

# Summary of Managing Coastal Activities (Naturism)

## A Guide for Local Authorities - 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, April 2009

This is a summary of the British Naturism publication "Managing Coastal Activities (Naturism), A Guide for Local Authorities". The full version is available from the British Naturism web site or the office. It complements the The Department for Rural Affairs, Defra, publication "Managing Coastal Activities, A Guide for Local Authorities". Defra lists British Naturism as one of the organisations that should be consulted with on specialist aspects of coastal management.

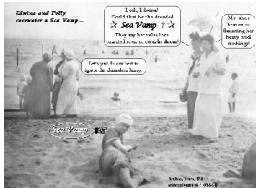


Naturism is normal everyday activities without the encumbrance of clothing. That is the only difference. The Naturist Beach Code provides guidelines on behaviour. There are at least 1.3 million self professed naturists in the UK and over ten times that number who are naturist to at least some extent. Naturists come from all walks of life. There are no naturist beaches in the UK, only about ten designated clothes optional beaches, but thousands of traditionally nude beaches.



Part of Studland Beach

The several thousand naturists using Studland Beach correspond to several million pounds per annum fed into the local economy. Many naturists feel obliged to holiday overseas. The economic and environmental cost is considerable.



Attitudes towards dress vary enormously with time and place and have little objective basis.

Most people are at least tolerant of naturism but there are a few who feel strongly that social nudity is immoral or harmful. There is no objective evidence to support either supposition.

Many complaints about naturism are because the complainant assumes, with little justification, that somebody else will be offended or harmed. Homophobia and gender prejudice are often a contributing factor.



A born naturist. (cc) hawaii

There is no evidence that nudity causes harm to anyone. Conversely there is very strong evidence that censorious attitudes towards the body result in widespread and in some cases serious harm. For example if the little girl in the picture lives in the USA she is ten times more likely to become pregnant before age twenty than if she lives in Denmark. It is not acceptable for adults to cause harm to children by using them as a smokescreen

for their own embarrassment.

There is no offence of nudity so naturism is legal under a wide range of circumstances but the law lacks clarity.

There should be no need for designated naturist beaches and many naturists look upon them as ghettos.

Unfortunately people requiring CRB checks for their career face draconian penalties for misjudgement so designated areas are essential. Many people from some of the most respected parts of society feel unable to use

undesigned beaches which has obvious and undesirable consequences for the social balance.

It is essential to identify the real cause of any problems. This is a specialist area and failure to discuss or consult often results in measures which are counter productive or even unlawful. Harassment mainly serves to reduce the number of law-abiding users and if there are any real problems they remain, may get worse and will be displaced to other beaches. It is of course impossible at any beach to prevent all criminal activity but with sensitive management, it can be reduced to minimal levels.

There is a growing determination amongst naturists that we should stand up for ourselves and we will not meekly give in when discriminated against or a public body exceeds its powers.

If a designated area is provided then we will encourage naturists to use it.

We frequently receive complaints from both families and the mobility impaired about the long walk, dangerous access and often poor beach safety of many naturist beaches, both traditional and designated.

If a beach is publicised appropriately and the beach environment is improved then use by families and other sensitive groups will increase.

Education, persuasion and peer group pressure are effective at reducing inappropriate or criminal behaviour. Any residual problem can be dealt with if the beach users feel able to cooperate with the police and other agencies to

identify culprits and to act as witnesses. Beach user groups can contribute in many ways.

Sign boards should be used to inform naturists and non-naturists of the beach. Non-naturists are much less likely to be offended if they are not taken by surprise and well-designed signs can largely eliminate friction. Other methods, such as the press, leaflets, tourist information, and user groups should also be used.

Further information is available from British Naturism.

[www.british-naturism.org.uk](http://www.british-naturism.org.uk)

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Publicity photograph for Marine Conservation Society litter campaign.