

The estuary from the sand on the Newburgh side, boats moored on the water and the Forvie dunes beyond

## *Before you go*

A loop of 3.6 km (2.2 miles) by the council's measure, which gives no walking time. Low ground, with a short rise onto the dune at the viewpoint: pavement, a wooden footbridge, tracks across the golf links, the Trust's boardwalks and soft sand.

Start at Newburgh Public Hall on Bridge Terrace. The Trust's car park at the end of Beach Road, on the loop, charges at the machines. Buses from Aberdeen and Ellon stop about 100 m from the hall: check the day on Traveline Scotland.

There are no toilets on the walk; the council lists the Newburgh Inn on Main Street as a place where anyone may use them without buying anything. There is no shelter, so bring a warm layer. Keep dogs on a lead and well away from the seals. On 21 December it is light only from about 8.46am to 3.25pm.

## *After the walk*

The seals are there all year, the most in winter, and at low tide the sand they lie on is bare: look up the tide times for Newburgh before you come. Trellis, in the old garden suite of the Udny Arms, about 150 m from the hall, does breakfast, lunch and home bakes, Wednesday to Sunday, 9.30am to 4pm.

The walk online, with its photographs and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/newburgh-seals-walk-round-the-ythan-mouth

It starts at Newburgh Public Hall, on Bridge Terrace off Main Street, NJ 999 252.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the police.



A WALK FROM

# Newburgh



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

# Seals, Dunes and the Mouth of the Ythan

*The River Ythan meets the North Sea at Newburgh, and a colony of grey and common seals lives on the sandbanks of its far shore. Aberdeenshire Council's Green Route is a loop of 3.6 km from the village hall, out through the dunes to the beach at the river mouth and back round the edge of the golf links.*

*words* // Hidden Scotland  *photography* // Hidden Scotland

Aberdeenshire Council starts its Green Route at Newburgh Public Hall, the village hall on Bridge Terrace, just off Main Street. Follow Bridge Terrace to a wooden footbridge, then the path south down the edge of the golf links to the Newburgh & Ythan Community Trust's car park at the end of Beach Road, where the Trust's boardwalks begin.

Out along the boardwalk, a short rise onto the dune brings you to a viewpoint above the river. Its board carries James McBey's 1914 etching of Newburgh, looking up the estuary to Knockhall Castle. A clear path crosses the dunes to the beach and runs south along the sand to the river mouth. Grey and common seals rest on the sand across the water, on the Forvie side: the Aberdeen Marine Mammal Project says over 3,000 have been recorded, and VisitAberdeenshire that the numbers regularly pass 3,500 in winter. Watch from this side, and never walk out over the wet sand towards them, even at low water: people coming close send them all into the sea. Eider ducks, diving terns and oystercatchers are about the estuary too.

Come back from the sand by the Trust's lower boardwalk. On 28 January 2026 the Trust closed its low-level viewpoint and the last 20 metres of boardwalk onto the beach after gales buried them in sand, and no reopening has been posted since: keep left of the green netting. Past the car park, the way back skirts the golf course, so keep an eye out for golfers, and crosses the same footbridge to the hall.




The council's Green Route, a loop from Newburgh Public Hall: 3.6 km, or 2.2 miles.

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