



YARMOUTH HARBOUR SENSORY TRAIL

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NOT TO SCALE

Landscape

The Western Yar estuary is an important part of the Isle of Wight's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The landscape has been shaped by people and their activities over hundreds of years and continues to be used and valued by all who visit.

Coastal defence

The first breakwater was built in 1847 and forms a coastal defence, creates a sheltered harbour and helps to protect the estuary and parts of the town from coastal flooding and erosion. The current breakwater is made from old railway line and sleepers which need to be replaced every few years.

Saltmarsh

Saltmarsh is made up of different plants that can survive in the constantly changing conditions. They cope with saltwater and freshwater, pounding from wind and waves, shifting mud and with changes in weather from heavy rain to hot sunshine. The saltmarsh provides a place for the estuary's birds to feed, nest and rest.

Mud

Estuary mud is packed full of tiny creatures which are not very easy to see as many of them emerge when the mud is covered with water. They graze the surface or live within it, some catching morsels of food on their feathery gills and hiding in the mud when disturbed. They help to keep the estuary healthy and are food themselves for larger creatures, fish and birds.

Sea level

Sea level is gradually rising and the change is predicted to increase in the future, perhaps as much as a metre in 100 years. This could make a big difference to our activities, roads, services and settlements. Sea level rise and the impact on coastal flooding is the main challenge for the harbour in the future.

Harbour

Yarmouth has been a settlement since 991 and the ancient harbour has changed a lot over the years. It now supports a variety of commercial, fishing and leisure craft and attracts over 100,000 visitors a year. The main harbour is accessible at all states of the tide.

The Sensory Trail is part of the Estuary Explorer project set up by Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners, supported through the West Wight Landscape Partnership by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project encourages everyone to discover more about the Western Yar estuary, Yarmouth Harbour and the landscape of the West Wight. For more information about the project please visit yarmouth-harbour.co.uk