

# **Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy**

## **Appendix 1: Theme 9 Parks, Gardens & Estates**

**PROJECT:** Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy  
**DOCUMENT NAME:** Theme 09: Parks, Gardens and Estates

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V01	INTERNAL DRAFT	F Clark	16/12/2016
Comments – first draft of text. No illustrations or figures. New HLF bid for the Leas Coastal Park – additional information from SDC to be included.			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V02	FIRST DRAFT	F Clark	13/04/17
Comments – As above with addition of information regarding ‘The Triangle’ community garden (Hythe).			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V03	RETURNED DRAFT	D Whittington	16.11.18
Update back from FHDC			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V04	CONSULTATION DRAFT	S MASON	29.11.18
Check through and title page inserted			

Version	Status	Prepared by	Date
V05			

## **Appendix 1, Theme 9 - Parks, Gardens and Estates**

### **1. Summary**

Folkestone & Hythe District contains a rich natural heritage and has a number of valuable parks and gardens. Whilst the current estates are smaller parts of once much larger landholdings, the heritage of these surviving parklands and their associated buildings and gardens often have significant time depth and demonstrate the distinctive manorial and agricultural experience of Kent. Two of the parks in the district are listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, and there are many more that whilst not listed are in excellent condition and continue to be integral to the identity of the District. As a coastal District, it has played an important role in the formation of the 'coastal garden' seaside resort and has retained excellent examples of striking landscaped gardens and horticultural quality. Small green spaces and tree-lined avenues within urban centres are also important to the district's local character and act as natural oases throughout many of the towns. The District's green spaces are special as they vary from gardens in the Elham Valley to the unique shingle estate of Dungeness. These parks and gardens are also incredibly beneficial for the mental and physical health of local inhabitants as well as visitors and continue to encourage a reconnection between people and their natural landscape.

### **2. Introduction**

#### ***The History of Land Ownership in Kent***

The settlement and division of land in Kent has always been largely dictated by the varied topography and natural resources found across the county. Systems of land ownership have evolved over time having been further influenced by a number of social, economic, political and agricultural factors. The majority of parks, gardens and estates that exist within the district are a result of these historical landholdings that can date their origins to centuries earlier. In more recent times, other parks and gardens have been established in response to the growing fashions of the seaside resort, spa town and recreational public space with the first park for public amenity being secured in 1703 at Tunbridge Wells. Other modern green spaces have been donated, bequeathed or secured in trust for the benefit of the public by various landowners, aldermen or entrepreneurs. The awareness of Local Authorities of the need for green space has further added to the numbers of parks and gardens, particularly within urban spaces, over the last 150 years.

Agricultural estates were being worked in Britain during the Roman period. By the time the Romans had left Britain in the early fifth century these agricultural units were likely in decline and the Anglo-Saxons then established their own estate system during the latter half of that century. Little evidence for the exact boundaries of these estates exists, but it appears that these were substantial units that were fashioned so as to enjoy the natural resources available within Kent. The county's mixed topography includes marshlands, Downland and river valleys, and settlements seemed to have been concentrated in the northern regions initially before the expansion and exploitation of other areas in Kent such as the Weald. Early Anglo-

Saxon estates within the district included Lydd, Lympne, Lyminge and Folkestone; Lyminge being a royal estate.

The primary subdivisions of land during the Anglo-Saxon period were lathes and hundreds, and in Kent these were initially founded around the royal settlements though they later became predominantly administrative units. The lathes were important judicial, administrative and taxation units, hundreds being further subdivisions within a lathe. In East Kent there were initially four lathes; the Lathe of Borough, Eastry, Lympne and Wye. By the thirteenth century Kent had a total of five lathes, and the lathe of Lympne had become the lathe of Shepway. By the time the Domesday Book had been completed in 1086, the hundreds system was still not fully formed and it was not until the thirteenth century that these boundaries would become fixed and then subsequently endure for the next 600 years.

The main purpose of the Domesday Survey following the Norman Conquest of Britain was to determine how resources were distributed among individual manors in the form of landholdings, equipment and overall monetary value. As a population survey it is incomplete, and the data relating to manors and their estates needs to be interpreted carefully as many large manors were actually made up of detached landholdings rather than being a singular block of land. Immediately following the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, large portions of land in Kent were vested to prominent men such as Odo of Bayeux, later Earl of Kent, and Richard Fitzgilbert. However, whilst vast landed wealth and authority had been secured by these secular landowners, the church was also still a prominent landholder within Kent and held approximately half of the landed estate in the county at this time. When Odo fell in 1088, a number of his largest estates were subsequently transferred to royal ownership whilst other parts remained with subtenants. Ultimately the secular, royal and ecclesiastical ownership of land resulted in a patchwork of small and medium estates that would characterise the medieval Kentish manorial landscape.

By the thirteenth century, Kent had developed into a county of marked contrasts in areas such as population density and land use. The northern plains of Kent enjoyed fertile land and easily cultivated loams and so had been settled earlier than other areas. A band of well-watered and fertile land runs through the centre of the county in a north-western direction and had again been more densely populated earlier on during the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. On one side of this band lay chalk Downland and on the other stony infertile Chartland that had been settled later in the thirteenth century. The more densely wooded and clay-soiled Weald area had also been slower to see increases in the establishment of more permanent settlement and exploitation. A large amount of landholding was still dominated by ecclesiastical institutions though again the land owned was often fragmentary rather than being a block of demesne and tenant land. A number of aristocratic families had founded further landholdings that again varied in size. Whilst the topography had been a strong influencing factor in the location, size and fortunes of estates, the medieval manorial and tenure systems were also important factors.

The manorial system of the medieval period was an essential part of a feudal society that flourished at this time; that is structuring society around relationships derived from the ownership of land in exchange for services rendered. This system applied

to all levels of the social strata and ranges from Earls and Barons providing soldiers to the King in exchange for prominent landholdings, down to peasants cultivating land in exchange for tenure. Kent's medieval manorial landscape begins to become distinct when considering factors such as systems of land tenure and the early enclosure of fields. Gavelkind tenure was used in Kent and meant that when a tenant died his former landholdings would be split between all male heirs rather than remaining as a single unit of land inherited by one heir. Unusually, the widow was also entitled to inherit half of her former husband's estates and could remain there on the condition that she never remarried. This system of land tenure in the medieval period is almost entirely unique to Kent and meant that landholdings could become small as they were subdivided amongst heirs, contributing to the patchwork of landholdings that was characteristic of medieval Kent.

Medieval land that was held by the Lord of the Manor included common land that was the earliest form of public open space. The fields belonging to a medieval manor were often divided into long, narrow strips that would each be cultivated by an individual or a family that were tenants of the manor. These fields were not fenced but each would be distinguishable by the different crops that were being grown. This was known as the 'open-field' system and dominates early medieval agricultural practice. However, in the south-east of England the open-field system was not adopted and fields were largely farmed as they had been pre-Roman as small enclosed spaces. Notably Kent and Essex did not use the open-field system.

During the thirteenth century agriculture had been thriving though increasing pressures were beginning to build that would have an important impact on Kent's landed estates. The early widespread enclosure of fields in Kent may have caused the loss of some villages and certainly resulted in the surrendering of some common rights. Common land was being eroded, and for some members of the community who relied on subsistence from these pastures and woodlands, it was a significant loss. As has been mentioned Kent was one of the earlier counties to become enclosed, and by 1600 most of the county was now characterised by this method of landholding. Gradually common land was replaced by private ownership where earlier very little land was owned outright and many manorial estates had grown in size. The relationship between Lord of the Manor and their tenants or labourers was also changing and became more based on monetary exchange rather than on the exchange of labour. Feudalism was hastened into decline by enclosure and had completely waned by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

By the sixteenth century, many estates were under threat from the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The result of this was the breaking up of great estates where substantial ecclesiastical lands were transferred to the crown in order to provide regular income for government. Further money was needed in order to finance Henry VIII's military campaigns and so former monastic properties were sold into private ownership. From the end of the sixteenth century landed society in Kent lacked many resident magnate families and a new *Landed Gentry* emerged who derived status from land ownership. Elaborate county houses set within estate parkland begin to emerge, a number of which survive today and are now under the care of private or public bodies such as the National Trust. The history of the parks and gardens of Kent from the seventeenth century onwards becomes more tied up with

the growth of the seaside resort, spa town and the recognition of recreational space as important to wellbeing.

### ***The Development of Parks and Gardens***

The growth of the spa town at the beginning of the seventeenth century resulted in the first public space being secured as an amenity for local inhabitants and visitors in Kent. Tunbridge Wells, the 'Wells' denoting its status as a spa, developed as a spa town in 1606 when Lord North discovered and began promoting the Chalybeate Spring there and its medicinal qualities. It first attracted the sick and then later the nobility who brought with them the idea of the fashionable spa. Its popularity had grown so substantially that in 1684 Viscountess Purbeck, owner of the Mount Sion Manor, began selling off plots of land realising the potential for development. In 1703 the Grove at Mount Sion, a remote corner of the manor, was placed in trust for the use as a public amenity space for local inhabitants and visitors becoming the first public park.

Other parts of Kent began promoting themselves as seaside spa resorts and the therapeutic benefits of sea bathing were further emphasised by Dr Richard Russell's publication on the medicinal qualities of sea water in 1750 (translated to English in 1752). In Kent towns such as Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Deal were among the first to begin promoting themselves as seaside spa resorts, followed by Dover, Sandgate, Folkestone and Hythe by the end of the eighteenth century. Every aspiring resort had a pleasure garden; a park that was designed for the purposes of entertainment such as concert halls, bandstands, amusement parks and zoos. Many of these were later redeveloped and were the forerunners to the seaside amusement park.

Early nineteenth century Kent was still a predominantly agricultural county that had escaped the worst effects of the Industrial Revolution that had begun in 1760 across Britain. Kent was still visited by affluent peoples, and with the arrival of the railway in the 1830s access to parts of Kent were made better and more affordable for a wider range of visitors. The age of social reform had begun and in 1833 a report by the Select Committee on Public Walks recognised and recommended the need for public walks and open spaces for the improved comfort and health particularly of working people. Concern for industrial workers and the recognised health benefits of green open space spurred proposals for the development of public parks and gardens.

Throughout the nineteenth century, parks were developed across Kent and seaside resorts continued to act as entertainment and recreational venues. Victorian gardens were designed fenced and gated spaces that offered sanctuaries away from the urban bustle. High standards of horticulture attracted families to parks for recreational and educational purposes. The Recreation Grounds Act 1859 increased the provision for sports and provided a cause for benefactors such as Radnor Park in Folkestone that was donated to the Folkestone Borough by the Earl of Radnor in 1886 for use as a recreational ground. Land prices had also dropped and so the Public Health Act 1876 endowed Local Authorities with the power to purchase, develop and manage municipal parks.

Civic pride towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign resulted in a number of Victoria parks across Kent that exhibited the baroque fashion and also incorporated sculpture, a feature that would become popular in Edwardian parks. The Town Planning Act of 1909 improved the locations and accessibility of public open spaces and enhanced the urban green space. After the World Wars naturally a number of memorial parks or memorials within existing spaces were established. After the First World War a number of parks were established and some old estate grounds were simplified for public use. The Second World War devastated many parks that were not restored until later in the 1950s and again a number of private properties on the periphery of urban towns were purchased by councils in order to provide more open space. In 1968, the Countryside Commission was created and new legislation allowed for county parks to apply for government grants.

There are a number of bodies now that work to preserve and maintain the parks and gardens of this country, and the benefits of open green spaces are well recognised. Not only are parks and gardens important and integral to the distinctive character of a place, but they also have significant positive impacts on mental and physical health. The district has a number of important parks and gardens both in urban and rural parts of the District, two of these being included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Many have important histories that demonstrate the unique agricultural and manorial experience of Kent and also form important parts of the special landscapes and panoramic views available in the district.

### ***Designation and Protection of Parks and Gardens***

Parks and Gardens that are recognised by national designation are listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The list is managed by Historic England under the provision of the National Heritage Act 1983 and uses a classification system similar to that used for Listed Buildings:

**Grade I:** Site of exceptional interest (around 9% of registered sites).

**Grade II\*:** Particularly important sites of more than special interest (around 28% of registered sites).

**Grade II:** Sites of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them (around 63% of registered sites).

There are over 1600 sites listed across England and these range from public parks, small domestic gardens, grounds of large estates and historic houses, town squares and cemeteries. The emphasis of the Register is on designed landscape rather than on planting or botanical significance, and many of the sites started life as the grounds of private houses. The addition of parks and gardens to the register means that they are afforded statutory protection and have the same weight in policy terms under the National Planning Policy Framework as Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments.

Local Planning Authorities have further responsibilities where undesignated historic parks and gardens are concerned. Whilst designated heritage assets have a high

status within the planning system and when considering planning decisions, the National Planning Policy Framework also applies to undesignated heritage assets. A 'heritage asset' can be defined as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their important historical value or by the value placed on them by their local communities and distinctiveness to the local area. Local Planning Authorities can identify undesignated heritage assets as part of local lists, local plans or as part of considerations in planning decisions. The inclusion of parks and gardens on local lists is important in raising their profile, assisting decisions into making new additions to the register and also in ensuring the benefits of national and local planning policies.

Since 1995, statutory consultation requirements have also been in place in relation to developments that are likely to have an impact on registered parks and gardens. These requirements are set out in the Town and Country Planning Order 2015 and state that Local Planning Authorities must consult the below before planning permission is granted for development affecting registered parks and gardens:

**Historic England** in relation to Grade I and II\* registered sites.

**The Gardens Trust** in relation to Grade I, II\* and II registered sites.

In July 2015, The Gardens Trust was created from a merger of The Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts. The Garden History Society had been granted statutory consultee status in 1995 and had acted in this role up until July 2015 when The Gardens Trust was confirmed by Government as the new statutory consultee for the designed historic landscape. The Gardens Trust represents the County Gardens Trust of England and Wales and plays a key role in the conservation and protection of designed landscapes. At the heart of the merger is the Historic Landscape Project (HLP) also including Historic England, and involves the close collaboration between interested heritage and amenity bodies to effectively manage and conserve the designed historic landscape.

The Gardens Trust will also attempt to consult on sites that are not included on the Historic Landscapes Register, although where insufficient information about the site is held by the Trust then cases are referred to the relevant County Gardens Trust to better address the issues concerned. In Kent this is the Kent Gardens Trust that was established in 1988 and again is dedicated to the preservation, protection and promotion of Kent's gardens.

### **3. Description of the Heritage Assets**

#### ***Sandling Park, Saltwood***

Sandling Park is listed as a **Grade II Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest**. It lies immediately south of junction 11 off the M20 and to the east of the A20 on the northwest outskirts of Saltwood. In total it covers 177 hectares; 13 hectares are formal and ornamental gardens and the remaining 164 hectares are parkland, farmland and woodland.

Sandling Park was established on the site of the ancient wood of Westenhanger. A property known as Great Sandling is believed to have stood on or adjacent to the



present park by 1769. By the late eighteenth century, the park was owned by the Deedes family who commissioned the Italian architect Bonomi to build a new house in 1796. The park was probably fenced for deer and the Deedes family continued to occupy the park until 1897 when it was sold to the Rt Hon Lawrence Hardy MP. In that same year the landscape gardener Henry Milner was asked to prepare plans for the gardens. The park suffered damage during the Second World War, most notably the house built by Bonomi was bombed and destroyed in 1942. The late Major Hardy built the current house on the same site. The park, house and gardens have remained in the Hardy family and are still a private residence. The grounds are opened for one day a year in aid of charity.

The current park consists of a mid-nineteenth to late twentieth century informal woodland garden that the Hardy family are responsible for and that boasts a specialist rhododendron collection. Early twentieth century formal features designed by Henry Milner are set within the largely nineteenth century park.

The formal gardens lie to the southeast and southwest of the current house with the extensive informal woodland gardens beyond them to the west, northwest and southwest. The woodland gardens and specialist rhododendron collection were first planted in 1845 and have been maintained by the current owners. The woodland gardens also contain a number of mature trees and a great variety of woodland plants and bulbs. A network of walks have also been established throughout the woodland garden. During the 1987 storms the woodland canopy suffered significant damage and extensive replanting has been continuously carried out in order to repair this damage and also to cover railway cutting that has affected the parkland during the Channel Tunnel and High Speed Railway 1 constructions.

Sandling Park also contains a walled kitchen garden and a rose garden that are both in excellent condition. The rose garden was likely laid out as part of Milner's garden plans and was first planted between 1898 and 1909.

### ***Port Lympne, Lympne***

Port Lympne is listed as a **Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest**. The site lies to the south of the B2067 road and 1 kilometre west of the village of Lympne. To the west, the fenced boundary abuts Aldergate Wood which is recognised as another historic park and garden by the Kent Gardens Compendium, volume one. The registered site is 23 hectares in total; this comprises 6 hectares of formal gardens and 17 hectares of woodland.

The estate was purchased by Sir Philip Sassoon and the present house (Grade I Listed) immediately built between 1911 and 1913 by Sir Herbert Baker. After the First World War, the gardens were laid out and the site was then later used by the RAF in 1942 after Sir Philip Sassoon had died in 1939 and remained empty for some time. In 1973 it was then purchased by John Aspinall for the use as a wildlife park. Port Lympne now has early twentieth century formal gardens that were originally designed by Sir Philip Sassoon and then laid out by Philip Tilden with the zoo adjacent and the 17 hectares of listed woodland.

The gardens lie principally to the south and west of the house and exhibit impressive terracing down the steep slopes. They are largely the work of previous owner Sir

Philip Sassoon and Philip Tilden and have remained in excellent condition. Continuous work is being done to the gardens to emanate the grandeur that it would have had when it was originally laid. The terracing is a striking feature as well as the variety of flora and landscaped terrace gardens. These include striped, chequer board and clock gardens as well as rose and dahlia gardens. There is also a working vineyard at the site that is thought to be the oldest of its kind in England, as well as a fig yard, ornamental ponds and fountains. The informal woodland are left practically unmanaged so as to encourage native flora and fauna. As a result, the site is of particular biological interest and exhibits excellent biodiversity. The Port Lympne site is open to the public.

### ***Acrise Place, Acrise***

Acrise Place is not a registered park or garden and is not open to the public, though the current house is a Grade II\* Listed Building. The site is located southeast of Elham and the grounds around the house cover 6 hectares.

Acrise Place was once a part of a much larger estate that can be dated back to the eleventh century. Acrise is mentioned in the Domesday Book and appears to have been part of the landed possessions of Odo of Bayeux until a few years later when he fell out of favour and the estate was transferred to the crown. It was then granted to members of the Cosenton family until 1660 when the Papillon family then own the estate and built the first house there. The estate was again sold in 1850 to the McKinnens family and then later in 1908 went to the Walney family who stayed there until 1936. The house appears to have been empty between 1939 and 1945 but was also occupied by the army at some point during the Second World War. It was purchased again by the Papillon family in 1946 who then remained in the house until the death of Mrs Papillon in 1986 when the estate was finally purchased by The Folkestone Building Company and a major programme of restoration on the house followed. The main house and other ancillary buildings have developed for residential units.

The land at Acrise Place was an open parkland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with some of the original trees still surviving at the site today. It was in 1911 when more formal enclosed gardens around the house was designed in addition to a sunken garden in the hopes of representing the estates long heritage. When the Papillon family purchased the estate for the second time in 1946 they maintained some of the formal gardens but there had been an extensive kitchen garden which became and is now wood yards. Parts of the grounds that were previously open parkland are now wooded and a rose garden has been sympathetically restored. Like other parks and gardens in the county, Acrise Place suffered the loss and damage of trees during the storms of 1987 and work to restore these has continued.

### ***Beachborough Park, Folkestone***

Beachborough Park is not a registered park or garden and is not open to the public. It is located north west of Folkestone near Newington and is approximately 10 hectares in size and covers much of the hilly landscape south of Lyminge.

Beachborough Park as it exists today is a smaller part of a once much larger estate that at one time was one of the largest in Kent. The estate has a long and prominent

history going back to the fourteenth century when it was first owned by the Valoigns family and then the Fogge family. The Fogge family held the estate until the end of Elizabeth I's reign in 1603 when they then sold Beachborough Park to Mr Henry Brockman who was probably responsible for rebuilding the seat. It remained in the Brockman family until James Brockman died unmarried and with no male heir in 1767, and the estate was bequeathed to Rev. Ralph Drake on the condition that he take the Brockman family name and coat of arms. In its more recent history Beachborough Park has served as a military hospital and private college. Beachborough House is a Grade II Listed Building and is still a private residence today. By the twentieth century much of the original estate had already been broken up, but most of the original house was destroyed in a fire during the mid-1970s.

The grounds around the estate were once very ornate and grand as well as the imposing mansion that sits on hilly landscape overlooking much of the estate. A formal garden existed in the early eighteenth century and also included a bathing pool, grotto, prospect rotunda and carriage-washing pond. Remains of the pools exist today as well as the grotto although it is falling into disrepair. The Drake-Brockman family had built a temple cottage within the parkland that survives today in private hands. An eighteenth century lake and original trees can also still be found at Beachborough Park. A large walled garden that is probably early eighteenth century has now been abandoned and a number of trees were lost in the 1987 storms. The Channel Tunnel development which was close to the southeast boundary of the estate meant the loss of a lake and it has now altered once panoramic views.

### ***Radnor Park, Folkestone***

Radnor Park is not a registered park or garden and is a municipal site in Folkestone that is open for general public use. The park was donated to Folkestone for use as a recreational ground by the Earl of Radnor in 1886. It is unclear whether the park is still used as a recreational ground, but it does have a number of features for the benefit of the public which make it a valuable urban open park.

The park features a mock-Tudor lodge that works as a tearoom, public facilities, ornamental and boating ponds, drinking fountain and children's play area. There are plans to update the play area, toilets and drinking fountain though a final decision is due this year. The parkland is largely open ground but there are a number of flower beds surrounding features such as the drinking fountain as well as tree-lined avenues of chestnut, beech and lime trees. These tree-lined avenues and the open green space at Radnor Park are valuable green spaces within the urban setting of Folkestone and contribute to the town's distinctive character as a seaside resort.

### ***Kingsnorth Gardens, Folkestone***

Kingsnorth Gardens, like Radnor Park, is not a registered park or garden but is a municipal site in Folkestone that is open for general public use. The park, which was formally a clay pit, was donated to Folkestone by the Earl of Radnor in 1926 for the development as a public park. The site was renewed with new earth and was subsequently named after a previous tenant, John Kingsnorth, who had lived at Ingles Farm near the site and had worked the land where the current Kingsnorth gardens is.

The garden was created in the traditional yet distinctive style of 'floral Folkestone' and has been maintained to continue in this style. It was opened in 1928 and has three descending terraces; the first is a garden of bedding, pergola and roses, the second is an Italian garden with formal ponds creating geometric designs, and the third is maintained with seasonal flowers. The formal garden planning of Kingsnorth takes inspiration from Italian, Oriental and English landscaping and covers 3.2 acres that are enclosed by trees. Pathways around the garden allow visitors to enjoy the spaces here and is again a valuable green space that acts as an oasis within urban Folkestone.

### ***The Lower Leas Coastal Park, Folkestone***

The Lower Leas Coastal Park in Folkestone is not a registered park or garden but has won a number of awards since it was reopened in 2000. During 2007 the park received the Green Flag Award, Best Regional and Best Overall Regeneration Project from the Royal Town Planning Institute and also won in the Landscape category at the Kent Design Awards that same year. In 2008 artwork from the Triennial event was displayed in the park and in 2015 the Lower Leas Coastal Park was awarded the Certificate of Excellence as reviewed on TripAdvisor. The park does contain a Listed Building; the Pulhamite Caves that were constructed in 1921 by James Pulham are a Grade II Listed Building. There are also a number of Listed Buildings that are valuable local assets on the Leas and that contribute to its unique character as a seaside promenade and resort. These include:

- **The Leas Lift, including Waiting Rooms, Break Houses and Railings** – Grade II\* Listed Building
- **Leas Bandstand** – Grade II Listed Building
- **Leas Manor** – Grade II Listed Building
- **Leas Cliff Hall** – Grade II Listed Building
- **Leas Club (Pavilion)** – Grade II Listed Building

The park has continued to be open to the public and now covers a mile-long stretch of clifftop promenade on the Folkestone seafront.

In 1784, there was a landslip on the seafront of Folkestone that created a new strip of land between the beach and Cliff side running between Folkestone Harbour and Sandgate. The Earl of Radnor built a toll road in 1828 that provided an easy access route between Folkestone Harbour and Sandgate, the original toll house now being a part of the current park. On either side of this toll road the land was cultivated and the 'cow path' within the current park was the old drove route from the Leas.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1898 shows evidence of new pathways that were being established on the Leas and notably in 1885 the Leas Lift opened and provided better access between the seafront and the upper Leas. Folkestone was a popular seaside resort and the amusement park that was established along the promenade proved to be so popular that a second lift car was added in 1890. The recreational features of this amusement park included a Victorian pier, switchback roller coaster, the Leas Shelter and the Leas Bandstand. The Leas Shelter would later become the Leas Cliff Hall and the switchback roller coaster was badly damaged during a storm in 1909 that it was dismantled.

In 1913 the Leas Cliff area was leased by the Radnor Estate to Folkestone to be used as parkland. The park had tearooms, woodland walks and shelters and provided a green space for people to enjoy. The 'zig zag path' that still forms a prominent part of the current park was created by James Pulham in 1921 as a new attraction and way of providing further access routes between the upper and lower Leas. The pathway as well as its caves and grottos were built out of artificial stone called Pulhamite, named after James Pulham, and is now a Grade II Listed Building.

In 1973 the Radnor Estate sold the land to the District Council who are the current owners of the site. The council have undergone an extensive programme of regeneration to the park with the first phase commencing in 2000 and the second in 2003. There are further plans for continued regeneration of the park that will enhance and highlight the significant collection of heritage assets that make up the Leas as well as the natural and built landscape of the parkland.

The park itself contains a number of features and amenities for the benefit of the public. At the top of the park the Victorian Leas Bandstand in addition to the Edwardian architecture along the upper Leas, particularly The Grand Hotel and the Leas Club (also known as the Leas Pavilion), highlights Folkestone's rich heritage as a popular seafront promenade in its heyday as a 'garden coast' resort. The park is then divided into three 'zones', the first being the 'wild zone'. This lies at the western entrance and is an informally managed space used for recreation and open parkland as well as for its rich biodiversity. The second section is the 'fun zone' that includes many of the public amenities such as the children's adventure playground, café and amphitheatre. The 'zig zag path' also runs through this section and a number of free public events are held at the amphitheatre throughout the summer months. The third section is the 'formal zone' and has been maintained to emanate the heritage of the original park. There is an emphasis on formal planting and horticultural excellence which the park was previously known for. The entire park is rich in flora and fauna. The undercliff section provides a microclimate and habitat for a variety of species.

Overall the Lower Leas Coastal Park in addition to the collection of heritage assets in the Leas area are significant to the distinctive and unique character of the Folkestone seafront promenade. They are significant communal assets that embody Folkestone's heyday as a seaside resort offering entertainment, recreation and coastal gardens, but also attest to its continued regeneration and adaptability. The story of Folkestone as a 'garden coast' and resort can be experienced through the Lower Leas Coastal Park and associated assets, bringing it to life for the local community and visitors alike.

### ***Brockhill Country Park, Hythe***

Brockhill Country Park is not a registered park or garden but is open to the public as a Kent Country Park owned by Kent County Council. It has been awarded the Green Flag Award since 2007 and is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest for its significant natural and geological value. It is located on the Sandling Road in Hythe covering approximately 54 acres and falls within part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Brockhill Country Park was once part of a larger estate that can be dated back to the Norman period. The original estate contained landscaped gardens and parkland that

were later subdivided; the remaining gardens and lake now constitute the current park. The manor house which is adjacent to the park is now used as the Brockhill Park Performing Arts College, though it was originally associated with the Tourney family until recently in 1903 when the last Lord of Brockhill Manor died. The current park also has a number of public amenities such as a café and children's play areas and so is a popular family destination.

The park has three distinct areas; the deer paddock which is a grassy area with some trees, the lake and the valley. The valley is the largest part of the parkland which also have the Brockhill stream running through towards the Royal Military Canal below. There are a number of natural environments within the parkland that are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna making it rich in wildlife and natural beauty. Kent County Council have established a number of walking routes around the park.

### ***Romney Warren Country Park***

The Romney Warren Country Park is located near New Romney on the Romney Marsh and was formerly a farm that has been converted into a landscaped parkland of 11 hectares. It was established as part of the Romney Warren Project that began in 1995 and is a partnership between the District Council, Romney Warren Charitable Trust, Nelson Park Gardens (local care home), Shepway Volunteers Centre, Romney Marsh Countryside Project and Kent Wildlife Trust. There is also a visitor centre that was leased to the Kent Wildlife Trust in 2004 which promotes the objectives of the project; these being the protection and raised awareness of the Romney Marsh as a historic landscape and valuable wildlife habitat. The project also provides opportunities for training and employment for disabled and unemployed people.

The parkland has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve because of the unspoiled grassland dunes, willow scrub and pond wildlife. It is not a listed site but parts have been designated as included within the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest due its important biodiversity. The parkland includes wooded areas, pond and open grassland. There are pathways around the park as well as a bird viewing shelter and mock Lookers Hut. Part of the site is also used by Nelson Park Gardens and Shepway Volunteers Centre as a place for horticultural and landscaping training aimed at adults from the local care homes.

### ***The Kent Gardens Compendium Volume One***

The Kent Gardens Compendium Volume one is a register of historic parks and gardens in the county of Kent as identified by the Kent County Council Planning Department. This work was published in 1996 and is now being built on by the Kent Gardens Trust. Volunteers from the Trust have so far looked at parks and gardens in the areas covered by the Medway Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and are commencing work with Dover District Council. Below follows a list of parks and gardens that were identified in the Compendium in 1996 and have not been looked at in detail above:

- **Aldergate Wood**, Lympne
- **The Beehive**, Lydd

- **The Garden House**, Saltwood
- **6 Grange Road**, Saltwood
- **Horton Priory**, Monks Horton
- **The Pear House**, Sellindge
- **Poplar Hall**, Brookland
- **Prospect Cottage**, Dungeness
- **Saltwood Castle**, Saltwood
- **Sea Close**, Hythe
- **Vine House**, Lydd

### ***Urban Parks and Gardens***

Parks and gardens within the urban areas of the district are also important heritage assets that act as natural oases for people and wildlife. Whilst they are not listed, they are integral to the identity and sense of a place and also contribute to the better wellbeing of local residents, visitors and wildlife. These may range in form and may be tree-lined avenues, designed flower beds or small recreational grounds.

Whatever the case, green space offers the opportunity to reconnect with nature and a chance to escape the bustle of urban life which is important to better mental health and the enjoyment of a place. These green spaces are also valuable to their local communities and so are significant as communal assets. Below follow some examples of these urban green spaces:

- **Clifton gardens**, Folkestone
- **Augusta Gardens**, Folkestone
- **Trinity Gardens**, Folkestone
- **Westbourne Gardens**, Folkestone
- **Grimston Gardens**, Folkestone
- **Langhorne Gardens**, Folkestone
- **Bouverie Square**, Folkestone
- **St Martins Field**, New Romney
- **Fairfield Road Recreational Area**, New Romney
- **Station Road Recreational Area**, New Romney
- **Oaklands Park**, Hythe
- **The Green**, Hythe
- **South Road Recreational Ground**, Hythe
- **The Triangle (also known as the Former Animal Pound)**, Hythe

The Triangle or former animal pound in Hythe is a **Grade II Listed Building** due to its historical interest and rarity. The former animal pound dates back to late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It was initially used in animal husbandry and then later as a horse watering station possible by the military. This is unusual, and the triangular plan is a very rare example. It has recently been purchased by the Hythe Triangle Community Garden charity and is going to be restored as a community garden for public use.

### ***Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries***

Memorial gardens are an important asset as part of the parks and gardens of the district. Following the First World War, memorial gardens began to be established in

commemoration to those who died in service. There are a number of these across the District as well as war memorials that are protected as Listed Buildings.

- **Christ Church War Memorial Gardens**, Folkestone
- **New Romney Garden of Remembrance**, New Romney
- **Hythe War Memorial and Gardens of Remembrance**, Hythe (War Memorial is Grade II\* Listed Building)
- **Sandgate War Memorial**, Sandgate (Grade II Listed Building)
- **Elham War Memorial**, Elham (Grade II Listed Building)
- **Memorial to Sir John Moore**, Sandgate (Grade II Listed Building)
- **The Look Out and Remember Garden**, Folkestone (The Lower Leas Coastal Park) – this memorial garden is currently near to completion and can be found on the Sandgate end of the Lower Leas Coastal Park in Folkestone. It has been created as a communal project and is meant as a place to remember those who have been lost before their time.

Cemeteries are also important heritage assets when considering parks and gardens. They offer space for contemplation and remembrance and are often well landscaped and maintained. The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England focuses on planned landscapes which includes cemeteries. Although all of the cemeteries within the district are undesignated, features within the cemeteries or churchyards may be included within the listed status of the church building such as parts of churchyard walls or memorials. Other memorial structures within cemeteries and memorial gardens may also be listed within their own right. Whether they are listed or undesignated heritage assets, they hold historical and communal significance that merits consideration within planning processes and are recognised as important by the National Planning Policy Framework. Within the district there are a number of cemeteries with varying time depth that are important undesignated heritage assets.

- **The Old Folkestone Cemetery**, Cheriton
- **New Romney Cemetery**, New Romney
- **Hawkinge Cemetery**, Hawkinge
- **Lydd Cemetery**, Lydd
- **Spring Lane Cemetery**, Seabrook
- **Brenzett Cemetery**, Brenzett
- **Shorncliffe Military Cemetery**, Shorncliffe (owned by the Ministry of Defence)

#### **4. Statement of Significance**

The district does not contain any seats that could still be considered as great country manors as those that do survive are smaller parts of once much larger estates. However, the existing estates continue to demonstrate significant time depth and parks and gardens of excellent quality have been preserved. The distinctive history of the Kentish manorial landscape and the development of the public parkland can be experienced through the natural assets of the district and they are also essential to the identity of the District as an area with iconic landscapes and panoramic views.



The coastal gardens bring to life the development of the seaside resort and pleasure gardens, and the many urban green spaces highlight the continued importance of natural oases within towns and cities for the wellbeing of people as well as wildlife. Overall, the parks and gardens of the district should be considered to be of **considerable significance** not only to the local character but also to its residents and visitors.

### ***Evidential Value***

Some of the parks can date their origins back to the Norman period and are mentioned in the Domesday Survey, such as Acrise Place and Brockhill Country Park, whilst others have developed from prominent medieval manors, most notably Beachborough Park. It is therefore likely that these sites contain buried archaeological remains that could further illustrate their earlier origins and provide additional valuable evidence of Norman and medieval estates. The parklands and associated buildings have gone through extensive phases of restoration and in some cases complete loss of original features, but further investigation of the grounds and buildings in some instances may again reveal further evidence of these earlier phases. With some of the parks it is known that the formal layout of the gardens in their earlier histories was different to their current plans and some features have been lost over the years. However archaeological investigation may reveal these earlier features where buried evidence may still survive and again illustrate the development of parks and gardens as part of landed estates over the centuries.

The district also contains important natural assets that embody the significant history of the public park that was developing during the eighteenth century. The growth of the seaside resort and spa town are highlighted in the extensive Lower Leas Coastal Park as well as the Leas area in general with its associated built heritage that collectively constitutes a unique and distinctive sense of the place and identity as a coastal town. The changing attitudes towards open green spaces and the provision of municipal parkland for the public can be experienced through many of the parklands within the District and constitute important evidence for this part of history.

### ***Historical Value***

The parks, gardens and remaining parts of estates within the District illustrate the historical experience in Kent of land ownership and changing attitudes towards public open space across the centuries. Some of the parks, such as Acrise Place and Brockhill Country Park, have significant time depth and can demonstrate the Norman forms of landed estate moving into the manorial system of the medieval period. Beachborough Park was once one of the largest estates in Kent and dates back to the fourteenth century and so can provide valuable evidence for the changes in land ownership as well as for the growing landed gentry in Kent that is present by the later medieval period. The effects of gavelkind tenure and the break-up of ecclesiastical lands during the Dissolution can also be seen in some of the surviving estates and constitutes important historical evidence for these events and their impact on the Kentish manorial landscape. The parklands and gardens of these once much larger estates further demonstrate methods of land use as well as changing tastes in garden planning and horticultural quality.

The recent history of the development of the Municipal Park and seaside resort can also be experienced through the surviving eighteenth century coastal parks and the more modern urban green spaces within the district.

### ***Aesthetic Value***

The parks and gardens of the district have significant aesthetic value and contribute extensively to the distinctive character of the area and its natural beauty. The district has a range of landscapes and can be divided into distinct areas, including the Romney Marsh, the Elham Valley and the Dungeness estate. The parks and gardens contribute to the natural beauty of the District and exhibit designs that enhance this attractiveness and also display formal landscaping and horticultural quality. A number of landscaping projects have been undertaken throughout the district to produce superior parks and gardens at the height of fashion. This ranges from examples such as the Pulhamite caves in the Lower Leas Coastal Park to the ornate grandeur of Beachborough Park. The district also offers a number of significant panoramic views of its landscape and particularly across the channel from a number of its parks and gardens that are currently excellently preserved. Many of these green spaces are also greatly appreciated by the artistic and creative community and have been the subject of an extensive portfolio of artistic work.

### ***Communal Value***

The parks and gardens within the district are a valued asset by both local residents and visitors. The green spaces range in time depth, size and layout but all contribute considerably to the local character and natural distinctiveness of the district. Some of the parkland and gardens that are parts of once larger estates highlight the historic landownership and evolution of this over time in Kent and allow people to experience this history and connect with the past. These parklands have remained as valued local assets and continue to provide a sense of local prestige and heritage. Many of these parks and gardens also act as places to bring people together and provide important communal functions such as events venues and destinations for family days out. The importance of green space to better physical, mental and communal health is also significant and the many gardens and parks throughout the district provide natural oases and panoramic landscapes that are widely enjoyed and are integral to the attractiveness and uniqueness of this area.

## **5. Vulnerabilities**

Within this theme, some of the assets are afforded statutory protection by being listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and their associated built heritage are also protected as Listed Buildings. However, this only applies to two of the parks within the district and the remaining are undesignated heritage assets. Whilst the majority are not registered, a number have been recognised as assets by The Gardens Trust and The Kent Gardens Compendium and so will also benefit from a level of protection in planning decisions as set out by the National Planning Policy Framework. However with a number of factors such as development and criminal activity having increasing impacts on

green spaces, those parks and gardens that are not listed will be much more vulnerable and susceptible to damage or loss.

Some of the sites, such as Acrise Place and Port Lympne, have gone through periods of decline when the estates have been unoccupied for lengths of time. This has resulted in the loss of original features and the decline in the condition of some of the gardens. The above named sites have both since been purchased again and are currently both under ownership and managed, however this demonstrates the negative effects that a lack of management can have on parks and gardens. If any of the estates or parks were to change hands again in the future, care must be taken to ensure that further periods of decline do not occur. As well as this, some of the assets mentioned in this theme are not in constant use and may also be in isolated locations leaving them vulnerable to neglect. An example of this is the Old Folkestone Cemetery which no longer takes burials (occasional interment of ashes with family graves can still be done) and lies outside of the centre of Folkestone and so is also fairly isolated though easily accessible by Cheriton Road that leads into the main town centre. This lack of current use has led to the cemetery experiencing vandalism and it has become neglected and badly overgrown. Work is being done by local groups in partnership with the District Council to restore and preserve the cemetery and to promote its historical and communal significance. Again this demonstrates the negative impact that neglect has on parks and gardens and care must be taken to ensure that this does not happen.

Criminal activity and anti-social behaviour are common problems that must be monitored and policed. Some of the sites around the district experience problems such as vandalism or littering which detracts from the attractiveness and cleanliness of the parks and gardens. There are a number of community groups in partnership with Folkestone & Hythe District Council that work to preserve and protect the green spaces of the District, and continued work against criminal activity can ensure that the parks and gardens are maintained in excellent condition. This is of particular importance to areas such as the Dungeness Estate and the Romney Marsh where the landscapes biodiversity is of special scientific interest and is often particularly sensitive.

Natural forces have also had an impact on the parks and gardens of the district. The great storms of 1987 are responsible for extensive damage to a large amount of flora in many of the estates across the district where many trees have been lost. Work has been done to restore the damage but unfortunately natural influences such as the weather may continue to have negative impacts on parks and gardens and the need for restoration work may be needed as a result.

Perhaps the most impending vulnerability to green space today is the increasing rate of development. Although two of the parks are listed and others are recognised as undesignated heritage assets and so are afforded levels of protection, some parks and gardens have already been affected by development and there is a risk that others will be in the future. The construction of the Channel Tunnel and High Speed Rail Link One in recent decades have had a negative impact on sites such as Sandling Park and Beachborough Park. Part of the unique character of these sites are the attractive landscaping and panoramic views out to the channel and these have been altered by these developments. Future developments in the district could

further cause damage and loss of land to the parks and gardens that are so integral to its identity and collection of distinct landscapes. The preservation of green space within urban centres is a further concern as these again contribute to the local character and a loss in sense of place would be felt by local people and visitors if these distinct urban green spaces were lost. As well as this, they are significantly beneficial to the wellbeing of people and wildlife and improve the mental and physical health of visitors and local people by encouraging recreation and a reconnection to the landscape. A number of schemes are promoting these green spaces and their health benefits and further contribute to the enjoyment and experience of an area.

## **6. Opportunities**

There are a number of valuable opportunities where the assets of this theme are concerned. By their very nature, green spaces can demonstrate several significantly beneficial effects on aspects such as health, communal wellbeing and the enrichment of an area. Whilst some of the parks are private and inaccessible to the public, such as Acrise Place and Beachborough Park, the majority within the district are open for public use and can offer a number of amenities and functions.

In many of the parklands and gardens walking routes have already been established and allow visitors of different abilities to explore the grounds by a number of different routes. There are opportunities along these routes to offer educational material identifying the important fauna and flora that can be observed, and again many of the parks currently provide this. More interpretation material highlighting the heritage of the parks and gardens as well as the heritage assets that may be present within the area could be added to further promote the cultural offering of the district as well as to raise awareness of the important natural heritage here. Care must be taken to not detract from the landscaping with too many boards or signs as an example, but the benefits of educational material still provide significant opportunities. In offering learning resources, people gaining a better understanding of the natural environment may also want to become involved in the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the many parks and gardens, ensuring that these important assets survive for many generations to come. There are a number of groups that promote community projects working within the landscape, such as the White Cliffs Countryside Project and the Radnor Park Community Group, and these are important to the longevity of the district's green spaces.

As well as maintaining or creating new walking routes, there are also opportunities for initiatives to co-ordinate with one another and provide wider experiences of the parks and gardens beyond perhaps just one site. Links could be made between groups within this theme but also with groups promoting heritage assets from other themes so as to provide an even broader experience and cultural offering. This could perhaps also feed into the leisure industry by attracting more visitors to the District and encouraging them to stay for longer whilst also raising awareness of the green spaces in the area. Groups that promote walking and exercise as part of their work such as the Pavement Pounders and the Up on the Downs project could co-ordinate with one another and other similar groups to create trails that take in a number of the

parks and gardens and also highlight the heritage of these and their associated assets.

Community groups that work to maintain parks and gardens such as the Radnor Park Community Group and the Friends of the Old Folkestone Cemetery could also link in with groups from other heritage themes to create heritage packages that highlight the histories that link in with the relevant green spaces. With the Old Folkestone Cemetery for example, there are a number of individuals buried there that were casualties of warfare and military heritage groups such as the Shorncliffe Trust and Step Short could co-ordinate with the Friends of the Old Folkestone Cemetery to create a heritage package that highlights the cemetery as a commemorative green space that is closely linked to the military heritage of Folkestone. The Friends are already working to create links with the Shorncliffe Trust and other relevant groups in the hopes of creating educational resources and experiences that highlight and promote these heritage themes.

As has been touched upon, a number of the community groups involved with the parks and gardens are doing important community work which offers significant opportunities for communal activity, training and learning. The provision of communal activities and events is important to the social wellbeing of local residents as well as visitors. As an example, the Lower Leas Coastal Park holds a number of free events at the amphitheatre throughout the summer months. This also offers opportunities for local involvement in the provision of these activities as well as participation in the events or projects offered. Communal work is important in reducing social exclusion and can also improve people's overall wellbeing and general feelings about where they live. Opportunities for training are also important, particularly for assets such as parks and gardens that need maintaining and preserving particularly as a number of them are not listed and so communal investment is perhaps even more essential to their survival. The training offered will give opportunities to develop new skills, become involved in community projects and even help towards gaining new employment. The parks and gardens are also popular subjects for artistic projects and this can again offer important opportunities for communal activity as well as a better understanding and appreciation for the green spaces of the district.

There may be future opportunities to reassess the assets from this theme as part of a project that the Kent Gardens Trust are currently doing. The Trust are doing work to build on the register of historic parks and gardens identified in the Kent Gardens Compendium that was produced in the 1990s. Areas in Kent that have been covered so far are Medway, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. Funding has now been secured to continue the work in Dover District and the many volunteers that work on this project are providing updated assessments of the historic parks and gardens within the research areas. If funding could be secured, this may be an important opportunity to update information and understandings of the historic parks and gardens within the district and perhaps even put others forward for listing. The work is done together with the Local Authority and has so far been successful in improving information within the areas already covered.

## **7. Current Activities**

There are a number of initiatives that are currently involved in the preservation, conservation and promotion of the parks and gardens of the district. They are also offering a number of communal activities as well as events that will enable these sites to adapt and survive for the benefit of future generations.

Community groups such as the Radnor Park Community Group work to preserve and improve the green spaces of the district. At Radnor Park, there are currently plans to update the upper Radnor Park play area, drinking fountain and toilet facilities which is part of a community backed project by the Radnor Park Community Group and Folkestone & Hythe District Council. Community work at the park last year also saw the conversion of the previously derelict Radnor Park Lodge transformed into a working tearoom with the help of students from the East Kent College. Another example of is the Hythe Triangle Community Garden charity that recently purchased The Triangle, also known as the former animal pound which is a Grade II Listed Building. The land will now be used as a community asset and restored so that it can be used as a community garden.

Community projects like these which work to improve and maintain the parks and gardens of the district are essential to their survival and continued adaptation to modern audiences. Other community projects include the creation of the Look Out and Remember Garden in the Lower Leas Coastal Park at Folkestone. A group of local mums have worked together with artists and Folkestone & Hythe District Council to create this unique memorial space dedicated to those that have been lost before their time. The work has received communal support and input, and the garden is now nearing completion. It is hoped that future remembrance events will be held here to further provide a neutral and communal area for contemplation.

Events are also held at the parks and gardens that attract wide audiences and also enhance the parks themselves as places of cultural and communal activity. The Lower Leas Coastal Park for example holds free events at the amphitheatre during the summer months and attracts wide audiences to the park. This creates important opportunities to further promote the green spaces of the district and in doing so ensure that they are valued and conserved. Many of the parks also provide facilities such as cafes and children's play areas that again will attract visitors that may then spend longer at the site and within the District. Educational resources are also available as some of the parklands are of special conservation interest, for example Brockhill Country Park and the Romney Warren Country Park. The provision of these resources further encourages visits to not only enjoy the green spaces, but also to understand their significance.

Some of the larger parks and gardens are managed and maintained by the District Council whilst others are privately owned and maintained. The Lower Leas Coastal Park is managed by Folkestone & Hythe District Council and there are currently plans to further enhance the park. There have been two previous phases of regeneration (2000 and 2003-6) that have seen work such as new picnic areas, new planted gardens and trees in addition to the erection of interpretation boards and signage. This continued regeneration work is important so that the park is adaptable and evolves to better provide for wide public users. Another large body that does a lot of regeneration work to its parkland and gardens is the Aspinall Foundation. The Foundation owns and manages the Port Lympne estate and is an internationally

renowned charity that focuses on the conservation and protection of wildlife and the natural environment. The Aspinall Foundation has established the Port Lympne Zoological Park within the district that attracts wide audiences and hosts a number of events that promote their main goals of the conservation and promotion of wildlife and the natural environment.

The Romney Warren Project at the Romney Warren Country Park is another important initiative promoting and actively conserving the significant wildlife and natural environment of the historic Romney Marsh. The project is a partnership between the District Council, Romney Warren Charitable Trust, Nelson Park Gardens (local care home), Shepway Volunteers Centre, the Romney Marsh Countryside Project and Kent Wildlife Trust. The park contains a visitor centre that is managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and offers educational resources about the historic Romney Marsh and its flora and fauna. There are also trails around the parkland as well as landscaped areas. The project provides training and employment opportunities for disabled and unemployed people. Parts of the park are also used for horticultural and landscaping training by Nelson Park Gardens and Shepway Volunteers Centre and aimed at adults from the local care homes. This work is important in improving the social wellbeing of the local disabled and unemployed people and provides opportunities to engage with groups and conservation work whilst also obtaining new skills. The training provided may also allow some previously unemployed individuals to use these skills to gain new employment within the conservation and horticultural sector.

Other groups are also working on co-ordinating activities with other initiatives in order to have more of a collective impact and to raise awareness of the rich natural heritage offering within the district. The Friends of the Old Folkestone Cemetery for example are working to create links with other groups such as the Shorncliffe Trust and Step Short in order to create heritage packages that highlight the cemetery as a valuable landscaped green and memorial space as well as having close links to the military heritage through the individuals buried there that were casualties of warfare. The heritage packages that could be created would not only be educational, but also be significant in raising awareness of parks and gardens such as the Old Folkestone Cemetery.

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