

PRESS RELEASE

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ISLAND COASTAL PATH 'SPREADING ROOM' COULD ERODE LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS



The potentially heavy impact of proposals for a new coastal path on the Isle of Wight have been highlighted at a special seminar organised jointly by the CLA with rural property specialists BCM.

James Attrill, partner at BCM rural property specialists and president of the CLA's Isle of Wight branch, explained: "This new coastal path and the 'spreading room' that comes with it has the potential to impact heavily on coastal property owners - BCM are urging all those affected to engage with the process before it is too late."

Attended by CLA members and BCM clients, the joint Coastal Access Seminar examined Natural England's proposals for the new coastal path on the Isle of Wight. Belinda Walters, the CLA's Regional Director for the Isle of Wight, Sarah Slade, the CLA's National Access Advisor, and James Attrill led the round table event.

Sarah Slade presented an overview of the proposals being put forward under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, as well as the process involved. Attendees were then given a chance to discuss their property and potential issues with Sarah directly.

Sarah Slade told the audience: "In our work across the country we see how coastal access is being implemented and this provides useful knowledge and experience which we can use to help CLA members understand how coastal access might affect their own situations. We are seeing, in particular, different types of solutions - according to circumstance - for estuaries, parks, and areas of high environmental importance."

Spreading room secures a margin of land associated with the path and where the path does not run along the coastline some land between the path and the coast will be designated spreading room, Mr Attrill told the meeting.

The land will be considered open access for the public to enjoy as they see fit, but this does not include camping or caravanning. Arable land and domestic gardens gain exemptions but permanent pasture or amenity land does not. There will be temporary exemptions for fields containing calving cattle or bulls, but in principle the arrival of the coastal path will mean that members of the public can enter non-exempted land for the purposes of enjoyment, either in conjunction with access to the coast or otherwise.



Where the coast is subject to erosion, there is a new principle of “roll-back” - this means that should the path become unusable due to erosion, the path will move with the coastline to the next most appropriate route, taking into account natural or man-made features such as housing.

Letters to landowners and tenants will be issued by Natural England in July to make them aware of the process. If you would like to discuss how the proposals may affect you, contact James Attrill at BCM or the CLA’s South East office.

Photo: Belinda Walters (left) and Sarah Slade of the CLA, together with James Attrill of BCM, address the Isle of Wight coastal path seminar.

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For further information, please contact James Attrill, Rural Consultancy, Isle of Wight office.
Call: +44(0)1983 828 800 Email: iow@bcm.co.uk

