

# Sand and Sea Defences

## Factsheet



### Why is sand put onto the beach?

The sea wall and sand together form the sea defence. The sand prevents the sea from undermining the sea wall, and also provides an attractive amenity area for residents and visitors. If the sand was not there, the sea would wash up against the sea wall and remove its foundations causing it to be unstable. The cost of a new sea wall is greater than the cost of pumping sand onto the beach.

### Who owns the sea defences?

The Environment Agency is responsible for the fabric of the sea wall, and ensuring that it is maintained, however ownership is retained by the owner of the land on which the sea wall is built.

### Is it a sea wall or a promenade?

Both. The Environment Agency allows people to access the sea wall, providing that they are not causing damage to the structure of the wall. Its primary function however is to provide a defence against sea breach, and it is not a public right of way.

### Who is responsible for sand clearance?

The Environment Agency is responsible for clearing sand away from the sea doors (also known as flood gates), and the landowner is responsible for clearing sand that has blown onto the sea wall. In most cases this is the responsibility of East Lindsey District Council, although there are a number of areas along the coast where this responsibility falls on local businesses.

### Who is responsible for keeping the roads clear when covered in sand?

Lincolnshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, is responsible for maintaining adopted roads/footways and keeping them safe. This includes the clearing of sand when it becomes a danger to users. However there is a limited amount of resources available and this may mean that on some occasions parts of the network may be inaccessible. Other than the Highways, it is the landowner's responsibility to clear.

### Why has the problem of sand on the sea wall/promenade become more of a problem in recent years?

As the sea levels rise, more sand is required to maintain the integrity of the sea wall, and to

provide a robust defence against the sea. The beach nourishment programme has been in place since 1994, and is primarily there to protect the sea wall.

### **Why is the sand pumped so high up against the sea wall?**

The sand needs to be high as this is the first line of defence against the sea. Earlier this year, when we had unprecedented weather conditions, the sand did its job, and the sea never reached the sea wall.

### **Why doesn't the Environment Agency put the groynes back in place rather than pumping in sand every year?**

Putting groynes in would be a one off cost, and would help to protect the sea wall. But the sand would wash away back into the sea, leaving the underlying clay. The lovely sandy beach would disappear and this would have a negative effect on businesses, visitors and residents.

### **Why doesn't the Environment Agency use rock armour rather than pumping in sand every year?**

As above. Putting rock armour in place would be a one off cost, and so annual spend would be reduced, but the sand would wash away, and the beach would disappear. The Environment Agency is going to begin a consultation with residents on what the options are for the future maintenance of the sea defences later this year.

If you would like to put your ideas forward, please contact the Environment Agency.

### **What are the priorities of local agencies in respect of sand clearance?**

East Lindsey District Council focuses its resources on keeping emergency access and the most heavily used walkways, clear of sand. However there is a limited amount of resource available and this may mean that on some occasions parts of the walkway will be inaccessible to non-pedestrians.

### **Why is grass being planted on parts of the beach?**

This grass is called Marram grass, which is found on sand dunes. The grass grows into the sand and its root system binds the sand together, so when the wind blows, the sand is less likely to move. It is one way of reducing the amount of wind blown sand going over the sea wall.

### **Is it realistic for us to expect the promenade/ sea wall to be accessible and clear all year around?**

No. Resources will be put into keeping the sea wall as accessible as possible from the end of March until October. Resources are not available to provide access over the winter months when the wind blown sand is at its worst. It costs a lot of money to clear the sand, and often the sand has blown back immediately after it has been cleared. We do not believe that this is a responsible way to spend public money.

### **I have a beach hut at the beach, why don't you clear the sand away from my door?**

Whilst we try our hardest to keep access clear of sand from the front of the beach huts on East Lindsey District Council land, there have been occasions where we have inadvertently caused damage to the chalet steps. The task is so great that often it cannot be done without causing some damage, but we try to minimise this by leaving a small area around the beach hut to avoid damaging your property. Be prepared for some sand to be around your chalet when you visit. It may be helpful to keep a shovel at your chalet to assist with access on occasion.

### **Why has mesh been put up on the railings, is it really necessary?**

The green mesh has been put up to try and reduce the amount of windblown sand coming over the sea wall. In other areas it has proven to reduce the sand by 40%. We have to try and use as many ways as we can to reduce the problem.

### **Who should we contact to report problems with sand?**

To report damage to the sea wall or sea gates call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506.

To report any other issues with sand or litter, call East Lindsey District Council on 01507 601111.