

National Trust Press Release

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Images available (see below)

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National Trust launches coastal appeal in bid to buy Bantham beach and Avon estuary

A multi-million pound fundraising appeal is being launched today by the National Trust in a bid to raise money to acquire Bantham beach and the Avon estuary in south Devon [1].

One of the finest estuaries in South West England and the best surfing beach in south Devon, this coastline is a place that has captured the hearts and minds of generations of holiday-makers and local people.

If the appeal is successful the Trust would maintain the high-quality access enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people every year and would work hard to further enhance the landscape along the estuary as a home for nature.

Joel Wakeling, a National Trust ranger, who is from south Devon said, "When I think of Bantham I think of the golden sand and rolling Atlantic waves. Somewhere that I spent a lot of time when I was growing-up; it's a place that means so much to so many.

"As someone whose heart and soul is connected to this very special stretch of coastline it would be amazing if the National Trust could raise the money to buy Bantham beach and Avon estuary.

"I would then know that my children and children's children would be able to have the same experiences that I had growing up, and that everyone will be able to enjoy this special place forever."

Thanks to the generosity of donors and legators the Trust is able to commit more than £4 million from its Neptune Coastline Campaign [2] towards the purchase of Bantham beach and Avon estuary. Based on estimates from the selling agents that still leaves a gap of £2.6 million, which the National Trust now urgently needs to raise.

The National Trust cares for 742 miles of coastline across England, Wales and Northern Ireland – including beaches, cliffs, islands, sand dunes and estuaries. Its most recent high-profile acquisition was in 2012 when it raised money to buy a one-mile stretch of the White Cliffs of Dover.

Mark Harold, Director for the South West, said: "This is a magical place, a true jewel on the South West coast. We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to permanently secure and

protect the landscape of one of the least spoilt coastal sites and secure its future for everyone to enjoy.”

“If we don’t raise the money then the future of Bantham beach and the Avon estuary is uncertain and this stretch of coastline might one day be disrupted by inappropriate management or development.”

The South West Coast Path runs along this stretch of coast at Bantham, so a level of public access is assured. However, the beach access is via a private road and if the National Trust was not successful in its acquisition, public benefit could be significantly reduced if a purchaser sought exclusive access and closure of the car park.

Mark Harold, added, “After long and hard consideration we have decided not to put in a bid for the cottages on the estate as the National Trust’s core purpose is not about being a social landlord.

“We have to make difficult choices to ensure that we use our limited resources where they will provide the greatest public benefit but we will seek to work with local residents and the wider community. We would also hope to work closely with any potential purchasers of the village.”

The estate at Bantham has been in the same family for generations. Bantham has been managed very sensitively to protect the unspoilt nature of the Avon estuary and surrounding countryside.

Inappropriate commercialisation has been avoided to create a feeling of charm which has attracted families over many generations, as well as water sports enthusiasts and those wanting to explore the beach and surrounding coast.

There are four easy ways for members of the public to support this appeal:

1. Donate online at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lovebantham>
2. Call 0344 800 1895 to pledge your support
3. Send a text message to support the appeal – please text BANT14 followed by the amount you’d like to give to 70070 (So to give £5, it’s BANT14 £5)
4. Donation cheques, made payable to ‘National Trust’, with ‘Bantham appeal’ written on the back of the cheque, can be posted to: National Trust, Supporter Services Centre, National Trust, PO Box 574, Rotherham S63 3FH

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For further information and images please contact:

Mike Collins, Senior Press Officer on 07900 138419 or

mike.collins@nationaltrust.org.uk

Shona Owen, South West Communications Consultant on 07769 924061 or

shona.owen@nationaltrust.org.uk

Notes to editors:

[1] The selling agents have indicated a guide price for Bantham beach and the Avon estuary of £6.25 million. With initial conservation and management costs the total amount required to purchase Bantham beach and Avon estuary based on the current guide price would be £7.2 million of which £4.6 million will be funded from the Trust's Neptune Campaign, leaving a fundraising shortfall of at least £2-£3 million.

[2] The National Trust is a charity and relies on the generous support of donors and legators who give to the Neptune Campaign in order to help save and care for some of the country's most beautiful and vulnerable stretches of coastal land. This appeal to buy Bantam beach and Avon estuary is one of our flagship fundraising projects for the 50th anniversary of Neptune. The National Trust's Enterprise Neptune Appeal was launched in 1965 with three aims; to alert people to the pressures facing undeveloped coast, to raise funds and to acquire unspoilt coastline for permanent preservation and public access.

- The National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 742 miles of coastline and hundreds of historic places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more information and ideas for great value family days out go to: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>
- National Trust ownership of coastline ensures that, wherever possible, public access is allowed and in many cases increased – not always easy to achieve when balanced against the needs of fragile environments. The Trust has a continuing programme of footpath creation, repair and improvement, which includes provision for disabled visitors, the very young and for those interested in all aspects of the coast and its attractions.
- Directions: follow signs to Bantham from A381 Aveton Gifford to Totnes Road or from the roundabout on the A379 connecting Churchstow and Aveton Gifford, Bantham, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3AN.