

Folkestone and Hythe District Council

Kingsnorth Gardens Management Plan

2021 – 2025



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Introduction

Kingsnorth Gardens has seen investment by Folkestone and Hythe District Council (F&HDC), Folkestone Town Council and Folkestone College since 2016. This management plan has been developed to provide a standard that the gardens will be maintained to. It will help to ensure that the gardens fulfil 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 five key principles are:

- Locally Distinctive
- Sustainable Recovery
- Greener Folkestone and Hythe
- Transparent, Stable, Accountable
- Continuous Improvement

The four service ambitions are:

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

2 Site Details

2.1 Population Distribution

Folkestone and 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 Folkestone & Hythe 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 of “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 new 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 Kingsnorth Gardens

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 continue to second roundabout. Complete a U-turn at this roundabout to bring you back towards Radnor Park and turn left into Kingsnorth Gardens before reaching the railway bridge.

By Train

Leave the train at Folkestone Central Station and turn right, walk under the railway bridge, cross over Kingsnorth Gardens and enter through the gates.

By Bus

From Folkestone Bus Station walk away from the town centre along Cheriton Gardens, just before the railway bridge the entrance to the gardens is on your left.

2.5 Folkestone Street Map



2.6 Site Description

Kingsnorth Gardens is a 1.3 hectare ornamental gardens in the heart of Folkestone. The site was originally excavated by the owner, John Kingsnorth and this material used for brick making. Subsequently used as a landfill site, the area fell into disrepair and following complaints from the public, the gardens were laid out in 1926 by Mr G E Roden, Parks Superintendent for the Town Council. Today the gardens are a mix of Oriental, Italian and English styles. Fountains and historic statues add interest to the site which is used for quiet recreation, simply enjoying the peaceful surroundings in the centre of the busy townscape. The gardens can be split into 3 sections Upper, Central and Lower.

Upper Gardens

This section is the subject of the winter gardens and pergola project. The original rose beds had suffered disease and soil degradation and were unsustainable in terms of plant health and maintenance. The beds were stripped and laid to lawn to allow the soil to rest before embarking on the regeneration project. There is scope to provide a more invertebrate friendly area of the gardens so the 4 large lawns will become wild flower meadows with long flowering bulb mixes and wild flower turf. The old pergola will be replaced with a new structure surrounding a central cherry tree and hard landscaping by the students and staff of Folkestone College in 2021. The area behind the pergola, spreading out to the rockery will be planted as a winter garden, with plants which either flower in winter or have striking winter stems, seed heads and foliage.

Central Gardens

The central gardens feature the four ponds, clipped yew hedges and the weeping ash tree. The ponds support goldfish, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. The 2 large rectangular ponds have fountains which add to the visual geometry of the section and the sound of moving water enhances the quiet and relaxing feel of the gardens. Folkestone College have assisted in renovating the dry stone walls and paving, giving the area a smart, formal identity. The weeping ash tree is over 100

years old and does have dieback within the crown. Retention of this stunning tree is important so it is carefully monitored and managed to preserve its place for as long as it is safe to do so.

Lower Gardens

Formal lawns intersected with paths, annual bedding and specimen trees dominate the lower gardens. *Acers* and tall *Chamaerops* draw visitors into the gardens adding height to the spring and summer bedding displays. The lawns are box mown and the soft edges of the herbaceous perimeter planting accentuate the sharp geometric beds. The lower gardens erupt with colour in the spring with the shrimp-pink foliage of the *Acers* set against the green lawns and intricate bedding displays. This section showcases the best of traditional municipal gardens with ample seating for visitors to simply sit, relax and enjoy!

2.7 Aerial Photograph



3 Site History

The name 'Kingsnorth Gardens' can be attributed to John Kingsnorth who was once a tenant farmer at Ingles Farm. He excavated the site for brick earth and produced bricks for local building projects. The kilns were located near to the railway arch that spans Cheriton Road. Following excavation, the site was turned over to allotments but became a landfill site. Following complaints the town Council began to consider developing it. Notions of a Town Hall or Municipal Offices were quickly dismissed as being too costly and the idea of an ornamental garden started to emerge.

The suggestion was eagerly accepted and the Parks Committee received instructions to proceed with the creation of a garden. The Parks Superintendent of the time was a Mr G.E. Roden, who orchestrated the planning and construction of the gardens. Work began in 1926 with a workforce of unemployed men and a budget of £3,500.

The design was typical of the time, a blend of garden styles from Oriental to Italianate, suffused with English eccentricity. The upper garden was to consist of a shelter and terrace overlooking the rose garden. Pergolas were erected for the climbing roses, providing shaded walks where the sight and scent of the roses could be appreciated at eye level. Over 2000 roses were planted. The central garden consisted of lawns and formal ponds – two large and two small, the large two complete with fountains, waterlilies and goldfish. The centrepiece was the stunning weeping ash tree, which was transplanted from its' original location in Sandgate Road.

Beyond the pools, the lower garden was largely laid to lawn with a combination of formal flowerbeds and the stunning acers (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum') with their unique shrimp-pink spring foliage.

The perimeter of the site was strengthened with planting of more ornamental trees and shrubs and herbaceous borders laid out around the outer path network. 500 groups of 12 plants formed the herbaceous borders, taller plants at the rear of the border and lower plants towards the front. The rockery show cased alpine plants in the sunniest part of the garden.

There were also various stone features, including an oriental lantern and statues of Sir Jeffrey Hudson and Pan located near the rockery.

Today the shelter has been removed with only pergolas remaining. Due to disease and poor soil, the rose garden has been removed and there are exciting plans to re-design the area in a more modern, sustainable manner.

3.1 Historical Photographs



4 Maintenance Plan

The Horticultural Senior Specialist has managerial control over staff who maintain the site. Gardening staff are assisted by park keepers who are responsible for cleansing of the park. The lawns, herbaceous borders, annual bedding displays and ponds are all maintained by the small team. Trees are maintained by the Arboricultural Senior Specialist with tree surveys taking place at least every other year. The budget for Kingsnorth Gardens is included within the wider Grounds Maintenance service budget.

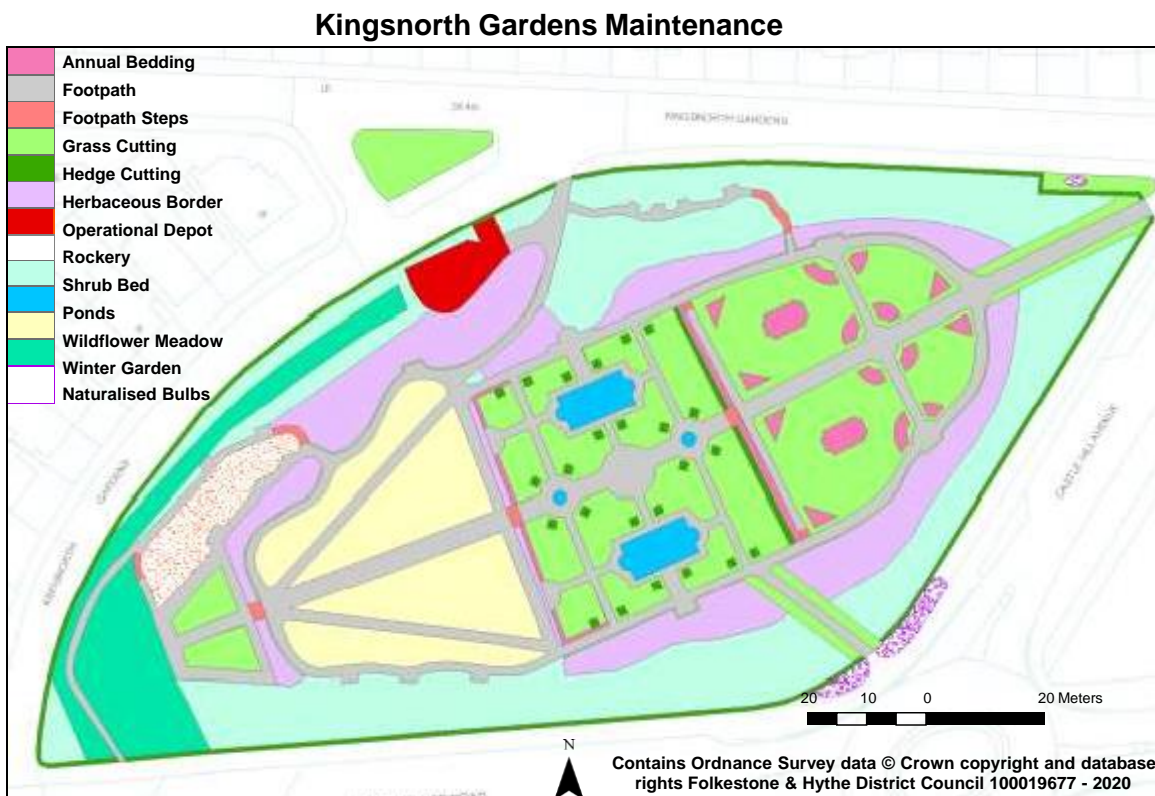
There are small buildings onsite for storage and staff facilities which are maintained by the Engineering and Buildings team along with the park furniture, fountains and pumps.

The manager allocates work in accordance with the maintenance schedules, 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 gardening staff are responsible for ensuring all day to day duties within the park are completed 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 annual bedding displays, gapping up and newly cleared areas including trees and hedging.

Park Keepers manage the cleansing of the major parks in Folkestone including Kingsnorth Gardens. 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 3, 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 Map



4.2 Grounds Maintenance Specification Table

The table below details the main maintenance operations carried out by the gardeners and should be read alongside the map above for activity locations. 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
Grass Cutting	All lawns mown with distinctive striping. Arisings collected and removed to composting site.	Weekly during summer, fortnightly or as ground conditions allow during winter
Lawn care	Scarification, feeding, pest control, top dressing, seeding, watering	Following good horticultural practise
Herbaceous Border	Hand weeding, edging, splitting, replanting, dead heading and pruning to maintain plant health. Cutting back old growth and removing debris	Monthly dependant on season
Naturalised Bulbs	Crocus and daffodils allowed to naturalise. Grass cutting and strimming regimes are adjusted to allow die back and bulb regeneration.	Allow 6 - 8 weeks after flowering before maintenance operations resume
Shrubs	Pruning to ensure good plant health and maintain safe access. Replanting as required.	Annual or as required
Trees	Ensure good plant health and layer vegetation under the canopy. Replace dead, diseased or dying specimens with suitable species. Leave dead wood on site where practical to create wildlife habitats.	As and when required. Tree survey carried out at least every 2 years by Arboricultural Senior Specialist
Annual Bedding	Seasonal displays (Spring and Summer), plant out twice per year. Remove all existing plant material, rotovate soil, add compost as required, clip grass edges and plant out as per design.	Biannually planting Weekly weeding
Hedge Cutting	Maintain all hedges on site at least twice per year outside of bird nesting season. Remove all clippings from site.	Biannually
Yew Hedges	Clip by hand to maintain good shape. Arisings removed to compost site	Late summer
Ponds and Fountains	Ensure plants are healthy and provide sufficient oxygen / habitat for fish, fry, newts and other pond dwelling wildlife	As required, on-going maintenance

	<p>Ensure fountains and pumps are in good working order</p> <p>Monitor pond structure for leaks</p> <p>Ensure surrounding slabs and pump housings are in good working order</p> <p>Ensure electrical items are safe</p> <p>Monitor goldfish and ensure stock is healthy and disease free</p>	<p>Report any defects to Engineering and Buildings team to effect repairs</p>
Green Waste	<p>All green waste to be taken to Hawkinge Cemetery for in house composting.</p>	<p>Daily or as required</p>
Statues and heritage features	<p>Ensure statues are securely fixed in position and in a good state of repair</p>	<p>Report any defects to Engineering and Buildings team to effect repairs</p>
Street Furniture	<p>Ensure all benches, litter bins, signage, pergolas, fencing and gates are in good state of repair and serviceable</p>	<p>Report any defects to Engineering and Buildings team to effect repairs</p>
Walls and pathways	<p>Maintain all surfaces and walls to high standard and monitor the same for defects</p>	<p>Report any defects to Engineering and Buildings team to effect repairs</p>
Staff Depot	<p>Ensure buildings are clean and tidy with all tools, equipment and machinery stored safely. Ensure portaloo is clean and regularly emptied. Staff notices in mess room to be relevant and regularly updated</p>	<p>Portaloo emptied and cleaned weekly by contractor. Staff upkeep of machinery store daily</p>

The gardening staff are also required to

- Inspect vehicle and trailer daily, complete inspection sheet and arrange any repairs with the F&HDC Mechanics
- Ensure completed relevant paperwork is returned to manager
- Liaise with the Park Keepers on issues regarding cleanliness /graffiti
- Ensure all works on site are carried out safely
- Ensure all tools are safe and properly maintained
- Liaise with Police, public and other site users as necessary

4.3 Park Keepers

The Park Keepers are a mobile crew who tend to the major parks in Folkestone including Kingsnorth Gardens. 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.

Daily

- Empty all litter bins as necessary, replace sacks and remove bagged waste to tip

- Thoroughly litter pick all areas, paths and steps as necessary
- Sweep paths and steps as necessary including beneath benches
- Remove broken glass immediately
- Remove fallen leaves (autumn)
- Inspect street furniture, inform Engineering and Buildings team of any issues
- Remove graffiti immediately or request Area Officer to assist as required
- Liaise with Police and other partner agencies as requested or required
- Advise public of relevant dog fouling and littering bylaws and collect intelligence as appropriate
- Assist visitors as required and ensure facilities are used appropriately
- Remove and report any sharps finds

Weekly

- Ensure all paths are walked and inspected, clean instances of graffiti, litter picking, report defects
- Clean all signs
- Clean bird droppings from seating
- Report all instances of fly tipping to office for clearance by contractor

4.4 Engineering and Buildings

- Maintain drive and footpath surfaces
- Maintain ponds, fountains and pumps
- Maintain all buildings
- Manage hired portaloos (staff use)
- Maintain furniture on site

4.5 Cleansing Contractor

- Supply rubbish sacks
- Remove all reported fly tipping

4.6 2021 – 2025 Management Action Plan

Area	Timescale					Comments	Objective Delivered
Maintenance Plan	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025		
Maintain gardens as required to provide a usable space for private recreation	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Re-pointing paving slabs around ponds				X		Engineering and Buildings / Possibly FC	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Install exterior flood light to depot	X					Engineering and Buildings team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Health and Safety	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	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	Ongoing good practice. Specialist HAVS were purchased to monitor daily exposure	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Continue to invest in battery powered or low vibration equipment	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
Tree Inspections		X		X		Inspections occur at least biennially	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal

							Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Facilities	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Rose Garden re-design	X	X				Specific areas currently laid to lawn to be replaced with wildflower and / or bulb meadows phased	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
Furniture survey	X				X	Replace damaged bins in keeping with newer ones	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Paths and walls	X	X	X			Working with Folkestone College staff and students to repair walls and paths using traditional methods. Use external contractors where issues too large for FC	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
Winter Garden		X				Redesign area with specific focus on winter colour and impact. Internal and FC / Volunteers	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
Rockery	X		X		X	Re-plant with Japanese style planting to provide year round floral interest. Internal and FC / Volunteers	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
Signage	X					Working with FC design students, replace all signage with corporate style entrance signs, information panels and relevant bylaws / desired behaviours while onsite	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
Gates			X			Re-paint and repair gates as necessary.	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Wildlife monitoring	x	X	X	X	x	Possible staff / Work Experience / 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

Sustainable planting (including trees and shrubs)	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
Planting wildflower and or bulb meadows in upper gardens	X	X				Engage with Bumblebee Conservation Trust volunteers	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
Pan statue renovation			X			Ward Grant bid submitted (Cllr Davison)	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Environmental Sustainability	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the council in 2020	X	X	X	X	X	See section 8 for full details	Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Continue in-house composting operation	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities

Assess need / viability of litter and recyclables compound		X				Dependant on success on other sites and availability of suitable location in gardens	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Investigate possibility of on-site compost		X	X			Dependant on success on other sites and availability of suitable location in gardens	Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Minimise powered tool use in favour of mechanical gardening methods and battery technology	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management
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
Marketing	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Welcome signs	X					Grounds Maintenance potentially working with FC	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Monitor all signs / sign posts etc	X	X	X	X	X	Replace as required	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Embed sustainability and ecological practices into management Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities

Increase use of social media to advertise events / promote site / volunteer opportunities	X	X	X	X	X	Communication and Engagement Team	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art
Community Involvement	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments	Objectives Delivered
Continue to work with volunteers under the Volunteer Charter	X	X	X	X	X	Grounds Maintenance Communities Team Area Officers	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 Go Folkestone on projects around historic features		X		X		Grounds Maintenance	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art Maintain heritage value while providing modern facilities
Pergola Project	X	X				Working with Folkestone College staff and students to replace existing pergolas, paving slabs and introduce planting to compliment the new structure	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
Encourage use of the gardens by community groups for suitable small events and art projects	X	X	X	X	X	Promote on Apply4 and website	Provide high quality, attractive recreational spaces with inclusive appeal Encourage community involvement through events, volunteering and art

5 Health and Safety

5.1 Introduction

Folkestone and 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 Folkestone and Hythe District Council 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 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. These are 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 have undertaken a 4 day H&S Managing Safely course provided by IOSH. This equips managers with the ability to assess risk in their own individual areas for tasks which their staff undertake. All seasonal employees are provided with an 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, 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 Kingsnorth Gardens and its visitors are safe and secure. The perimeter is fenced with gates to each entrance, shrub borders soften the fencing and inside the gardens the site feels open with views across the site. The staff depot is secured with double gates to control access. The site is open at all times but entrance gates can be locked overnight should antisocial behaviour become an issue.

In addition to Police response and patrols, Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) patrol the gardens 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.

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 gardens regularly at times when dog fouling is likely to occur (e.g. early mornings) which has proven very effective in educating visitors 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 staff mean that defects are quickly noticed and rectified. Should a defect prove to be beyond the capability of the on-site staff, the Engineering and Buildings team is allocated the job to complete. 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.

5.4 Chemicals

Chemical use is kept to a minimum in the gardens 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 Technician 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.

5.5 Vehicles and Machinery

The Parks Team have a Ford Ranger and large trailer and a Kawasaki Mule. Each morning before starting the vehicles the staff complete 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 manager 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 or when appropriate. 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 F&HDC logo
- Sun protection cream
- 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. When working near ponds and water courses, staff may require waders, floatation suits, life jackets and water proof gloves.

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. All staff complete an annual day long first aid course and there are a number of staff in each area who undertake the longer 3 day course certification. All teams are provided with mobile telephones but 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 are encouraged to use common sense when carrying out operations. 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.

6 Facilities

6.1 Lawns

Formal lawns dominate the central and lower gardens, these are box mown weekly during the growing season. Maintenance operations including striping, feeding, pest control and watering to achieve a high quality sward. Visitors use them for sun bathing, reading and picnics. Interspersed with seasonal bedding, ponds and specimen trees and hedging they give the gardens its typically English feel.

6.2 Ponds

There are four ponds in the central area of the gardens, 2 are large and rectangular while 2 are small and circular. The rectangular ponds, complete with water fountains are stocked with large goldfish, waterlilies and oxygenating plants. They also provide a home for good populations of smooth newts, frogs and the larvae of damsel and dragonflies. The surrounding hard landscaping is formed of slabs with seating and litter bins around the central weeping ash tree. Sympathetic brick cupboards house the pumps and electric supply for the fountains.

6.3 Furniture and Signage

Litter bins and benches are dotted around the site allowing visitors to rest and relax in the quiet of the gardens. Signage encourages visitors to use the site responsibly and gives relevant contact details. Furniture is selected to reflect the formal nature of the gardens and the site is a popular choice for donated benches. New applications for donated memorial benches are administered through the Business Support team. The pergola in the upper section is to be replaced in conjunction with Folkestone College (see section 8 for further information).

6.4 Annual Bedding

Found in the lawns of the lower gardens and along the edges of walling in the central garden, annual bedding is a popular feature and forms the back drop for many wedding photos. Having been a feature of formal municipal gardens for decades, F&HDC strives to make its displays as sustainable as possible. Plants are carefully selected to be attractive to pollinators, re-used in other displays, grown in sustainable media and finally composted in house to produce high quality mulches.

6.5 Historic Statues and Features

Dotted around the garden are statues, original dry stone walls and an oriental stone lantern. The lantern forms a central focus in the lower gardens and the statues depict Sir Jeffrey Hudson and Pan. It is not known how either statue came to be in the gardens and Sir Jeffrey, also known as Lord Minimus has been refurbished following a community led project. Both statues are framed with foliage from the herbaceous borders, the contrast in colours highlighting their presence.

6.6 Herbaceous borders and Shrubs

Softening the fencing surrounding the gardens, the borders showcase flowers, shrubs and bulbs throughout the year. They also provide sensory experiences for visitors, nectar sources for pollinators, habitat for insects and small mammals and autumnal fruits for birds.

6.7 Trees

Specimen trees are integral to the overall design of the main gardens, complimented by those planted in the perimeter. Species such as Foxglove tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*), black pine (*Pinus nigra*), Cypress tree (*Cupressus spp*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) give splashes of colour with blooms and foliage.

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 gardens. 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.

6.8 Rockery and Winter Garden

Situated in the upper gardens, the rockery is a dry south facing area which was once planted with sub-tropical species of trees, plants and alpines. The traditional planting has been modernised, updated and redesigned with innovative Japanese style species which are more sustainable, having a low watering requirement. Inspired by the winter walk at RHS Harlow, the winter garden uses textures, brightly coloured stems and foliage, winter flowering and berry bearing species to enliven the upper gardens in the cold, dark months.



Spring colour in the gardens



Ponds and yew box hedging



Herbaceous planting



Upper garden proposed wildflower / bulb lawns



Chinese lantern



Rockery

7 Nature Conservation and Heritage

7.1 Ecological Management

Though formal in their character, the gardens offer suitable habitat for many insects, birds, pond dwellers and small mammals. Ecological opportunities exist across the site and with some sensitive management and a sound ecological ethos, biodiversity can thrive.

The upper section of the gardens has a more natural feel with large trees and shrubs offering shelter and a food source important for birds. The Pergola Project includes the whole area from the western entrance down past the rockery and on to the formal lawns and ponds of the central gardens. Once constructed, the new pergola will support climbing plants allowing pollinators to gather nectar at higher levels than in the traditional beds. The rockery will feature oriental planting with large open flowers, attractive to bees and other insects. Contrasting with the manicured lawns of the central and lower gardens, the upper lawns are to be laid with wildflower turfs and planted with long flowering bulb mixtures. This trial could be rolled out on other sites, should it prove successful.

The central section features ponds with good populations of amphibians, insect larvae and other pond dwelling fauna. Despite the formal nature of the ponds and the presence of goldfish, the habitat is able to support a wide variety of wildlife.

The lower gardens are very formal with clipped lawns and seasonal bedding displays. Every effort is made to ensure these areas offer opportunities for wild species with open flowers, good nectar sources, close to year round flowering and early forage species, particularly important to bumblebees.

The perimeter hedge, trees and adjacent shrub and herbaceous borders provide shelter and food sources for a variety of fauna especially birds.

7.2 Buildings, Footpaths and Structures

The maintenance of staff depot buildings, structures and infrastructure is undertaken by the Engineering and Buildings team. FC students have been repairing some of the dry stone walls on site, giving them valuable practical skills.



The on-site staff report any footpath issues to the Engineering and Buildings team for attention. Small issues are repaired by the maintenance officers and larger works may be completed by contractors if the resource or technical skill is not available in house. The majority of the paths in the gardens were resurfaced in 2019 /2020.

The gardens is home to an oriental Chinese lantern and statues of Pan and Sir Jeffrey Hudson. Sir Jeffrey has been recently renovated following a community led project. The lantern sits in the centre of the lower gardens and is currently in satisfactory condition, considering its age. The manager is currently working with Go Folkestone and a Councillor to secure a Ward Grant to restore the statue of Pan.

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 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:

- Planting 900 trees across the district in 2019/20 including small, native and semi-mature trees
- 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 Kingsnorth Gardens 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 transport and waste costs.
- It reduces the need to water newly planted shrubs or bushes 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. This reduces the need to move the green waste to Hawkinge to be composted.
- Other local options, such as New Romney Depot, Kingsnorth Gardens and the Coastal Park are being investigated.

8.2 Peat

- The GM department never use raw peat, when purchasing potted plants and other nursery stock including bedding plants, nurseries are asked to supply a certificate stating peat sustainability.
- 60% of summer 2020 bedding plants have been purchased in peat free growing media.
- Tree stock purchased from our preferred supplier has been peat free since autumn 2012.
- Aim to be 100% peat free by 2025.

8.3 Annual Bedding

- All seasonal bedding is grown in reusable trays which are returned to the supplier for reuse.
- All perennial seasonal plants are replanted in various herbaceous borders across the district.
- All seasonal bedding is grown in reusable trays that are sent back to the supplier for reuse.

8.4 Waste Management

- The main parks are popular spots for family picnics and gatherings.
- Visitors are encouraged to either take their recycling home and to put litter in the bins provided
- 3 double compounds (general waste & recyclables) have been installed to tackle excessive waste in the Coastal Park. A similar compound could be installed in the gardens if a need is identified.

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.
- 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. In Kingsnorth Gardens grass cutting is intensive but plans are underway to introduce biodiversity friendly meadows on some of the lawns.
- 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;

- 1 long reach hedge cutter
- 7 hedge cutters
- 4 drills
- 4 chainsaws
- 2 pole saws

The 5 year capital investment plan is due to for renewal in 2022, this 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.

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 55L (diluted) being used annually across the service in the last 5 years.
- 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 and an average of 55L (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.

8.9 Vehicles and Machinery

Council vehicles are purchased and re-newed on a roughly 8 year cycle. A procurement exercise looks in particular at economy, efficiency, localism, specification and servicing plans. New vehicles are purchased on a rolling programme in order to fit with available budget.

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 gardens 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 experience within the staff. The 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

Felled wood is chipped on site and used as mulch for new tree planting or flower beds.

Peat free or reduced peat material or alternatives such as in house produced compost and/ or woodchip are used whenever possible. Nursery suppliers using peat based growing media are asked to provide a Responsibly Produced Peat (RRP) certificate.

Following the summer season, hanging baskets are removed from throughout the district any suitable plants are re-used in the gardens, grasses and laurels are good examples of this. Grape hyacinths (*Muscari armeniacum*) have been used in the winter bedding and planted out in borders following the change in seasonal bedding.

Horticultural methods commonly employed within the gardens 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. Composted bark chippings i.e. mulches is sometimes used throughout our sites
- Planting small specimens so the plant acclimatises to their 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.
- Most plastic pots used for growing herbaceous plants are sent back to the supplier for reuse.
- Seasonal bedding and other planting schemes are designed with pollinator friendly factor in mind, focusing on variety of pollen- rich single-petalled flowers for 'easy access', bright colours, different shapes and scent, prolonged flowering period.



Pollinator attractive seasonal bedding scheme

9 Marketing

9.1 Signage

On site signage is currently old, of poor quality and in need of amalgamating. New welcome signs will be designed and installed at each entrance in 2021. The new signs will be installed by students at Folkestone College. The signs will be in a corporate style and contain information about the site with contact details and inform visitors of how the site can be used.

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 Kingsnorth Gardens. 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 gardens are currently achieving 4.5 stars on the Tripadvisor website.

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

10 Community Involvement

10.1 Folkestone College – Youth Social Action Scheme

Having successfully delivered the Radnor Park Tea Room Project, F&HDC continue working with Folkestone College and identified another project for Kingsnorth Gardens. The old pergola is in need of replacement and the whole area in need of a revamp. The manager gave an eastern theme as a brief and the students responded with a design which has been agreed.

Background Information

The Built Environment department includes Level 1, 2 & 3 courses for full/part time and apprentices in Site Carpentry, Bench Joinery, Wood Machining, Painting & Decorating, Bricklaying & Plastering. There are currently 200 full & part time and 150 apprentice students enrolled.

Each full time construction course includes 10hrs working on social action projects which provides students with an opportunity to work on local projects that develop construction trade/skills and knowledge and provides a venue to showcase their work, support their local community and make improvements that make a difference to their built environment.

Learners develop different skills, work as teams and establish a sense of pride and passion to improve their community. The video link below shows students and staff expressing what social action means and the impact it has on them.

<https://www.youth-social-action.careersandenterprise.co.uk/youth-social-action-colleges>

New Pergola Design

Some very enthusiastic students developed the idea of an area to sit, view and reflect on employment sectors that have made positive contributions to the community. Hence the 12 sided feature which will act as a sun dial. Sitting behind the circular Moon gate, the sun dial cherry tree will be pointing towards the East and the rising sun.

The area will be added to the college's yearly maintenance schedule to inspect and repair as and when required.





10.2 Work Experience

Working in partnership with The Beacon School in Folkestone since September 2019, F&HDC have offered two students work experience in the Coastal Park and Kingsnorth Gardens. Working 2 days a week from 7:30am until 2pm, students are able to learn skills in horticulture and park upkeep as well as developing their social skills. Duties in Kingsnorth Gardens undertaken by the student include weeding, planting and maintaining annual bedding, leaf clearance and sweeping paths.

The scheme will run for 5 years and has the potential to be expanded in the future to other suitable students and sites.

10.3 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. Between October 2018 and October 2019, volunteers donated 3,672 hours to working on F&HDC open spaces.

10.4 Go Folkestone

Go Folkestone are a community group dedicated to improving the town by identifying projects, fund raising and promoting the district. Member, David Noble wanted to restore the statue of Sir Jeffrey Hudson which has been displayed in the gardens since 1928.

Sir Jeffrey was a court dwarf of the English Queen Henrietta Maria of France. Also known as Tom Thumb and Lord Minimus, he reportedly fought in battles, sailed aboard a pirate ship and was presented to the Queen in a pie!

Go Folkestone raised funds for the restoration through the sale of a calendar and the new statue, which is moulded around the original, stands in much the same position as it did over 90 years ago.



1940s



2015



2018

There is no known connection to Folkestone but generations of local children were pictured measured against Sir Jeffrey. Pictured above as a child, is David Noble who spearheaded the fund raising campaign. David is pictured again with the new statue (far left) in the 2018 photo at the unveiling ceremony.

The group are raising money to restore the statue of Pan at the time of writing.

10.5 Art and Events

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.

The 2020 Triennial was postponed due to the pandemic and will take place in 2021. Kingsnorth Gardens has been selected as a location for 2 artists in 2021; Richard Deacon will create 5 granite 'benches' in the upper gardens and Mariko Hori, inspired by the Zig Zag Path in the Coastal Park, will install a cement 'bush' in the central gardens, constructed of items donated by the public and coated in a Pulhamite cement.

Events

Kingsnorth Gardens offers limited space for events but the site is available for hire to community groups. 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.

The council promotes the use of the gardens to community groups. The venue is available to hire at a reduced rate (£41 per event at the time of writing). The council supports all events by providing officer time and expertise. 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/organising-event/guide-event-planning>

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
- Volunteer Charter (also available online)
- MyTrees Database
- Carbon Action Plan