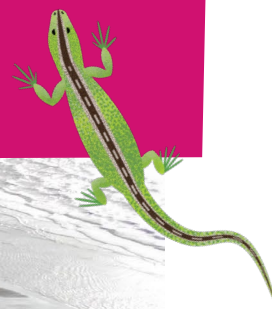




National Trust

# Nature Haven News

Your spring update from National Trust Formby



© Image CHC Neil Rigby

## A new chapter for wildlife and people

Our conservation work to kick start the restoration process in the dunes where the old Victoria Road beach car park used to be is now complete.

With around 80,000 tonnes of rubble removed, we'll soon see the dunes starting to move naturally again, creating a healthier habitat for wildlife, a more resilient sea defence, and a safer, more natural space for people to enjoy.

Although the project is complete, this is the start of an exciting new chapter for wildlife and people at Formby. The landscape now needs time to heal - thank you for not dwelling in the dune restoration area. Over the coming years, we'll witness nature's remarkable ability to restore itself as a healthier, more connected sand dune system develops.

Most of the rubble has been reused to create a more sustainable car park further inland, safely positioned away from where the dunes will continue to naturally roll back. This will ensure there is space for people to park at Formby for many years to come.



Scan the QR code to find out more about what to expect when you visit.

### What to expect when you visit

Victoria Road and Lifeboat Road car parks and toilets are open but as Formby is a wild, natural and legally protected landscape, parking capacity remains the same as before.

The replacement car park at Victoria Road is nestled in the woodlands on the right-hand side as you drive in. You can expect a nature rich, half a mile walk to the beach through the woodlands and, as always at Victoria Road, through the dunes. Lifeboat Road continues to offer a shorter, more accessible route via a wooden boardwalk.



© CHC Neil Rigby

Sand dune restoration area where the old beach car park used to be.

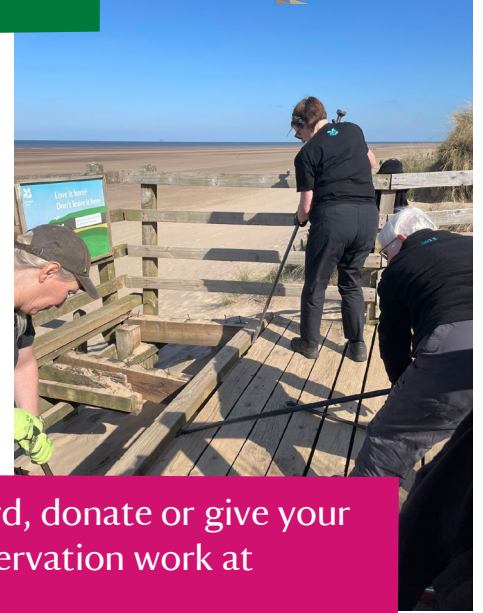


© NT Images Albert Peacock

Signs of success with new marram grass shoots starting to grow .

👁️ For more information on this project including frequently asked questions [click here](#).

# Ranger round up



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

## A picnic area for everyone

With support from our regular volunteers, the Ranger team have been improving the family picnic area to the north of the site at Victoria Road.

To help the space work well for everyone, we've created both a dog-friendly open area as well as a clearly signed and fenced dog-free zone. The old boardwalk has been replaced with a smooth compacted stone path, and we're planning to add a new accessible route leading to one of the picnic tables for people using wheelchairs and buggies. We'll also be installing an extra picnic table to create more space to sit and rest.

## Access through the dunes (image 3)

Formby's shifting sands create vital habitats for rare dune wildlife. It also brings challenges, especially for structures like the Lifeboat Road boardwalk, which needs regular repairs to withstand the elements. Our team has recently replaced old, rotting beams in the main switchback area.

Windblown sand can quickly build up too, reducing access. Our team clear the boardwalk every month, increasing to fortnightly over the summer. But it can build up again very quickly. That's why we're exploring equipment that could make sand clearance quicker.

The beach end of the boardwalk is especially affected. Once the high spring tides have passed in mid-May, we plan to remove some of the edging so the summer rollout planks can be installed further up the boardwalk, where there is less sand build-up.

## Moo-ving towards healthier dunes

We recently said farewell to the Lancashire Wildlife Trust herd of English longhorn cattle, who spent the winter with us grazing in the dunes. The trial has been a great success and was even celebrated on BBC North West News.

Using No-Fence virtual fencing technology, the cattle were able to graze difficult to access areas that had been left untouched for years. This has helped open up the dunes, with more bare sand, shorter grass areas and less dense, overgrown vegetation. These changes are improving dune habitats and creating better conditions for rare wildlife. We're looking forward to the cattle's return this winter.

## Creating diverse woodlands (image 1)

In March our Rangers and brilliant volunteers planted 2,500 trees. Around 2,000 saplings now fill newly opened woodland near Lifeboat Road and Ravenmeols, with a further 500 planted at the Victoria Road site. A mix of Scots pine and native species like hazel, hawthorn and rowan will help boost biodiversity, in time providing food and shelter for wildlife and helping create healthier, more resilient woodlands for the future.

## Signs of success (image 2)

Our annual wildlife surveys are in full swing. From listening for rare natterjack toads to spotting sand lizards, moths, butterflies and emerging flora, these surveys capture a vital snapshot. The data helps us monitor biodiversity, understand the health of local wildlife, and measure the impact of our conservation work and where we need to focus our efforts.

# Community Matters



Thank you for not lighting fires or BBQs and taking your litter home with you. Together we can keep Formby special for people and wildlife.

## A loo-vely success story

You might be surprised to know there is no water supply at Lifeboat Road. That's why we have a gated block of port-a-loos. We have also recently been trialling two compost loos and we're delighted to report that it has been going well with no contamination to the system. If you'd like to try a greener way to spend a penny, our new loos are simple to use following the steps on the signs.

## Improving access for everyone (image 2)

Back in January some of the team from Formby and Speke Hall, including a few of our marvellous regular volunteers, headed out on a road trip. We visited our friends at Bendrigg Trust in Kendal, to discover more about how they're making adventures accessible for everyone and working with people to overcome barriers and transform lives.

It was great to hear that some of the changes we've already made at Formby can make a real difference. From improving paths and increasing the number of benches to providing free sand wheelchairs.

We're also feeling inspired to keep exploring new ways to make this wild and natural space more accessible to everyone, where we can.

## Coffee, crepes, ice cream and more

Earlier this year, we invited local businesses to express interest in offering food and drink for visitors at Formby. We're delighted that Green Beach Coffee, who have been serving refreshments at Lifeboat Road for the past couple of years, are now at Victoria Road. They will be in both car parks at weekends from 1 May and everyday during the holidays. Ice cream will be available from mid-May.

## Moments of reflection (image 1 & 3)

A series of thoughtfully designed on-site features have been created by our talented volunteers to mark the Victoria Road conservation project. They invite everyone to reflect on the scale of the work undertaken and the lasting positive impact it will bring for people and wildlife. These features represent a major and successful effort to restore and safeguard this precious landscape for the future.

Repurposed timber has been used to create welcoming picnic tables, the long-standing notice board donated by the Rotary Club has been given a new lease of life and adapted into a sheltered bench and resting place. Finally, a gabion bench constructed using some of the rubble that used to be in the dunes offers a spot to rest and relax.

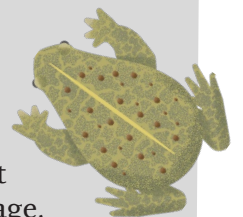
## Talking Formby

Laura our Community Engagement Manager has been out and about, from organising a security bike marking session with Merseyside Police at Lifeboat Road car park, and attending the Formby High School careers fayre, to talks for the Formby Trefoil Society, Mothers Union and Women's Institute.

## Volunteer impact January to April

Our amazing regular volunteers have given **1,634 hours**. Here's a snapshot of what we have achieved:

- ❖ 15m of boardwalk rebuilt
- ❖ 250m of hedge at Larkhill trimmed
- ❖ 350m of footpath resurfaced
- ❖ 200 hours of scrub control
- ❖ 2500 trees planted
- ❖ Over 1km of brushwood fencing built
- ❖ Whole site rebranded with new signage, including 8 new routed signs kindly created by the Liverpool University School of Architecture



# A natter with...

## Jess Kirk – Office Co-ordinator

### How long have you worked at NT Formby?

I joined the team in April 2024.

### What was your previous job?

I worked as a Receptionist at Formby Pool, where I was part of a great team, got to know some lovely local people and it fitted well with my lifestyle. When I saw this role, it stood out to me as something that suited my skills and passions. I've always worked in customer-focused roles, from pubs to managing large-scale events in the hospitality industry, and I've always enjoyed working with people and I love visiting NT Formby.

### Describe your role at NT

My role is so varied. I support the team by responding to emails and telephone calls from people who love to visit, ordering tools and uniforms, taking notes during meetings, managing group bookings, running reports and, of course, making sure the volunteers are well supplied with biscuits. No two days are ever the same, which is what makes the role so interesting.

### What do you like most about your role?

It's a dream come true being able to work and support my favourite place, enjoying the variety and flexibility the role offers. However, the team is probably what I enjoy most. Everyone is so supportive, passionate, knowledgeable and dedicated. They're all lovely people who work incredibly hard and manage to bring humour to everything they do.



### Where is your favourite spot to enjoy nature at Formby and why?

I've lived in Formby all my life and have been going down the beach since I was little with my mum, then with friends in my teens, now making memories with my kids there. The whole site is so nostalgic and special to me! I couldn't possibly pick a favourite spot.

### How would you describe NT Formby in 3 words?

My spiritual home.

### What's your favourite National Trust place to visit?

Claife Viewing Station in the Lake District. It has an unsettling eerie charm, which probably isn't selling it haha, but its definitely worth a visit if you're at the Lakes.

## Spring wildlife to spot



- ❖ Vernal mining bees buzzing around the dunes.
- ❖ St Mark's fly clumsily drifting in the air.
- ❖ Orange tip, peacock and brimstone butterflies fluttering in the breeze.
- ❖ The striking, day flying cinnabar moth - look out for their black and yellow caterpillars on ragwort.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Sand lizards basking in bare patches of sand (thank you for not disturbing this protected, rare species).

## Blast from the past

This year marks 250 years since the world's first permanent lifeboat station was established here in Formby. Formby Civic Society are busy planning a selection of local celebration events including the installation of a Blue Plaque – find out more on their Facebook page.

Edward Chambré Hardman's collection, cared for by the National Trust, offers a great way to explore local history through photography at Hardmans' House in Liverpool find out more [here](#)



All that remains of the lifeboat station today ©NT Images



Lifeboat station at Formby 1930 ©NT Images Edward Chambré Hardman Collection