



A guide to using
Seaford Beach
& inshore waters





Introduction

This guide provides information about Seaford Beach and the inshore waters for visitors and local residents. Seaford has volunteer lifeguards who patrol the beach at weekends and public holidays from 1 May to 30 September from 10am to 6pm. They can be seen in their distinctive uniforms on foot, quad bikes, rescue boards, boats or manning static posts on the beach.

Seaford Beach is a rural beach, as opposed to a resort beach, and as such the lifeguards are not always on duty. It is a steeply shelving beach which means that the water gets deep very quickly and users should exercise caution in the water.

The water quality in Seaford Bay is regularly checked by the Environment Agency and the results are published weekly. In recent years Seaford Bay has regularly had water recorded in the cleanest categories.

Seaford Bay has byelaws which control the use of the beach and the inshore waters. These byelaws relate to:

- the control of dogs on the beach and promenade, and
- the use of boats in the inshore waters.

A 200 metre zone from the low water mark on the shore is marked by a line of yellow buoys but weather conditions can sometimes move these and the line may not always be obvious. The restrictions however still apply.

The beach

The tidal movement in Seaford Bay travels parallel to the beach and someone in the water can be carried along the beach without being aware of it. It is very easy for people to become disorientated and lose the point where they entered the water. This is especially a problem if inflatables are being used.

Parents and guardians should always keep a close watch on their children. They should also note which way the wind is blowing. Great care should be taken if it is blowing from the beach towards the sea. Under these circumstances small inflatables should always be securely fastened to something or an adult. The waves on Seaford Beach may look exciting to play in but they can be very dangerous to the unwary or the weak swimmer. Even small waves are capable of knocking people over and rolling them around in the surf and causing injury.

When the tide goes out it can leave sandy patches which are inhabited by weaver fish. These are small fish that burrow into the sand and have sharp stinging spines on their backs. They are very difficult to see and very painful if stood on. The simple solution is to wear beach shoes when on the sandy areas. They do not burrow into the larger shingle. If you are stung, treat by soaking the foot in water as hot as you can stand.

Contact the lifeguards if they are on duty and they can assist with treatment. Weaver fish are normally found at the Newhaven end of the beach.

Jellyfish that sting are not usually found in Seaford Bay.



ABOVE Weaver Fish





Seaford is a seaside town, not a seaside resort. It doesn't have many of the things that our bigger neighbours have, such as a pier, or pavilion, arcade or funfair. What it does have is a friendly atmosphere and free on-street parking for two hours (although this may be reduced to 1 hour, so please read the signs).

There are shops for just about everything you need on a day out and the town is a short walk from the beach. If you are self-catering for a picnic on the beach there are supermarkets and numerous food shops, though not all will be open on a Sunday. There are several of good pubs in the town, many of which serve hot food all day. There are also restaurants, cafes and take-always of most varieties.

The Tourist Information Centre at 37 Church Street can supply information on a wider range of subjects than is provided in this booklet. Seaford Town Council offices, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Police Station are also located at this address.

Driving on the beach

With the exception of authorised vehicles, driving or parking on the promenade or beach is not permitted.

Kite flyers

Kite flyers are asked to exercise extreme caution when flying large kites as these are capable of causing serious injury when unexpectedly coming down. Kite lines have also been known to cause severe friction burns to other beach users.

Tombstoning

Tombstoning is the very dangerous activity of jumping from any high place into water. It gets its name from the fatalities that occur every year as a result.

DON'T DO IT – IT CAN KILL

Because water levels are always changing with the tides, what might have been safe in the morning may be fatal in the afternoon. The tidal range in Seaford can be up to 6.9 metres. This means that a short jump into plenty of water can later become a long drop into very shallow water, resulting in injury, paralysis or death. Jumping from Splash Point has the additional hazard of cuts from rusting metalwork. Waves can also decrease the depth of water.



Public rescue equipment

Lifebelts and ropes are kept in red boxes at regular intervals along the top of the beach from Splash Point in the east to Newhaven Harbour in the west. These items are only for use in an emergency. It is an offence to interfere with any public rescue equipment without reasonable excuse and is punishable with a fine of up to £500. Lewes District Council replaces a large number of lifebelts each year because of vandalism or theft. Remember, it may be you or your family that needs the services of that equipment in an emergency.





Flags on our beach

Red and yellow flags mean that Lifeguards are on duty and it is safe to swim between the flags.

A red flag means that it is hazardous to enter the water and it is unsafe for swimming.



An orange cone means that it is unsafe to use unpowered inflatables, rubber rings, airbeds and similar toys because the wind is blowing from the beach to the sea.

It is important to remember that flags will only be flown on Seaford Beach at weekends and public holidays from 1 May to 30 September and usually only between 10am to 6pm. At other times it is up to individual beach users to make their own decisions as to the suitability of the sea conditions for swimming.

When making those decisions it is always advisable to err on the side of caution.

Better safe than sorry

Scuba diving from the beach

In the interests of safety, scuba divers are asked to use a recognisable diving surface marker buoy when underwater anywhere in Seaford Bay. This should warn any water craft in the area that there are people underwater who may come to the surface suddenly.

When entering the water from the beach, divers should always leave someone on the shore to monitor their progress. The number of people entering the water should be logged to ensure that the same number return. The shore party should have the means of summoning the assistance of the emergency services should the need arise (a mobile phone or VHF radio).

Seaford Lifeguards

Seaford Lifeguards patrol the beach and inshore waters at weekends and public holidays from May to September (inclusive), usually between 10am and 6pm.

The lifeguards operate from a control room which is situated above Seaford Rugby Club at the Salts Recreation Ground and can be contacted by calling: **01323 895554** during their operational hours. The lifeguards also have a small base of operations just to the east of the Martello Tower. This is manned when sufficient staff are available for advice and minor first aid.

Seaford Lifeguards are all volunteers and give many hours to protecting the people who use the beach and inshore waters. On average the lifeguards, in the yellow shirts and the support team in red, perform in excess of 3,500 hours of duty in a summer season. That does not include all the hours of fitness and technical training they undergo throughout the year.



All Seaford lifeguards are trained to the National Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NBLQ) or are working towards it. The Lifeguards have their own training staff and run courses for members as required. The Support Team are trained in a variety of other skills to assist the lifeguards, such as first aid, resuscitation and boat handling.

All the members of Seaford Lifeguards are authorised by Lewes District Council to enforce the byelaws relating to boats and dogs and, if necessary, the gathering of evidence to assist the council in taking formal action.

If you would like to join Seaford Lifeguards or make a donation, contact The Honorary Secretary, Vivienne VandenBegin, Buddel Brook Cottage, 37 Sherwood Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 3EG.

Tel: 01323 492679 mobile: 07773 526473

email: secretary@seafordlifeguards.org



Local facilities



PARKING ON THE SEAFRONT IS FREE

The Salts Recreation Ground has a cafe, a children's playground, a skate park, tennis courts, pitch and putt golf, toilets plus Seaford Cricket Club, Seaford Rugby Club, The Base Youth drop-in Centre and the headquarters of Seaford Lifeguards.

There are also toilets at the Buckle Car Park and next to Martello Tower.

The Lifeguards have a small base near the Martello Tower.

There is a refreshments kiosk near Martello Tower and another opposite West View.

The Martello Tower and Museum are at the eastern end of the Beach.

There is a caravan and camping site at The Buckle end of Marine Parade.

Dog information



DOG BAN

On section of beach: (see map below)
from 1 May to 30 September



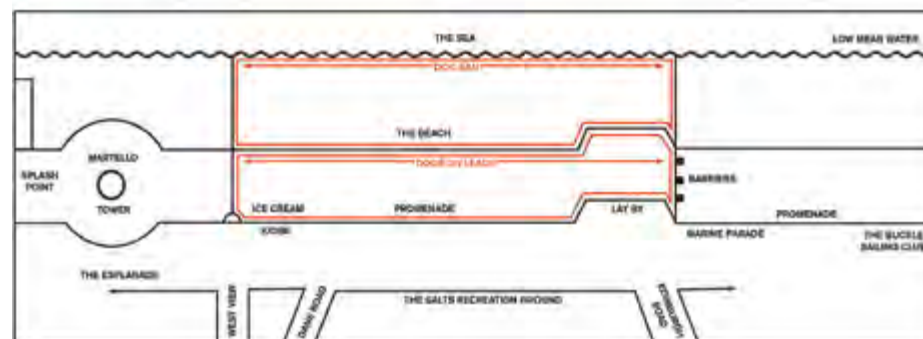
KEEP DOGS ON LEADS

Adjacent to dog ban beach only from
1 May to 30 September



CLEAN IT UP

Beach and promenade all year



Anglers

Angling is permitted on the entire length of Seaford Beach. Anglers are asked to be considerate to others and to be very careful with hooks and weights when casting, to avoid causing injury to themselves and other beach users.

The lifeguards get more calls for help to remove hooks from fishermen than they do from other members of the public.

You may encounter fishermen using nets close to the beach. Swimmers should be aware of this and, where possible, use another area.

Barbecues

Barbecues are permitted on the beach but users are requested to follow some simple rules.

- Do not light fires directly on the stones, use a proper barbecue. Disposable types are ideal.
- Do not cause any annoyance to other beach users including playing loud music.
- Be aware that stones can explode if they get too hot, make sure that barbecues are safely put out when you have finished with them.
- Do not put used hot barbecues into the litter bins.

Take all your rubbish off the beach when you leave. Don't leave broken glass on the beach. If you break any glass please pick up the pieces and put them into a bin on the promenade.



Chalk cliffs

Walkers on Seaford Head must always stay well back from the edge. The cliffs are made of chalk which is a very crumbly rock and frequently large pieces of it fall hundreds of feet to the beach. The point where it separates can be several metres from the edge with no visible crack beforehand.

KEEP AWAY FROM THE EDGE!

Jet Skis

Jet skis may be launched from the beach but this should be done to the west of Edinburgh Road where the byelaws allow diagonal movement from the beach at a maximum speed of 8 knots. Jet-ski users are the most complained about water users and must always conform to the byelaws (see pages 14-15 for byelaws and other information).



Sunburn

Prolonged exposure to strong sunlight will cause sunburn. The amount of time it takes to burn varies considerably depending on the strength of the light and an individual's skin type. Ten or fifteen minutes in strong sunlight can be enough to burn fair skin, particularly for young children.

The repeated application of a high factor sun cream (Sun Protection Factor 30 or above) will filter the harmful effects of the sun's rays whilst still allowing the benefits of exposure to sunlight. It is important to remember to put on sufficient cream and to reapply after swimming. If the skin appears reddened then the application of suntan cream is too late. The individual should seek shade and if the effects are severe, seek medical attention.

To prevent sunburn it is important to keep the body covered with suitable clothing. A hat can stop the ultra-violet light burning the scalp through thinning hair or partings and can also reduce glare into the eyes. It can also help prevent the brain overheating.

Identity bracelets

If you are taking children on to the beach there is always the possibility that you might become separated. To counter this, the lifeguards have a supply of waterproof plastic identity bracelets.

All you have to do is to put your child's name and your mobile phone number on the bracelet. If you become separated and your child comes to our attention we will be able to contact you.

THEY'RE FREE: *if you want some ask a Lifeguard*



Lost property

If you lose something on the beach when the lifeguards are on duty it is advisable to enquire if it has been handed in to them. A number of keys, cameras, mobile phones etc. are handed to the lifeguards who manage to restore them to their owners. If they can't be reunited they get handed in at Seaford Police Station as soon as is convenient.

Beach huts

The beach huts on the promenade at Seaford are mainly owner occupied but ownership of some has been retained by Seaford Town Council and these are leased to local residents. To be put on the waiting list for these contact Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, Sussex BN25 1HG or telephone **01323 894870**.

Kitesurfing and windsurfing

Kitesurfers and windsurfers are regarded as 'powered craft' for the purposes of the byelaws and as such can only come straight in and out of the beach at less than 8 knots. This is difficult even for experienced surfers to achieve. It is suggested that if a suitable starting point west of Edinburgh Road is used it will allow the wind or kitesurfer to go in or out from the beach at an angle without crossing into the safe swimming area. (See pages 14-15 for byelaws).

DON'T

- Swim after drinking alcohol
- Swim when the red flags are flying
- Swim in rough conditions
- Dive or jump from groins, rocks or piers
- Climb on groins, rocks or piers
- Take glass containers onto the beach
- Play loud music
- Cause any kind of nuisance or anti-social behaviour

DO

- Read the information notices
- Swim between the red and yellow flags
- Swim with a friend
- Watch over your children
- Know your capabilities

Naked sunbathing is not allowed on the beach



Seaside pleasure boat byelaws

These byelaws are made under Section 76 of the Public Health Act 1961 and Section 10 of the East Sussex Act 1981 and copies are available on request from Seaford Lifeguards. The period of operation of these byelaws is annually from 1 May to 30 September.

Seaford Bay is covered by the 'Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws' and this means the area from Splash Point to Edinburgh Road, and from the low-water spring tide mark out for 200 metres, is designated as a safe swimming zone. The seaward side of this zone is marked by a line of yellow buoys but tidal and weather conditions can push them out of place or wash them ashore but the zone still exists. Only hand powered craft are allowed in this zone.

The 200 metre area from Edinburgh Road westward to Newhaven permits powered boats to enter the zone but restricts them to a speed of less than 8 knots and craft must be used with due consideration for all people in that area.

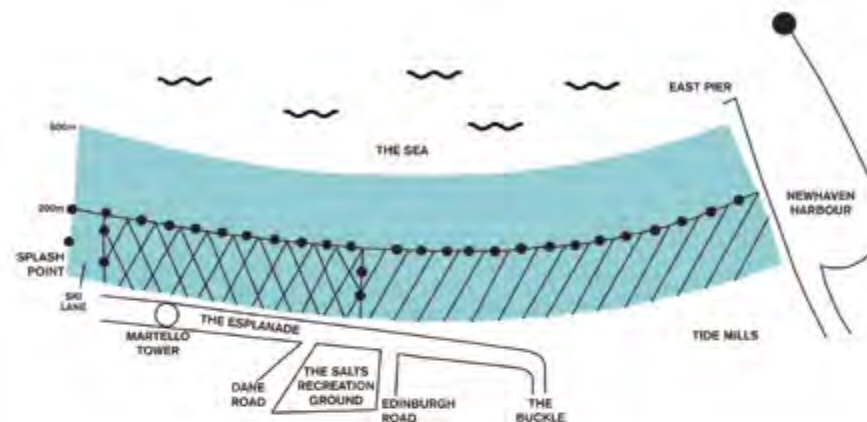
The exception to this allows powered craft to travel directly to sea beyond the buoys or to return to land from beyond the buoys at a speed NOT EXCEEDING 8 knots and with due regard to the safety of any person in that area.

Any person offending against these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale. This is currently £1,000.

At Splash Point there is a water-ski lane running parallel with Splash Point and on the western side. This allows powerboats to come into the beach and to go to sea whilst towing water skiers in excess of 8 knots.

Persistently offending craft and users are liable to be photographed along with any attendant equipment such as cars and trailers to assist Lewes District Council to identify and prosecute offenders.

IN FORCE FROM 1 MAY TO 30 SEPTEMBER



<p>Up to 500m from shore - all areas</p> <p>boats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not driven dangerously • driven with due care and attention • driven with consideration for bathers • efficiently silenced 	<p>BOATS includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing boats • Any other motor powered boat • Jet skis • Sailing boats • Yachts • Wind surfers • Any craft or board not propelled by hand
<p>Up to the marker buoys 200m from shore</p> <p>Boats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speed limit 8 knots 	
<p>Safe bathing area</p> <p>NO BOATS PERMITTED unless</p> <p>Hand propelled</p> <p>or</p> <p>Going directly from shore to sea or from sea to shore at a maximum speed of 8 KNOTS</p>	
<p>Ski Lane - no speed limit</p>	

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Seaford
Town
Council

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**In an emergency dial 999
and ask for the Coastguard**



Useful telephone numbers

Seaford Lifeguards	01323 492679
Sussex Police	01273 470101
Seaford Tourist Information	01323 897426
Seaford Museum	01323 898222
Seaford Town Council	01323 894870
Solent Coastguard	02392 552100
RSPCA	0300 1234999
Hospital (Brighton)	01273 696955
Hospital (Eastbourne)	01323 417400
Lewes District Council	01273 471600
Lewes District Council Pollution Hotline	01273 484340
National Coast watch Institute	0300 1111202
Newhaven Marina	01273 513881

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