Created by Rowena Macaulay on behalf of Essex Local Access Forum**(2)**. Last surveyed 14th June 2023**(3)**

View these and more phototrail images mapped here: https://tinyurl.com/3fa6bm9b **(4)(5)**

This section of the coastal path runs along the sea wall on the north side of the Blackwater Estuary. The estuary is an internationally important site for wintering birds. Depending on the state of the tide, large numbers of waders and wildfowl can be seen. Across the mudflats you can see Osea Island, a private property that has had a varied history. There are a number of buildings on the island that are currently used for music studios and accommodation, including holiday lets. **(6)**

Distance: 7.5 km / 4.6 miles (one-way, excluding approach/exit) **(8)**

Start point:
what3words: stream.winds.zone; Grid Ref TL 90670 08489; Lat/Long 51.742659 , 0.76036521 **(9)**

The start point is given from the path itself at the Goldhanger end. The distance from the centre of Goldhanger, at the Chequers pub, to the coastal path is an additional approx. 520m.

Facilities at start: Goldhanger village is approx. 0.5 m from the coastal path. The Chequers Inn (https://www.thechequersgoldhanger.co.uk/), closest to the coastal path, serves food and is dog-friendly. There is no wheelchair accessible public toilet in the pub or village**.**

Facilities at end: Two pubs (The Jolly Sailor and The Old Ship) and The Lock Tea Room are close-by (https://www.visitmaldon.co.uk/heybridge-basin/)

Access features: the route is mostly level, save for access/exit to the sea wall, and two points detailed.

Terrain is mixed/uneven but largely firm, with grassy/earthen track and some light gravel at the Goldhanger end; tarmac (with some poor-repair) at the Heybridge end.

There is one staggered barrier at the Osea Island causeway, likely to be avoidable by chair users with assistance. **(7)**

Public transport and parking:
The 95/95A bus route serves Tollesbury-Goldhanger-Heybridge-Maldon. At Goldhanger there is a small car park for pub patrons opposite The Chequers; otherwise parking is on-road but quiet. At Heybridge Basin there is parking in the Daisy Meadow car park, next to the canal.

Suitability for chair/scooter users: we estimate this route section is likely to be accessible to all-terrain chair and scooter users, and to some independent chair users, with some assistance likely to be necessary in places on account of occasional gradients/camber and mixed surfaces. **(10)**

Route description: from Goldhanger...

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Access to the coastal path: at the start point, alongside an information board, there is both stepped access (1) with metal handrail to both sides, and ramped access with a medium gradient of approx. 1:12-15 m(?) to the sea wall. The ramp and sea-wall path is hard-surfaced (hoggin), with a dusting of light gravel.

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Occasional bench/rest points are located at the Goldhanger end, and there is ramped access to the water here also (4), close to the Goldhanger Sailing Club shelter (5).
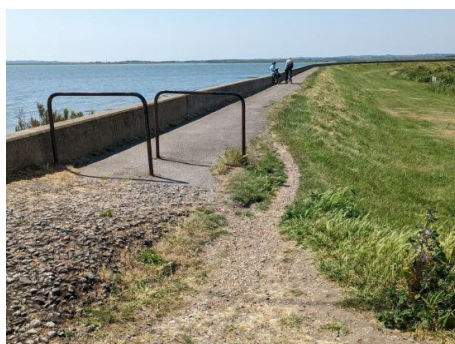

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Approx. 1 km along (///fonts.discussed.painter), an inlet forces a small diversion (6), creating short, steeper sections off and back onto the sea wall. Rutted farm track on the downward gradient and single footpath on the upward (7), combined with camber, make this section more difficult. Chair/scooter users may require assistance.

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At Osea Island causeway, an older-style staggered barrier (11) marks commencement of tarmac path, which continues to Heybridge Basin. The barrier creates a significant obstacle for chair/scooter users who are obliged to use rough greensward to the right for approx. 250 m until a grassy ramp enables access back up to the path itself (12).

...to Heybridge Basin

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Smooth tarmac for the most part aids onward accessibility beyond Osea, although collapsing path surface in places has created some short stretches with significant camber in places (13-14). More than one café serves the coastal path here though (the 'Beach House'(15) also has an accessible toilet) so there are good refreshment breaks.

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The changing character of the waterfront between the more rural Goldhanger end and the holiday vibe of the chalets and wooden beachfront huts on the approach to Heybridge Basin make this stretch particularly delightful.

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Beyond the huts, at Saltcote Sailing Club, a long concrete ramp leads up to Wharf Road, ahead/right (20), whilst the coastal path continues to the left (20-21) along a very narrow, overgrown section (///handfuls.secure.closed).

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23

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Whilst likely to be off-putting to some, this was a manageable squeeze (in a 16" manual chair) with a little help. Further on (23), a turn in the path combined with a low-level concrete obstruction (hard to capture meaningfully), similarly hampered fully independent chair access.

Route description: from Goldhanger...

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Toward Heybridge Basin the path opens up again (24-25), and once again its character changes as it runs alongside long stretches of boat yard at Blackwater Sailing Club. Just beyond the club (///encloses.zinc.defeat), a chicane-style barrier *may* deter some larger scooters (most chairs should be able to negotiate successfully).
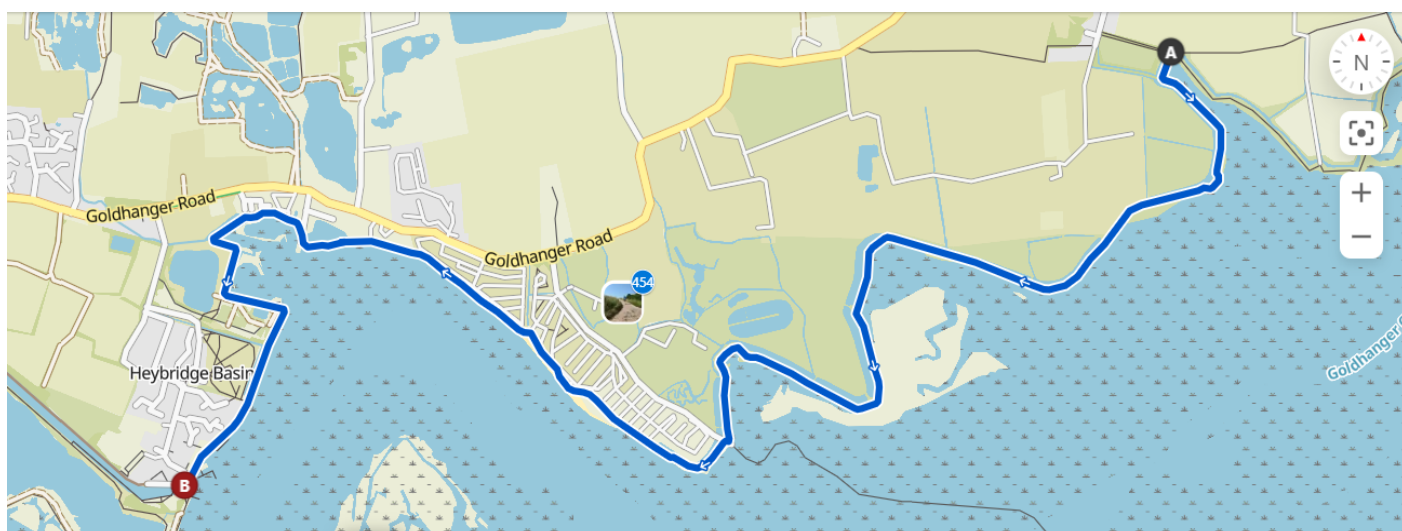

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At Heybridge Basin, plentiful watering holes await - there is a waterfront café (The Lock tea room) and two pubs (The Jolly Sailor and The Old Ship) to choose from, and a very pleasant spot alongside Heybridge Lock to stop awhile before the return journey (see bus times back to Goldhanger perhaps!).

The route trajectory mapped: Goldhanger to Heybridge Basin (right to left) (11)

Further information
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Find out more about the work of Essex Local Access Forum :
https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/public-rights-of-way/essex-local-access-forum

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