



News from The Moors at Arne



November 2023 edition



Constructing a site access track

Welcome to the latest project newsletter. As the days get shorter and the temperature drops, the main working season at Arne has drawn to a close and fewer staff will be on site over the next few months.

This year's works continued for a little longer than previously communicated in order to complete some key works during the first two weeks of November. Next year's main works will start from 1 April.

Site update

During 2024 we will start to construct the new embankments. We are aiming to construct the embankments from material sourced from within the site as far as possible. The team have been carrying out some trials to assess the suitability of the material on site.



Borrow pit trial

Site update



The window sampling rig in action

Part of the investigations involved digging a 2.5m deep trial pit. Larger 'borrow pits' will be dug later in the project to create the embankments.

The embankments will be strengthened with an impermeable core created using a specialist method which mixes cement with material dug from site.

We have collected soil samples using a 'window sampling rig' and these will be sent off for laboratory testing to ensure suitability for the process.

The network of site tracks is now complete and as works for the year draw to a close there will be a significant reduction in the number of HGVs passing through Ridge. Thank you for your patience over the past few months.



Ecology update



An important feature of the Moors at Arne will be the new freshwater habitat area. This will be situated at the western end of site and will be protected by a large embankment before the breaches are made.

This freshwater area will become home to many of the species which currently live on the wider site and would not be suited to the new intertidal habitat. In addition to this new area, there are several other parts of site which will remain suitable for these species.

During October, we trialled a process of turf translocation (pictured above) This involves moving sections of turf from an area of site which will eventually become intertidal, to the new freshwater zone.



Archaeology

As the archaeologists down tools at Arne for the year, Greg Chuter, Senior Archaeologist at the Environment Agency reflects on this year's finds.

During this year's dig, over 50 circular ditches of varying sizes were uncovered. Some of these 'ring ditches' have gaps or entrances, and at least one has evidence of postholes within it that once supported a roof structure for a 'round house'. Finds have been very sparse, which is unusual, but some pottery fragments recovered suggest the site was being used in the mid to late Iron Age period, (c. 500 BC to AD 43).

It is thought that some of the ring ditches may have acted as drainage around stacks of reeds or other material gathered from the marsh, and others may have been to define working areas or even temporary tent like structures.



Some of the circular ditches found at Arne



Archaeology

In many locations, ring ditches overlay earlier ring ditches, suggesting continuous 'rebuilding', perhaps due to winter storm damage. Given the nature of the site and the scarcity of finds it is very likely that occupation was seasonal, focused on the spring and summer months, and that the main settlement was elsewhere, perhaps at Ridge or even Wareham.

Next year, the archaeologists will return to a different part of site, where evidence of salt production has been found.

Meet the team



This month we would like to introduce Neil Watson, Project Executive for the Environment Agency. With 25 years' experience working in the coastal environment, Neil's role is to ensure adequate resources are available to deliver the project effectively and that objectives are met.

Neil is excited about the prospect of making the breaches and watching the new inter-tidal habitat develop.



About the project

The Moors at Arne project will adapt 150 hectares of land into a diverse wetland 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 their project partners, RSPB and Natural England.



Keeping in touch

We welcome your feedback and are here to answer any questions you may have about the project. Please email arne@kier.co.uk

For more information about the project please visit our web pages

<https://www.dorsetcoast.com/project/moors-at-arne-coastal-change-project/>

