

COASTWISE

HAPPISBURGH COASTAL TRANSITION PLAN

In 2025 to 2026, six 'coastal transition plans' were created for different places in North Norfolk.



To view the transition plans, including the one focusing on Happisburgh, please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/transition-plans

The plans are very thorough. They collate lots of background information and identify a wide range of place-specific actions that have been put forward as ways to prepare for coastal erosion. These are based on input from community events, investigations and meetings since 2024.

Recent discussions have prioritised these key actions for Happisburgh.

- Cliff-top water management
- Housing: Support for homeowners and new sites for affordable housing
- Maintaining beach access
- Improve media representation of Happisburgh
- Maximise use of existing rock armour
- Re-use of Beacon House site
- Recording and preparing St Mary's church for the future
- Preparing the graveyard for future change
- Improvements to Manor Field
- Relocating and upgrading public car park and associated facilities

Other local actions are already underway, such as the relocation of the car park and associated facilities.

Your views are important. More information is available on these posters with a space to comment or you can send us your thoughts by email: coastwise@north-norfolk.gov.uk



**NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



**Environment
Agency**

PRIORITY ACTION: CLIFF-TOP WATER MANAGEMENT

AIM

Trial cliff-top water and drainage management to reduce its influence on coastal erosion.

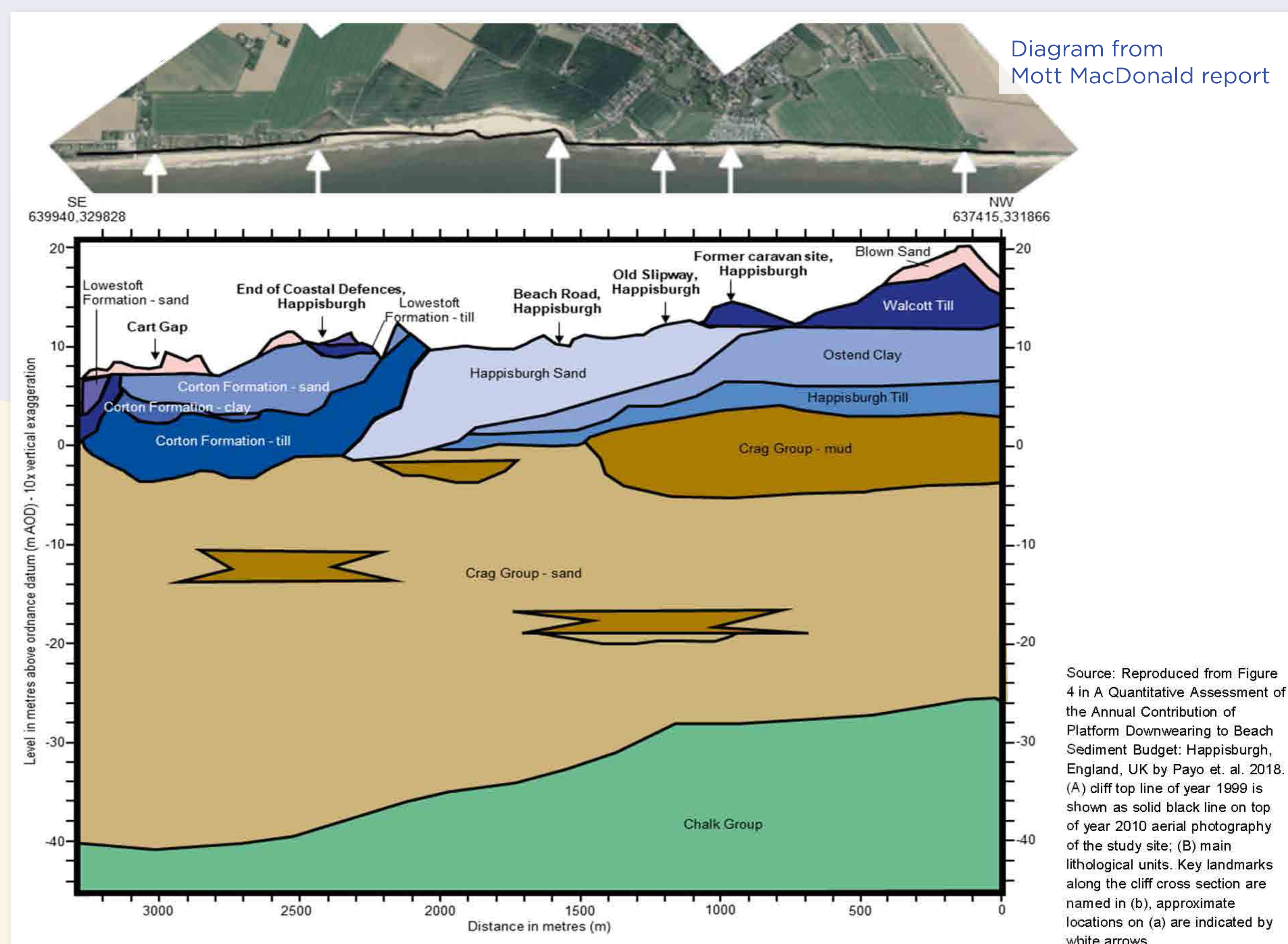
WORK DONE TO DATE

- An investigation was commissioned into '*Understanding water and cliff failure at Happisburgh*'. Scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/water-and-cliff-failure-happisburgh
- The report explains that it is unclear if managing cliff-top water will effectively reduce erosion rates. Further work is needed to understand how these might have wider effects or unintended consequences on surface water flooding in the village.
- It also identifies possible actions that could assist and be trialled.



NEXT STEPS

- The liaison group working with Coastwise has identified some possible next steps. This includes working with a local landowner to explore the possibility of a drainage scheme.



IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: LOCAL HOUSING

AIM

Support homeowners at risk of coastal erosion and share learning.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Support has been provided to property owners most immediately at risk via grants for professional services, property purchase options and demolition management.
- Learning from this has helped longer-term options to be investigated, assessed and developed with national input for wider application ('Coastal Home Assurance Scheme')
- Coastwise commissioned a national investigation with partners and industry representatives on the possibility of coastal erosion insurance. It has found that currently there is nowhere in the world that insures for coastal erosion. It is not deemed to be viable for England either, as a very significant Government policy change would be required which is highly unlikely. The report will be made available soon on the Coastwise webpage, please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise-blog



NEXT STEPS

- Coastwise is preparing to fund a trial of the Coastal Home Assurance Scheme to support further homeowners at coastal erosion risk. More information will be shared with communities and eligible households over the coming year.

AIM

Identify sites for affordable housing in the long run to attract families to the village.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Sites are being investigated in Happisburgh as locations for affordable housing to replace that lost to coastal erosion.
- Housing Association has developed a scheme in Happisburgh for affordable housing - awaiting further information from developer.

NEXT STEPS

- Community to input ideas for potential affordable housing sites in the new Local Plan - via drop-in events, Parish Council, Coastwise liason group or other means.
- Coastwise can facilitate community representatives to engage with NNDC housing team to discuss land for affordable housing.

IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY, PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: MAINTAINING BEACH ACCESS

AIM

Maintenance of beach access, in future via current ramp or preferred alternative.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- In the short term, North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) have a rolling consent for recutting the ramp. This was most recently done in May 2026 following a period of closure due to damage during the winter.
- Coastwise commissioned a study to identify and assess alternative access options that could be considered for beach access at Happisburgh.
To read the report please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/happisburgh-beach-access-report
- The report explored a number of options for the rock bund, including changes to height, and depth, or splitting the current arrangement an placing in front of specific locations, for example at the base of the ramp or at base of the cliff closest to the churchyard.
- NNDC coastal engineers have carefully considered all options provided in the report. They have agreed that the current location and orientation of the ramp is the most effective and cost-efficient option going forward.



NEXT STEPS

- Changes in ramp condition can be reported directly to: coastal.management@north-norfolk.gov.uk



IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: IMPROVE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF HAPPISBURGH

AIM

Encourage a more positive media representation of Happisburgh to attract families and other potential permanent residents.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Coastwise is investigating commissioning a film on Happisburgh to demonstrate the positive benefits of coastal adaptation, the resilient future that the village has and put the coastal risk into perspective.
- Work to redevelop the Happisburgh heritage trail with the Norfolk Museums Service is underway.
- North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and Coastwise have managed media engagement around property demolitions as much as possible to de-sensationalise coverage and accurately inform audiences about coastal change.

NEXT STEPS

- Community to rework the Happisburgh village vision statement (from the existing transition plan) to better reflect the identity and aspirations of the village.
- NNDC Communications team have offered to provide a guidance session(s) on media handling and social media. This could be done with the Coastwise liaison group.

**IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:**

PRIORITY ACTION: MAXIMISE USE OF EXISTING ROCK ARMOUR

AIM

Re-use existing rock in the most effective way possible.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Rock armour has been in place for a number of years and repositioned, when possible, as required.
- Coastwise commissioned a study to investigate the effectiveness of the current rock placement at Happisburgh and explore alternative options to reuse the existing rock to maximise its effectiveness in slowing erosion. To read the report please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/happisburgh-beach-access-report
- Other than leaving in current location, options identified include continuing to roll the rock back as it is, to shorten but bolster the height around the end of Beach Road and the beach access, or to split the rock and place in different locations, etc.
- The possibility of fundraising for additional rocks has recently been proposed by some local people.



NEXT STEPS

- Community to liaise with NNDC Coastal Management team regarding preferred options. This can be supported by Coastwise via the Parish Council or the Coastwise liaison group.
- Fundraising for additional rocks is outside the remit of Coastwise, however NNDC can facilitate advice if a local group forms to investigate and pursue this option. A community lead would need to take forward this idea and explore feasibility and options with NNDC Coastal Management team.



Rock bund at Happisburgh

IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: RE-USE OF BEACON HOUSE SITE

AIM

Establish a community garden and potential alternative route for the coastal path.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- The site of the former Beacon House on Beach Road has been purchased by NNDC.
- Due to coastal erosion risk, the property and outbuildings have been safely demolished.
- The mature garden has been preserved, and contains established trees, shrubs and wildlife. No maintenance or clearance has been carried out.
- There has been some interest expressed in making the garden accessible to the community, as a garden for public enjoyment and benefit. The site could also provide a potential alternative route for the coastal path.

NEXT STEPS

- These ideas can be progressed via a local working group. A group will need to be formed to advance the management and maintenance of the site.
- Coastwise can provide some support through a grant, other support and required legal advice.
- A community led ecological survey of the site would also be a beneficial starting point. Coastwise can provide some contacts for this.



IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: RECORDING & PREPARING ST MARY'S CHURCH FOR THE FUTURE

AIM

Start the process of capturing living records of St Mary's church well in advance of it being at immediate risk of erosion.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- A digital heritage capture and scan of the church was commissioned by Coastwise and completed by Wessex Archaeology in 2026 to digitally 'preserve' and be able to share the experience of this significant building. To learn more about this project, please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/digital-heritage-project



Wessex Archaeology working with Happisburgh Primary School pupils

- Local people were invited to be involved in the project and many people visited during the open days to join in with recording aspects of the church using lidar scanners and record their memories.
- A digital model is being created. When it is finished, it will be possible to explore the church, hear stories from the community, watch and listen to the ringing of the bells, see a church service and hear the organ being played. You can also view the local children's 3D scans of features from around the church.

NEXT STEPS

- The heritage capture and scan outputs from the work led by Wessex Archaeology will be shared online soon, including some short film reports about the work.
- St Mary's Church in Happisburgh will also be part of an upcoming study by Historic England looking at long term management and decommissioning of historic buildings; Happisburgh one of the many case studies being looked at - timing to be confirmed. Coastwise will work closely with Historic England and support them to maximise local engagement with this when the project starts (tbc).

IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: PREPARING THE GRAVEYARD FOR FUTURE CHANGE

AIM

Prepare for the future loss of site to coastal erosion decades in advance to enable theological, pastoral and practical aspects to be thoroughly considered in time for necessary decisions and actions to be taken.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- The '*Graveyards Transition Options*' investigation was commissioned, and the report published to support Parochial Church Council (PCC) and Diocese, as well as other places outside north Norfolk with similar sites at risk in their planning and decision-making. To read the report, please scan the QR code or visit www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/coastwise/graveyards-report
- Coastwise is supporting the PCC and Diocese to explore future options of the graveyard, in discussion with the Parish Council.



NEXT STEPS

- Creation of public information materials and a public event/s.
- Ground Penetrating Radar survey to be completed in the autumn to better understand the layout of the graveyard.



Happisburgh church and graveyard

IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: RELOCATING & UPGRADING PUBLIC CAR PARK & ASSOCIATED FACILITIES

AIM

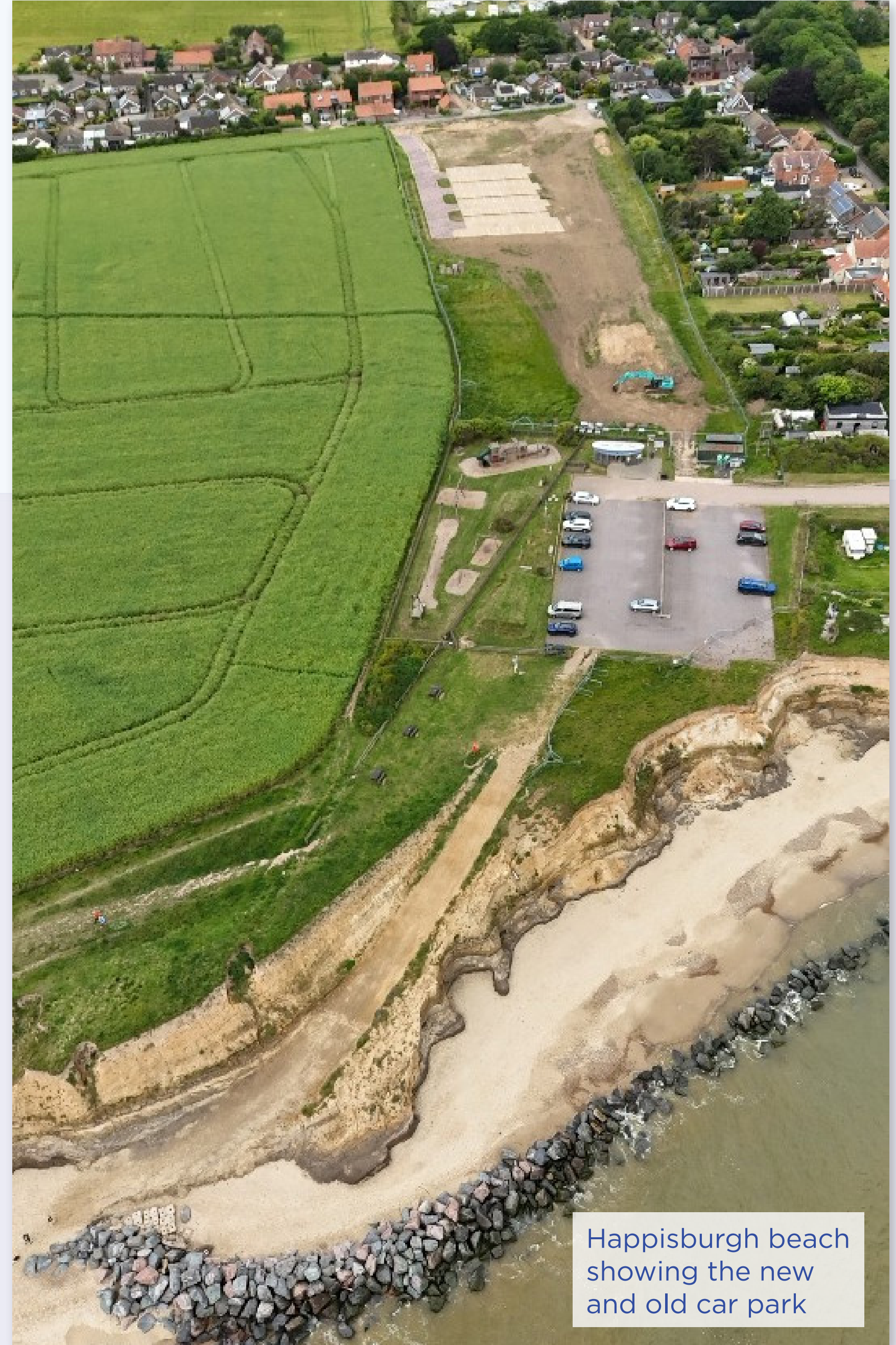
Ensure ongoing and upgraded provision of public car parking and associated facilities close to the beach for the benefit of local people and visitors.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Relocation of car park commissioned. Currently awaiting highways approval following amendments to meet additional community requests.
- Second submission of plans includes replacement toilets, play area and installation of EV charging points.
- Agreed lease with Parish Council for future management including funds from car park to be set aside for coastal management at Happisburgh.

NEXT STEPS

- Complete construction, connect to highways, sign lease and deliver second phase (new toilets, playpark). Landscaping to follow during planting window.
- Repurpose existing toilet block for information, seating, and other uses.



IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE:

PRIORITY ACTION: IMPROVEMENTS TO MANOR FIELD

AIM

Maximise community benefits arising from access to Manor Field.

WORK DONE TO DATE

- Coastwise has bought land and completed ecological surveys to better understand the flora and fauna on this site and consider how biodiversity can be supported.
- NNDC have completed a site walk over to identify issues and arranged for the safe demolition of derelict buildings.
- Past events have established the value of this site to the community as accessible green space for recreation. Interest has been expressed in the potential for other uses.
- An information board has been acquired and will be installed in the near future, which will include updates about Coastwise activities locally.

NEXT STEPS

- Ideas such as the installation of some benches have been put forward and will be considered with the Coastwise liaison group. Where possible, Coastwise will facilitate taking these ideas forward.
- If you have ideas about improvements for this space, please add them below.
- Please provide information about any issues with the site or subsequent ideas about its use to Coastwise: coastwise@north-norfolk.gov.uk. If possible, please include a photograph and use a What3words reference or pinned location.



IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PRIORITY,
PLEASE ADD THEM HERE: