



A Brief History of Moors Valley Country Park

1984-85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Dorset District Council purchases Kings Farm, an eighty-two acre dairy farm adjacent to Ringwood Forest. • Construction of the Moors Lake and the first nine holes of the golf course are completed. • First section of railway track is laid, by Narrowgauge limited.
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First warden (David Crompton) appointed in May and the first visitors discover Moors Valley in July. • Forestry Commission builds a car park. • An 18th century timber barn is purchased from a farm at Eastern Royal near Marlborough and work begins to re-construct it at Moors Valley Country Park as the Visitor Centre. • Tim Dixon appointed Senior Ranger
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Visitor Centre and tea room is opened to the public and the first events programme for the park is published.
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second farm is purchased by East Dorset District Council making the total area of the park 250 acres. • The golf course is ready for play and so the park is officially opened with a charity golf match on the 19th July 1988. • The first schools take part in warden led environmental activities.
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Dorset Countryside Management Service is set up to manage Moors Valley Country Park and other countryside sites owned by East Dorset District Council. • A second lake, the Crane Lake, is constructed.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second half of the Barn is brought from Easton Royal and is added at right angles to the original part of the Barn to allow the tea room to expand and to house the Country Shop. New footpaths are built through the northern area of the park.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Play Trail and Tree Top Trail in the Forest are opened.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second nine holes of golf are ready for play making it a full 18-hole course. The Look Out is built. Car parking charges are introduced
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The car park is extended to cater for the high visitor numbers, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million in this year. A golf club house is built.
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Castle and Sand Works play area is built, especially for toddlers. The junior area is refurbished.
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new kitchen is built for the Tea Room; toilets are extended to incorporate baby changing facilities and family cubicles. A third wing of the Visitor Centre is built to house the Country Shop. An information point is opened in the visitor centre. • The bicycle hire centre is opened in the Visitor Centre.
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A footpath with boardwalk is built to allow people to walk from the play areas and picnic area to the railway station in safety. • 4 way-marked walks are completed.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cycle hire centre and management of the golf course become directly managed by park staff rather than through private contractors. • A toilet block is built at the railway station.
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the golfer's car park are made. The Ants Nest play trail structure is completed. Moors Valley Country Park celebrates its tenth birthday.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cycling for health initiative for older people is launched at Moors Valley and proves to be very popular. • Waymarked cycle trails are put in.

<p>2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths at northern end of the park are tarmac to make them a better surface for walking on. • Moors Valley newsletter is produced for the first time, Wardens run over 150 events over the year. • Stretch of the Moors River through the park is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest by English Nature. • Loggosarus and Snakes and Ladders play structures are removed, replaced by Snake and ladders 2. • Car park charge is raised to a peak charge of £4.00 per car per day. Season ticket is raised to £18
<p>2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Forest picnic area opened. • Launch of walking for health initiative. • Snake pit on Play Trail refurbished. • Park closed for 6 weeks – Feb to March due to Country wide outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease
<p>2002</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April, car park charges increased to £25.00 for a season ticket and max daily charge of £5.00 per car per day. • October, magpie slide replaced on play trail by the Pond Maze. • November, fort in junior adventure play area replaced with two giant wigwam towers
<p>2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July ‘Go Ape’ – the high ropes course with tarzan swings, rope bridges and zip slides is opened. • August, remaining family trail footpaths are tarmac to make route more suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs and less liable to puddling in wet weather. • October - Moors Lake and Crane lakes dredged to remove the silt build up over the last 10-15 years.
<p>2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to alter car park system begins. • Tim Dixon – Countryside Manager since 1998 leaves to work for Essex Country Council. (Dec) Head Ranger Clare Gronow takes over as manager.
<p>2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May - new car park system comes into operation – pay for length of stay at end of visit rather than pay and display. Number plate recognition system for annual permit holders. • Oct - Takeaway sales point at Visitor Centre opened. • Nov – pond on drive under boardwalk dug out. New dragons teeth put in on drive. • Nov – knee rail at front of Visitor Centre replaced
<p>2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan – foundations laid on carriage shed extension at railway • Feb – more hardstanding car parking provided in main car park. Fence and path improvements on mound area. Area in front of VC extended and re-tarmac – young trees planted in front beds. Dog Park re-furbished and extended. • Nov – 5 permanent fishing bays are built on the west bank of the Moors Lake
<p>2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March – agreement reached to lease front entrance land – fences removed and area landscaped. • April – cold store unit for restaurant completed • April – play area wood chip dug out and all new chippings added • April – new dragonfly entrance sign put in place • May – new carriage shed at railway station completed • May – The rock – play equipment built in play area.
<p>2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New piece of play equipment – explorer den, in infants play area • Toilets extended and fully refurbished. • New boarding on golf drive boardwalk • Lottery funded Play Ranger project launched. Tracy Standish appointed senior Play Ranger • MACK trading takes over the running of the golf course - March
<p>2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEBS new play trail structure opened 16th April by WAVE 105 and Rhys Jones. • Activate 1000 project ranger appointed April 09 – Karl Prince • New footpath built at Potterne Park to create all weather circular route around Potterne wood and park. Funded through heathland mitigation scheme. • June 2010 – Activate 1000 programme launched. • New improved Moors Valley website launched.

<p>2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangers take out original zip wire and seating and rebuild a new wire, new seating and traversing wall. Swings also replaced with bucket swing. • New section of footpath built connecting Bingham drive (Verwood) through Potterne Wood to Potterne Park bridge. • New section of footpath built near Potterne Wood as river bank subsiding. • Footpath at back of 13th tee improved. • 7km single track cycle route officially opened in Oct
<p>2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spielart play equipment installed in infants area – replacing Kompan fairy castle • Park awarded Greenflag status • Fitness trail opens in the Forest • Country Shop concessionaires John and Diana Byatt give in their notice and the shop ceases trading in Nov 11. Small shop opens at Information Point (Oct 11) • Play Ranger project comes to an end • Railway has 25th Anniversary weekend in July • Rangers win St Johns Ambulance National Award for their first aid delivery and training. • Go Ape start to offer guided Segway tours (Aug 11) • Go Ape first children's course opens at Moors Valley (Oct 11) • Water Voles released on the Moors River as part of a re-introduction programme (Aug 11) • New ponds at Potterne completed. Footpath from Potterne Park into Moors Valley is tarmac, to make a fully accessible all weather route from Verwood to the Visitor Centre. • Stag Beetle on Play Trail replaced by Funnel Trap
<p>2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old country shop now called Stables and used for private hire, craft markets and other events • Biomass boiler installed – Feb 2012, to provide heat for VC • Railway frontage refurbished. Model railway at front of VC rebuilt • New drainage and 1st raised bed built at front of VC • Giant Nests (Play Trail) and Log Den (Forest Picnic Area) both open – April 2012 • Snakes and Ladders removed from Play Trail • Wobbly dragonfly see-saw and springies installed in sand play area • Stage 2 of VC frontage improvements and path widening works take place
<p>2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potwash area roof lifted and area fully refurbished • Old forts in play area replaced • Towers and tunnels replaced by House of Baba yaga • Moors Valley celebrates its 25th Birthday • Moors Valley conservation volunteer group launched • Gladstone electronic booking system installed
<p>2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New counter and server area build for the restaurant • Cycle hire resurfaced, new fencing • Lots of flooding Dec-Feb - footpath repair works required. • Activate Coast and Countryside Scheme launched • Moors Valley comes 2nd in Dorset Tourism Awards • Matt Reeks becomes partnership manager for CED partnership • Community and open spaces service review. MV and countryside teams split. CG becomes MV team leader. KT Davies comms ranger. E Reeks engagement ranger. M Beavan taken on as Visitor services ranger • Karl Prince moves on to Leisure based role • Mack trading sign revised contract for management of the golf course • Christmas tree sales move to front of Visitor Centre and operated jointly.
<p>2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Jan. Following review, Moors Valley dedicated team is set up, part of the wider countryside and open spaces team • April – new Crocodile Crossing launched on play trail. • April – website re-launch with mobile version and Moors Valley first film • May – new car parking system installed- ticketless system • Nov - MV is winner of winners at Dorset Tourism Awards and silver award in SW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tourism awards Wessex accessible cycling set up at MV November – first Park Run event held
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New wetpore footpath installed in sand play area Audio trail around Moors Lake launched April – wavy slide refurbished by Mike using oak April – 2 additional pay stations installed (6 total) MV challenge promotion launched along with Deanos craft den. Ditches in nature area and towards 7th dug out and tree works carried out. Pond on golf drive dug out Wi-Fi available in the Visitors Centre Battlefield live started – forest concession Hawk walks offered in forest. New FC office and Go Ape Segway container installed Tracey Churcher takes over from Andrew Norris at FC All new fleet of bikes – Diamond backs brought for cycle hire centre Sara Tschersich appointed Estates Ranger November – first junior parkrun event held MV wins Dorset Tourism Awards in accessibility and sustainability Visit England – quality award given
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand play area extended – sand diggers, train, small fort and musical play. Wet pore path under Railway Bridge installed. Golf centre refurbishment works completed in April – to give extended bar area and completely new ladies and gents changing areas. Glass wall in the VC installed to split the restaurant and retail area. Partial refurbishment of tree top trail in March Sections of single-track trail refurbished and volunteer group for managing single-track and Watchmoor bike park launched by FC March – Gruffalo spotters app, augmented reality trail launched April – busiest April on record. Over 30k cars. April – All day charge increased to £10/car May – retail area in shop extended. April – Rangers office refurbished, hot desk style. Contactless payments installed at pay stations Play trail refurbishment – timbers and snake pit (full rebuild). Play trail – new equipment – Hawkhouse Drinking water fountain installed Wildflower meadows planted Café retendered – won by Seasons restaurant Staff changes – Mike Dodson, Ben Symes, Matt Beavan all leave. Karl Prince and Steve Head join the team
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan; Retail area increased in size with slat wall replacing free standing units Ranger Den created in Stables. Huge overhaul of building. Wildlife slowly introduced May: Sharon Foster employed as Retail Development Ranger June: Junior Fort strengthen and fixed September: Direct Debits for parking launched, offering monthly all hours parking for £6 a month
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan – June; Ranger Den further developed. New habitats introduced Jan; Shop size increased, permanent wall installed, with slat walling March; three seasonals; Kieran, Kate and Charlie start April; Moors Valley falls under the new Dorset Council, after CED separate and 9 authorities across Dorset become 2. April; all day charged increased to £12 (over 4hrs) April; Clare Gronow, team leader, retired after over 30 years at the park ☹ Karl Prince to stepped up as team leader May; Steve Head appointed Estates Ranger after Sara T went off to pastures new May; New play equipment; Bewilderness launched on play trail

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July; New Duty Ranger position filled by Kerri Downton • Sept; New Nets Adventure activity structure built by Go Ape, soft opening, with full launch in 2020 • Sept; Restoration of WW2 Decoy Bunker complete by Moors Valley Conservation Volunteers and the Rangers • Nov; 6-way tyre swing replaced with new 5-way seat swing • Nov; new bendy boardwalk reopened after being completely refurbished. Now on steel foundations • Dec; Katie Davies, Marketing Ranger, leaves after 17 years • Dec; All new fleet of GT Avalanche Sport bikes – old ones sold off
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January – Tables and chairs replaced in restaurant after 20+ years use! • All old tables and chair sold for suitable donations to raise money for local charity' Hope for Food • Jan; New maintenance ranger; Kenan Ramsay started • Jan; new ice cream building started and tender for concessionaire goes live • Feb; New Duty Ranger; Cycle Hire, Tom Butcher started