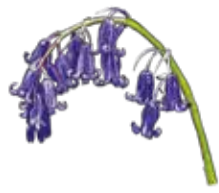


The **Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape** has one of the finest concentrations of birds, plants and animals to be found anywhere in eastern England.

The **Orwell estuary** is an ideal location from which to enjoy these natural wonders.



Highlights



1 The Orwell Bridge opened in 1982 after taking three years to build. Marvel at the main span of 190 metres. The bridge provides a major link between the Port of Felixstowe and the rest of the UK.

2 Freston Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) has light sandy soil with spring-fed valleys, of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland. The history of management includes the creation of a deer park and the medieval introduction of sweet chestnut. It supports distinctive ground vegetation, including wild garlic and is among the best bluebell woods in Suffolk.

3 Lodge Farm is often home to Red Poll cattle, a local native breed. Originally prized for both beef and milk these cattle are part of a modern agrarian renaissance. They fare well on an extensive farming system for slow matured beef and are compatible with the environment. Suffolk Sheep and Suffolk Punch Horses are the other native breeds that make up the 'Suffolk Trinity'.

4 Wherstead Park was largely ploughed up in the WWII 'Dig for Victory' campaign. In WWI the Park was used as a staging depot for horses before their export to 'the Front'. The main house (built on the site



of an earlier residence) has a foundation stone dated 1792. The original house was designed for Sir Robert Harland who, in 1813, exchanged the estate with Mr. John Vernon of Orwell Park on the other side of the river.

5 The Hard at the end of Redgate Lane is said by some to be part of a Roman causeway across the Orwell. The crossing was possibly still in use until at least 1352 as the Downham Bridge, marking the boundary of the Liberties of Ipswich.

6 Cutler's Wood, like Freston Wood, is wonderful in spring for bluebells and is part of the ancient woodland SSSI in this area. Stalls Valley has remained almost unchanged for centuries, and early maps give it the same name. Victorian naturalists knew it for its flora, especially its ferns.

7 Suffolk Food Hall is a popular foodie and family destination, supporting the rural economy. Since opening in 2007, the Suffolk Food Hall has quickly established itself as a centre of excellence for local food, bringing together the best possible food and drink specialists under one roof. Overlooking the river and the Orwell bridge, it boasts a food hall, café and restaurant, shop, as well as play area and great walking routes on the doorstep.

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



Wherstead & Freston Explorer Guide



Discover wonderful woodland, farmland and the **Orwell estuary**



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Wherstead & Freston Explorer Guide

Wherstead and Freston are great for exploring the unique farmed and estuary landscapes of the National Landscape. The walks take in Freston Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



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

Into the Valley

Terrain:

Easy – Ground under foot fairly flat, one stile. This walk takes you onto public roads. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Distance:
3.5 miles (5.5 km)
Time:
2 hours



Start the walk at the Suffolk Food Hall. Head south-east across the paddocks in front of the Food Hall, taking in the stunning view down the River Orwell. Cross the middle of the field towards the main road, taking care as you cross Freston Brook along a narrow verge.

After a bit of birdwatching at the bottom of Freston Hill, you enter Freston Wood SSSI, woodland typical of this part of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape. Leave the wood at St Peter's Church, Freston, largely restored by local architect R.T.Orr in 1874.

It includes an Arts & Crafts styled octagonal vestry and a sensitive rescue of the C15th tower and the C14th east window. Right on to the lane around to the village (taking care on the road). On leaving the village take the footpath on your right, to Freston Lodge Farm (Farm is to the right of your route).

At end of lane bear left, down through the meadow valley, across Freston Brook and left along the line of poplar trees, then right to the Orwell Nursing Home. Turn right onto Redgate Lane and turn left at Redgate Farm. Walk back across the paddocks for lunch or tea back at the Suffolk Food Hall.



Wherstead Woodlands

Terrain:

Easy – Ground under foot fairly flat. This walk takes you onto public roads. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Distance:
4 miles (7 km)
Time:
2 hours 30 mins

On the 'Wherstead Woodlands' walk you can see more ancient woodland, the Stalls Valley, farmland and the villages of Wherstead and Freston.

Start the walk at the Suffolk Food Hall. Head south-east across the paddocks in front of the Food Hall, taking in the stunning view down the River Orwell. Cross the middle of the field towards the main road, taking care as you cross Freston Brook along a narrow verge.



After a bit of birdwatching at the bottom of Freston Hill, you enter Freston Wood SSSI, woodland typical of this part of the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape. Leave Freston Wood. Follow the lane right. Continue on the lane to 'T' junction at Freston Village, turning right through village centre.

Turn right after Bond Hall taking Bridleway to Broom Knoll. The lane narrows. After Broom Knoll, continue on farm track to Stall's Valley and Cutler's Wood, both designated as SSSI ancient woodlands.

Turn right at Valley Farm and walk along a farm track towards Wherstead Village. See examples of good wildlife habitat created by the Paul family. New hedgerows and trees have been planted, to benefit birds such as yellowhammer and mammals such as vole and hedgehog. From Wherstead village turn right at the 'crossroads'.



The walk back down to Suffolk Food Hall gives you a good view of the river Orwell and bridge. By looking right, across rolling farmland to the hedges and trees, you view an English landscape that helped make a National Landscape. Also in the area are Orwell Country Park and two Suffolk Wildlife Trust sites at Levington and Trimley.



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.

