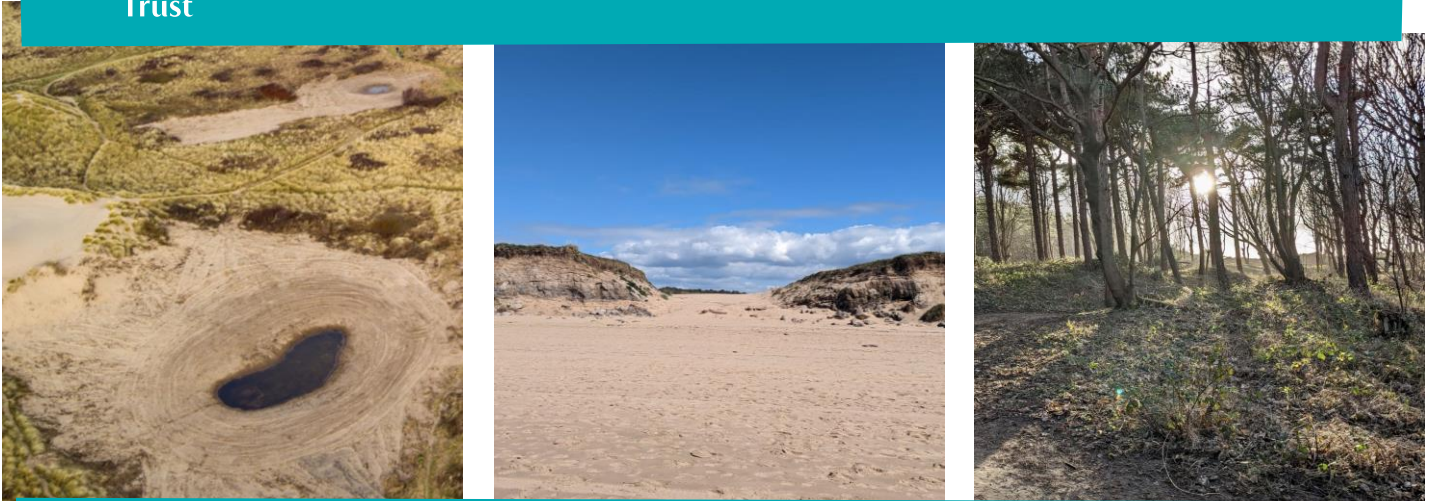


National  
Trust

# Nature Haven News

Your Spring update from National Trust Formby



## Watching the power of nature in action

Dynamic Dunescapes conservation work is bringing new life to Formby's rare sand dune habitats.

The Dynamic Dunescapes project work may be coming to an end but this is just the beginning. We're now watching and waiting to see the wonder of nature in action. We've created space for sand to move more freely and natural processes have been restored. This is already helping to create healthier habitats for Formby's rare wildlife including natterjack toads, northern dune tiger beetles and sand lizards.

### Project achievements



- 3.8 hectares of invasive scrub removed from dunes creating bare sand for basking and burrowing.
- 0.8 hectares of invasive gorse and birch removed from Larkhill Heath creating space for native plants.
- 11 natterjack toad pools created or restored.
- Protective fencing installed around slack pools.
- 2 notches crafted in the tobacco waste dune cliffs.
- Plantation trees thinned where the woodlands meet the dunes to create corridors for sand to move naturally and help these habitats co-exist.

### Welcoming everyone January to April 2023

- Over 90,000 people visited
- 313 new members signed up to support
- 1,173 hours of time given by local volunteers
- 30 pre-booked school and group visits



It's amazing to watch sand naturally blowing through the two notches in the tobacco waste dunes. It's over topping the flat field of rank vegetation including nettles to create new, healthy sand dunes and more connected habitats.

### Latest news

- Victoria Road beach car park potholes repaired.
- Additional wildlife surveys happening at Victoria Road to help inform the sand dune restoration project planning permission decision.
- Rangers have spotted several sand lizards and natterjack toads coming out to breed.
- Natterjack toad tadpoles logged in new breeding pools.
- Snugburys van selling delicious ice cream straight from a Cheshire farm, back at Lifeboat Road at the end May.
- RNLI Lifeguards at Lifeboat Road at weekends and banks holidays.
- Special fences around new slack pools to create a safe and quiet space for natterjack toads to breed.
- Welcomed new seasonal facilities and welcome team members to help prepare for busy sunny days.

# Ranger round up



Failed plantation cleared ready for tree planting



Coastal footpath re-surfacing work in progress

Every time you pay to park, scan your membership card, give your time as a volunteer, donate or simply take your litter home with you you're supporting important conservation work at Formby's nature haven - thank you.

## Tree planting at Ravenmeols

The rangers have been working with regular volunteers in the Ravenmeols area to clear sycamore from an old, failed plantation. We'll be re-planting around 400 trees in this spot over the winter. We've used the brush removed from the area to make dead hedges around the plantation. These will provide hiding places and nesting habitats for all sorts of creatures, as well as food for insects. They will also help protect the sapling trees as they become established.

## Healthy hedgerow habitat for wildlife

With the help of fantastic regular volunteers the entire hedge at Larkhill has successfully been laid and we managed to finish back in February, before the bird nesting season began in March. The hedge is roughly 120 metres long and has taken two winters to fully lay – a traditional skill that has been around for centuries and helps regenerate trees and shrubs. Once established a well laid hedge is denser and more connected. This creates important habitats, protection and a good source of food for many birds, insects and small animals.

## Prime property for birds

On a rainy day back in October the ranger team worked with our amazing regular volunteer groups to build 24 new bird boxes. In March the rangers were out and about on site putting the bird boxes up in some prime locations, ready for the nesting season.

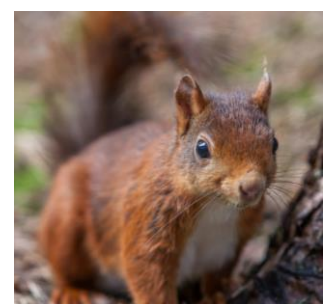
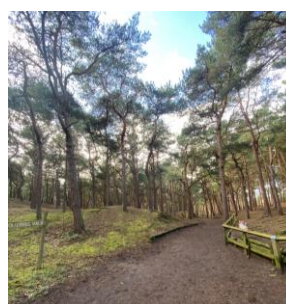
## Improving paths for everyone to enjoy

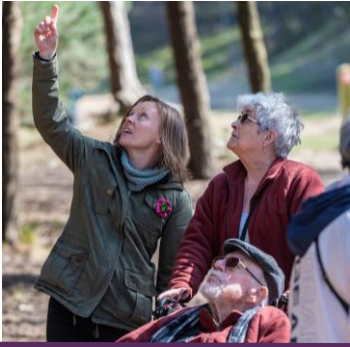
We're on a mission to repair and restore popular paths across the site. Our aim to create better access for everyone where we can, particularly wheel chairs users and people with buggies. Recently re-surfacing work has been happening on the path leading down from the new improved Kirklake switchback, the Victoria Road woodland walk and 300m of the Sefton Coastal path between Lifeboat Road and Victoria Road.

## Red squirrels roaming free

You might have noticed some changes along the popular squirrel walk at Victoria Road. We've been working with regular volunteers to remove the inner ring of worn out and vandalised fencing.

The area was originally fenced off when we used to feed the red squirrels. To help reduce the spread of squirrel pox we stopped feeding them a few years ago. This means rather than gathering in one area to feed they more naturally roam wild and free right across the site and local area. We're loving how natural and open the space is now looking. There are no plans to replace the fence at this time as it is no longer needed.





# Community Matters

## Formby through the seasons

We've been working in partnership with Outline Arts and a group of local young people to express the four seasons of Formby's nature haven through art.

Their artwork was displayed at Holy Trinity church hall for around 150 members of the Southport and Formby Volunteer Association to enjoy on #WorldEarthDay. The exhibition included sensory elements such as sand, pinecones and sounds from the woods and wildlife.

## Dementia friendly walks

In April we welcomed back friends of the Blue Flamingo Cafe in Preston for a second dementia friendly guided walk and talk at Formby's nature haven, led by ranger Chris. We got some lovely feedback from the group "Thank you, Chris, for leading us on such an informative and enjoyable dementia-friendly walk!"

## Eat Sleep Recycle

In partnership with Outline Arts we've been inspiring local children to creatively express the simple ways we can all look after the world around us in the build up to #WorldEarthDay. The budding young artists have been turning trash into treasure, by collecting waste items to use in their creations.

After weeks of hard work the "Eat, Sleep. Recycle" exhibition didn't disappoint. A big thank you to Jennie from Outline Arts and all the children and teachers from St Jerome's, Our Lady of Compassion, Woodlands and St Luke's primary schools in Formby.

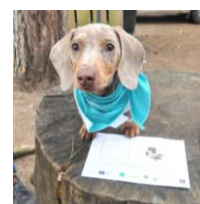
## Get involved

- ❖ Free **Well-being walk** Monday 15 May 10-11am meet at Lifeboat Road notice board. No need to book.
- ❖ Free **guided bird watch** walk 17 May 9.30am meet at Kirklake Road corner notice board. No need to book.
- ❖ **Woodland conservation work walk and talks** - several dates in May visit our website for more details.

## Paws for thought campaign

With the help of regular volunteer Chris we've been encouraging people to sign their furry friends up to be a dog ranger, pledging to help protect the #SeftonCoast by;

- 🐾 Always disposing of dog waste responsibly.
- 🐾 Not chasing or disturbing birds and other wildlife.
- 🐾 Keeping out of natterjack toad dune breeding pools.
- 🐾 Being under close control at all times.
- 🐾 Taking care around livestock.

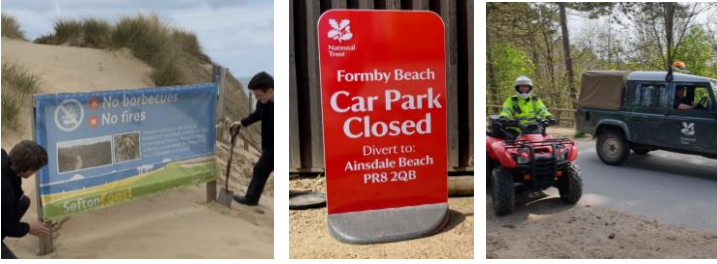


## Volunteer impact January to April

- ✓ Removed around 1km of redundant, old plantation fencing.
- ✓ Spent 5 days (around 300 hours) controlling invasive scrub in Ravenmeols.
- ✓ Cleared the boardwalk of sand 3 times.
- ✓ Installed around 50 dragons teeth posts at Lifeboat Road.
- ✓ Laid around 50m of hedge at Larkhill Heath.
- ✓ Created about 100m of dead hedge habitat.
- ✓ Supported with the thinning of 2 plantations.
- ✓ Cleared a failed plantation in preparation for planting around 400 trees this winter.
- ✓ Resurfaced 300m of footpath.
- ✓ Removed and replaced 20m of revetment fencing



# Busy days planning



There's no quick fix to the challenges busy days can bring, but we're continuing to collaborate with Sefton Coast partners, as well as listening to feedback from visitors and the local community to help us find solutions that work for people and protect wildlife.

Here's just a few of the measures we have put in place to create a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

- **Fortnightly operations meetings** with local partners including Sefton Council and emergency services.
- **No pro-active marketing** of NT Formby as a destination.
- **Increasing awareness** on social media and website of limited parking and what to expect on a busy day.
- **Sharing useful information** on social media including simple ways everyone can help keep Formby special.
- **Encouraging travel by train or bike** in communications to reduce the number of cars.
- **Changing perceptions** from beach resort to nature haven by focusing messaging on conservation work and wildlife.
- **Banners** to encourage taking litter home and stop fires
- **Signs** to highlight when car parks are full and direct people to Ainsdale Beach.
- **Live parking updates** on busy days through social media.
- **Traffic cones** in key locations to reinforce restrictions.
- **Promoting alternative destinations** to explore nearby.
- **Free designated parking** for Blue Badge holders close to accessible paths.
- **Toilet facilities** at Lifeboat Road with an increased number of units and more frequent emptying.
- **Additional large bins** in the car parks, including eye-catching ones designed by local children, and more frequent emptying.
- **Extra seasonal staff** and **fantastic volunteers** to help with the day to day running of the site during busy periods.

## Spring wildlife to spot

- **Vernal mining bees** buzzing around the dunes.
- **St Mark's fly** clumsily drifting in the air.
- **Orange tipped butterflies** fluttering in the breeze.
- **Skylarks**, greater spotted woodpeckers, **warblers** including willows, chiffchaffs and white throats.
- **Groups of migrating, wading birds** such as dunlin resting on the shore.
- **Birds heading to our shores** to feed, breed and spend the summer with us including **swifts** and **wheatears**.

## A natter with...

Amy Peacock - Property Operations Manager



**How long have you worked at NT Formby?**  
Just over 4 years, I started in January 2019.

**What was your previous job?**

I worked for NT Claydon House, Buckingham as Operations Manager, and have worked for different National Trust properties since 2009.

**What is your role at NT Formby?**

I oversee the day to day running of the operations teams at NT Formby as well as Gawthorpe Hall and Rufford Old Hall. My day can go from talking about cleaning schedules to representing NT at busy day planning meetings with Sefton Coast partners.

I'm currently working on an operational plan to support visitors and the local community if the Victoria Road conservation project planning application is approved. Our aim is to ensure visitors can still safely enjoy the site and explore new areas, as well as reducing visitors on busy days by working with local partners to promote alternative coastal spots nearby.

**What do you like most about your job?**

The variety and incredible team of staff and volunteers that make it possible. It's a cliché to say that no day is the same as any other, but it really is true of my role.

**Your favourite spot to enjoy nature at Formby**

I love wandering through the woods, especially on a sunny morning when you can hear the birds singing and the sun comes between the trees.

**Describe NT Formby in three words**

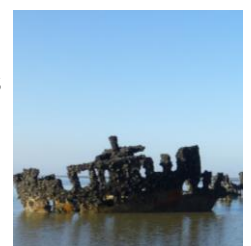
Inspiring, Explorable, Magical

**Other favourite NT place to visit**

Lanhydrock in Cornwall. I've got fond memories of visiting as a child, running through the rhododendrons playing hide and seek with my sister.

## Blast from the past

You can sometimes see the skeletons of two shipwrecks embedded at low tide – The Bradda and The Ionic Star both ran aground in 1939. For safety we recommend only viewing the shipwrecks on a guided walk.



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