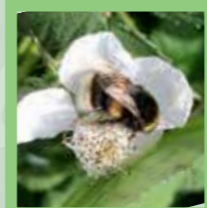


# Wildlife

The park's geology and coastal setting provide the basis for a rich flora and fauna, particularly for migrating birds and insects. The thin, sandy soil is ideal for native wild plants, while the south-facing undercliff has a mild microclimate for wildlife that is unusual elsewhere in the country.



Historically the cliff-face and undercliff were mainly grassy slopes. In the 1880s, pines and holm oaks were planted, followed by self seeded sycamores, which created coastal woodland



with a lower canopy of hawthorn and ground cover including stinking iris. The undercliff provides a habitat for butterflies, bees, woodpeckers and

blue tits.

On the seashore, gulls wheel overhead as shags skim the surface searching for fish. Explore rock pools at Mill Point during low tide to find sea anemones, crabs and starfish.



# History

Once a wild foreshore, landslips in 1784 created the park's basic landform. In 1828, the Earl of Radnor built a toll road providing an easy route between the harbour and Sandgate. An original toll house remains within the park. Either side of the toll road, land was cultivated and grazed. Old field boundaries are still in evidence and the Cow Path reminds us of the drove route from The Leas.



In 1843, the railway arrived and Folkestone grew quickly from a small fishing town into a major resort with visitors from London, including Edward, Prince of Wales. In the park, tea rooms, shelters and woodland walks were provided among the newly planted holm oaks and pine trees so that people could "take the air".

The Leas Cliff Hall was designed in 1913 by J.L. Seaton Dahl to replace a smaller Victorian concert venue called the "Leas Shelter", from which three cast-iron air vents can still be seen. The Great War delayed the Hall's construction and it eventually opened in 1927. A grade II listed building and "Neo-Grec" in



style the Hall's upper floors are richly decorated – see if you can spot features including lions' heads, and Folkestone's emblem flanked by dolphins.

The Hall has witnessed many musical, dance and fashion styles from Jazz to Rock. During World War

Two thousands of servicemen and women danced to swing bands, and at a VE Day celebration paratroopers climbed down a rope and into the Hall through the balcony! In the swinging 60s and 70s acts included the Rolling Stones, T. Rex, and Status Quo. It was closed for modernisation and refurbishment on 16 September 1980 and re-opened on 6 May 1981 which is the venue seen today.

Today the Hall can accommodate audiences up to 1,500 people and some 150,000 people visit every year.

The Zig Zag Path was built in 1921 as a new attraction and to provide work for the unemployed. As natural as it looks, the cliff-face and grottoes are entirely artificial, being built of mostly waste material and coated in special cement called Pulhamite after its creator James Pulham. Now a listed structure, the path is one of the country's finest examples of his work.



During 2007 the Coastal Park received a total of four awards; the prestigious Green Flag awarded by the Civic Trust, best regional and best overall Regeneration Project from the Royal Town Planning Institute and winner in the Landscape category of the Kent Design Awards.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council are keen to continue consulting the public on the future development of the Coastal Park through a "Friends of the Park" group. If you are interested in joining the group please leave your contact details with any of the staff on site.

# Relaxation

Starting from the Leas Bandstand, the Zig Zag Path takes you down to the 350-seat Amphitheatre where a programme of free events, including music, magic, comedy and drama, is held each summer.

Nearby is the South East's largest free adventure playground complete with sunken pirate ship, zip lines and over 12 metres of tube slides! Careful, you may have difficulty in getting your children to leave!



The Formal Zone between the Amphitheatre and the Leas Lift has been sympathetically restored to retain the spirit of the historic park. Plants throughout the park have been selected for their resistance to drought and the salt air.

Interpretation panels help visitors to understand the park and there is even a 'Pierscope' to view the Pier, now long since demolished. (Much less expensive than building a new one!)

The Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 2 passes through the park. The route is complemented by artwork, including entrance features and hand-sculpted benches. A labyrinth, designed by a local artist, has been added to stimulate creative thinking using sandstone recovered from the underpass in the town centre.



## The Lower Leas Coastal Park

Folkestone, Kent



Welcome to our award-winning park. Here are some guidelines to make sure everyone can enjoy it safely:

Be considerate of other people in the park, especially if you are cycling or scooting.

Vehicles are allowed to park in marked bays only. Nearest coach park is at harbour end.

Campervans are not allowed to stay overnight.

Keep dogs under control, and remember they aren't allowed in the play areas.

Open fires are not allowed.

Let us know if you're planning an event in the park, or if you have any suggestions or concerns.

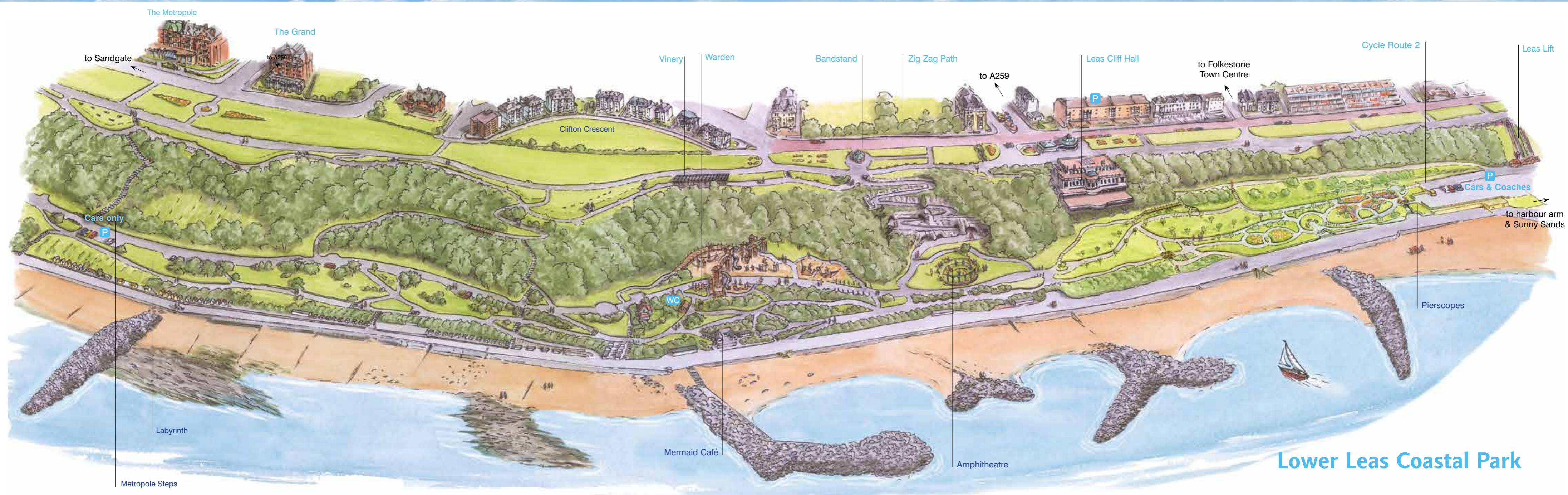
Camping is not allowed anywhere in the park.

Put your rubbish in a bin, or take it home.



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# Lower Leas Coastal Park