# Clacton-on-Sea’s stark divide with Frinton-on-Sea exposes deep socio-economic fractures



Clacton-on-Sea, once a thriving seaside resort with a bustling promenade and vibrant beach culture, faces significant socio-economic challenges that put it at odds with its more affluent neighbour, Frinton-on-Sea. Just seven miles apart, these towns exemplify a stark contrast in community spirit and economic prosperity, raising questions about the factors contributing to their divergent paths.

Clacton, now one of the most deprived areas in the UK, is grappling with spiralling unemployment, rising drug use, and escalating crime rates. According to recent government data, the town has one of the highest proportions of economic inactivity in the country, sitting at an alarming 46.8 per cent—far surpassing the national average of 21.7 per cent. This translates to one in five residents never having held a job, while nearly half of all children in the community live in poverty. Such figures illustrate the urgency of addressing the deep-rooted challenges facing Clacton.

Residents express frustration over the limited employment opportunities available. Linda Marshall, who runs a seaside kiosk, laments, “There’s not many jobs in Clacton, but the atmosphere has stayed the same.” Many locals depend on seasonal tourism, leading to a stark decline in visitor numbers during the colder months. The public transport system compounds these issues, with infrequent bus services that hinder mobility and access to employment for many in the community.

In stark contrast, Frinton-on-Sea basks in an aura of exclusivity and affluence, with average house prices soaring to around £800,000. Celebrated as the 'Bond Street of East Anglia,' the town's high street is a thriving hub of independent shops that flourishes year-round, unaffected by the seasonal ebbs that plague Clacton. Chris Pereira, a local shop owner, attests to the vibrancy of Frinton's economy, stating, "It is always bustling. Business is going well, even in the off-season." This thriving environment has attracted many wealthy Londoners seeking second homes, contributing to the town's reputation for snobbery and exclusivity.

The divide between the two towns is further underscored by how residents perceive each other. Some Clacton inhabitants feel looked down upon by Frinton locals, describing the latter as 'posh' and resistant to change. Richard Pegg, a Clacton resident, articulates this sentiment of elitism, saying, "Frinton is a lot posher; there is definitely snobbery there." He expresses frustration over the negative characterisation of Clacton, countering that his experience in the town has been largely positive.

Despite the challenges, many Clacton residents pride themselves on their community spirit. Valerie Parish, who has lived in Clacton for over a decade, highlights the warmth of the local people, stating, "The community is amazing. I couldn't fault the character of the town." This sentiment reflects a collective resilience, as they grapple with ongoing economic hardships.

Unfortunately, crime and safety issues plague Clacton, with local accounts detailing pervasive drug use and alarming incidents of violence. One resident described the fear that permeates the streets, saying, “It is a nightmare. Druggies everywhere. Never a copper around when you want one.” Such concerns are echoed in broader discussions on the town's socio-economic climate, where drug abuse and street drinking are increasingly prominent issues, resulting in calls for more policing and community support.

Conversely, Frinton's top-tier real estate market and robust local economy contribute to a sense of security, fostering a community that many residents believe is well-protected from the problems seen in neighbouring Clacton. Alan, a resident, reflects this sentiment, stating, "There are no issues with crime, hardly anything at all. It is safe to walk around, unlike other areas."

Yet, the socio-economic divide invites a more profound inquiry into the historical and structural factors contributing to such disparate community outcomes. While both towns share a coastal identity and tourism as a common economic thread, decades of underfunding in Clacton have limited its capacity to attract investment and develop sustainable growth. Despite a recent £20 million regeneration project intended to revitalise the struggling town, many residents remain sceptical, questioning if this will produce meaningful change.

The contrasting narratives of Clacton and Frinton-on-Sea demonstrate how geography can influence social landscapes and economic trajectories. As each town grapples with its identity and future direction, the lessons emerging from their divergent paths may offer insights into broader regional development challenges and community resilience in the face of adversity.

**Reference Map**

1. Clacton-on-Sea socio-economic challenges and community perspectives.
2. Clacton’s socio-economic difficulties highlighted through government data.
3. Drug use and safety concerns in Clacton.
4. Crime statistics comparing Clacton with regional averages.
5. Frinton-on-Sea's economic vitality and independent shops.
6. Local attractions and cultural highlights of Frinton-on-Sea.
7. Development of Frinton-on-Sea as a destination.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14687211/Inside-tale-two-seaside-towns-Frinton-Clacton.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/06/05/what-clacton-tells-you-about-white-working-class/> - An article from The Telegraph discussing the socio-economic challenges faced by Clacton-on-Sea, including high unemployment rates, economic inactivity, and crime. It highlights the town's struggles with social issues and the impact on residents' quality of life.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1842430/clacton-on-sea-drug-alcohol-abuse> - A report from the Daily Express detailing concerns about drug use and street drinking in Clacton-on-Sea. Residents express fears for their children's safety and call for increased policing and support services to address these issues.
* <https://www.crimerate.co.uk/essex/clacton-on-sea> - CrimeRate.co.uk provides statistical data on crime rates in Clacton-on-Sea, comparing them to Essex and East of England averages. The data includes various crime categories, highlighting areas with higher rates in Clacton-on-Sea.
* <https://www.thetouristtrail.org/guides/essex-guides/a-guide-to-frinton-on-sea/> - A comprehensive guide to Frinton-on-Sea, covering its history, attractions, and unique characteristics. The article emphasizes the town's uncommercialized beach, independent shops, and tranquil atmosphere.
* <https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/essex/22567757.frinton-on-sea-essex-7-reasons-visit/> - An article from Great British Life highlighting seven reasons to visit Frinton-on-Sea, including its renowned fish and chips, independent shops on Connaught Avenue, and the scenic Greensward area.
* <https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/essex/23527845.frinton-on-sea-explore-seaside-gem-essex-coast/> - A feature exploring Frinton-on-Sea as a seaside destination, discussing its appeal to day-trippers, independent shops, café culture, and the town's development over time.