

# HEALTHY SELFIE TRAIL

GEOPARK  
JOURNEYS

## PAIGNTON HARBOUR TO PRESTON SANDS AND BACK

2.5 miles



Use the what3words codes to follow a circular route (or follow the map and directions) and learn some extraordinary facts about the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark along the way.



*Why not take some selfies (we've suggested a few picturesque spots along the way) and tag us at #healthyselfie, #extraordinarygeopark and #englishriviera? We would love to see your photos. Have fun!*

These trails have been created with the help of Living Options to be as accessible to as many people as possible. With this in mind, we point out parking (and public transport options), toilets and Changing Places Toilets (where available). We have also tried to use wide and flat walkways and avoid any areas that tend to get overly busy or loud.

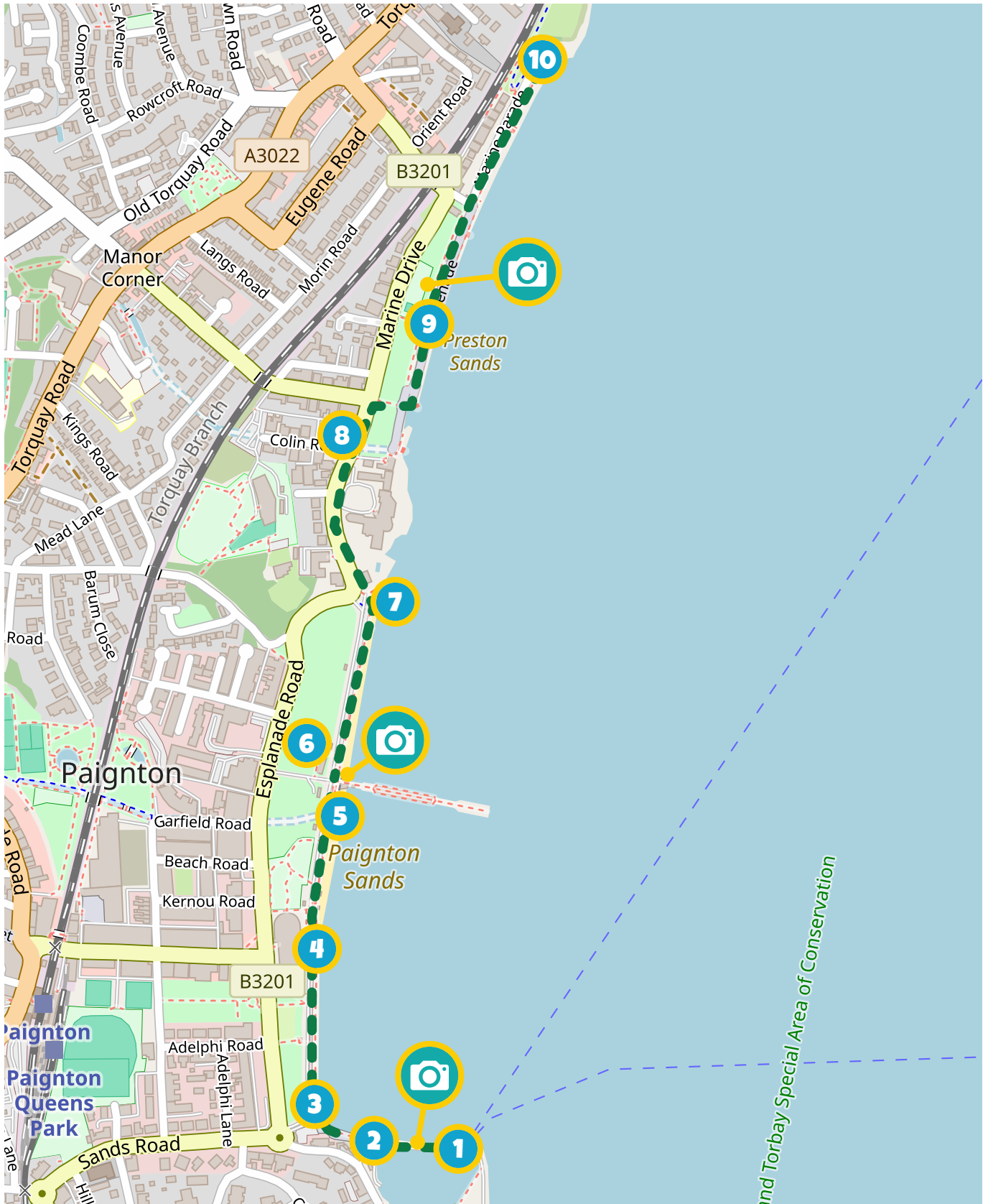
This route doesn't cross any roads and has a number of benches on the route to allow people to rest along the way.



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# PAIGNTON HARBOUR TO PRESTON SANDS AND BACK

2.5 MILES



This walk starts outside Harbour Light restaurant (what3words: crass.potato.gives). There is some free parking alongside the harbour, as well as Roundham Car Park (Cliff Road, TQ4 6DH). There is also pay and display parking along Paignton Seafront. If you are travelling by bus, please see the Stagecoach website for route information. Paignton Train Station is around 15-minutes' walk away. See the GW Railway website for train times.

1. With the restaurant on your left, walk down the side of the harbour until you reach the harbour entrance. (**what3words: starts.circle.port**)

### EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

The harbour you see today is a bit of a hidden gem in Paignton and dates back to 1837. It was formally used to land not only fish, but also building materials including stone and timber, as well as coal. The harbour was also used to export cabbages, grown locally and exported right across the UK. Indeed, the local residents gained the cruel nickname 'Flat-polls' after a well-known local variety. The other big export was Paignton cider and at one time it was estimated the harbour was selling up to 40,000 hogsheads a year or around 18 million pints.



### PAIGNTON HARBOUR

2. Retrace your steps back to the start and then with the restaurant on your right, walk under the arch.

### EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Harbour Light was once a fish cellar and net store, one of many cellars, fish houses and fishermen's cottages that would have one been found in this area known as Rowneham in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. What is now the public toilets on the corner of the harbour by Mollys Café was once the coastguard station, where customs men would keep an eye out for smugglers. The room above the arch at Harbour Light was used in the film *The System* that was filmed across Torbay in the 1960's. It was where the character of 'Tinker' played by Oliver Read lived in the film and you can find stills from the movie upstairs in the restaurant.

3. From here you can either follow the lower promenade (just above the beach) although some people may prefer to follow the pavement running parallel to Paignton green, especially at high tide and with rough sea conditions. Continue in the direction of Paignton Pier.

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Paignton Sands has been named the Prettiest Pink Beach in the UK and the second prettiest in the world, beating beaches in Bermuda, the Bahamas and Barbados. The terracotta-pink tinge is created by iron minerals in the sand oxidizing with the air, and when the tide goes out and the sand is still wet, it creates a remarkable natural mirror that reflects Paignton Pier, giving it a extraordinary pink hue. It's one of the many reasons that Paignton has always been so popular with families, alongside the shallow waters that make for really safe bathing. At the far end towards Preston Sands, you will also find some of the best rockpools in the Bay and in amongst the colourful seaweed, you might also spot small crabs, sea slugs, periwinkles or shrimps.

4. When you pass under Shoreline restaurant, you will find a Changing Places toilet (**what3words: repair.bands.fault**).



*PRINCESS PIER*

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

To the right of Paignton Pier is a spring that can be seen bubbling out onto the sands on a low tide. It's an outflow from a stream that runs through Victoria Park and was dubbed the Devil's Whirlpool in days gone by. It's certainly popular with sea birds who use it as a source of water, especially Herring Gulls, Black-backed Gulls, Shags and Cormorants. Herring Gulls are large white birds, with pale grey backs and black chevron designs on their tails. Meanwhile, as the name suggests, Black-backed Gulls are white with black backs and similar chevrons. The cormorant family has two members, the Cormorants and the Shag. The latter has a narrower beak and less yellow around the face.

5. Continue to Paignton Pier, where it is possible to take an optional walk to the end, with paths to the side of the main covered amusement arcade. Please note, the pier can be quite noisy due to the sound of the machines and may not be suitable to those sensitive to loud noises and bright lights.
6. There are more public pay toilets directly opposite the pier on Paignton Green. There is a disabled toilet directly overlooking the green.

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Paignton Pier was first opened in 1879, financed by local barrister Arthur Hyde Dendy. It stretches 240 metres out to sea and once had a grand pavilion on the seaward end, that was destroyed by a fire in 1919. It was also the stop-off point for paddle steamers travelling between Torquay and Brixham. Remarkably, it also once contained a small zoo with real lions, while a scenic railway used to travel the length of the pier, turning into a ghost train towards the end of the route. Today you will find Jurassic Dinosaur Adventure Golf at the end of the pier, as well as amazing views out across the Bay and the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark.

7. Continue along the promenade until you reach the “pink house” at the end (**what3words: then.give.calls**). Follow the pavement along the road and continue on past the Redcliff Hotel towards Preston. For those with no mobility issues, it is possible to walk around the front of the hotel on a low tide.

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

The railway arrived in Paignton in 1859, which linked the town with Torquay and on up to London, giving birth the town’s reputation as a family tourism resort. To celebrate, a traditional Paignton Pudding was baked, which resembles a huge Spotted Dick. It weighed one-and-a-half tons, had a circumference of 13 foot 6 inches (4 metres) at the base and 5 foot on top and was so heavy that a team of eight horses were needed to pull it onto Paignton Green. It was intended that 850 poor parishioners and more than 300 railway navvies would sit at tables to eat the pudding, but only after they have devoured the main meal of bread, meat and unlimited cider. However, around 18,000 people had turned up all wanting some pudding a drunken riot broke out, with the dessert ripped to pieces and devoured until not a morsel was left.

8. Just pass the hotel by the zebra crossing (**what3words: harp.horn.dash**) turn right and walk towards the seafront. You can then continue following the shoreline with the sea on your right (and beach huts on your left during the summer months).

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

The Redcliffe was originally built in the 1850s by a retired army officer called Colonel Robert Smith, who has served with the Bengal Engineers in India. A talented artist and architect, he designed Redcliffe Towers himself in 1852, with the mansion built in stages between 1855 and 1864. His grand design boasted 23 bedrooms, a billiard room, a conservatory with stunning sea views and an underground plunge bath reached by a tunnel leading from the main house. The building was later owned by Paris Singer, heir to the Singer Sewing Machine fortune and then became a hotel in 1904. It is about to undergo a massive multi-million pound development to transform it into a five-star hotel and the 'ultimate celebration of luxury'.

9. Continue right along the promenade (**what3words: grow.makes.coffee**) until you reach Marine Parade and then continue along with the sea still on your right.

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

If you look across the water towards Brixham, the flat headland you can see in the distance is Berry Head guarding the Bay. This limestone headland, which has been massively quarried over the years, is a National Nature Reserve and a Key Geopark Site. If you were to stand here at night, you would see the flashing of the lighthouse, which has a range of 20 nautical miles and some very interesting claims to fame. It is apparently both the shortest in Great Britain (being just five metres tall) but also the highest at 58 metres above sea level. It was also once believed to be the deepest, as the optic was originally turned by a weight falling down a 45 metres deep shaft.

10. Continue right until you reach the red cliffs (**what3words: carry.after.vines**)
11. Retrace your route back towards Paignton, past the colourful beach huts along Marine Parade and Preston Green. There are even public toilets in the shape of beach huts halfway along the green.

## EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

There are 325 huts along Preston Green and a further 113 along Marine Parade to the north. The origins of beach huts can be traced back almost 200 years to a time when doctors began recommending sea water as a cure for a variety of ailments. Bathing machines on wheels that could be lowered down the beach to the sea were replaced with changing tents, and you can still spot some of the metal hooks these were attached to along the promenade. The First World War saw beaches closed from 1914, with the barbed wire etc not removed until 1919. It was around this time that some enterprising locals converted the abandoned bathing machines, removing their wheels to make huts. These were painted in the bright colours we still find today.



## BEACH HUTS AS A BACKDROP

- Retrace your route back to the start. You can go anti-clockwise around Paignton Green and follow the pavement past the hotels along Paignton seafront. Arrive back at harbour Light Restaurant (**what3words: crass.potato.gives**).

# # Walk End!



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