

The Formentera heritage office reports that after roughly two months of work, restoration on assorted parts of the old La Mola windmill is now complete. Workers are expected to finish mounting pieces of the structure that were restored last week.

Full restoration operations were deemed necessary after the heritage office and Balearic Islands Foundation reported that wind and the elements had left two of the lighthouse's six pinewood sweeps in a deteriorated state. One sweep snapped as crews performed preparatory work, bringing two more sails along with it and prompting the decision to remove the windmill's wind-catching apparatuses so the ensemble could be secured, allowing for improved visitor safety and a more thorough assessment of restoration needs.

To the extent possible, meticulous restoration operations respected craftsmanship and materials of the original structure. For instance, slender and straight pine trees were selected to replicate the sails, or sweeps, in need of replacement.

Efforts were led by Francesc Torres 'Moliner' and Jaume Escandell d'en Ferrer — individuals with knowledge and experience in similar operations, and who in the past worked with the previous miller, Joan Torres Mayans 'Moliner', to restore other windmills in the Pine Islands.

Safeguarding windmills

"Restoration was considered a priority given the poor state of conservation of several of the windmill's structural elements", said heritage councillor Raquel Guasch, highlighting the Formentera government's efforts "to guarantee protection of the La Mola windmill". In November 2019 members of local government voted to begin the process of designating La Mola's *molí vell*
(old mill) a monument of special cultural interest. Attendees of another plenary gathering, this time in July of last year, voted to extend protections around the windmill with "more innovative safeguards consistent with the reality of the physical surroundings". In the words of the local heritage chief, "the goal is to ultimately accord 'cultural interest site' status to every windmill on the island".

Last year the Consell de Formentera signed a rental agreement with Balearic Islands Foundation, which owns the windmill, giving local government direct control over opening hours and visits for the next six years.

The “Molí Vell de la Mola” will once again open to the public this Saturday, with winter hours —weekends from 10.00am to 2.00pm— in effect until May. Admission is free.

18 January 2021
Communications Department
Consell de Formentera