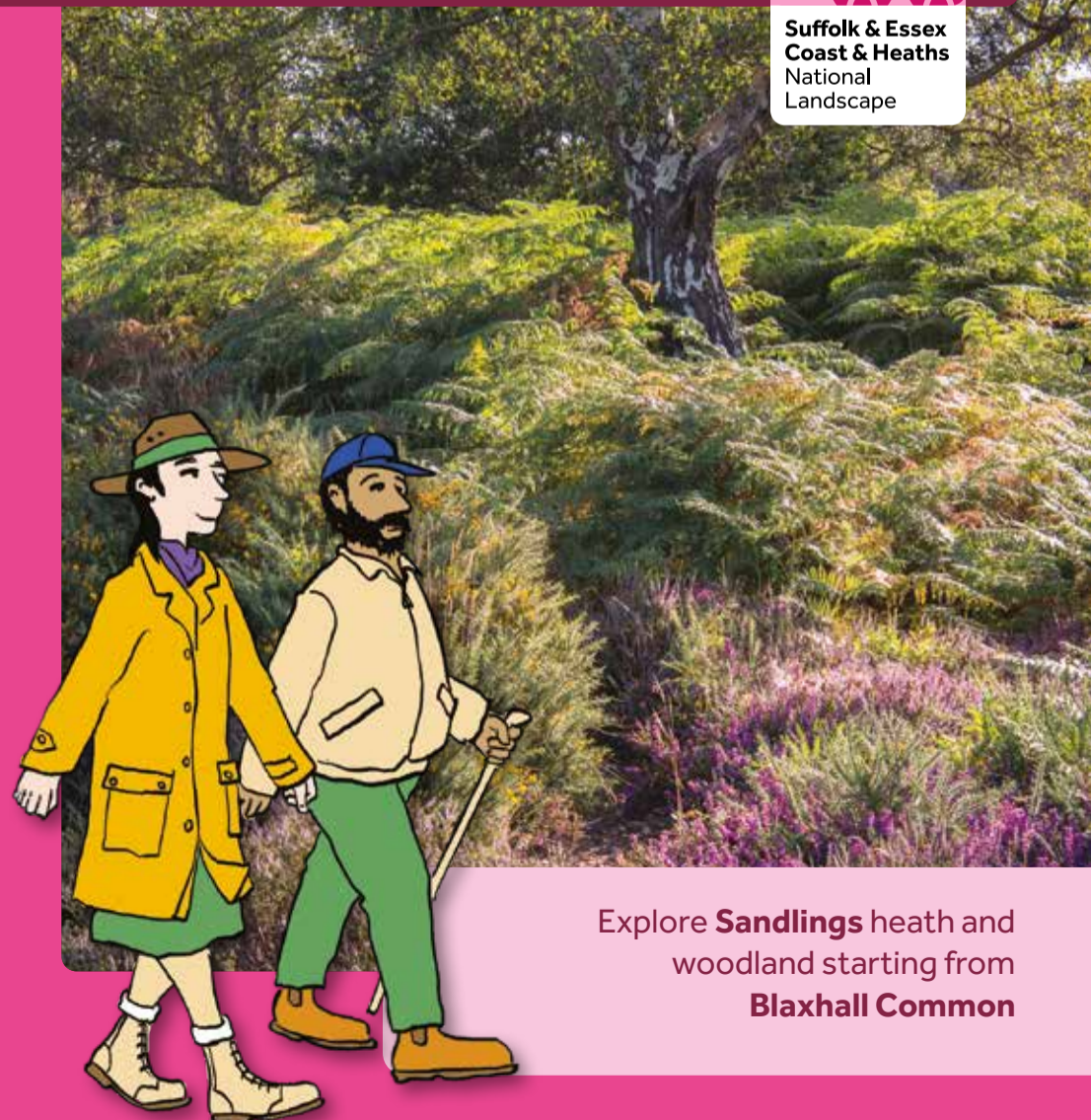
Key to map

- 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



Design and illustration: wearedrab.co.uk Cover image: © Gill Moon

Blaxhall & Tunstall Explorer Guide



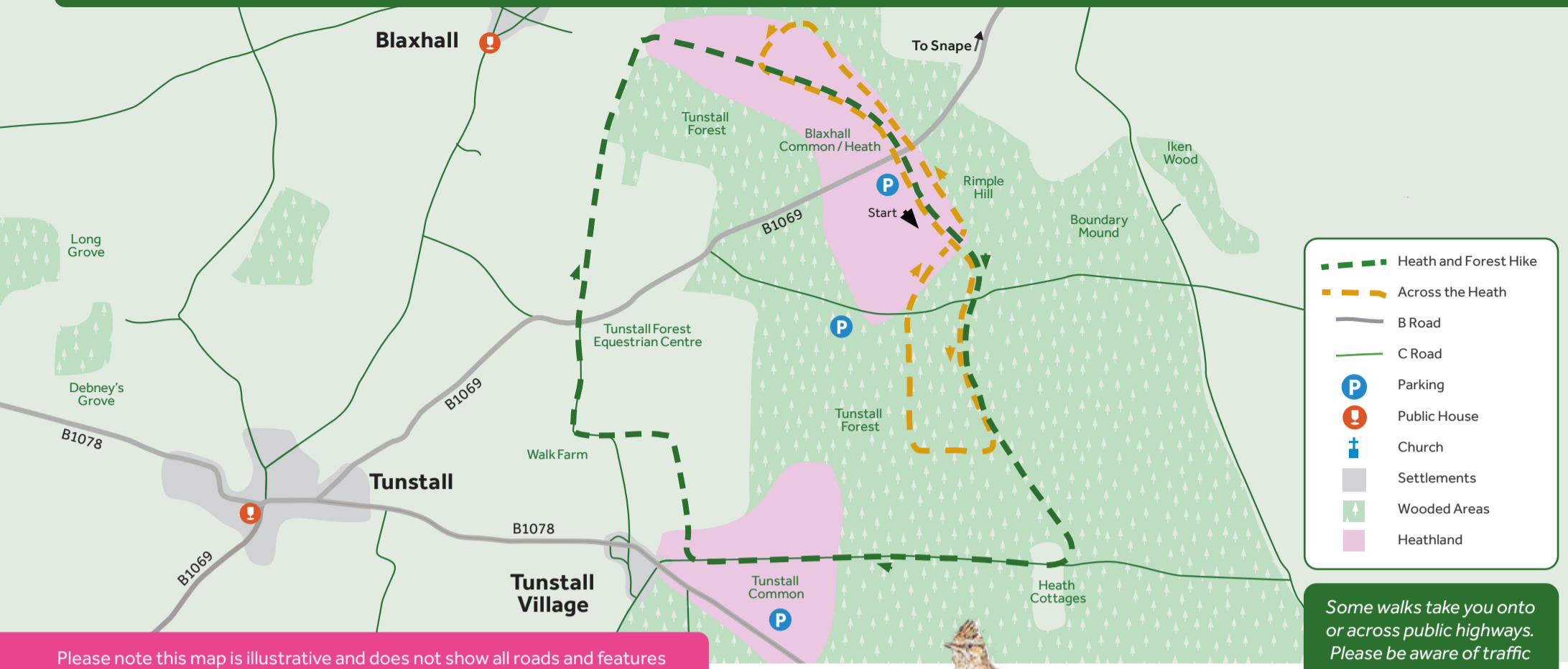
Explore **Sandlings** heath and woodland starting from **Blaxhall Common**



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Blaxhall & Tunstall Explorer Guide

These walks follow paths across wild Suffolk heathland and through majestic woodland. You will encounter ancient habitats, old twisted pine trees, hidden glades and commercial forestry.



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

Heath and Forest Hike

Terrain:

Paths and tracks – can be very muddy after rain. Some sections on minor roads. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Distance:
4.2 miles (6.8 km)

Time:
2 hours

Stay on same side of road as car park (NGR:TM 383565). Follow path that leads away from car park and road across Blaxhall Common. Keep roughly straight. When path splits, keep left. When you reach minor road, go straight across and continue on far side through forest. Keep on path, ignoring all exits and cross paths, until you come to cottage at cross tracks (turning left at cross tracks links to a longer walk to Alde estuary). Turn right and follow straight track through forest and across Tunstall Common.



When you reach power lines, turn right. Keep straight and follow path then track. Continue between hedges, then take first track on left. Keep straight until road. Follow road ahead and then around right bend. When you reach main road, cross carefully and take track on opposite side. Follow straight track beside fields. When you reach end of second field, take path right and then left as it follows edge of woodland. When you reach junction with sunken path, turn right. Follow path across heath to road and car park.



Across the Heath

Terrain:

Paths and tracks - can be very muddy after rain. Some sections on minor roads. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Distance:
2.6 miles (4.2 km)

Time:
1 hour 15 mins

Follow 'Heath and Forest' route until junction with minor road. Go straight across road and continue on far side through forest. When you reach track crossing obliquely from left to right, bear right.

Continue straight for short distance, then turn right at cross tracks. Continue straight until next cross tracks, then turn right and follow path (with fence on left) to return to minor road.

Cross road and take unsigned path opposite that leads to right. Continue on path to junction. Cross path you followed earlier and take path opposite. Follow path, keeping forest on right. When you reach main road, cross and continue on far side.

Follow path uphill until you reach large hollow in ground on left. Just before hollow, take path left as it leads around hollow. On far side of hollow, take path left and continue straight. When you reach junction with sunken path, turn left and return to road and car park.



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.