

Minehead coastal defences to be strengthened with new rock armour

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The £1 million project has been announced to protect Minehead, Somerset from coastal flooding.

The Environment Agency has announced plans to extend coastal flood defences at Minehead seafront this spring, bringing greater protection to the town's 355 properties and businesses.

The project, worth just under £1 million, will extend existing rock armour to the east of the town, near Butlins and Minehead Golf Course. Work is expected to begin in spring 2026 and take several months to complete.

More than 5,000 tonnes of rock armour will be used to strengthen defences across 100 metres of a vulnerable shingle ridge at the Warren. Materials will be transported by road, requiring approximately 250 lorry movements during the construction period.

A temporary opening through the rock groyne will maintain beach access throughout the works, which will be carried out during suitable tidal conditions and delivered in an environmentally sensitive way.

Why this work is needed

5,000 tonnes of rock armour will be used to strengthen the defences at Minehead seafront

Minehead's eastern esplanade is currently protected from coastal flooding by a natural shingle ridge. However, this ridge is vulnerable to erosion from winter storms, and rock armour has previously been used to reinforce it. Parts of the town are particularly at risk during north-westerly storms and high tides.

This latest scheme follows the successful completion of coastal defence works in 2023, when 14,500 tonnes of granite rock armour reinforced Minehead's sea wall. Since then, erosion to the sand face at the end of the existing rock armour section has made this next phase necessary. The new works will also indirectly help to reduce the impact of flash flooding in the area.

The town benefits from an extensive coastal defence scheme maintained by the Environment Agency, including vital annual maintenance such as beach reprofiling. Recent storm events have tested the existing defences, but they have continued to protect the town. Environment Agency flood mapping shows that the risk of coastal flooding is expected to increase due to climate change, making continued investment essential.

This latest scheme follows the successful completion of coastal defence works in 2023

Bert Leach of the Environment Agency, said:

This project builds on the successful work we completed in 2023 and will provide vital protection for Minehead against coastal flooding. We've been monitoring the coastline closely, and this extension to the rock armour will address the recent erosion we've seen

at the eastern end of the existing defences.

We know roadworks and lorry movements can be disruptive, so we're working hard to keep any impact on residents and visitors to a minimum. We're grateful for the community's patience while we carry out this important work to protect the town.

Ben Parker of Minehead Town Council, said:

We welcome this investment in Minehead's coastal defences. Protecting our town from flooding is essential for our residents, our businesses, and our future.

The 2023 scheme gave us real confidence that these defences work, and it's reassuring to see the Environment Agency acting quickly to extend that protection. This is good news for Minehead.

The Environment Agency is working to minimise disruption during construction. Work will be carried out during suitable tidal conditions, with plans in place to ensure the scheme is environmentally sensitive.

The Agency aims to complete all works, including reopening the West Somerset Coast Path, part of the England Coast Path connecting Minehead and Dunster, before summer 2026.

Background

- The 2023 Minehead coastal defence scheme reinforced the sea wall with 14,500 tonnes of granite rock armour.
- The coastal footpath around the golf course currently has a closure in place due to erosion.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minehead-coastal-defences-to-be-strengthened-with-new-rock-armour>