

A Forest for playing!

Forests are a child's dream.

Trees were made for climbing, logs for balancing on and sticks for building dens and a hundred and one other imaginative uses. Add to this a beck to splash in and build dams and Hamsterley Forest ticks all the boxes.



In 1998, our first purpose built play area was engineered by play designer **Andy Frost**. Unfortunately, time and the elements have taken their toll on the structures so plans were put in place to replace the existing features with a new play trail.

Our **new play trail** will have play zones built along the route of the trail to encourage exploration of the wider forest and re-connect kids and parents with the joys of 'wild play', such as climbing trees, building dens and making use of the young explorer's most essential tool – **the stick!**

We built the first phase of the trail in February 2015 and added phase 2 in 2016. Working with Infinite Playgrounds, this phase was inspired by the **Vikings** and included a new multi-user **Dragon Boat Swing**, **Thor's Workshop** and a **Viking Ghost-ship**.

And why the Viking theme? Well, they were pretty wild and were great explorers. That's what we are hoping the play experience in the forest will be for imaginative, adventurous young explorers who don't want to be confined just to a conventional playground.

Now we are ready for the most exciting developments yet. During this coming winter more Viking themed-play will be arriving in the forest. There will be more play opportunities aimed at toddlers and their parents and more challenging play aimed at young teenagers.

Funding for the project has come from a variety of sources, including income from car parking and the Hamsterley Forest Discovery Pass. **Thank you for supporting your forest – none of this is possible without our visitors' support.**

As part of the project, the raised boardwalk will be removed in the autumn to make way for new play – we hope you're looking forward to seeing the new additions in spring 2017.

To keep up to date with developments, visit our facebook page at [facebook.com/hamsterleyforest](https://www.facebook.com/hamsterleyforest).