

**Folkestone & Hythe District Council**  
**Lower Leas Coastal Park Management Plan**  
**2026 – 2030**



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# 1 Introduction

The Coastal Park has seen major investment by Folkestone & Hythe District Council (F&HDC) and other funding bodies since 1999. This management plan has been developed in association with various other strategies and documents to produce a standard that the park will be maintained to. It will help to ensure that the park fulfils the vision statement that all parks should:

- Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal
- Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
- Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
- Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities

This management plan helps in achieving the key principles and service ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan (2020 -2030) and the department Service Plan.

The six key principles are:

- Locally Distinctive
- Sustainable Recovery
- Greener Folkestone and Hythe
- Transparent, Stable, Accountable
- Continuous Improvement
- Working Effectively with Partners

The four service ambitions are:

- A Thriving Economy
- Homes and Infrastructure
- Excellent Community Services
- Quality Environment

## 2 Site Details

### 2.1 Population Distribution

Folkestone & Hythe District Council covers a total area of 36,525 hectares and encompasses the towns of Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney and Lydd. The population of Shepway is 113,000 (2019).

### 2.2 Diverse Countryside

Kent has a varied and diverse countryside including the largest area of ancient semi-natural woodland of any county in Great Britain. The pattern of agriculture, including fruit, hops and general produce, has earned Kent the title “Garden of England”.

The coastline of Kent stretches for 350 miles from the industrialised Thames-side to the great shingle expanse of Dungeness. Along the Medway and Swale estuaries are the mudflats and salt marshes known as the North Kent Marshes. The White Cliffs, around Dover and Folkestone are internationally renowned and have been designated a Heritage Coast by Natural England. There are also numerous attractive towns and villages throughout the region, many of which are relatively quiet and unspoiled. The landscape, attractive settlements and coast represent the major assets of the region.

### 2.3 Transport links

#### Road

The Folkestone / Hythe area is well served by an excellent transportation network. The A259 serves the length of the South East coast from Folkestone to Havant. Junctions 10, 12 and 13 of the M20 motorway link Hythe and Folkestone to the M25 and London and east to Dover. Regular buses travel on the A259, stopping at Folkestone Bus Station. National Express coaches provide a service from Folkestone to London with at least 4 departures each day.

#### Rail

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link has increased passenger activity throughout the district, the shuttle operates between Folkestone and Calais, with a 35 minute journey time.

Folkestone Central and West stations provide regular services to the rest of the South East and London. The high speed rail service is available from Folkestone West Station arriving at London St Pancras in just under 1 hour.

#### Sea

The Port of Dover is within easy travelling distance from Folkestone. This is a principal passenger service port for the South East providing regular services to France and the wider continent. Passengers using the cruise terminal at Dover Eastern Docks take the opportunity to explore the area before embarking on their cruise.

### 2.4 Directions to Coastal Park

#### By Car

Leave the M20 at junction 13 and follow A20 (Cherry Garden Lane) to the second set of traffic lights. Turn left into Cheriton Road (A2034) and continue to the roundabout. Turn right at the roundabout and follow the A259 under the railway bridge. Go straight across 2 roundabouts following Castle Hill Avenue. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> roundabout turn left into Sandgate Road and proceed through the town centre. At the traffic lights turn right and take the second left at the roundabout following the Road of Remembrance down a steep slope. Continue until the road forks and take the right fork along the

harbour. Follow the road round but continue straight along the seafront on Lower Sandgate Road until you reach the park. Ample pay and display parking is provided in the harbour area.

### By Train

Leave the train at Folkestone Central Station and walk along the A259, Castle Hill Avenue until you reach The Leas. Turn right and walk along The Leas until you reach the bandstand. Follow the Zig Zag Path down into the park.

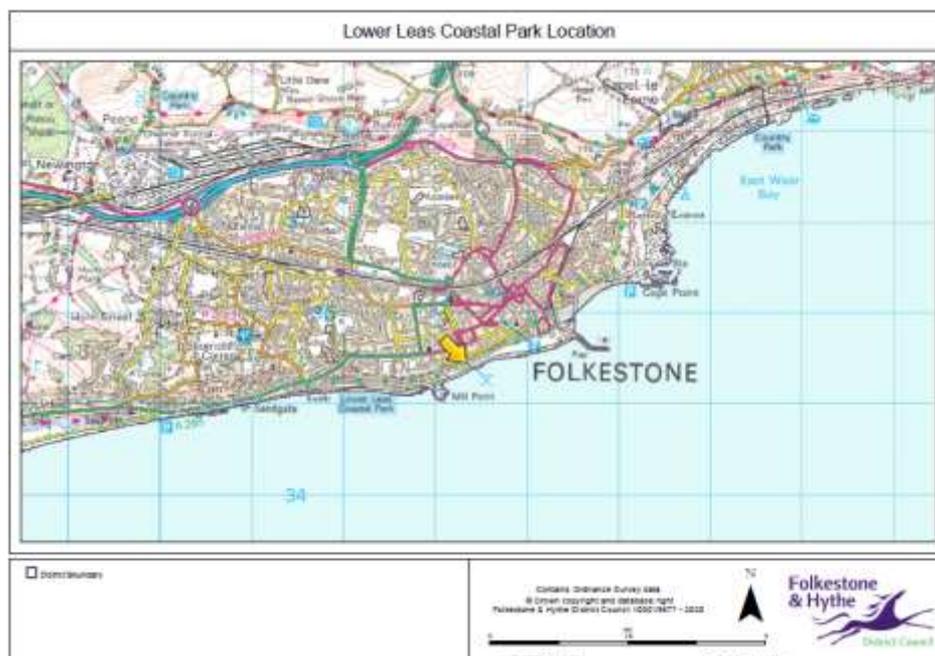
### By Bus

From Folkestone Bus Station walk along West Terrace towards the sea. At the roundabout take the steps leading down from the Road of Remembrance. At the foot of the steps turn right and walk past the Leas Lift into the park.

## 2.5 Kent Context Map



## 2.6 Folkestone Street Map



## 2.7 Site Description

The Coastal Park is an 11 hectare linear section of land between Folkestone and Sandgate. It is split into three broad recreational zones namely; the Wild Zone, Fun Zone and Formal Zone.

### Wild Zone

This zone encompasses land from the western entrance to the Toll House and is informally managed for recreation and wildlife. Areas of grass are close mown for amenity value while other areas are managed to encourage wildlife by maintaining existing habitats and creating additional ones. The parks geology and coastal aspect provides the basis for a rich flora and fauna, particularly migrating birds and insects. The thin sandy soil is ideal for native wild plants to thrive, while the south facing sunny under cliff has a mild micro-climate suitable for wildlife that may be unusual elsewhere in the country.

### Fun Zone

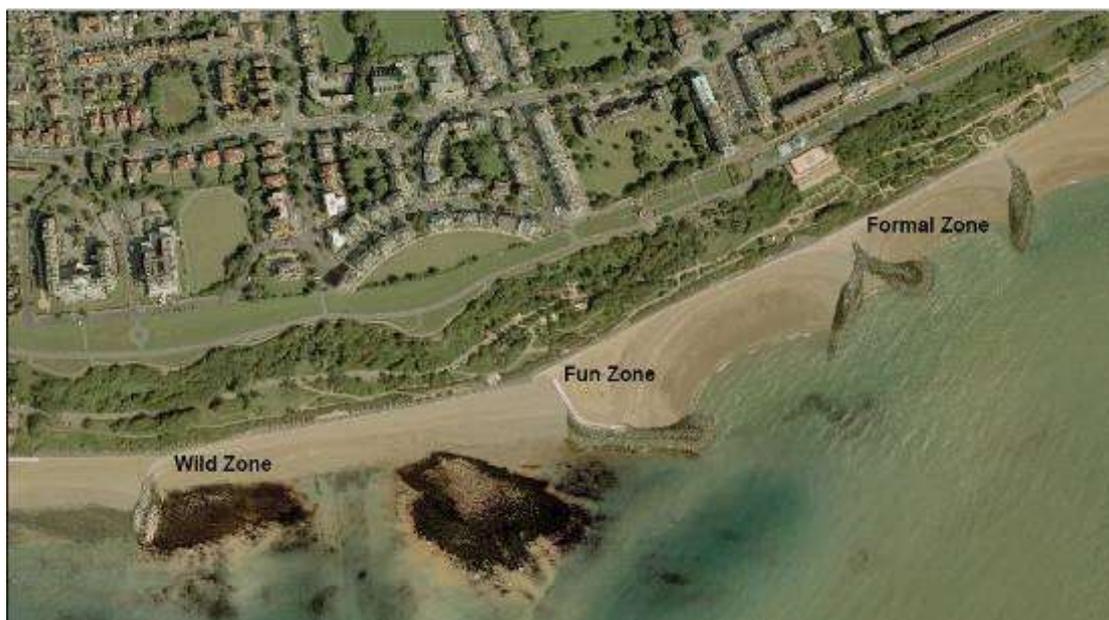
The centre of the park is used purely for recreation with the play area as the main focus. The equipment is wooden in construction to blend in with its surroundings and maintain the rural feel of the site. The equipment aims to challenge children of differing ages physically with a strong emphasis on inclusivity. The adventure play nature of the equipment is markedly different from play opportunities offered elsewhere in the district creating a destination play area in line with the councils Play Strategy 2020 – 2030 (further information provided in section 6).

Also situated in this zone is the site office, Amphitheatre, Zig Zag Path and Storytelling Area. Free events throughout the summer take place in the amphitheatre with a wide range of activities, theatre, workshops, films and live music to entertain visitors.

### Formal Zone

This zone was the subject of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant and opened in May 2006. This zone contrasts the wild zone with formal planting and emphasises the horticultural excellence the park has been known for historically. New areas are continually being developed with many sub-tropical plants being trialled in response to climate change and the need to eliminate additional watering.

## 2.8 Aerial Photograph



## 3 Site History

The Coastal Park was created in 1784 when a landslip produced a new strip of land between the beach and the new cliff line. The land was farmed although it appears this was difficult due to the geomorphology of the area.

Cattle were led down the cliff face to graze and this steep path still exists today and is known as the Cow Path. A raised boardwalk provides an alternative route to the stepped sections, ensuring access for all abilities and families with pushchairs. Viewing platforms allow visitors to take a rest on the steep steps.

Following the land slip the Toll Road was built to generate income and provide a route between Sandgate and the harbour. Visitor numbers to Folkestone increased due to the newly discovered benefits in sea bathing and other more general health benefits associated with sea air.

The land was under the ownership of Lord Radnor who, in the 1840s recognised that following completion of rail links, the park could be used to attract visitors to the town. During the 1870s new paths were laid allowing access from The Leas to the park. To ease this steep access the Leas Lift was opened in 1885 followed by a second lift at the same site in 1890. The lifts proved popular and 2 further lifts were built. The 1893 lift carried passengers from Sandgate to the Leas and the 1904 Metropole Lift provided an alternative to the Leas Lift at the eastern end.

Recreational features were added to the park during this period and included the Victoria Pier, Switchback rollercoaster style ride, The Leas Shelter and the Leas Bandstand. The Switchback ride was severely damaged by a storm in 1909 and was dismantled. The Leas Shelter became the present day Leas Cliff Hall following extensive refurbishment and The Leas Bandstand was completely refurbished in 2006.

The park suffered decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century although attempts were made to regenerate the area with the construction of the Zig Zag Path in 1921 which also provided much needed employment for the town, a model railway constructed in the 1940s and the opening of the beach front Mermaid Café.

The model railway was dismantled in the 1970s although parts of the station foundations can be found in the fun zone.

The Mermaid Café has been improved recently and the Zig Zag Path was repaired to remove the stepped section and reintroduce the slope to improve access.

The park further deteriorated in the 70s, 80s and 90s with only essential cliff stabilisation works being carried out. The park became a magnet for undesirables and the once celebrated features became derelict. However in 1999, following successful applications to various funding partners including Interreg II, the Home Office, the Single Regeneration Budget (SEEDA), Sustrans and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Folkestone & Hythe District Council embarked on an extensive 3 phase regeneration scheme, with phases 1 and 2 being completed in 2000 and phase 3 in 2006.

Due to its origin and location, access in and around the park has historically been difficult. The development of the park has dealt with these issues where ever possible, removing steps, installing lighting and re-surfacing pathways.

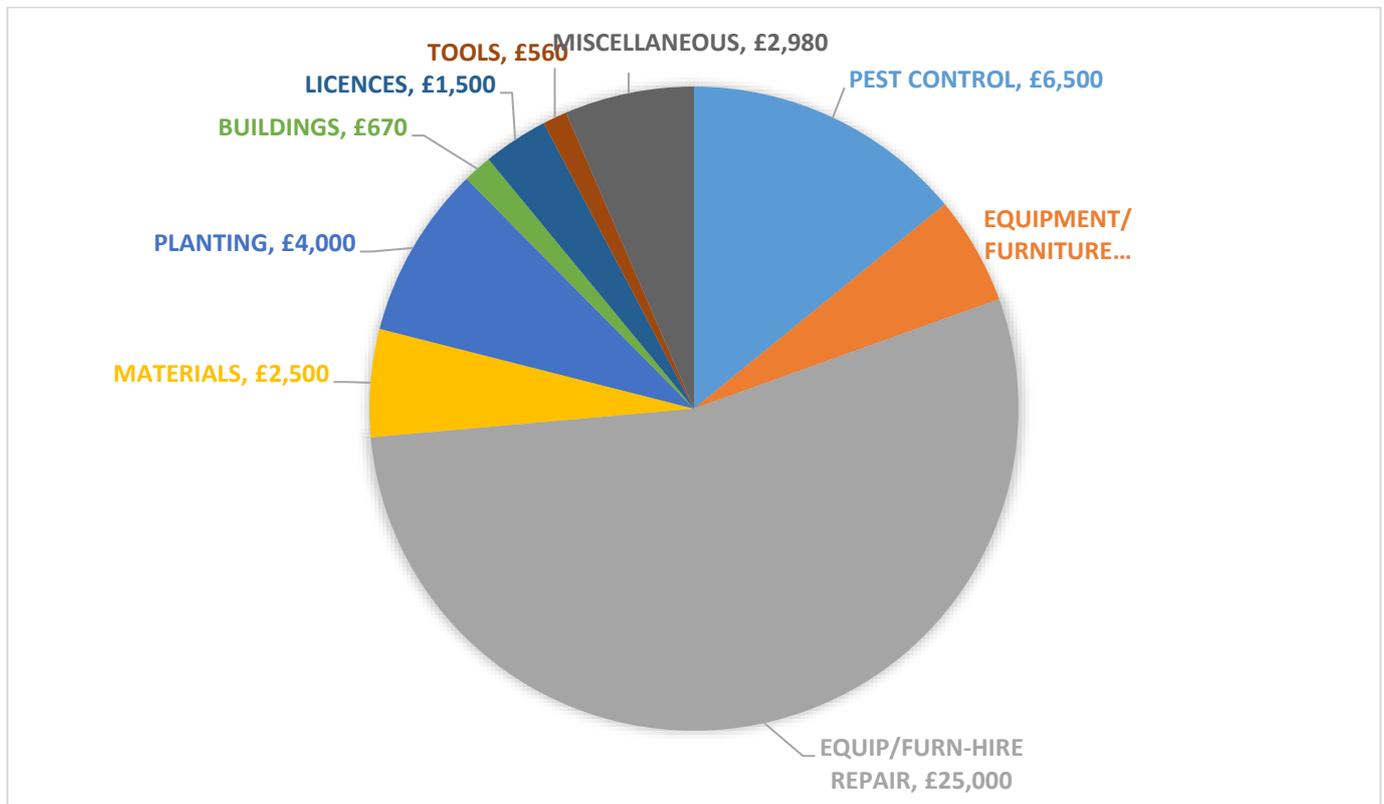
### 3.1 Historical Photographs



## 4 Maintenance Plan

The Horticultural Manager has managerial control over 1 Head Gardener, 1 Gardener, 2 Park Keepers and 4 seasonal Park Keepers. These site-specific staff can respond to issues as they arise allowing a high standard to be maintained at all times.

The Coastal Park has a separate, ring fenced budget of £46,200 per year which funds maintenance of the park as detailed below.



The Head Gardener allocates work in accordance with the maintenance schedules, discussions with the manager, the service plan, key principles, risk assessments and best horticultural practice. The risk assessments are available to view on request as are all other documents relating to Health and Safety (COSHH, Safety Data Sheets etc). The Head Gardener is responsible for ensuring all day to day duties within the park are completely in a timely fashion and to a high standard.

The manager makes regular inspections to ensure works are carried out to the correct standard and frequency. The manager also selects planting required for gapping up and newly cleared areas including trees and hedging. The hostile marine environment often dictates plant choices although trials are carried out to introduce new horticultural interest and respond to climate change.

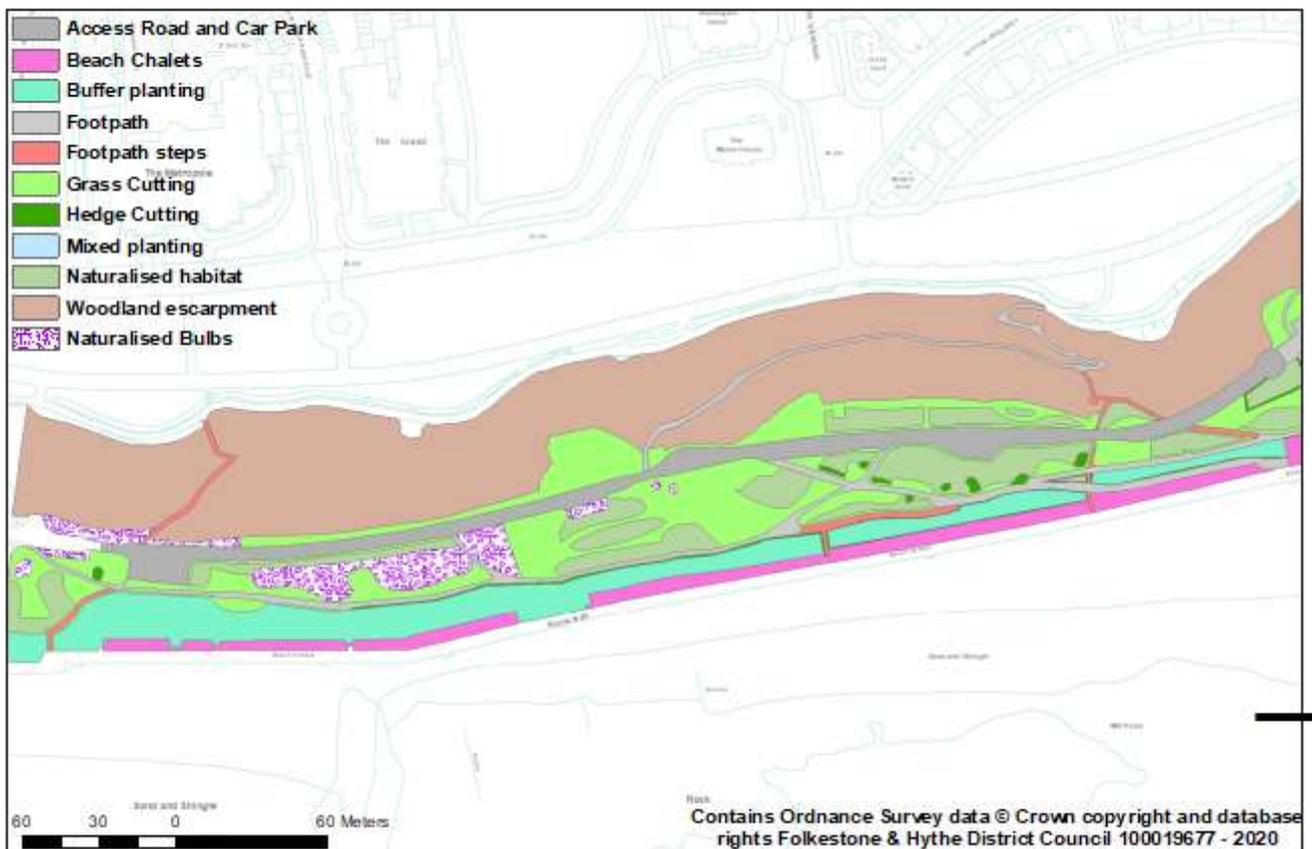
Coastal Park staff are supported by other members of the Grounds Maintenance team such as the Arboricultural Manager (tree care and management), the Technical Manager (fleet, equipment and machinery) and Horticultural Supervisor (chemicals and health and safety). Other departments also assist with the running of the park as detailed below. The Engineering and Estates teams play a significant role in the upkeep of the park's infrastructure and play equipment.

Park Keepers manage the cleansing of the major parks in Folkestone. They collect intelligence regarding breaches of dog fouling and littering bylaws and can issue warnings to the public. Intelligence is passed on to the Environmental Enforcement Officers who can then issue fixed

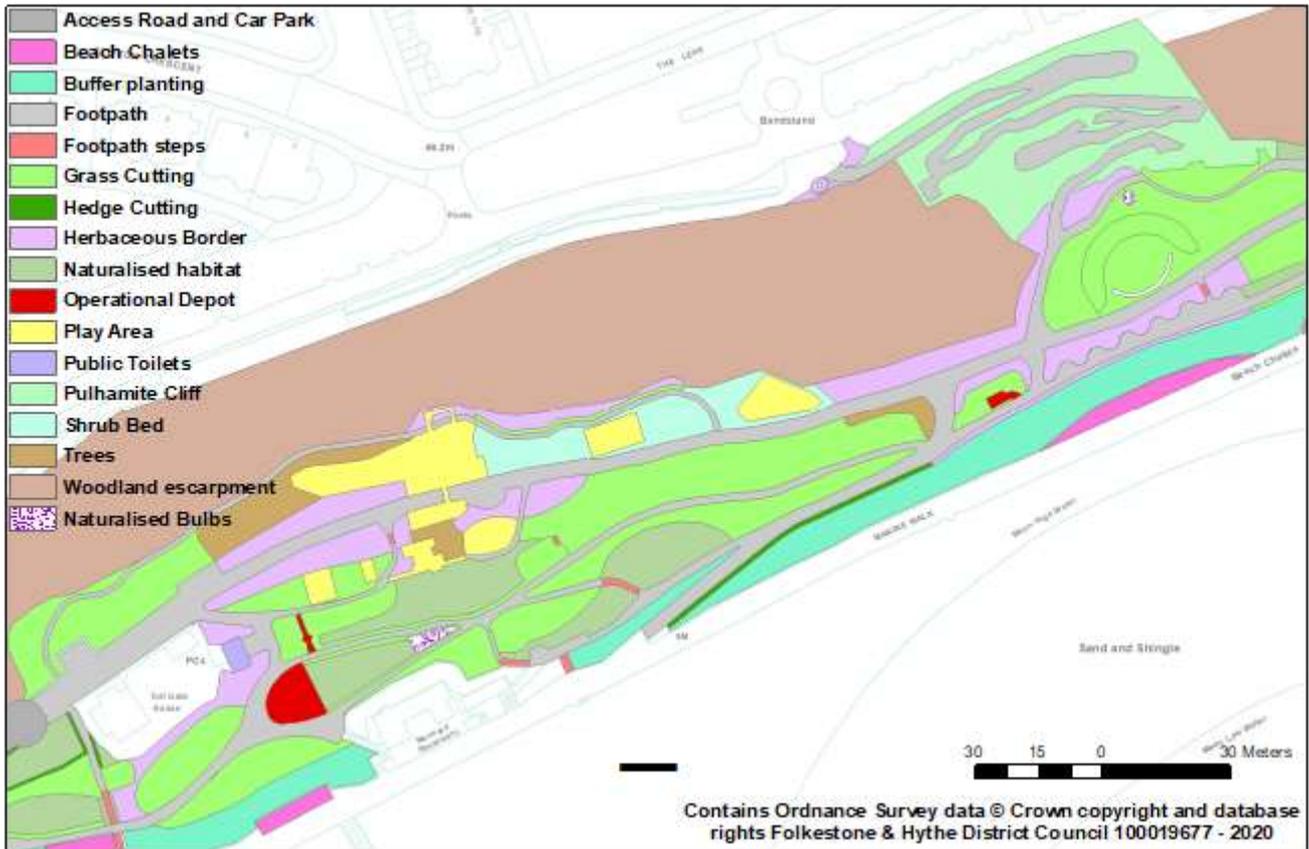
penalty notices. The 2 teams of 2, work on a 4 on 4 off system during the summer, reduced down to 2 teams of 1 person during the quieter winter months.

## 4.1 Maintenance Maps

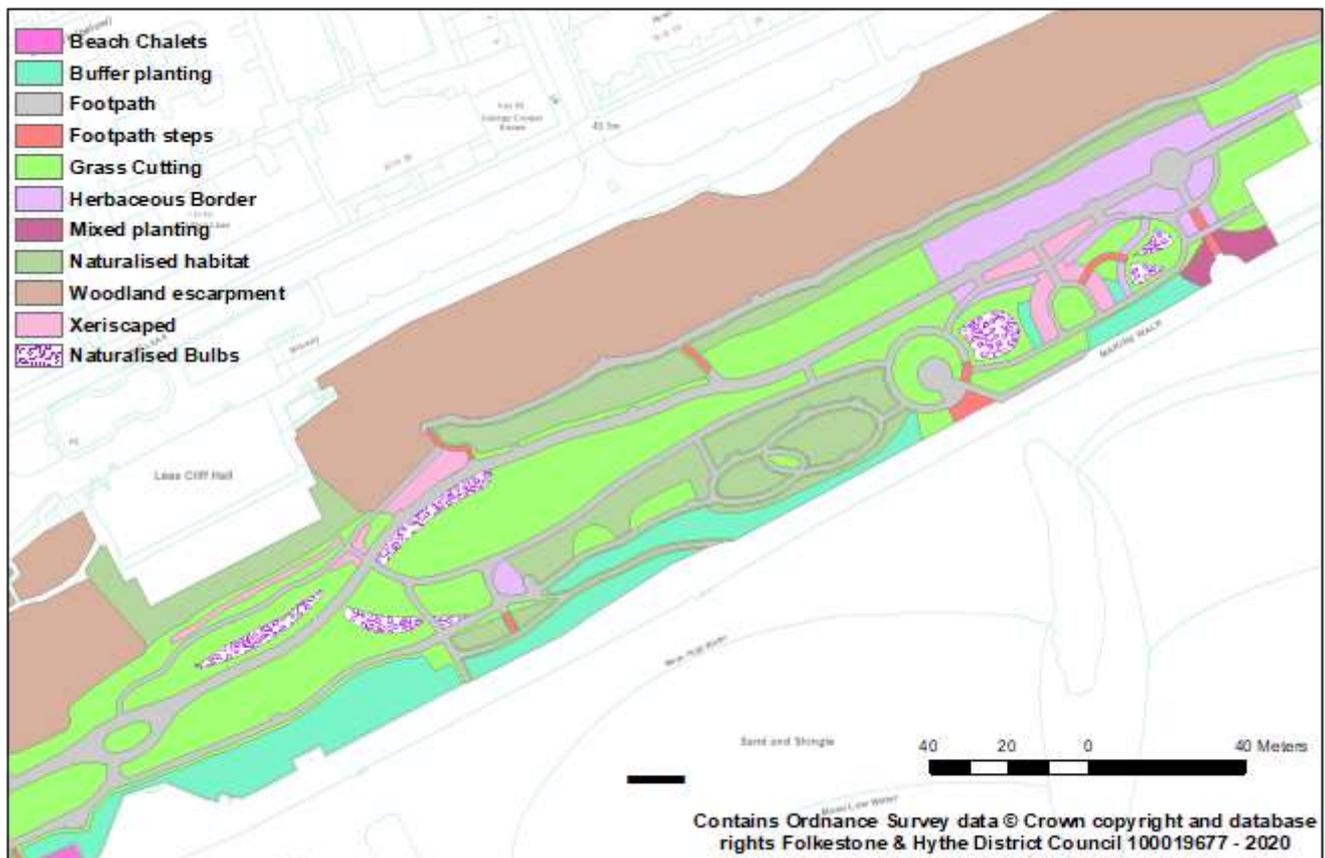
### Maintenance - Wild Zone



## Maintenance - Fun Zone



## Maintenance - Formal Zone



## 4.2 Grounds Maintenance Specification Table

Folkestone & Hythe District Council  
Lower Leas Coastal Park Management Plan 2026 - 2030

The table below details the main maintenance operations carried out by the team, the gardeners and the park keepers and should be read alongside the maps above. Definitive schedules of work are in place; however, a flexible approach can be adopted if required. All staff are aware of the high standards expected and work to ensure they are met. There is a real sense of ownership and pride in the site from the staff which is entrenched by constant feedback from park users.

Area	Operation	Frequency
Buffer Planting	Cut back to maintain good growth and plant health. Maintain safe access along Promenade and pathways. Expose obscured views across channel and improve security / maintenance access behind beach chalets.	Annual or as required
Naturalised Habitat	Wild areas managed for wildlife conservation. Flail or Ferris mowers are used depending on area and slope angle	Biannual or as instructed by the Manager
Grass Cutting	Large amenity areas close mown for recreation. Ride-on mower used, backed up by smaller machinery	Fortnightly or as required
Herbaceous Border	Hand weeding, edging, dead heading and pruning to maintain plant health. Cutting back old growth and removing debris	As required, dependant on season
Strimming	Transitions into conservation cut areas and path edges to soften changes in maintenance. Areas where monoculture of wild species would otherwise dominate (Alexanders, bramble, white poplar)	Monthly or as required dependant on season, moving towards reducing strimming (HAVS)
Naturalised Bulbs	Daffodils, crocus, bluebells and snowdrops allowed to naturalise. Grass cutting regimes are adjusted to allow die back and bulb regeneration.	Allow 6 - 8 weeks after flowering before maintenance operations resume
Xeriscaped Borders	Pruning to ensure good plant health. Gapping up as required.	Annual or as required
Shrub Border / Mixed Planting	Pruning to ensure good plant health and maintain safe access. Gapping up as required.	Annual or as required

Wildflower Meadows/ Pollinator Border	Mowing regime to achieve desired mix of fine grasses and wild flowers. Raking off of all arisings to lower nutrient level and remove opportunity for rank species to dominate.	Biannual (March and September although the meadow is assessed prior to cutting and adjustments to timescales are subject to change)
Trees / Woodland Escarpment	Ensure good plant health and layered vegetation under the canopy. Replace dead, diseased or dying specimens with suitable species. Leave dead wood on site where practical to create wildlife habitats.	Baseline report generated by MyTrees software. Surveys conducted biennially
Green Waste	All green waste not left on site as wildlife refuges to be taken to Hawkinge Cemetery for in-house composting.	Daily or as required
Cleansing tasks	Litter picking, bin emptying, toilet cleaning & replenishment of consumables, graffiti removal, leaf clearance	At least daily

The Head Gardener is also required to

- Supervise agency seasonal staff based in the park (including induction)
- Liaise with colleagues, contractors and stakeholders
- Carry out daily checks on the park's infrastructure and street furniture
- Report / deal with all issues as they arise
- Assist as required to ensure the smooth running of events
- Carry out pest control as required (rat baiting, wasp removal)
- Use knapsack sprayer as required
- Maintain chemical store and complete monthly inventory
- Inspect vehicle and trailer daily, complete inspection sheet and arrange any repairs with the F&HDC Mechanics
- Ensure all staff complete relevant paperwork and hand to manager
- Liaise with the Park Keepers
- Ensure all works on site are carried out safely
- Ensure all tools and equipment are safe and properly maintained
- Work out of hours as required
- Liaise with Police, Border Force, the public and other site users as necessary

### 4.3 Park Keepers

There are two park keeping teams; a mobile crew who tend to 12 major parks in Folkestone and a Coastal Park crew who is primarily based in the Coastal Park. Both teams work on four day on/ four day off basis with summer and winter hours in place. 364 days a year.

All duties listed below are undertaken by members of this team, ensuring that the park is clean and safe while providing a point of contact for the public. The teams are trained to cover both rounds allowing more flexibility for the council.

## Daily

- Visual inspection of play equipment. Record on log sheet and report to manager
- Rake all sand pits, remove litter, leaves and detritus
- Sweep sand from all play equipment including ropes, ladders, platforms and ramps
- Empty all litter bins as necessary and replace sacks, leave all used sacks at agreed collection points. Big Belly bins send emails to request emptying when they're full, reducing the number of visits made.
- Thoroughly litter pick all areas, paths and steps, reporting any fly-tipping
- Sweep paths and steps as necessary including beneath benches
- Remove broken glass immediately
- Remove fallen leaves (autumn)
- Inspect street furniture, carry out maintenance (oiling etc) and minor repairs or inform Engineering and Buildings team as appropriate. Remove graffiti immediately or request Area Officer to assist as required
- Sweep main pathway removing all litter, sand and obstacles
- Keep site office tidy at all times, including storeroom underneath and storage cupboards within the toilet block
- Complete an accurate daily record of events in the diary provided including visitor numbers, any defects found, repairs undertaken, any incidents and site visits from other employees / delegates
- Liaise with Police, CCTV, Town Centre Management and shops as requested or required
- Check large beach sandpit for debris and remove during the winter (Beach cleaners employed through council's cleansing contract during summer season)
- Advise public of relevant dog fouling and littering bylaws and collect intelligence as appropriate
- Assist park visitors as required and ensure park equipment is used appropriately
- Unlock and lock toilet block as appropriate
- Liaise with Toll House residents and Mermaid Café and HatHats Coffee lease holders as appropriate
- Remove and report any sharps finds
- Remove rubbish sacks from collection points twice daily throughout the year and transport to KCC waste site
- Clean toilet block thoroughly twice daily during the summer and daily during the winter, more often as required during busy periods

## Weekly

- Clean all perspex/ plastic panels on play equipment
- Ensure all paths/routes are walked and inspected at least weekly, repairing minor damage, cleaning instances of graffiti, litter picking and noting down defects to be reported or repaired on return visit
- Clear around and inside all ground lights and lamp column bases
- Inspect chicken wire on wooden walkways for trip hazards and repair or report as necessary
- Clean all interpretation panels and entrance signs
- Inspect all art features within the park and report as appropriate
- Clean bird droppings from seating
- Check cliff face and pathways for obvious movement and report as appropriate

### **4.4 Engineering and Estates**

- Receive daily visual play area check sheets and action as appropriate
- Ensure inspections (weekly and quarterly) are carried out by RoSPA trained staff and any issues raised are addressed appropriately
- Action all issues raised by annual insurance inspections
- Assist in the annual manufacturer inspection and work to compile an annual spares order

- Arrange for maintenance officers to carry out works as requested by the manager
- Maintain lighting
- Maintain roadway and footpath surfaces
- Maintain all buildings on site
- Arrange maintenance on Wallgate hand wash in toilet block
- Manage and administer Beach Chalets
- Liaise with Mermaid Café with regard to maintenance and legal matters and enforce contractual obligation of the same
- Arrange, monitor and finance emptying of sanitary bins in toilet block
- Monitor cliff face for movement - £30K annual budget for specialist advice and surveys
- Act on any ground slippage or drainage issues
- Maintain sea defences below Coastal Park

#### **4.5 Cleansing Contractor**

- Supply rubbish sacks
- Empty litter and recycling compounds (x3) and dispose of the same
- Remove all reported fly tipping
- Provide litter pickers for beach during summer
- Litter pick and empty litter bins in the eastern car park

## 4.6 2026 – 2030 Ambitions & Management Action Plan

Area	Timescale					Comments	Objectives Delivered
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030		
Maintenance							
Assess the need for additional furniture, investigate options for recycled plastic		X	X	X	X	Allow time for changes in site use to take effect (i.e. BBQ ban)	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Replace access control at western entrance with a more suitable option which does not impede service delivery		X	X	x	x	Buildings and Engineering	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Renovate sprinkler system to amphitheatre		X	X	x	X	Buildings and Engineering	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Evaluate whether smaller litterbins are required following installation of 12 Big Belly compactors and 3 litter and recycling compounds and the removal of BBQ furniture	X	X	X	x	X	Monitor requirement during busy summer months and remove if requirement does not exist	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Use PDP's for staff to ensure training is up to date and relevant	X	X	X	X	X	Led by Organisational Development Manager	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management

Health and Safety	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Risk assessment, COSHH, safety data sheets - monitor and update	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing good practise	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Staff Health Surveillance including HAVS	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing good practice led by HR. HAVS ware in use	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Installation of automated barrier at the main entrance. Maintain its functionality.	X	X	X	X	X	Buildings and Engineering Installed in Decmeber 2025	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities COMPLETED in 2021
Top up wood chippings / sand used as safety surface in play area	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing maintenance	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Update staff training on pest control (rodent and wasp)		X			X	Ongoing training requirement	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management

Facilities	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Growth bid for Tower Unit, Spider area and toddler area replacement. Including Public Consultation and re-landscaping of adjacent areas	X					Public consultation started in December 2024, completion date end of Feb 2025. Whole Project to be completed in 2026	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Ensure play equipment meets relevant guidelines EN1176 & EN1177	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing good practise	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal
Renovate, renew and replace Beach chalets	X	X	X	X	X	Engineering and Buildings team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Renew Wardens Hut & staff welfare facilities		X		X		Pending budget approval	Staff well being
Review lease for Mermaid Café (2029)				X		Engineering and Buildings team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Apply for annual Premise License	X	X	X	X	X	Spring annually	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management

							Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Conservation and Heritage	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Monitor flora and fauna	X	X	X	X	X	KWT investigate opportunities with volunteers, nature walk events, Bumblebee Conservation Trust	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Planting (including trees and shrubs)		X		X		Ongoing, potentially use volunteer work parties	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Planting pollinator friendly plants	X	X	X	X	X	Engage with Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Butterfly / Moth Conservation Trust	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Prune trees and stack dead wood where appropriate		X	X			Investigate possibility of log piles and composting bays on-site	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Complete refurbishment of Metropole Steps	X	X				Buildings and Engineering	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal

Environment and Sustainability	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments	Objectives Delivered
							Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Continue in-house composting	X	X	X	X	X	Use of on-site composting facilities.	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Landslides. Stabilise existing cliff falls. Monitor ground movement using topographic surveys	X	X	X	X	X	Budget approved and contractor appointed for the area directly above the Fun Zone. Works to be completed in February 2026.	Provide safe, high quality, attractive recreational spaces
Provide modern sustainable buildings. New buildings such as staff room to have sustainable ethos such as living roofing, solar panels etc		X	X			Pending budget approval	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Minimise vehicle movement where possible by utilising tracker technology	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Maintain existing facilities – low flush urinals, motion activated lighting	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities

Continue to invest in battery powered and low vibration equipment. Explore options for electric fleet	X	X	X	X	X	Using Capital Investment Programme to form purchase	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Objectives Delivered</b>
Retain Green Flag	X	X	X	X	X	GM annual application and management plan	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Monitor notice boards and signage for repairs	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing, replace as required	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Introduce use of QR codes across the site	X	X	X	X	X	Communications team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal
Increase use of social media to advertise events / wildlife sightings / volunteer opportunities move away from paper leaflets	X	X	X	X	X	Communications team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal

Community Involvement	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Continue to encourage use of the Coastal Park for events by community groups	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Provide at least 2 major summer events under the SLA and 4 Rock Pooling events	X	X	X	X	X	Engage with suitable service providers annually	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Continue to work with the public to identify and implement suitable community projects	X	X	X	X	X	Renovation of Anderson Shelter outside the Toll House. Educational visits.	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Participate in Folkestone Triennial and Folkestone Fringe 2028 and 2029			X			Support local artists and art groups	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art

Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management  
Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art  
Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities

Recruit volunteers (Communications teams)	X	X	X	X	X	Use Volunteer Charter	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Continue to work with local enthusiasts collecting wildlife data	X	X	X	X	X	Local enthusiasts / KWT / Bumblebee / Moth Conservation	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art

# 5 Health and Safety

## 5.1 Introduction

Folkestone & Hythe District Council is required by law to state its policy for managing health, safety and welfare. Good health and safety at work is a task shared by Members, Corporate Leadership Team, employees and contractors alike. All employees are required, as a condition of their service, to comply with F&HDC policies and procedures.

It is essential that the relevant risk assessments (RA's) and Safe Systems of Work (SSW's) are read and understood by every employee. These are reviewed annually or when necessary to take account of any new circumstances that might affect its validity.

The GM team have a suite of task specific RA's that will, where necessary, be supported by service and corporate policy statements and/or codes of practice set out in the SSW or other specific requirements relating to current Health and Safety at Work legislation. Where there is a reliance on SSW, in house training will be provided.

All managers, supervisors, head gardeners and team leaders have undertaken a 3 day H&S Managing Safely course provided by IOSH. This equips team leaders with the ability to assess risk in their own individual areas for tasks which their staff undertake. All seasonal employees are provided with a day-long H&S briefing where all the pertinent RA's and SSW are read through. All employees are encouraged to contribute to the documents, ensuring that these dynamic documents remain relevant and practical.

RA's are held electronically and hard copies are held at each depot. Some tasks, particularly those relating to chemical use and tree works, require onsite RA's and all staff are trained to complete these forms. All these documents are available to view on request at the Civic Centre.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome monitoring is undertaken alongside annual health monitoring (hearing and vision tests, whole body vibration testing, health screening questionnaire) for all staff. Gardening staff use HAVS monitors that digitally measure their daily exposure. Data is collected daily and notifications sent to individual managers for assessment. Daily vibration exposure log books are available should there be technical issues with the HAVS ware. These monitors are dynamic in their application and have been recently used to maintain social distancing of staff, ensuring smooth service provision through the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 5.2 Security

Facilities are in place to ensure the Coastal Park and its visitors are safe and secure. Street lighting was added in 2000 as were CCTV cameras which are maintained and monitored by Folkestone Town Council. Street lighting, upgraded to LED in 2021, is maintained through an external contractor and overseen by the Engineering and Buildings team.

Lighting in the park is provided by lamp columns, wall and ground lighting. All the columns are numbered on maps which are held by F&HDC and the contractor ensuring faults are quickly and easily identified and rectified.

Height barrier has been in place for number of years now and helps to prevent unauthorised entry to canvas and other larger vehicles. In addition to this, an automated barrier has been installed at the same, westerly, entrance to the park. This is to help control traffic flow into the park at peak times and at night. The barrier is currently open between 7am and 8pm.

The staff provide an on-site presence and a point of contact for the public during busy periods. The table below gives an indication of the staff resource.

There is no staff on site on Christmas Day.

### Site Staffing Levels

	Head Gardener	Gardener	Mobile Park Keeper	Static Park Keeper
Winter Week	1	1	1	1
Winter Weekend			1	1
Summer Week	1	1	2	2
Summer Weekend			2	2

As a response to increased and unacceptable levels of antisocial behaviour late into the evenings, the western entrance is now locked between 8pm and 7am (March to September). There is also a height barrier to prevent access for high vehicles and campervans.

In addition to Police response and patrols, Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) patrol the park during the day and into the late evening to discourage anti-social behaviour and disperse any individuals or groups who may be abusing the equipment or facilities. They are a friendly and approachable presence who can help the public with any problems or queries regarding local issues. All the on-site staff know the officers and have mobile telephone numbers should they need them.

F&HDC employs Environmental Enforcement Officers to investigate and enforce environmental incidents and crimes. They are able to deal with dog fouling, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and a wide range of other community issues. They patrol the park regularly at times when dog fouling is likely to occur (e.g. early mornings) which has proven very effective in educating park users and reducing incidences.

Area Officers are also employed to provide a point of contact for residents and visitors. They are allocated specific areas within the district and build up extensive knowledge of their own particular patch. They organise and lead work parties, remove graffiti, recruit volunteers and unite the local community through effective liaison and conflict resolution.

### 5.3 Equipment and Facilities

All staff are provided with uniforms so they are easily identified, wearing practical high-viz clothing bearing the council logo. The inspections carried out by the staff mean that defects are quickly noticed and rectified. Should a defect prove to be beyond the capability of the on-site staff, the job is allocated to the Engineering and Buildings team. A team of six maintenance officers with a wide skills base are able to attend site and repair or replace most street furniture and equipment. A range of electrical and mechanical engineering contractors are also available.

The Engineering and Buildings team play a pivotal role in ensuring the equipment and play area is safe for use. With such a well-used and substantial unit it is essential that all aspects are checked and repaired on a very regular basis. The programme of inspection is as follows

**Daily** – visual inspection on arrival to ensure equipment has not been damaged overnight – (on-site staff).

**Weekly** – RoSPA trained staff carry out a visual inspection. These inspections assess the safety of the equipment and form the basis of maintenance schedules.

**Quarterly** – RoSPA trained staff carry out an operational inspection. These inspections are more meticulous, inspecting bearings and other hidden elements, records are provided using a risk based approach.

## **Annual – Zurich Insurance inspection**

All reports are received by the Engineering and Buildings team and any defects quickly rectified. The current play area provider (eibePlay) visits the site annually to assess the need for minor repairs and replacement. Popular pieces are simply replaced although the opportunity is sometimes taken to bring new equipment in to add interest, improve inclusivity and keep up to date with advances in play.

A well-stocked first aid kit is kept for public use in the site office. Cuts and grazes are treated with sterile wipes and plasters given to the parent or guardian of the injured party. The emergency services are called for more serious injuries. All Folkestone emergency services have keys to access the park and crews from outside the district will cut padlocks in emergency situations. All incidents which require an ambulance are recorded and reported to the H&S Officer.

### **5.4 Chemicals**

Chemical use is kept to a minimum in the park although it is unavoidable in some circumstances. The gardeners are trained in pesticide storage and spraying (City and Guilds NPTC PA1 and PA6). Although this is a qualification for life, staff undergo refresher training every 5 years. Before any spraying operation the relevant paper work is completed and held on file for future reference. The main chemical used in the park is rat poison to control the rodent population and occasionally the path edges and steps will be sprayed with glyphosate. The woodland escarpment provides an ideal undisturbed habitat for rodents and the volume of food waste in the park, a continuous food source. Rodent control is therefore essential and a number of regular baiting points are used to reduce the number of rodents in the park. The banning of BBQs should decrease the available food source which in turn could lead to a reduction in the rodent population.

The Horticultural Supervisor monitors all chemical use and keeps records of all spraying operations and chemicals kept at depots. Safety data and COSHH sheets are kept for each chemical and the Technician ensures chemicals are not kept beyond their using up period. Each depot has chemical and fuel stores clearly marked with relevant safety warning signs. There is also a flambank for storing fuel. All documents relating to chemical and fuel use are available to view on request.

An exercise to assess current chemical use has shown that usage and staffing cost is low with most areas receiving 2 visits per year and an average of 14L (diluted) of glyphosate used per year. The council has agreed a motion to phase out the use of herbicide and pesticides where possible. Trials into alternative methods such as hot foam, water or burner treatments and mechanical removal methods are scheduled to take place during the timeframe of this management plan on council land. Once this trial has been conducted and evaluated, where new methods of weed control are found to be effective and financially viable they will be adopted and implemented into this management plan and the wider management of the council's estate. It is understood that alternative methods for weed removal and treatment are being developed and officers will continue to monitor any significant developments.

### **5.5 Vehicles and Machinery**

The Coastal Park gardening team have a Toyota Hilux Double Cab Pick up van with large trailer and a Kawasaki Mule. Each morning before starting the vehicles the Head Gardener completes daily checks. This system ensures that the vehicles remain in good condition and any faults can be quickly rectified by the F&HDC mechanics.

All machinery is serviced annually and the Head Gardener ensures this is carried out. Small electric tools and equipment are subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) every 12 months.

## 5.6 Personal Protective Equipment and Signage

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is issued to all staff to be worn at all times. The uniform has been developed through discussions with the staff, managers and health and safety officer. The basic kit consists of

- Steel toe capped and mid soled boots
- Brush cutter trousers with high-viz strips
- Polo shirt with F&HDC logo
- Body warmer with embroidered F&HDC logo
- Sweater with F&HDC logo
- High-viz coat with F&HDC logo
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Baseball cap (with neck protection) and winter hat with F&HDC logo
- HAVs ware wrist monitor
- Sun protection cream
- Hand sanitiser
- Face masks
- Gloves – different types are available depending on personal preference or task in hand
- Forestry helmets with ear and face protection
- Chemical spray suit including wellington boots, chemical resistant gloves and face shield
- Leptospirosis awareness card. This provides staff with advice on how to reduce the risk of contracting Leptospirosis (Weil's disease). The card also serves to inform medical services that the card holder is at risk.

Certain members of staff require a more extensive or different kit such as the Arborists who must wear clothing to protect them from chainsaw injury.

All vehicles and depots are equipped with a fully stocked first aid kit. These are checked annually or as used to ensure all salient items are included and that they are not past the best before date. There is one first aider in each team or depot and all staff members are provided with mobile telephones. Where Lone Working is unavoidable staff are made aware of the policy, risk assessments, emergency procedures and must check in with their manager or another team member at regular intervals.

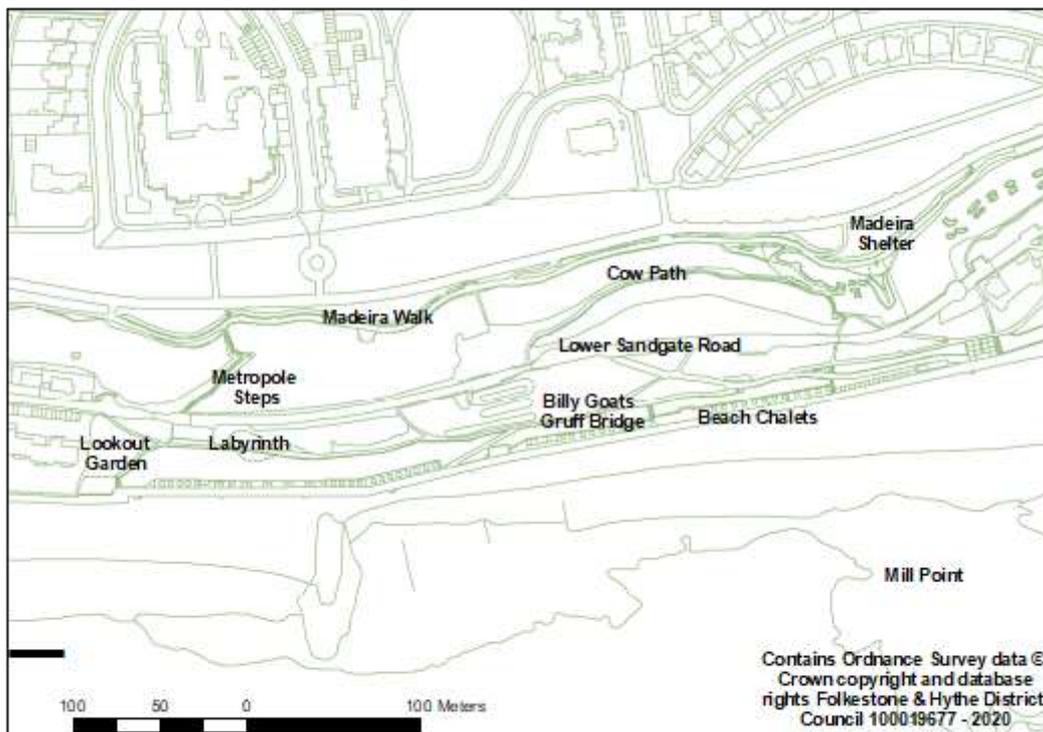
Signage is used on site to warn the public of maintenance operations occurring. Grass cutting and hedge cutting signs are commonly used especially on narrow pathways, car parking areas or secluded spots. Staff use common sense when carrying out operations e.g. strimming in the play area would cease should a school party arrive. Maintenance and major works to play equipment is programmed to take place outside school holidays where ever possible. In the case of injury or damage to a visitor or their property staff fill in the relevant paperwork and hand the visitor a letter from the insurance officer detailing how claims are dealt with and providing contact details.

Situated in the play area is a sign detailing emergency procedures and telephone numbers. The address and number of the nearest hospital and the Civic Centre are also on this information panel.

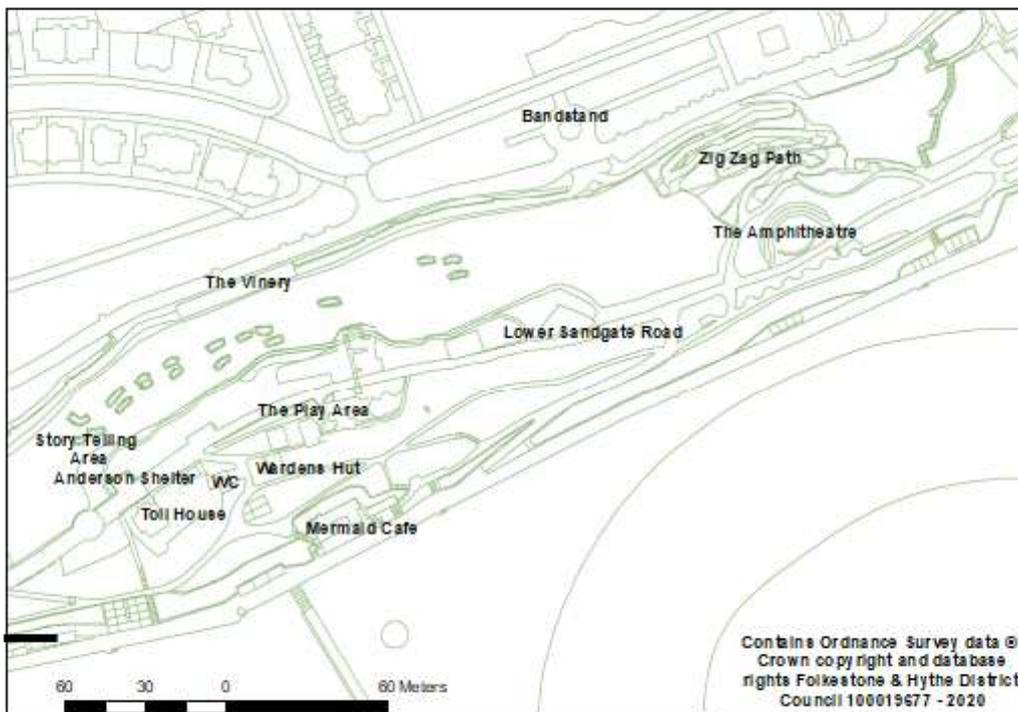
# 6 Facilities

## 6.1 Facilities Maps

### Facilities in the Wild Zone



## Facilities in the Fun Zone



## Facilities in the Formal Zone



## 6.2 Play Area

The main draw of the park for families is without doubt the extensive adventure play area which is still the largest free adventure play area in England.

The original timber equipment, installed in 2000 has since attracted wide array of visitors, local and from further afield. The climbing nets, wobbly bridges, tunnel slides, two 30m zip lines, tubes and net bridges made up the main tower units, have entertained and challenged thousands of children between 4 and 16 years of age. Parents have been well catered for in terms of seating.

In addition to the main unit, there are 5 smaller areas. The most popular being the pirate ship which replaced the original shipwreck when it had reached its end of useful life. It was replaced in 2021 through a £40k Capital Bid. The unit is popular with all ages and fits well with the coastal theme of the park.

The spider web climbing walls, sand diggers, hammock and a construction yard for toddlers have all been equally popular with children of all ages and abilities.

Sand is used as a safety surface to help the play equipment blend in with the natural environment and also continue the maritime theme of the park.

### Fun Zone refurbishment

Continuous works to the main tower units, toddler unit and the hammock area have been required to increase their useful life. This has become uneconomical and a decision has been made to replace the play equipment with new. Public consultation took place in early 2025 when members of public were asked for feedback on current facilities and their preferences for new units. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14TjXP46a7/?mibextid=wwXlfr>  
<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/news/article/301/how-you-can-help-awesome-refurb-of-coastal-park-play-area>



FHDC's aim was that the new play equipment would replicate the stature, quality design and materials of what it is replacing – while also sitting respectfully within its environment and minimising any ecological impacts.

Emphasis is put on better accessibility so all children can enjoy various elements of the play area. FHDC has engaged with selected local schools and other key stakeholders.

A £750,000 budget has been agreed by FHDC councillors.

### Indicative Project Programme

Landscape Architect appointment and design work October	October - December 2024
Public consultation	Winter & Spring 2025
Design review	Following consultation
Tender for contractors	Autumn 2025
Tender award	December 2025
Planning submission (by appointed contractor)	January 2026
Planning determination	January 2026
Removal of exiting play equipment (dependent on cliff stabilisation works)	Winter 2025
Construction start on site	Spring 2026
Target opening	July 2026

### Public consultation results & moving forward.

Over 1,100 people completed the questionnaire covering a wide range of topics between December 2024 and February 2025. These responses have been used to shape the emerging design with a particular wish to have a range of equipment that caters for different age groups, while also giving children the opportunity to play alongside each other no matter their abilities.

The feedback from the public consultation has been incorporated into the landscape masterplan for the play area. The Council does not require that every element must be included within the new play area design, but that consideration has been given to the consultation feedback and accommodated wherever possible.

10 key points summarising the comments on the Lower Leas Coastal Park consultation:

1. More Equipment for Younger Children
2. Inclusive and Accessible Equipment
3. Maintenance and Updates
4. Variety and Imaginative Play
5. Safety and Accessibility
6. Additional Facilities
7. Equipment for Older Children
8. Sports and Interactive Areas
9. Environmental and Educational Elements
10. Parking and Accessibility

## Tender process & award

Play companies have been invited to submit a concept design based on criteria set by the client (FHDC), existing budget and public consultation results. It was understood that the Council does not require that every element must be included within the new play area design, but that consideration has been given to the consultation feedback and accommodated wherever possible.

The tender process took place in December 2025 and saw four high quality submissions. The contract was awarded to company who demonstrated an excellent understanding of the brief, the unique nature of the Park and its environment and the desire to continue the parks legacy as the best coastal play area in the region.

## Design

The new design offers high play value and includes progressively challenging play, accessible play, educational play, natural play, a quiet zone, additional seating areas, a buggy and bike park and a picnic area. All is set in landscaped environment with exotic feel.

The sustainability approach for the project focuses on responsible material selection, minimizing carbon emissions and waste, ensuring long service life, and supporting FHDC's Net Zero 2030 target.

## Play Area Strategy 2020-2030

This document sets out a vision for the future of play provision in the district:

*Play experiences are fundamental to the health and development of children and young people. Folkestone & Hythe District Council will therefore seek to ensure all residents are able to access a high quality and high value play area. We will work with town and parish councils, together with other providers, to create play spaces which offer challenging and exciting environments for children and young people of all ages and abilities.*

To ensure that the strategy is deliverable there are a number of objectives:

- Improve the location, quality, value and accessibility of play provision for all children and young people.
- Effectively utilise planning policy to benefit play provision.
- Raise awareness of play opportunities and the importance of play.
- Maximise funding opportunities for the maintenance and enhancement of play areas.
- Communicate and engage with key partners and stakeholders.
- Ensure appropriate and regular communication and review.

Within this document the Coastal Park is recognised with the highest designations:

- Type D: Destination play area

Play spaces which can attract visitors from a wider catchment, usually within larger parks they often have supporting facilities such as car parking, catering and toilets.

- Priority Play Area (PPA)

Objective: Continuing to maintain and seeking to enhance the Priority Play Areas (PPAs) as identified in this Strategy.

- Strategically Important Play Area (SIPA)

Objective: Supporting the provision of a network of Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPAs) to ensure the majority of the district's residents are within a 15 minute walk of a high quality and high value play space, which meets the needs of the community.

The document is published and is available to view online.

### 6.3 Amphitheatre

This grassed arena is set at the base of the Zig Zag Path with the English Channel as a stunning backdrop. There is ample seating for 300 visitors and performances throughout the summer are free and well attended. There is power and lighting available for use. Community use is encouraged and the manager and events co-ordinator work hard to ensure the summer events programme is successful.



### 6.4 Art Changeling Theatre

Changeling Theatre is a professional touring theatre company serving community audiences across South East England. Best known for our hugely successful open air tour every Summer, they have staged Shakespeare's most popular plays in locations ranging from castles to beaches to football stadiums.

Changeling has performed at the Amphitheatre for the past eight years. Their Shakespeare's performances such as Othello, Merchant of Venice have been enabled by the support of the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust.

Shakespeare's famous romcom *Much Ado About Nothing* is staged for its annual outdoor tour in 2026. It will get a gothic makeover by the company, drawing on themes of love, dishonesty and deception.

### Creative Folkestone Triennial

The first Triennial in 2008 was an ambitious outdoor art project, integral to kick-starting the cultural regeneration of the town. The original vision was to host three curated outdoor festivals of art, one every three years to run for 3 months. 13 years and 4 exhibitions on, the festival is as big a part of life in Folkestone as it is in the international arts calendar.

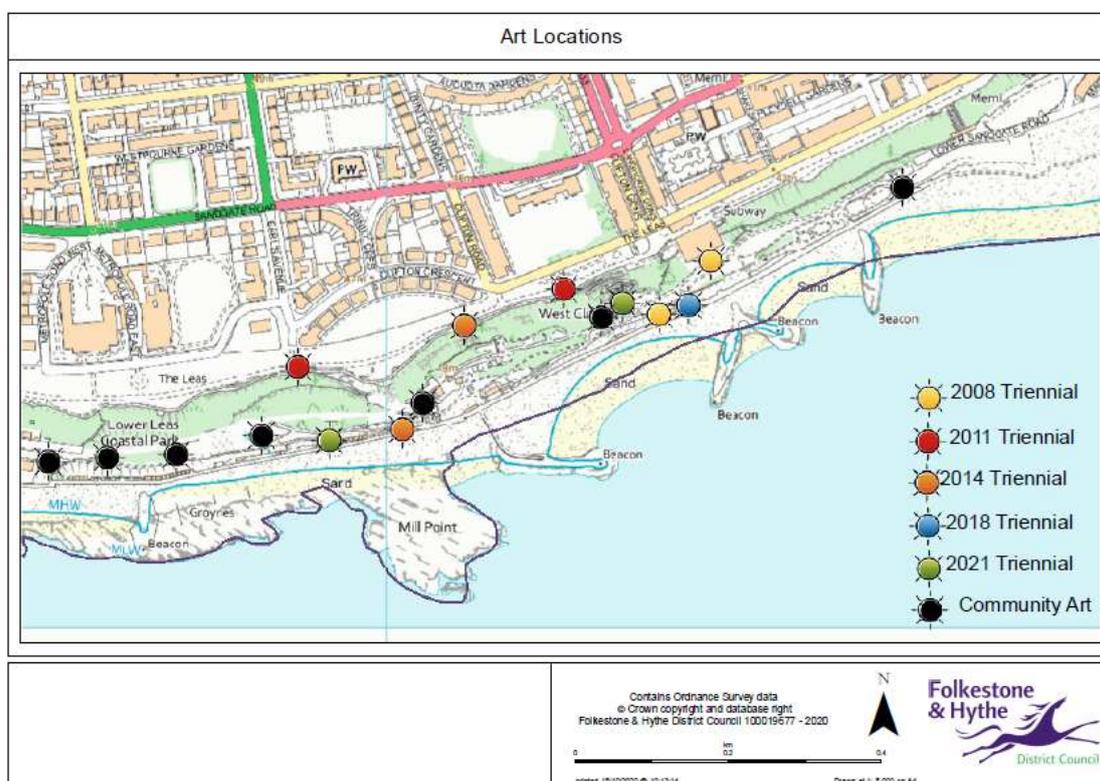
Curated by Professor Lewis Biggs OBE, artists are invited to respond to the town creating public artworks using visual, sculpture, photography, performance, sound or any other media they chose. Areas of the town are selected to form a trail taking visitors on a journey of discovery, bringing the local community with them. Community projects such as workshops for schools, families, Further and Higher Education, participative installations and hosting opportunities involve residents and the whole project provides work for local contractors. Each Triennial has a title linked to the history of the town and the exhibition is developed using areas which deserve show casing or regenerating, always with the local community in mind and on board. Some pieces become permanent features, remaining in place and adding to the Folkestone Artworks Exhibition around the town.

This targeted approach has resulted in a superbly curated outdoor exhibition, the UK’s largest urban exhibition of contemporary art which has contributed millions of pounds to the local economy and has proved invaluable to all sectors of the community.

The Folkestone Fringe builds on the main festival engaging emerging artists, local groups and the whole community in art projects which sometimes complement the commissioned works. Based at the Harbour Arm and supported by Creative Folkestone, the Fringe project runs continuously and involved around 350 artists since 2017.

The last Triennial took place in summer/ autumn 2025. The Coastal Park is always a popular location for artworks and featured 2 artists in 2021; Rana Begum has transformed the replacement beach chalets along the entire promenade with her trademark colour schemes and geometric designs. Sam Belinfante is set to produce a mobile sculptural performance in various locations across the town including the Amphitheatre.

The map below shows examples of permanent pieces of art within the park from the Triennials and other commissioned community pieces.



### Triennial permanent pieces

- 2008 Adam Chodzko - Mis-interpretation panel under the Leas Cliff Hall  
Richard Wilson - Golf beach chalets on the promenade  
Richard Wentworth - Tree plaques opposite Toll House
- 2011 Ruth Ewan - Decimal clock at the top of the Zig Zag Path  
Spencer Finch - Colour wheel on Madeira Walk  
Strange Cargo - Everywhere Means Something to Someone – The People’s Guidebook to Folkestone features different places in the Coastal Park numerous times
- 2014 Pablo Bronstein Architectural beach chalet  
Will Kwan – Sculptural screens on top of the Vinery
- 2017 Bill Woodrow - Seafront sculpture on the promenade

### Permanent Community Art

- Art benches 2000 – sculpted by Will Glanfield, these benches reference the woodland on-site with hawthorn and oak leaves and seeds depicted in the back rests
- Pierscopes 2008 – Added as part of the interpretation the ‘scopes’ are inlaid with a picture of the old pier in its original position
- Labyrinth 2008 – Imagined by local artist Clare Dansted and constructed using recycled stone from the demolished town centre underpass
- Other Peoples Photographs 2008 – Strange Cargo project to install a photograph donated by residents on every street in Folkestone.
- Lookout Garden 2018- 2025 – A community run and funded project creating a space for quiet personal reflection. <https://share.google/BABBHfJliKuNX2ZD6>

Numerous other temporary art projects have been installed in the Coastal Park during the last 20 years.

## 6.5 Toilet Facilities & Changing places

The toilet block near the Toll House has ladies, gents and disabled facilities. A baby change table is provided in the disabled toilet which is accessible with a RADAR key after hours. Opening times vary with the season but they are always open between 8am and 4pm. The toilets are cleaned daily in the winter and at least twice daily in the summer. The site staff monitor the toilets during busy times and clean as and when necessary, recording the times on a form. They are located in the fun zone near to the play area and site office. The lighting system is motion sensitive and water saving modifications have been made to the urinal. The flushers in the ladies are also activated by motion sensors which are more hygienic and promote wise water usage.

A 2022 Capital Bid for £150,000 secured the addition of a second toilet block to the park. There are two unisex units with baby changing facility and one accessible unit.

The block includes a kiosk for light refreshments and was constructed in a sustainable manner with features such as a living roof.

The building, successfully completed in June 2023, is located next to the Amphitheatre. The café operates 364 days per year.

### Changing places

The facility was opened in May 2024 and is situated This is situated at the eastern end of the Coastal Park adjacent to the car park near the Leas Lift.

Changing Places toilets are designed to meet the needs of disabled children and adults with complex needs and who rely on carer support. They differ from standard disabled toilets designed for those who can use a toilet independently. Specialist equipment includes ceiling hoists and changing tables.

Its installation opened opportunities for visitors reliant on enhanced disabled toilet facilities to visit the area where it may not have been easily possible for them to do so previously.

The project was funded by The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who launched the Changing Places Fund in 2021 to increase the number available across the country.

Source: Folkestone & Hythe District Council, <https://share.google/vpLKmreM1zjXcijw5>

## 6.6 Refreshments

### Mermaid Café

This café was built in the 1940s alongside other recreational facilities to boost visitor numbers to the park. Owned by F&HDC, the café is leased to a local business who run the café and maintain the buildings and access points. The café also boasts a bar with a full premise license for the sale of alcohol and small music events.

## HatHats Caffee

A sustainable toilet block with an integrated commercial kiosk (run by HatHats Coffee Company) located near the foot of the Zig-Zag Path, featuring solar power, a green roof, and accessible facilities alongside the refreshments. This addition supports recent upgrades to the park, including new play equipment (Shipwreck) and Changing Places facility, with future plans for a larger revamp of the main play area underway.

Source: Folkestone & Hythe District Council; <https://share.google/w4Mcoe53KR0i9HLz0>

## 6.7 Beach Chalets

Since taking back control of the beach chalets in 2018, F&HDC have secured funding to replace dilapidated beach chalets and renovate others which will increase the number and visually improve the area. 35 will be renovated and 80 new wooden huts will be installed. Planning permission to carry out the work was given on 26 May 2020. This permission included improvements to the surrounding area, repairing retaining walls and replacing ramps and steps.

The tiered chalets below the play area are concrete with flat roofs and wooden windows and front doors. These chalets are unique and will be renovated with doors, ironmongery and shutters replaced before being topped with living roofs to encourage biodiversity.



New and renovated beach chalets painted with Rana Begum's colorful design.

## 6.8 Picnic Areas

BBQ's and open fires are not permitted within the park due to consistent damage sustained to park infrastructure and furniture. Councillors took the decision to ban their use in 2020 with temporary signage explaining the decision installed on site. The new signage is bold and clear to give immediate impact although it is planned that this will be toned down over the coming years as visitors get used to the change in facilities. Picnic furniture is still provided and has been repaired or replaced where BBQ damage has occurred.

## 6.9 Informal Performance Areas

The story telling area complete with story tellers chair and rocks for the audience to perch on is used by school parties in particular and its quiet location is perfect for younger children to escape the often highly charged atmosphere of the play area.

The tree circle is centrally located within the park and is used for smaller bands to perform in during the summer. School parties use the area as a meeting point and it is often used for Tai Chi groups in the early mornings.



The roundel is found in the formal zone with good access to the beach and seating. This area lends itself to acoustic performances and draws people into the park from the beach.



## 6.10 Gardens

The Coastal Park has traditionally been known for its horticultural excellence and the improvements to the formal zone have recaptured this aspect of the parks history. There are herbaceous beds either side of the main pathway at the entrance to the park in Folkestone and smaller sections with differing flowering times providing year round interest.



The winter garden features snow drops and hellebores and has stone seating with views across the channel. The horseshoe garden has displays of grasses with splashes of colour provided by wall flowers, Osteospermum and Erigeron. The Mediterranean Bank is being developed with many plant trials being carried out to reduce watering requirements.

## 6.11 Beach

The coast protection scheme has created an excellent recreational area with sheltered bays perfect for sea bathing and a large sandpit set in the shingle foreshore. The promenade now links

Folkestone to Sandgate and the rock groynes and sheltered bays also lend themselves to fishing and small boating activities. Mill Point provides excellent rock pooling opportunities and is very popular with school children.



## 6.12 Cycling

### Click2Cycle

Bikes can be hired via an app from a number of stations within the district and returned after use. There are stations near to both ends of the Coastal Park which is featured on the website as a suggested cycle trail. The scheme also offers rider discounts in local cafes, bars, restaurants and shops. For further information visit <https://www.click2cycle.com>



National Route 2 runs through the Coastal Park on the Lower Sandgate Road and allows cyclists easy access to and through the park. Cycle racks have been integrated into the rear of artistic features so cyclists can stop and enjoy the park.



## 6.13 Entrances, Footpaths and Car Parks

It is important to create and maintain colourful entrances to the park to give a good impression on arrival. As with the rest of the park these important areas are kept clean and tidy at all times. The two main entrances have large welcome signs which are cleaned and inspected for damage at least weekly.

All paths are walked by staff on a daily basis and any new defects are noted and dealt with appropriately. Some footpaths have wooden sections particularly over steep or undulating land. These wooden sections have chicken wire overlaid to reduce the risk of slipping which is inspected regularly for damage. Litter and debris is removed daily and where grass edges exist these are kept neat and tidy.

The western section of the Lower Sandgate Road is a pay and display car park with all proceeds returning into the Coastal Park budget. The staff keep this area free from litter and debris and planting on the verges helps to soften the impact of the road on the natural environment. The eastern section pay and display car park is a 2018 addition to help alleviate parking at peak times. This car park, adjacent to the open space, is litter picked by the cleansing contractor.

## 7 Nature Conservation and Heritage

### 7.1 Ecological Management

The Coastal Park sits in a unique area of undercliff which has its own mild microclimate and is often the first landfall for migratory species. These factors mean that the park has a rich diversity in both flora and fauna. The wild zone is managed to allow flora to flower and seed while pollinator friendly meadows in the formal zone encourage bees and other insects to flourish. Having a rich insect diversity provides a solid base at the start of the food chain, in turn supporting predatory species such as small mammals and birds.

Baseline surveys carried out in the initial stages of the parks' development informed early management techniques and proved successful in increasing the biodiversity found on site, particularly with regard to insects.

Further work is now required to ensure that the current ecological management is still appropriate and whether improvements can be made in any areas.

As detailed elsewhere in this management plan, F&HDC have adopted an environmentally intelligent ethos and are keen to work with companies, educational providers, community groups and charities to enhance the practices on site for local biodiversity. The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership undertook a survey of some of the meadow areas, their findings can be viewed in the Lovers Coastal Park Survey report. We look to extend this to other survey groups.

Of particular interest are two insects, the Ivy Bee (*Colletes hederæ*) and the Firebug (*Pyrrhocoris apterus*), both known to be breeding on site. Wasp spiders (*Argiope bruennichi*), slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) and clouded yellow butterflies (*Colias croceus*) have all been spotted in the park.

The manager is supporting a 'bee friendly motion' which was unanimously adopted at full Cabinet, to create and maintain bee and pollinator habitats with new wild flower turf areas being laid in the park. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust hopes to gain funding to begin bee surveys in the Coastal Park and wider Folkestone area from 2021.

Records obtained from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust show good numbers and diversity of bumble, honey and solitary bees within the Coastal Park.

Bee species	Number of records	Years Recorded
<i>Andrena dorsata</i>	1	2006
<i>Andrena flavipes</i>	1	2006

<i>Andrena nigroaenea</i>	2	2006
<i>Andrena nigrospina</i>	1	2004
<i>Andrena trimmerana</i>	1	2006
<i>Anthidium manicatum</i>	1	2006
<i>Anthophora quadrimaculata</i>	2	1997, 2006
<i>Apis mellifera</i>	1	1997
<i>Bombus hortorum</i>	2	2004, 2006
<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>	2	2011
<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	7	1997, 2004, 2006, 2008
<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	3	2004, 2006, 2008
<i>Bombus pratorum</i>	1	2004
<i>Bombus terrestris</i>	3	2004, 2006, 2008
<i>Bombus vestalis</i>	1	2004
<i>Coelioxys inermis</i>	1	2006
<i>Colletes daviesanus</i>	1	2006
<i>Colletes hederæ</i>	6	2006, 2007, 2008
<i>Dasygaster hirtipes</i>	2	1996, 2006
<i>Hylaeus hyalinatus</i>	2	2004, 2006
<i>Lasioglossum calceatum</i>	2	1993, 2006
<i>Lasioglossum leucozonium</i>	1	2006
<i>Lasioglossum minutissimum</i>	1	2004
<i>Lasioglossum smeathmanellum</i>	1	2004
<i>Lasioglossum villosulum</i>	1	2004
<i>Megachile centuncularis</i>	2	1987, 1997
<i>Megachile ligniseca</i>	1	1987
<i>Megachile willughbiella</i>	1	2004

Data collected by local enthusiasts has been passed on to the council. These records are mainly for birds but include some moths and butterflies. While the whole dataset dates back to the 1980s, some data has been extracted and gives an idea of species found in or around the Coastal Park from 2010 to 2020 and is detailed below

## Birds

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Arctic Skua	<i>Parasitic jaeger</i>	Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Auk spp		Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>
Black Bird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>
Black Cap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Black Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>

Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	Pied/White Wagtail	
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>
Common/Arctic Tern		Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>
diver sp.		Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Feral Pigeon		Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	unidentified auk	
Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>

House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>	Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
		Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>

## Moths

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
The Spectacle	<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>	Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>
Yellow-barred Brindle	<i>Acasis viretata</i>	Common Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>
	<i>Acleris sparsana</i>		<i>Eudonia mercurella</i>
Garden Rose Tortrix	<i>Acleris variegana</i>	Common Pug	<i>Eupithecia vulgata</i>
	<i>Acrocercops brongniardella</i>		<i>Evergestis limbata</i>
	<i>Agriphila geniculea</i>	Double-striped Pug	<i>Gymnoscelis rufasciata</i>
The Brick	<i>Agrochola circellaris</i>	Brown House Moth	<i>Hofmannophila pseudospretella</i>
Dark Sword-grass	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Vine's Rustic	<i>Hoplodrina ambigua</i>
Shuttle-shaped Dart	<i>Agrotis puta</i>	Small Dusty Wave	<i>Idaea seriata</i>
Turnip Moth	<i>Agrotis segetum</i>	Bright-line Brown-eye	<i>Lacanobia oleracea</i>
	<i>Ancylosis oblitella</i>	Hummingbird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>
Bee Moth	<i>Aphomia sociella</i>	Old Lady	<i>Mormo maura</i>
Centre-barred Sallow	<i>Atethmia centrago</i>	L-album Wainscot	<i>Mythimna l-album</i>
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Lesser Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua comes</i>
	<i>Blastobasis adustella</i>	Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua fimbriata</i>
	<i>Blastobasis lacticolella</i>	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua janthe</i>
	<i>Bucculatrix bechsteinella</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>
Horse-Chestnut Leaf Miner	<i>Cameraria ohridella</i>	Flame Shoulder	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>
Light Emerald	<i>Campaea margaritaria</i>	Brimstone Moth	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>
Yellow Shell	<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	Common Quaker	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i>
Clancy's Rustic	<i>Caradrina kadenii</i>		<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>
	<i>Celypha lacunana</i>	Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix	<i>Pandemis corylana</i>
Latticed Heath	<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>		<i>Parornix anglicella</i>
	<i>Clepsis consimilana</i>	Willow Beauty	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>
	<i>Cochylimorpha straminea</i>	Angle Shades	<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>
	<i>Cochylis molliculana</i>		<i>Phyllocnistis xenia</i>
	<i>Coptotriche marginea</i>		<i>Phyllonorycter corylifoliella</i>
	<i>Cosmopterix pulchrimella</i>		<i>Phyllonorycter messaniella</i>
	<i>Crociosema plebejana</i>		<i>Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae</i>
	<i>Cydia splendana</i>		<i>Phyllonorycter tristrigella</i>
Burnished Brass	<i>Diachrysia chrysitis</i>	Mother of Pearl	<i>Pleuroptya ruralis</i>
	<i>Dioryctria abietella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>

Brindled Green	<i>Dryobotodes eremita</i>	Small Blood-vein	<i>Scopula imitaria</i>
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>	Rose Leaf Miner	<i>Stigmella anomalella</i>
	<i>Ectoedemia erythrogenella</i>		<i>Stigmella aurella</i>
	<i>Ectoedemia heringella</i>	Barred Sallow	<i>Tiliacea aurago</i>
Hoary Footman	<i>Eilema caniola</i>	Oak Hook-tip	<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>
Dingy Footman	<i>Eilema griseola</i>	Garden Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>
	<i>Elachista argentella</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>
Common Plume	<i>Emmelina monodactyla</i>	Square-spot Rustic	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>
	<i>Ephestia unicolora</i>		

### Butterflies

Common Name	Scientific Name
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
Wall (High Conservation Status)	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>

Kent Wildlife Trust are engaged to provide family rock pooling events (funded by F&HDC) on Mill Point and the area is also included in their Shore Search calendar. These events are constantly adding to the species found, with the hairy crab (*Pilumnus hirtellus*), squat lobster (*Lauriea siagiani*) and chameleon shrimp (*Praunus flexuosus*) being recorded as new species for the area.



## 7.2 Tree Management

The main aim is to manage trees and woodland areas to sustain and increase amenity, heritage, recreational and nature conservation value over time.

Key objectives are to:-

- Create a diverse canopy, increase species and age structure
- Maintain and enhance the woodlands biodiversity value
- Improve the woodland amenity
- Monitor all reaches for Ash Dieback
- Remove ivy from trees
- Leave standing deadwood as appropriate
- Create log piles

The Arboricultural Senior Specialist carries out a tree survey every other year in the Coastal Park. The council purchased a GPS/GIS software package (MyTrees) to record all tree surveys. The team at MyTrees start with a comprehensive survey of the tree stock across all sites. Each tree is surveyed and recorded in terms of species, spread, age, height, maintenance works etc. This is then downloaded and added to the GIS database. Where appropriate trees are grouped and this is the case for sections of the RMC and Coastal Park. The initial survey indicated that there are

- 3,875 individual trees
- 365 trees in groups (small dense tree groups in parks)
- 22,201 tree groups (RMC/ Coastal Park predominantly)

MyTrees records tree stock on a centrally held database accessed through a remote server. The software enables management of tree stock by updating and adding records where necessary, allocating work to the in-house team of arborists and used as a tool to demonstrate that the council are actively managing their tree stock. Once works have been completed, the database is updated accordingly. Newly planted trees are simply added to the database.

## 7.3 Buildings, Footpaths and Structures

### The Vinery

The Vinery, built in the 1930s was, in its pre-war heyday, a well-used facility providing a sheltered gathering and sitting space with glorious views over the English Channel and the Coastal Park. The contemporary photographs included in this document illustrate this and show that the shelter has not changed in its essential design and layout.

Part of the Coastal Park regeneration has been to completely restore the structure to its original condition. The original screens, largely missing their 'glazing bars', were also restored to original condition. The roof grid structure now forms a loggia to support vines and a Triennial artwork.

### The Madeira Shelter

This attractive shelter and viewing platform occupies a prominent position on The Leas promenade. The structure has importance both from a visual and amenity point of view. Minor maintenance issues such as repainting and cleansing are addressed by the Area Officers.

### The Metropole Steps

These historically important steps at the western end of the park form a major link between The Leas and the Lower Sandgate Road. HLF funds were used to completely replace the steps with a

timber staircase that could adapt to any movement of the cliff face, provide safe landings with the added benefit of resting areas and viewing platforms to soak up the panoramic maritime views.

### Sea Wall and Shoreline

Running the length of the park this walkway provides a major sea defence, a fully accessible route from Folkestone to Sandgate and a maintenance route for the beach nourishment programme. The Coastal Park staff ensure that vegetation is kept clear and contact cleansing as necessary. Life belts are positioned along the length of the coastline in the district. Each station is numbered and displays a telephone number in case of damage. The manager is responsible for ensuring they are checked weekly.

The shoreline has been vastly improved since the coastal defense scheme took place in 2004. The scheme created sheltered bays suitable for swimming and water sports with a giant sandpit set into the shingle. The promenade now extends from Folkestone right through to Sandgate and is very popular for a gentle stroll and a wide range of running events. Beach cleaners are employed throughout the summer season and the Coastal Park staff report any cleansing issues to the cleansing contractor. Any fault with the beach or groynes is reported to the Engineering and Buildings team.



### Zig Zag Path

This completely man made structure forms one of the most impressive entrances to the park. Built in 1921 by local workers, this is arguably the most important piece of work by James Pulham. The Grade II listed cliff path features caves, grottoes, arches and numerous planting pockets. A basic shape was formed using recycled rubble and any other available materials then the special Pulham cement was applied using large combs to give a rock like effect. The recipe for the cement varied from site to site and each of the four Pulham brothers used a slightly different method. The skills and knowledge have been lost with time but various testing and analysis have gone some way to revealing the constituents. The railings have been designed to ensure they are sympathetic to the structure. The planting has been chosen to endure the harsh maritime environment and dry aspect.



### The Leas

The Leas is closely associated with the Coastal Park, it comprises of a large expanse of high quality lawn interspersed with footways and seasonal flower beds. The entrance foyer for the Leas Cliff Hall and Channel Suite dominate the mile long cliff top with the Bandstand, RAF memorial, carpet bed and sensory garden also found here. The Step Short Memorial Arch marks the eastern entrance to the promenade and acknowledges the service men and women who passed through Folkestone during WWI. The high standards of maintenance in the Coastal Park are continued through onto The Leas. The carpet bed features a different charity each year with the relevant logo depicted through intricate planting. A notice board displays information regarding the featured charity and money can be donated into a secure underground safe.



#### 7.4. Landslides

Landslides have always been a part of geological history in this area. There wouldn't be Coastal Park if it wasn't for a landslide!

There appears to be no single cause for landslips however combination of several reasons:

- Rainfall during February was very high
- The ground - known as the Folkestone Formation - is a combination of medium to coarse grained sand with weakly cemented sandstones. This makes it prone to erosion and being unstable
- The weight of trees during high winds may be weakening the stability of the cliff

has resulted in cliff falls in November 2023 (Cow Path) and March 2024 (the Vinery area directly above the play area).

#### The Vinery

Cliff stabilisation work near The Vinery, below The Leas, in Folkestone is due to start in January 2026 ahead of the refurbishment of the play area.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council immediately undertook protection measures and a series of high-level surveys and technical assessments by various experts were carried out.

A tree management programme to reduce heights and the risk of further slips is ongoing.

A complex remediation strategy has now been devised. It includes high tensile mesh, soil nailing, draped netting and a high king post wall.

#### The Cow Path

The landslide above the Cow Path presents different challenges and needs a bespoke approach. The intention is to begin remediation works at this location during 2026.

## 8 Sustainability

Folkestone & Hythe District Council declared a climate emergency along with many other councils in 2019 and a budget of £10m has been set aside for initiatives which will help the council hit its net-zero carbon emissions target by 2030.

A low carbon and sustainability specialist has been appointed to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group which is in the process of producing a Carbon Action Plan.

In the short term the council has made the following moves towards the 2030 goal:

- Tree planting across the district ; including small, native and semi-mature trees
- Installing a network of electric vehicle charging points across the district, including charging points in the Civic Centre car park, all public car parks and operational depots
- Planting wildflower areas and managing land to promote biodiversity
- Reducing strimmer use and pesticide application around trees and obstacles where suitable.
- Purchasing battery operated grounds maintenance equipment where suitable to replace petrol powered equipment

Managing the Coastal Park in a sustainable manner is accepted as essential for its longevity. In the wider Council it is common place to consider sustainability in all functions.

Many daily activities can be reduced or made “greener” such as turning lights and other electrical items off and reducing the amount of paper used in the office.

Office and washroom lighting is motion activated and all toilet facilities are fitted with low flush, touch free systems.

### 8.1 Green Waste and Composting

- 95% of in - house produced green waste is processed (mulched and composted) at Hawkinge depot.
- In place since 2010, this reduces the need to buy compost or mulch from external companies, reducing financial pressure and transport and waste costs.
- It reduces the need to water newly planted shrubs by providing a protective barrier.
- The use of mulch reduces the use of pesticides used to stop weeds competing with the new plants.
- In the last year localised composting units have been installed in key areas such as East Cliff, Kingsnorth Gardens and the Coastal Park. This reduces the need to move the green waste to Hawkinge to be composted.
- Other local options are being investigated, such as New Romney Depot,

## 8.2 Peat

- The GM department never use raw peat for their own planting schemes or soil replenishment. When purchasing potted plants and other nursery, nurseries are asked to supply a certificate stating peat sustainability.
- Seasonal bedding and floral displays (baskets, troughs) are now 100% peat free.
- Tree stock purchased from our preferred supplier has been peat free since autumn 2012. Aim to be 100% peat free by 2030

## 8.3 Living Roofs

Living roofs have been trialled at the Coastal Park on the operational depot roof, six tiered beach chalets and HatHats Coffee shop and toilets. Benefits include;

- Provision of important microclimate for insects.
- Reduction of the surface run off.
- Significant reduction of heat and the need for air conditioning & provision of insulation in winter (known as green roof insulation).
- Improvement of air quality due to the filtering mechanism of the plants and substrate.
- Installation is very simple - the plants are grown into felt matting and form a thick blanket of plants that can be rolled out like grass turf on pre-prepared flat roof.
- Watering requirements are extremely low – these plants thrive in dry soils and hate being waterlogged.

## 8.4 Waste management

- The main parks are popular spots for family picnics and gatherings.
- Visitors are encouraged to either take their litter home or to use the tin & plastic recycling points and general waste points.
- 11 Big Belly compactor bins (solar powered) were installed in the Coastal Park 2 in 2018. All bins are connected to smart phones and send notifications informing the park keepers when they are full resulting in less emptying trips.
- So far 190,444 litres of litter have been collected from Big Belly bins (62,573 litres in July 2020).
- 3 double compounds (general waste & recyclables) were installed in 2021 to manage high volumes of waste accumulated in peak times.
- 

## 8.5 Tree Stock

- F&HDC has 3,875 individual trees found within its parks and open spaces.
- There are a further 22,201 trees contained within groups and woodlands such as those on the Leas Escarpment and the Royal Military Canal.
- Last year GM planted in excess of 900 new trees within the district.
- Future planting - it is intended to reduce the number of trees planted in parks and open spaces over the coming years in order to ensure their establishment.
- There is limited resource available for the watering and aftercare of newly planted trees and as a result young trees often fail due to drought.
- In order for tree planting to be more successful F&HDC will be planting between thirty to forty trees so that all of them receive appropriate aftercare providing net gain over the next ten years.

## 8.6 Grass Cutting

- GM maintains open spaces in-line with their use and to ensure the character of the area. The total cuts per year can be dependent on many factors.
- Areas such as the Leas and parks can be cut every two weeks, wild areas on the canal may be just twice per year.

- GM managers have been working on identifying areas where cutting regimes can be reduced to help increase biodiversity and reduce all environmental impacts.

## 8.7 Furniture and Equipment

GM has invested in electric equipment where appropriate including;

- 1 long reach hedge cutter
- 7 hedge cutters
- 4 drills
- 4 chainsaws
- 2 pole saws
- 3 back pack blowers

The capital investment plan, due for renewal in 2026 will ensure environmentally friendly options are adequately investigated.

Hand tools with replacement parts such as blades are purchased where available rather than having to buy complete new items.

Any new equipment or furniture purchased must be sustainably sourced or use recycled materials and add to the initiatives detailed above as part of the council's ongoing commitment to protecting the environment and achieving net-zero-carbon emissions by 2030.

The Coastal Park is a rural site and uses mainly wooden furniture and play equipment to reduce the impact of these features on the natural feel of the site. The main play structure is in need of replacement and the tender document will require contractors to detail how their equipment meets the council's ethos and targets around sustainability.

## 8.8 Chemical Use

The GM department use chemicals for a wide range of applications, they are as follows (but not limited too);

- Parks and open spaces - certain fence lines are treated twice a year which significantly reduces the labour costs in keeping these parks safe and visually appealing.
- Used in ponds to control blanket weed.
- Trees - Eco plugs are applied to tree stumps to inhibit regrowth where stumps are in locations where they cannot be removed through grinding.
- Wasps/Rats - Pests are treated with pesticides where public safety is impeded, there are currently no cost effective alternatives.
- Use of glyphosate is minimal within Grounds Maintenance, with an average of just 14L (diluted) being used annually across the service ( compared to 55L five years prior)
- The council does not use any chemical treatments (herbicide or pesticide) in children's play areas.

An exercise to assess current chemical use has shown that usage and staffing cost is low with most areas receiving 2 visits per year. The council has agreed a motion to phase out the use of herbicide and pesticides where possible. Trials into alternative methods such as hot foam, water or burner treatments and mechanical removal methods are scheduled to take place during the timeframe of this management plan on council land. Once this trial has been conducted and evaluated, where new methods of weed control are found to be effective and financially viable they will be adopted and implemented into this management plan and the wider management of the council's estate. It is understood that alternative methods for weed removal and treatment are being developed and officers will continue to monitor any significant developments.

## 8.9 Vehicles and Machinery

Council vehicles are purchased and re-newed on a roughly 8 year basis. A procurement exercise looks in particular at economy, efficiency, localism, specification and servicing plans.

The fuel tank at Ross Depot not only provides financial benefits but reduces non-operational mileage and time.

The composting machine adds to the sustainability aspect of the parks management. After composting, green waste removed from the park is now re-used on site, eliminating the need to purchase compost. This addition of any composted material also reduces the need for watering and adds structure and nutrients to the soil.

Machinery is kept to a minimum with hand tools being used where ever possible. Using these more targeted and traditional methods of grounds maintenance encourages better plant health and also increases knowledge and experience of staff. Investment in electric equipment means that staff are also less susceptible to problems associated with excessive machinery use such as hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). Noise pollution is also reduced within the park creating a quieter environment for visitors.

### 8.10 Horticulture

Where public safety is not impeded, dead wood is left on site as wildlife habitat. Large dead trees which do not pose a risk should they fail are also left standing on site as raptor perches. Felled timber is chipped and used as mulch for new tree planting or flower beds.

Following the summer season, hanging baskets are removed from throughout the district and suitable plants are re-used in the Coastal Park. Selecting plants which can be re-used in this way is considered when designing annual floral displays for the district.

Plants which do not require watering are used and the general principles of xeriscaping followed. This method of design and planting uses environmentally sound techniques to create colourful areas which reduce water consumption, favour low maintenance species and provide excellent habitats for insects, in particular bees. The scree beds demonstrate this method with their pebble “mulch” and carefully chosen plants such as *Armeria maritima* (Sea pink or Thrift), *Pulsatilla vulgaris* (Pasque flower), *Geum spp.* and *Stipa tenuissima*.

Horticultural methods commonly employed within the park and across the service include:

- Deeply cultivate the soil, digging in large quantities of organic matter from Hawkinge compost site, to improve soil structure, soil retention and water availability for plants. Mushroom compost is sometimes used as well as composted bark chippings i.e. mulches.
- Planting small specimens so the plant acclimatises to the growing environment gradually as they develop.
- Planting grey-green or silver leaved specimens as they reflect the sun’s rays, helping to conserve moisture within the plant tissues.
- Planting less hardy, silver leaved and sun loving plants in April help to establish their roots well before the winter arrives.
- Thoroughly watering in new plants and keeping them watered for the first season after planting to ensure they establish well.
- Using water from the canal to irrigate plants and trees (EA extraction license in place)
- Use peat free alternative when purchasing plant and tree stock where available.
- Reduce grass cutting frequencies to increase park’s biodiversity and to decrease noise, fumes and exposure to hand arm vibration.
- Where appropriate, seasonal bedding is replaced by sustainable (perennial) planting.

## 9 Marketing

### 9.1 Leaflet

The Coastal Park leaflet copies used to be available in a multitude of venues including the site office, Mermaid Café, Civic Centre, Folkestone Town Council and local hotels. The move towards reducing the environmental impact of the site and the rise in use of social media platforms (more below) has meant that the leaflet had become obsolete. An electronic copy can still be found on FDC website,

### 9.2 Interpretation and Signage

There are 13 interpretation panels throughout the park and 2 entrance panels featuring an overview of the park and basic information including warning symbols and permitted activities. The interpretation panels cover both natural history and heritage of the park. The heritage panels are set in formal lectern style wooden mounts and the natural history panels are set in Pulhamite plinths. There are also 3 notice boards displaying information about the park and its events; one at the Amphitheatre, one at the eastern entrance and the last in the play area. The Billy Goats Gruff Bridge, complete with troll lurking underneath provides an imaginative play space consistent with other park features. Similar play sculptures are used on the Royal Military Canal, creating an identity between the two sites.

### 9.3 Social Media and Web Advertising

The Communications team use popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and sometimes LinkedIn to promote the Coastal Park. The manager feeds information, good news stories and any changes on site through to the Comms team who post using the most appropriate platform. Visitors are encouraged to use websites such as TripAdvisor and Trust Pilot to review their experience and these websites are monitored by the council in order to gain insight into how the sites are performing in terms of visitor satisfaction.

The Coastal Park has received a Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor every year since 2014 earning entry to the Hall of Fame. The manager monitors the entry and is able to respond to visitors queries where necessary. The park is always ranked within the top 5 things to do in Folkestone.

The council website features a page for the park with basic, pertinent information about the site and links to various downloads (leaflet and management plan). There is a wealth of information on the internet about the park, its history and general visitor information.

Wider use of QR codes is planned for the upcoming year.

### 9.4 Publications

Local author and illustrator, Marianne Roberts approached F&HDC with an idea to write and illustrate a children's book about the Coastal Park and Zig Zag Path. The book was written during 2010 and is available from local cafes and bookshops.

A book has been written regarding Pulhamite and its history. The Zig Zag Path features in this book as it is one of James Pulhams' last pieces of rock work. For more information see <http://pulham.org.uk>

The People's Guidebook to Folkestone – Everywhere Means Something to Someone was produced by Strange Cargo for the 2011 Triennial. Residents were invited to contribute to the book providing quirky stories behind their favourite places in the town. The Coastal Park is featured numerous times within the book and the plaques at each location create a trail around the town. <http://www.strangecargo.org.uk/portfolio/public-art-people/everywhere-means-something-someone/everywhere-means-something-someone-guidebook-5/>

## 10 Community Involvement

### 10.1 Events

Many community organised events take place in and around the Coastal Park in addition to council funded programmes. The manager works closely with the Event Coordinator and external partners to ensure that all events were safe, well attended and enjoyed by all. F&HDC produce events guidance online, aimed to help organisers plan and manage their events successfully.

F&HDC provide a series of events in the Coastal Park under a Service Level Agreement (SLA), using local arts and community groups to deliver the service. Kent Wildlife Trust are engaged to provide rock pooling events at Mill point which are always well attended and used as an indicator of current biodiversity. Since 2021 KWT and FHDC have expanded the programme and included nature walk through the park.

Comments collected by KWT following the rock pooling events in 2020:

*“Amelia aged 9 “It was super fun” Thomas aged 6 “thank you, I had a great time””*

*“Fun and informative the children and adults had great fun thanks!”*

*“This event was epic”*

*“They went above and beyond in terms of getting the children excited about marine life.”*

To ensure a full programme of events the council promotes the use of the amphitheatre and park to community groups. The venue is available to hire at a reduced rate for community groups (£41 per event at the time of writing) and in order to ease the whole process the Coastal Park has a full premise license under which all events are held.

Terms and conditions have been drawn up which all organisers sign to ensure that all events are safe and within the terms of the premise licence held by the council. The council support all events by providing officer time and expertise and some equipment.

The Council now uses Apply4, a cloud based platform which streamlines the event application process. Event organisers apply and make payments online, enabling F&HDC to issue permits as soon as the application has been approved. Messaging and document management tools help stakeholders and the Council to manage queries and communicate with ease.

<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/article/1068/Apply-to-organise-an-event->



Rock pooling in summer 2020

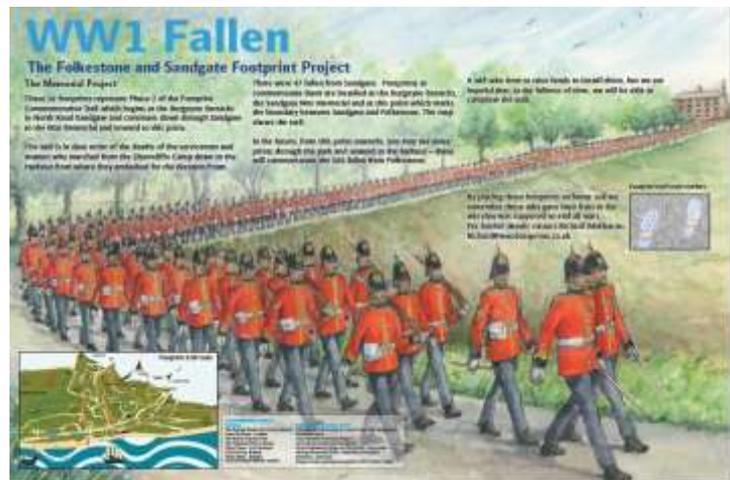


Nature Trail 2021

## 10.2 Community Projects

### The Footprint Project

This community project led by The Sandgate Society comprises a series of footprints around the Sandgate War Memorial, commemorating soldiers from Sandgate who fell during World War I. Each footprint bears a plaque with the name of a fallen soldier. The second phase of the project marks the route taken by service personnel through the Coastal Park and includes an interpretation panel. Funding has been raised through Councillor Ward Grants and a Justgiving page. The interpretation panel below has been installed on site to explain the project.



### Anderson Shelter Project

Led by a local Councillor the project will see the renovation of the Anderson Shelter opposite the Toll House. Aiming for completion in 2027, involving local schools and artists, the interior of the shelter will be recreated with figurines viewed through a Perspex roof.

## 10.3 Work Experience

Working in partnership with local secondary schools, F&HDC offer two students work experience in areas such as the Coastal Park and Kingsnorth Gardens. Working 5 days a week from 7:30am until

3pm, students are able to learn skills in horticulture and park upkeep as well as developing their social skills. Duties in the Coastal Park undertaken by the student include weeding, raking sand pits, leaf clearance and planting.

*'I just thought I'd let you know that \*\*\*\* is beaming today. He had such a good day yesterday that the staff in his classroom have noticed how happy he is today!!  
I'd like to thank you and the team for welcoming him back - he is gaining so much more than just work skills from being part of the team and working at The Coastal Park.'*

#### 10.4 Art

Folkestone Triennial brings together local, national and international artists. Inclusion for all is a key ethos of the project and schools clubs and individuals are able to take an active role in the project itself and a whole range of fringe events and activities. The Coastal Park is a popular choice for artists and fringe events. The Folkestone Guidebook, Everywhere Means Something to Everyone, written by local residents, was produced by Strange Cargo and features the Coastal Park numerous times.

F&HDC worked with a community group who created a garden for quiet personal reflection.

The **Look Out and Remember** area design is based on the double helix, symbolising continuity and evolution. A pebble can be left in the pond to remember a loved one. The loss of 3 young people inspired this garden and a collaboration of local artist working with the mothers created this memorial garden. New welcoming sign was installed in May 2025.

The Group can be followed on via their Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1TnoRdSxfA/?mibextid=wwXlfr>



Many local artists have used the park as an inspiration for the art work. Their work can be seen in various galleries in Folkestone.

#### 10.5 Volunteers

Volunteering helps people connect with each other, the wider community, provides health benefits and helps make parks and open spaces even better. F&HDC is committed to making volunteering an enjoyable and safe experience. This is reflected in the Volunteer Charter launched in spring 2021.

Volunteers can get involved in many ways, from managing habitats and surveying wildlife to keeping parks clean and safe. People have the chance to get involved with their local community, meet new

people, develop skills and learn more about the parks and the environment while helping to inform current management.

## 11 List of Appendices

All appendices are available to view either online or on request at the Civic Centre.

- COSHH and Safety Data Sheets
- Corporate Plan (also available online)
- Service Plan
- Risk Assessments
- Safe Systems of Work
- Leaflet (also available online)
- Play Strategy (also available online)
- Volunteer Charter (also available online)
- Premise License – terms and conditions
- Service Level Agreement
- Beach Chalets Management Plan
- MyTrees Database
- Carbon Action Plan
- Lower Leas Coastal Park meadow survey
- Fun Zone refurbishment public consultation survey, results and concept design