



National
Trust

Nature Haven News

Your summer update from National Trust Formby

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Creating healthier woodland habitats

We're on a mission to create healthier, more diverse woodlands where wildlife can thrive.

As part of our 10-year woodland management plan, conservation work will be continuing this autumn and winter in the woodlands at Formby. We'll be focusing on an area of woodland south of Victoria Road. To see a map of where work will be happening click [here](#).

The pine trees that grow here aren't native to the coast, with some planted over 100 years ago. Plantation woodlands are densely packed with trees of a similar age. The trees grow tall and thin as they compete to reach the sunlight, rather than establishing healthy roots. As the above image shows, a tightly packed canopy also reduces light, preventing saplings, wildflowers and other plants from growing.

Mature pine trees will be thinned to create light and space, encouraging a richer, more diverse woodland habitat for wildlife. Thinning work will be carried out before the bird nesting season starts, and each tree checked for active squirrel dreys before being thinned.

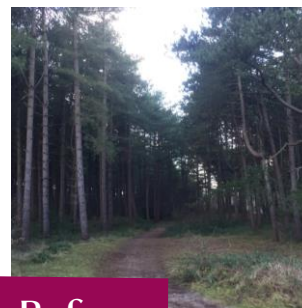
Nature will do most of the restoration work, but we'll be lending a hand next spring by planting around 5,000 sapling trees and shrubs, where thinning has created enough light for these young trees to succeed.

What to expect when you visit

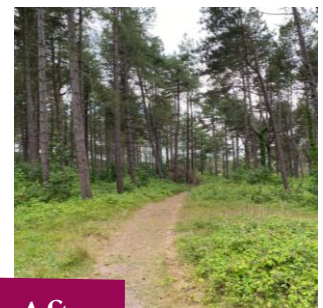
The work will be taking place from October to February, alongside our annual tree safety work. Some paths may close temporarily, and diversion signs will be in place if needed. If you see the team or contractors at work, please keep a safe distance and pop dogs on a lead.

The areas where the work is happening may look a little stark initially, but nature will quickly embrace the space.

We manage Formby's woodlands sustainably and responsibly, meeting Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) and UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) standards.



Before



After

© NT Images Chris Hunter

These images show the results from previous thinning work. You can see more space and light, understory species starting to grow and bushier, less spindly pine trees - a much healthier and more diverse woodland.

Join Ranger Chris for a woodland walk and talk this September. Scan or click [here](#) for more information.



Ranger round up



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

Wildfire destroys dune habitat (image 1)

The recent fire in the dunes at Formby damaged an area of rare dune habitat around the size of four football pitches. While the impact on nature is significant, there is hope. Many dune plants are adapted to disturbance. Surviving root systems, buried and wind-blown seeds will all help vegetation, including marram grass, return over time.

Thank you to everyone who signed our nationwide petition calling on the government to:

- Make climate resilience a national mission
- Invest in nature as essential infrastructure
- Better support Fire and Rescue Services

Small patches, big difference (image 2)

Back in May the Ranger team worked with our regular volunteers to do some sand patching to the south of the site, where the dunes have become too stable. This conservation task involves digging out small areas of marram and vegetation to create more patches of bare sand, where rare sand lizards can bask and build energy. As well as spots of soft, more mobile sand for them to burrow and lay their eggs in.

Wildlife friendly dog walks (image 4)

We've recently installed new signs across the site encouraging people to bag dog waste and take it home, as well as helping to dispel the myth that dog waste is good for nature. While it may seem natural, dog waste is rich in nutrients that will harm Formby's rare plants and wildlife, by disrupting the delicate balance of the special habitats here.

Moo-ving back in this winter (image 3)

Following the success of last year's trial, we're delighted to be welcoming back Lancashire Wildlife Trust's herd of English longhorn cattle. Using No-Fence virtual fencing technology, the cattle will graze difficult to access sections of the dunes in the Ravenmeols area, this winter.

Conservation grazing helps open up the dunes, creating more bare sand, shorter grass areas and less dense, overgrown vegetation. Over time this will create healthier habitats for rare wildlife including sand lizards. For more information including how to track the live location of the herd, visit our [website](#) or look out for the information and safety signs on site.

Fun times for little nature lovers (image 5)

The Ranger team have also recently been working with our regular volunteers to enhance and extend the natural play trail in the woodlands off cornerstone path, near Victoria Road. New features include two, more accessible bridges, balance beams, hurdles, a little fort with steps and two more wooden xylophones.



Community Matters

© NT Images Laura Michelangeli



© NT Images Jess Woolston



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.

Celebrating 40 years of vital support

Back in April our Manchester National Trust Volunteer Group celebrated 40 years of giving their time to support NT properties in the North West. This is an incredible achievement. We are so grateful and want to say a huge thank you to the members past and present who have supported our work to care for wildlife and habitats at Formby.

Saving lives at sea (image 3)

We're delighted to be the home of a new blue plaque celebrating Dock Master William Hutchinson, who established the world's first permanent lifeboat station in Formby in 1776. Marking 250 years of this remarkable maritime heritage, the plaque will help keep the story alive for future generations.

Installed near our new #BoatBench by Lifeboat Road car park, the plaque was the idea of Formby Civic Society and funded by local parish councillors. The bench was designed and created by talented volunteer Carla.

Today, only parts of the lifeboat station's brick foundations remain. The boathouse, later used as a tearoom by the Norris family, was demolished in 1965 as the shifting coastline and naturally rolling dunes reclaimed the site.

Award winning display (image 1)

Thank you to everyone who popped over to say Hi at the Southport Flower show. We were delighted that our raised bed display was awarded a silver-gilt medal. The bed was designed and created by our amazing regular volunteers and aimed to raise awareness of our woodland conservation work, by showing the key features that help create a healthy woodland habitat for wildlife.

Talking Formby (image 2)

Laura our Community Manager has had another busy summer getting out and about chatting to over 800 local people about our conservation work. From school halls, summer fetes and local events including Formby Live and community celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of Formby's historic Lifeboat station.

Keeping Formby special together

We're so grateful to everyone who has helped tackle the huge amounts of litter left behind over the summer, including fortnightly events organised by Formby and Freshfield Beach Litter Angels and Rage Against Rubbish handing out bags and talking to people. 21 corporate volunteering groups also gave an amazing 2,430 hours to litter pick. Over the summer months, NT staff litter pick daily on site and this additional support from the local community makes a huge difference.

Volunteer impact May to August

Our amazing regular volunteers have given **1,798 hours**. Here's a snapshot of what we have achieved:

- ❖ Extended and enhanced cornerstone play trail.
- ❖ Supported our annual wildlife surveys.
- ❖ Created several large patches of sand lizard habitat by removing patches of marram.
- ❖ Resurfaced around 50m of footpath.
- ❖ Created and installed 3 benches.
- ❖ Over 250 hours clearing the boardwalk of sand.
- ❖ Removed 200m of broken/dangerous fencing.
- ❖ Installed over 20 new interpretive signs across site.
- ❖ Installed new waymarkers for Asparagus trail.
- ❖ Supported with the Southport Flower Show.
- ❖ Cut back and strimmed major footpaths and routes across site.



A natter with...

Claudia Loffredo

Visitor Experience Manager

How long have you worked at NT Formby?

I joined the team in April 2026 – so I am still quite new!

What was your previous job?

I was the Front of House Manager at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral for two years and previously I was in London working in Visitor Services and Experience in places like the Sir John Soane's Museum, Kew Gardens and Chiswick House and Gardens. I'm passionate about heritage, art and nature, and about making historic buildings and natural spaces more inspiring, accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Describe your role at NT

I am the Visitor Experience Manager for NT in the Liverpool City Region this includes Speke Hall, Formby, Hardman House and The Beatles Childhood Homes. At Formby, I help visitors and activity providers access the site safely while protecting the natural environment. This includes managing permissions, issuing licences and building partnerships with local groups. Everything from pilates on the beach to nature art classes and horse-riding events.

What do you like most about your role?

The most rewarding part of my role is helping people connect with places like Formby and seeing visitors and communities benefit from them. I've recently...



... been working with Freshfield Animal Rescue, whose expertise has helped support local pet owners and their animals at Formby, a great example of a community partnership.

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

I was born on a coastal town and am drawn to the sea! What I really enjoy about Formby is the walk and change of scenery from the woodland to the beach, it feels like nature couldn't have chosen a better itinerary for everyone's wellness.

How would you describe NT Formby in 3 words?

Wild, fun, peaceful.

What's your favourite National Trust place to visit?

I recently enjoyed a trip to Osterley Park with its magnificent mansion, lakeside walks and acres of parkland to explore.

Hosting events at Formby

To help keep everyone safe and protect Formby's special wildlife and landscapes, any organised activities or events run by third parties need a licence. If you're planning an event or activity, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your proposal to formby@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Blast from the past

This old Vimto bottle was recently revealed by Formby's shifting dunes, complete with its original label and cap. The design suggests it's around 40 years old, likely dating back to the 1980s, back when cassette tapes, shoulder pads and Rubik's Cubes were all the rage.



While it's an intriguing find, it also highlights how long litter lingers. By taking home everything you bring, you can help keep Formby special for people and wildlife. Thank you for your support.

Autumn wildlife to spot

- ❖ Elusive and rare **red squirrels** become more active this time of year gathering food for winter.
- ❖ Fabulous **fungi** from shaggy ink caps, dune brittlestem, puffballs, fly agaric to jelly ear.
- ❖ **Dragonflies** basking around dune ponds on sunny autumn days, with common darters often the last to be seen.
- ❖ Migrating **waders** resting and re-fuelling on Formby's shoreline, including sanderling, dunlin, knots and curlews.
- ❖ **Grey seals** occasionally spotted bobbing along offshore as autumn progresses.
- ❖ Thousands of honking **pink footed geese** flying in their distinctive v-shaped formations as they arrive from Iceland.
- ❖ Shy **roe deer** occasionally trotting through quieter corners of the pinewoods and dunes, particularly during the early morning or evening.

