

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

MALDON DISTRICT



MaG8 Woodrolfe Creek Saltmarsh, Tollesbury

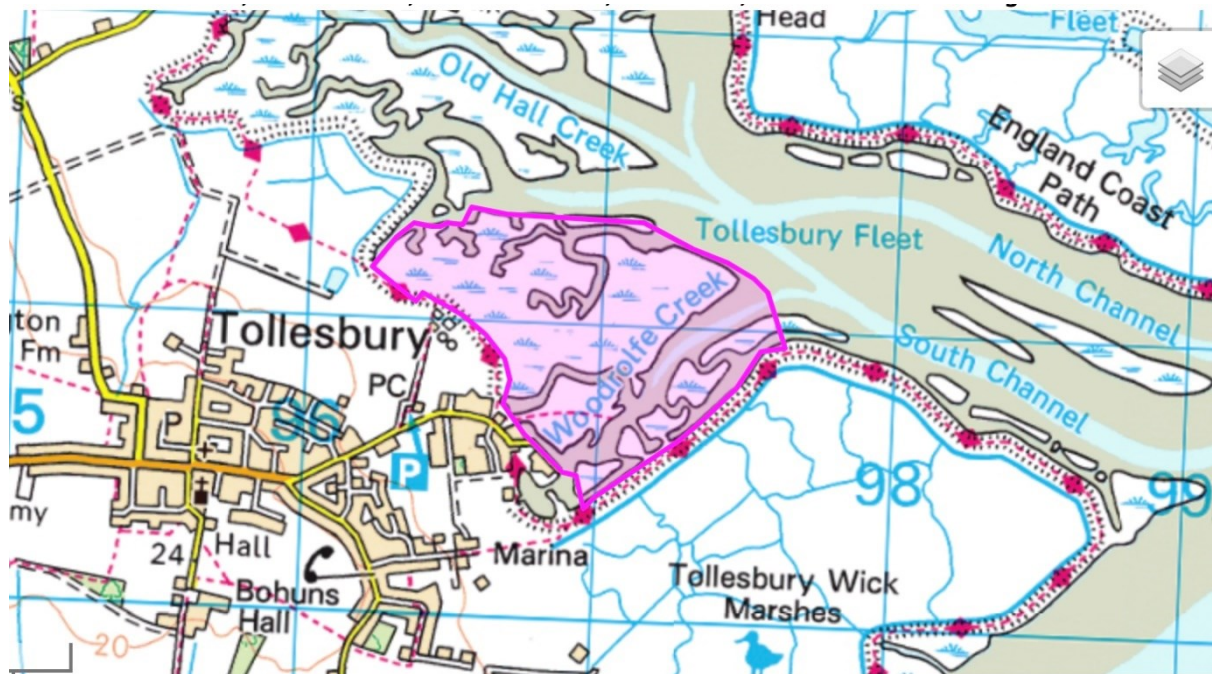
Site location: between Tollesbury village and Tollesbury Fleet

Grid Reference: TL 969 105

Status: Viewable from seawall footpath

Summary of the geological interest:

Probably the best and safest place to see saltmarsh in Essex is at Tollesbury, where the marsh at Woodrolfe Creek is criss-crossed by paths to enable boat owners to reach their vessels.



Site Assessment. Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

Scientific interest and site importance

Saltmarshes and their fronting mudflats are one of the few natural wilderness areas left in the UK. They are formed by silt and mud being deposited in sheltered locations and colonised by salt-tolerant plants. The surface of the marsh is dissected by a system of drainage channels (creeks) and often pitted with occasional pools (salt pans). Essex is especially important for this habitat - our coast has a larger area of salt marsh than any other county.

Radiocarbon dating of plant remains at a depth of 3.5 metres in recent borehole at the edge of the saltmarsh at Tollesbury has produced a date of almost 5,000 years. It was concluded that the growth rate of the saltmarsh has been nearly constant with an accretion of about 1.5 millimetres per year.



Woodrolfe Creek salt marshes from the air. Photo: Essex County Council.