



National  
Trust

## National Trust report for South Milton Parish Council's annual meeting, April 2024

2023 was a fairly quiet year for the National Trust at South Milton Sands in terms of visitor numbers. The season started well, however with the weather turning at the start of the school holidays visitor numbers remained lower than normal throughout August.

Following Tim Rolt's retirement, Matt Voller joined the team in November as Welcome Manager. Matt joins us from Devon Wildlife Trust, where he was working in the Wembury Marine centre, and he has a strong marine conservation background. Matt manages all of the Trust car parks across the South Devon countryside properties, including the staffed car parks at South Milton Sands and Wembury.

Two new seasonal staff have recently joined the car park team at South Milton – a Welcome Services Assistant and a Supervisor – ready for the summer season ahead.

The weather has proved a real challenge over the last year in terms of maintenance, particularly of the track. The constant rain has caused it to wash out and become potholed much more frequently than other years. It has recently been regraded and stone rolled in to help maintain the surface for longer. The turf along the back edge of the car park was striped back while the diggers were on site working. This has improved the appearance and will help ensure that cars park closer to the fence, which in turn will allow better space for the middle row.

Both the access boardwalks onto the beach were replaced – the upper one, opposite the café was a like for like replacement. The main boardwalk opposite the car park was an upgrade, with a viewing platform at the beach end to provide better access for all abilities to enjoy the site.

More recently the rangers and volunteers moved 2 of the picnic benches opposite the café further up within the fenced off area, they then moved the chestnut paling fence out in line with the track and have planted Marram Grass in the area behind. This work is to help stabilise and protect the sand dunes at what is one of their narrowest points. The project was funded by the South West Coast Path association.

We are looking forward to what will hopefully be a busy, sunny summer season, with lots of families and other visitors enjoying the beach.