



News from The Moors at Arne



December 2024 update



Welcome to another edition of The Moors at Arne newsletter. Since the last issue, we have had snow, heavy rain and some beautiful clear sunny days on site and the team have captured some great photos showing the changing conditions over winter, like this lovely sunrise image. It is a real privilege to work in an environment where we are so close to nature.

A year at Arne Moors in numbers

As 2024 draws to a close we are reflecting on the year that has passed. Here are some of the highlights:

- 2.8km of new embankment constructed
- Four new outfall structures built
- 680m of realigned Furzebrook stream created
- Two football pitches of turf moved into new freshwater area
- 12 new ponds and scrapes dug in the new freshwater area
- One prehistoric wooden spade found by the archaeology team
- 135 species of bird spotted on and above the site

What a year it has been as we move one year closer to completing this exciting project in your local area. Things are really taking shape!

On behalf of the whole project team we would like to wish you a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Site news

Three flap valves have now been installed on the Furzebrook outfall structure. These will open at low tide to discharge water from the Furzebrook stream into the new intertidal area. They will then close at high tide to prevent water flowing back in. The design allows for the safe passage of eels and fish through the structure.

Two of the smaller flow control structures in the east of the scheme are now complete and the third will be completed during next year's construction season. The causeway outfall structure has also been installed.



Over the winter months, we will need to keep vegetation cut back in area where the works are being carried out next year. On a site of this scale, this is an on-going task. Each time vegetation is cut, the ecologists are on hand to ensure that the ecology on site is safeguarded.

Community updates

Last week a small team from Kier used one of their volunteering days to help out with some jobs that needed doing at Stoborough Primary School. Employees at Kier have 2 days off every year to volunteer for good causes and this group were particularly keen to do something to benefit the local community.

Together, the team of five braved the cold to paint the exterior of the school's swimming pool and tidy up the garden area at the front of school.

Thank you to the staff at Stoborough Primary for making us feel so welcome and we hope the children enjoy using their freshly painted pool next summer!



Introducing our water vole specialist



Dr Merryl Gelling is a nationally recognised ecologist specialising in protected British mammals and is the lead water vole and otter ecologist on the project. Her role involves the design and implementation of mitigation that will ultimately protect the water voles and otters on site during construction and after completion.

How would you describe your role on the project?

Because of the sheer size and dynamic nature of the site there is no simple solution. We have been using different approaches in different areas of the site, including capturing water voles to physically remove them from certain areas, and habitat manipulation to encourage them to move elsewhere on site where no works are currently occurring. All of the work relating to water voles is done under licence from Natural England and is heavily time-constrained - we can only capture or displace water voles during a short window in spring and autumn to ensure we don't impact on their breeding or over-wintering periods, but we also have to consider the presence of other species, and restrictions which pertain to those so it feels like a constant juggling act!



What interests you most about the project?

Working on a large scale project which is ultimately creating new habitat is really satisfying – even though much of the site is currently a construction zone there is still so much wildlife present, and on completion the variety of wildlife will only increase. So much of this project design is driven by wildlife, which makes a refreshing change. It is a really challenging but exciting project to be involved with.

Can you share a fun fact about yourself?

I once spent three months driving a London ambulance to Mongolia so that it could be donated to a women's hospital. We travelled through 14 countries including Iran, Turkmenistan and Russia and didn't have a single flat tyre!



What's happening next?

Some tree works will take place within the site boundary to allow for the construction of a new footpath through the woodland area.

Vegetation management will continue over the winter and the project team will be busy at the site offices planning for the year ahead.



About the project

The Moors at Arne project is adapting over 150 hectares of land into a diverse wetlands habitat. This type of habitat is being lost in other areas of Poole Harbour due to 'coastal squeeze'. This is a term used to describe the effect of rising sea levels pressing against man-made structures such as flood defences resulting in a loss of intertidal habitat such as mud-flats and salt marsh.

Kier is the contractor delivering this project on behalf of the Environment Agency and its project partners, RSPB and Natural England.

Got a question for the project team? Contact us via arne@kier.co.uk

