

## The Sefton Coastal Path – 33.6km

At 33.6 km (21 miles), the Sefton Coastal Path is the second longest route detailed in this guide. This route is a stimulating journey through a wonderful variety of landscapes with a rich biodiversity of wildlife and a fascinating history. It features sandy beaches, coastal marshes, pine woodlands, heathland and tidal estuaries, all with invigorating vistas across the Irish Sea to North Wales, Snowdonia and even the Lake District on a clear day.

The Sefton Coastal Path can be walked throughout and parts are cycle-friendly. It can easily be completed over a weekend based in Southport, or it can be broken up into individual short walks as desired, perhaps using the Liverpool to Southport Merseyrail line which runs parallel to the coast. The route is fully accessible until you reach the Formby Bypass (A565). Suggested stages are summarised below and the details of the walk in its entirety can be found via the Sefton Natural Coast website, or simply follow the Sefton Coastal Path waymarker (pictured).



Waymarker

### Stage One - Crossens to Ainsdale (Easy Cycling)

The route is flanked by the salt marshes of the Ribble which are managed by Natural England and Sefton Council and is suitable for cycling. Attractions include Marshside RSPB Reserve – one of the country's top reserves for breeding wading birds; Southport's wonderful pier and Marine Lake.



## Route distance 33.6km

### ROUTE KEY POINTS

- Marshside RSPB Reserve (WC Facilities accessible)
- Southport Pier & Pavilion
- Eco Centre (WC Facilities accessible)
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- Ainsdale Discovery Centre (WC Facilities accessible)
- Highest Sand Dunes: Big Balls Hill
- Formby Red Squirrel Reserve (WC Facilities accessible)
- Aintree Racecourse
- Alt Estuary
- Antony Gomley's 'Another Place' (WC Facilities at coastguard station accessible)
- Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre (WC Facilities accessible)



Other attractions in Southport include the Promenade, Lord Street shopping and dining; the Marine Way suspension bridge; the Ocean Plaza complex and the Queen's Jubilee Nature Trail.

### Stage Two - Ainsdale to Hall Road

(Suitable for cycling in part, on Ainsdale NNR and between Hightown and Hall Road).

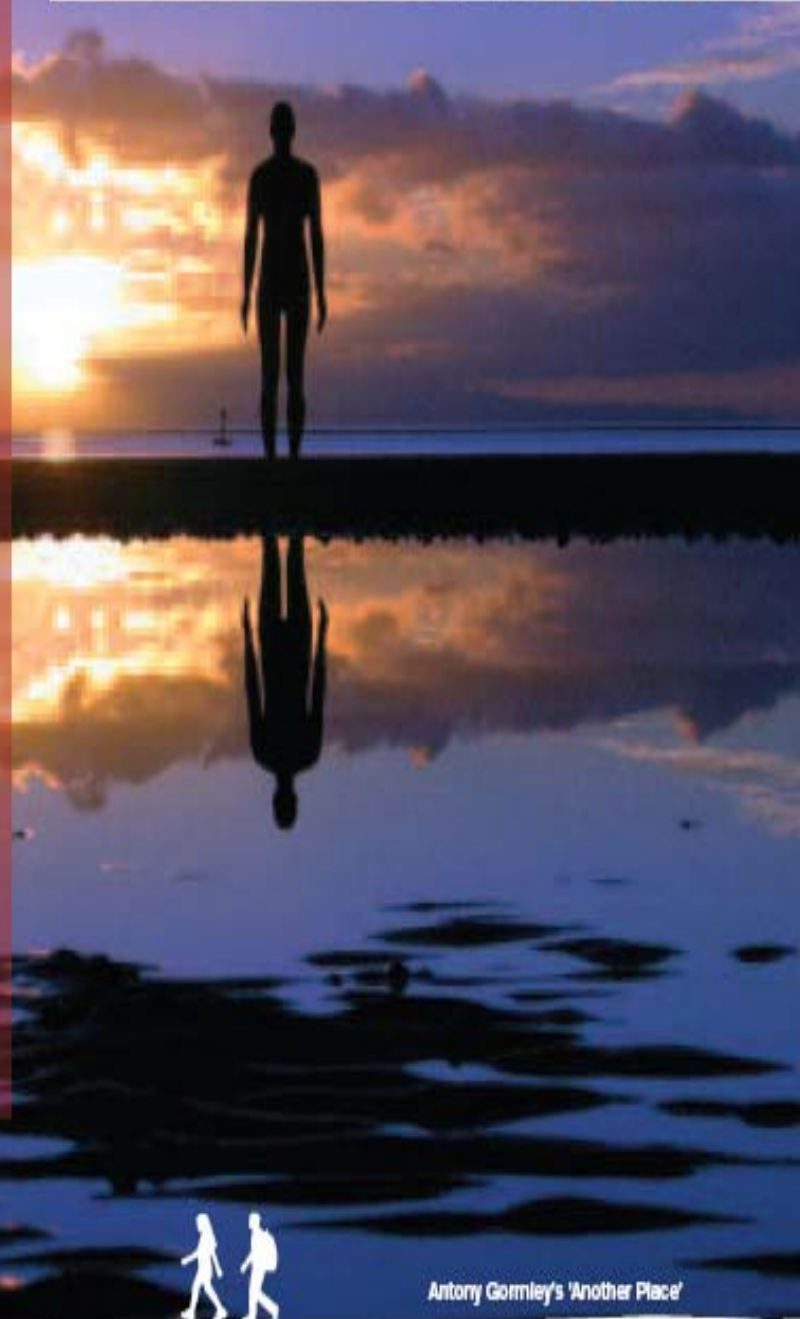
This stage features Royal Birkdale Golf Club, the venue for The British Open in 2008 and the Women's British Open in 2010; Ainsdale Discovery Centre, headquarters of Sefton Council's Coast & Countryside Service; Sands Lake Nature Trail and several top rated nature reserves with Grass of Parnassus, wild Orchids, rare butterflies, Sand Lizards, Natterjack Toads, plus hordes of shorebirds in winter.

Fomby Point has four more excellent nature reserves; the National Trust's famous Red Squirrel Reserve; the site of the UK's oldest lifeboat station; magnificent sand dunes and pine woodlands; the tidal mudflats of the River Alt, yet more shorebirds and a church with a unique stained glass window featuring the wildlife of the Sefton Coast.

### Stage Three - Hall Road to Crosby Coastal Park (Easy Cycling)

This route features the Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre; the site of an old fort; the only shingle beach in Sefton; birdlife in abundance and the evocative sculptures of Antony Gormley's 'Another Place' – 100 iron figures stretching along two miles of the beach from the mouth of the Mersey to the River Alt. There's also the magnificent Georgian villas of the 20th century sea captains overlooking Crosby Coastal Park and the port of Liverpool, with its towering container cranes, wind turbines and ships from all over the world.

Eco Centre



Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'