

## Five walks in Unst

to get you out & about to improve  
physical health and mental  
wellbeing

Unst Walks

## PEERIE WANDERS

'Peerie Wanders' has been designed and developed by NHS Shetland Health Improvement Department in collaboration with Shetland Islands Council. This booklet contains a number of walks to get you out and about to help you on your journey to become more active.

## WHY WALKING?



Walking is a great way to be active and stay healthy—it's not surprising that walking is the most popular leisure activity in Scotland. Walking is free, it's good for the environment, and is suitable for almost everyone. You don't have to be fit to start with—you just have to start! If you pick up your pace, you'll get more health benefits. Taking notice of the natural world also helps with our wellbeing.

## WHY BE MORE ACTIVE?

The human body needs to be active to function well, but modern living means that most of us are not active enough. Being regularly active can:

- Increase our energy.
- Strengthen our muscles.
- Lower our risk of heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis.
- Improve our mood and wellbeing.
- Help us sleep better.
- Improve our self-esteem and confidence.



## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BE ACTIVE?

The physical activity guidelines recommend that we should aim to do at least two and a half hours of moderate activity each week, which can be broken up into 30 minutes, 5 days a week. Walking, and any other activity that raises our heart rate and makes us feel warmer, counts towards this. Remember any amount of activity is beneficial and something is better than doing nothing.



## GETTING STARTED

The walks vary in length from 1km-5km and are designed for all levels of ability and fitness. The routes may have a red route and blue route: the red route is the shorter route; the blue route gives you an added progression if you want a challenge.

### Tips to help you get started:

- Start with the shortest walk at a pace that feels comfortable for you – don't worry if you can't complete it, just do what suits you.
- As you walk more and become fitter, begin walking at a more brisk pace to get more physical health benefits.
- Keep a note of your walks in the diary at the end of this booklet – you can record how you felt during the walk, how long it took you to complete and any other reflections.



## PEERIE WANDERS - TOP TIPS

- Wear comfortable sensible footwear, particularly if the terrain is uneven.
- Encourage a friend, family member or colleague to join you.
- If walking alone, tell someone where you're going and how long you plan to be.
- If the visibility is poor, wear reflective clothing.
- Check the weather forecast before you go and dress appropriately.



## Look out for Wildlife

On all these peerie wanders, there is the possibility to see a variety of wildlife. Some walks have more opportunities than others, depending on the area, and they will vary throughout the seasons.

The greatest variety will be in the spring and summer when most wildflower species bloom and resident bird species are joined by summer migrants. Although autumn and winter are quieter times of year, there is still plenty to look for. We have provided prompts in each walk of the wildlife you might come across.



### Nature connection prompt

Find a pattern in nature that looks like a face.

RSPB Shetland Audio Trail



Scan me with your smart phone camera!

For a sound bite of some of Shetland's nature friendly places, have a listen to RSPB's audio trails. You can listen to these directly from your phone by scanning the QR code.





## WALK 1 - Easting Beach

Head towards Munness, turn left onto another single track road and follow the road to Hannigarth house. There is a small car park at the end of the road. Leave your car here, and walk down the hill to Easting Beach. The open space & rolling sea make this spot idyllic, with Viking Settlement archaeological sites above the beach to explore.

- Length: 2.6km or 1.5 mile return walk.
- Est time: 40 minutes.
- Look out for: spectacular sandy beach, coastal wildflowers, shorebirds on the beach, seabirds and wildfowl offshore e.g red breasted mergansers, gannets and divers.
- Terrain: sections of this walk are uneven terrain with a gradient, stiles.
- Potential Hazards: Uneven ground.



**Nature connection prompt:** Touch the water with your bare hands or feet – what does it feel like?





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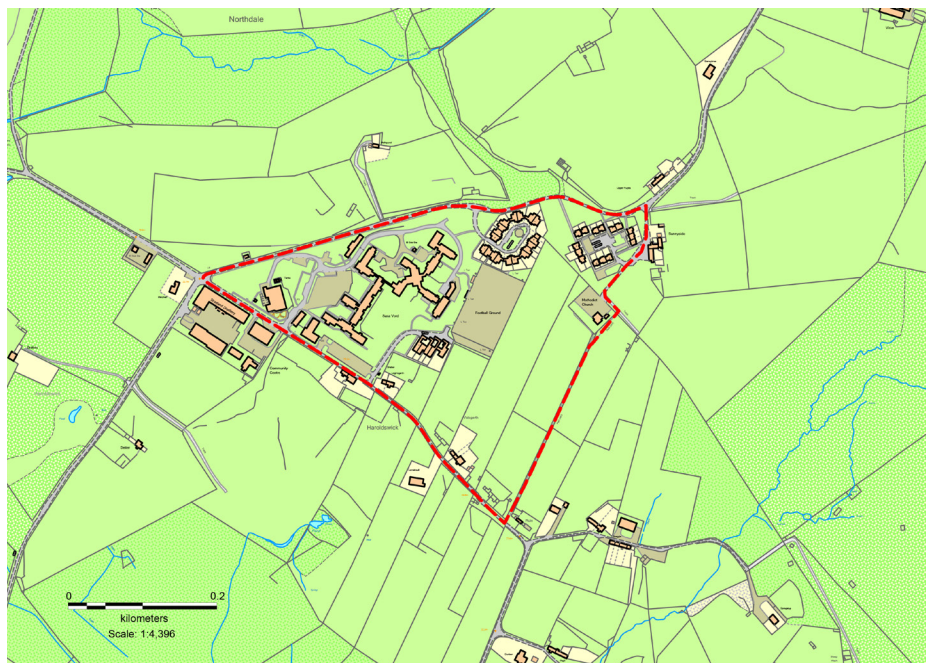
## WALK 2 - Lund Beach

To reach Lund Beach, travel towards The Westing before turning left again towards Lund and follow the road to the end. You may need to get out and open gates, please remember to close them! At the end of the road, you will be greeted with an old kirk (church) and graveyard above the beach, before making your way down to the sand dunes and tranquility of Lund Beach. Look out for the historic remains!

- Length: 1.2km/0.75mile return walk.
- Est time: 30 minutes.
- Look out for: beautiful sandy beach, coastal wildflowers, shorebirds, oystercatchers and ringed plovers. Seabirds offshore: eiders, arctic terns and shags.
- Terrain: beach and dunes.
- Potential Hazards: Uneven ground and access to the beach.



**Nature connection prompt:** Pick up two similar natural objects (stones/ shells/ leaves) and notice the differences between the two.



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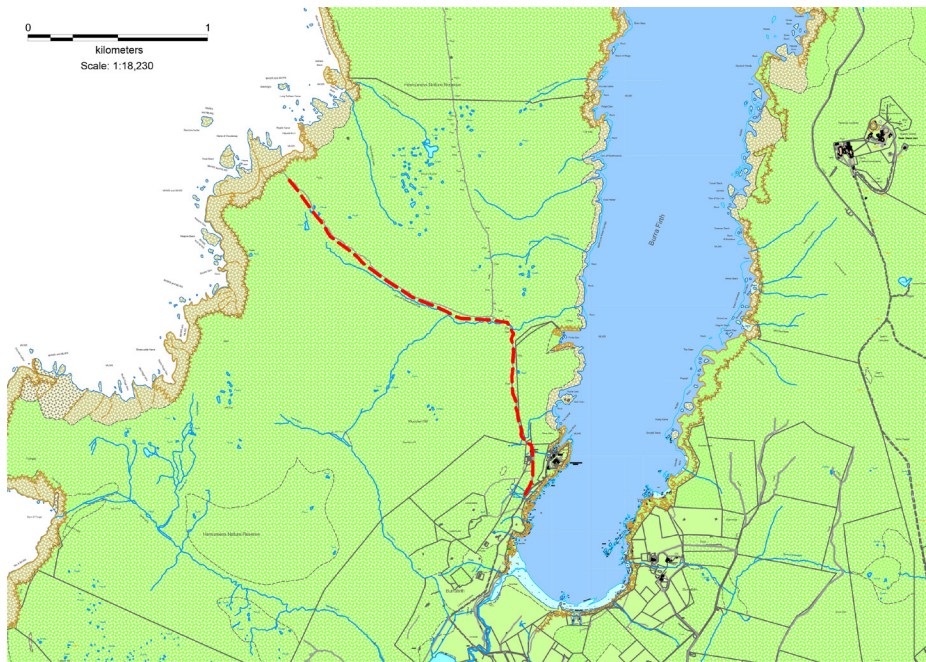
## WALK 3 - Saxavord

Begin at the Brewery where you can park up.  
From here head up towards Sunnyside, take a right back down towards Skeggie and complete your circle by heading back towards the Brewery.

- Length: 1.6km or 1 mile return walk.
- Est time: 20 minutes.
- Look out for: wildflowers especially along roadside verges and field margins, curlews, oystercatchers and greylag geese feeding in fields. Listen out for skylarks wrens and wheatears during the summer.
- Terrain: Mostly on quiet roads with a length of grass path.
- Potential Hazards: this route takes you along the road so be careful of oncoming traffic.



**Nature connection prompt:** Take three deep breaths in the outdoor air. How do you feel afterwards?



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## WALK 4 - Hermaness

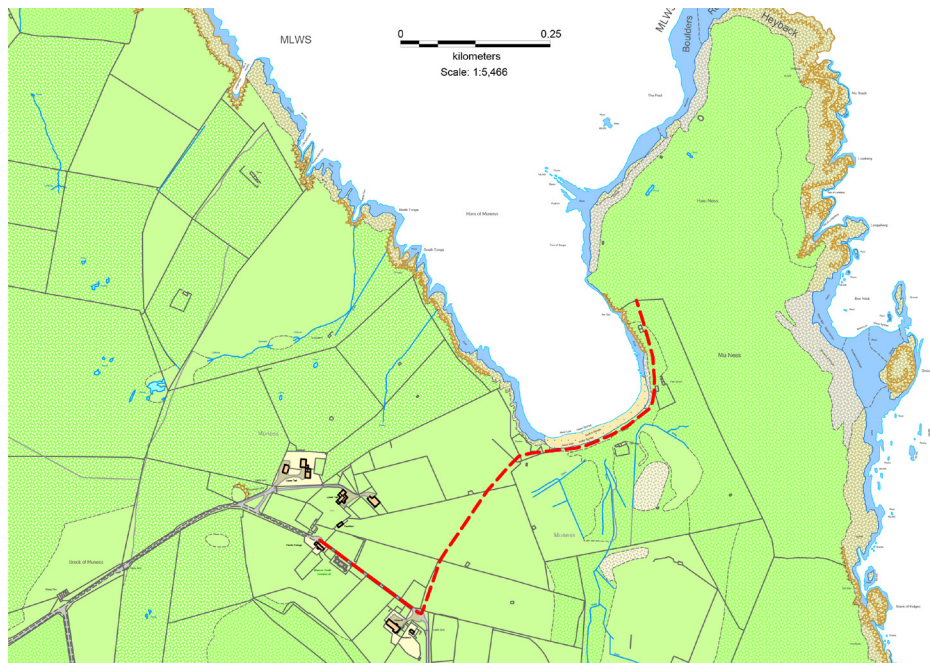
Head towards Burrafirth and follow the road until you get to the Hermaness car park. From here follow the gravel path and then boardwalk path towards the Hermaness cliffs.

- Length: 5km/ 3 mile return walk.
- Est time : 1.5 hours.
- Look out for: spectacular cliff scenery, seabird colonies, gannets, puffins and fulmars. Blanket bog, breeding great skuas, dunlin, golden plover, red throated diver. More information on Hermaness National Nature Reserve can be found at: [www.nature.scot/hermaness](http://www.nature.scot/hermaness)
- Terrain: an uphill gravel path, steps and boardwalk. Some boggy areas and cliff edges.
- Potential Hazards: unprotected cliff edge, Great Skua “Bonxies”, nest here during summer and can sometimes swoop at humans.



**Nature connection prompt:** Look for a living creature and try to find a similarity between yourself and it. Does it breathe/walk/live like you?





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## WALK 5 - Muness

Head out towards Muness and park up at the Castle, take a moment to explore before setting off on your walk. At the house just up from the castle, follow the arrow out left and head to the Ham of Muness for some coastal scenery.

- Length: 1.6km or 1 mile return walk.
- Est time: 20 minutes.
- Look out for: spectacular cliff scenery with seabird colonies, gannets, puffins and fulmars. Great Skuas and Red Throated divers on the blanket bog and moorland.
- Terrain: grass with slope down to beach and stiles.
- Potential Hazards: uneven ground.



**Nature connection prompt:** Find a plant and use more than one of your senses to check it out. What does it look/sound/feel like?

## TAKING CARE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Shetland is famed for its natural beauty and wildlife. By following the guidelines outlined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code you will respect the needs of those who rely on the countryside for their living, whilst preserving the natural environment.

1. Use stiles and gates to cross fences and walls. Fasten all gates that you have opened.
2. Do not walk through fields of cultivated grass as this is a very important crop in Shetland.
3. If you have to cross cultivated land, do so by the edge of the field.
4. Avoid livestock and do not disturb them, especially during lambing time (mid-April until late-June).
5. Whilst you may walk a dog, you should keep it on a short lead in the countryside, avoid livestock and be a responsible dog owner and pick up after your dog. Obey any notice forbidding dogs.
6. Do not leave litter or start fires.
7. Do not disturb nesting birds, especially those which nest on the ground.
8. Respect wildlife and refrain from picking wild flowers.
9. When parking on country roads do not obstruct access roads or access to fields. Park further away if need be.
10. Take care when walking near cliff tops as the edges can be crumbly and dangerous.

## OTHER THINGS TO NOTE



All the walks in these leaflets have been safety assessed by Shetland Islands Council, however, as they are all based outside in the countryside there are factors to watch out for that may not be noted. This include potential livestock (including Bulls), cliffs, swooping birds (during mating and hatching season), animal faeces and walks taking you close to the sea. These are factors that neither NHS nor SIC can predict due to the nature of the land that these walks take place on, so take extra care looking out for potential hazards.

## PEERIE WANDER WALK DIARY

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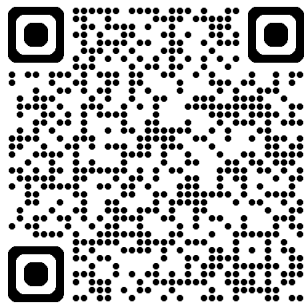


## PEERIE WANDER WALK DIARY

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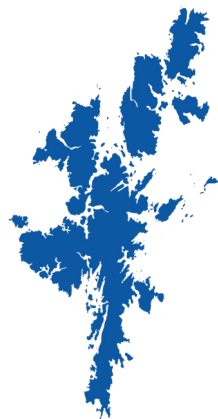
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FOR A HAPPIER,  
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND



**Shetland Amenity Trust**  
Caring for Shetland's heritage

