

# Sandsfoot Gardens Management Plan



Weymouth & Portland  
Borough Council



## Sandsfoot Gardens

This site description and action plan, together with the 'Management of Green Flag Gardens', forms the basis for the maintenance, management and development of Sandsfoot Gardens.

The Sandsfoot Gardens action plan builds on the success of previous plans, which has seen the gardens retain its Green Flag for 5 years.

A large amount of development work was undertaken during 2010 to 2016 and, in the main, is complete. When the first plan was created it focussed on improving the heritage by implementing a Heritage Lottery Fund castle restoration project, opening up the Henrician castle to the public. It also dealt with issues relating to antisocial behaviour, criminal damage and drunks but these problems have been overcome to the benefit of all. Now, with a great sense of achievement and satisfaction, the latest plan moves on to ensure the maintenance of the high standards continues and will identify new and emerging requirements for the gardens. The plan will be reviewed annually but on-going feedback from stakeholders and meetings with the Friends will enable continuous development.



### Introduction

Sandsfoot Gardens lie just to the west of Weymouth, within the ancient parish of Wyke Regis, and surround the ruins of Sandsfoot Castle, built by Henry VIII in 1539. This small but beautiful garden is made up of seasonal flowers, herb beds, herbaceous borders, shrub beds, lawns and hedges, which surround an ornamental pond in the centre of the grounds.

The gardens provide one of the best uninterrupted views of the entire bay and, as such, provided a viewing opportunity for the 2012 Olympic sailing events held in Weymouth bay and an unsurpassed viewing opportunity for the Paralympic games sailing events held in Portland Harbour.

The gardens are owned and maintained by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, which also had ownership as Weymouth Town Council prior to local government re-organisation in 1974.

### Local Plan Designation

Sandsfoot Gardens lie within the electoral ward of Wyke Regis and are designated as local open space by Policy C9 of the Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review. This policy protects the form and function of the site by preventing built development that is not ancillary to the recreational and amenity value of the gardens. However, the policy does allow such local open space to be used flexibly, depending on the open space needs of the area, eg. for formal parks, informal recreation, children's play or formal sport, etc.

## **A Welcoming Place**

Sandsfoot Gardens provides a range of facilities and services for visitors to use and enjoy.

### Ruins of Henry VIII's Tudor Castle

Sandsfoot Castle, one of the most popular features of the gardens, was complete by 1541. It was built rapidly by order of Henry VIII, along with Portland Castle, to defend this part of England's coast against attack by the French and Spanish.

The sea and the weather have been the most effective enemies in wreaking damage on the castle. By the end of the 17th century it was becoming a ruin, its proud gun floors fallen into the sea as the cliffs below crumbled under wave and tide.

Since then, much facing stone has been removed and used in other structures, including the foundations of Weymouth's Town Bridge, which still stands. The final insult for this unique fort came by 1930 when it was declared unsafe and closed to the public.

In 2012 the Borough Council, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Castle, re-opened the castle to the public.



Renovations of the castle underway



The castle and associated structures are owned and maintained by the Borough Council's Parks team. See separate sections of this report and also the HLF Bid and Conservation Management Plan available in the evidence folder for green flag judging purposes.

The castle is open all year round and is free to enter. It is a great setting to host public events and is a perfect backdrop for wedding photos.

### Sandsfoot Café

A cafe at the entrance of the gardens opened in the summer of 2006 and has proved a popular attraction with both local residents and visitors to the gardens. A terraced area set out with tables and chairs is available to customers.

The building is a concrete, block, brick and re-constituted Portland stone construction with some timber facing. It is single storey with access for deliveries from Old Castle Road to the side and rear. The frontage is glazed with a roller type hatch.

In terms of financial support, Sam & Josie continue to be the major sponsor of garden events, including Tudor Picnics and this year's A Midsummer Night's Dream performance. They also supply electricity, at their cost, to events.



Sandsfoot Cafe



Dogs get refreshments too

#### Toilet

The toilet is constructed to the side of the café and is included within the main building. It is well fitted out and maintained by the café owner and is intended for use by visitors. The building is in good order.

#### Ornamental Pond

A feature pond with fountain is another focal point of the gardens. The pond boasts good planting coverage and a healthy fish stock. The electrical supply for a pump for the fountain, which runs all year round, is fed directly off the café and is funded by the café owners.

#### Reinstatement of the Footbridge

The Friends worked with the Borough Council to link the ornamental gardens to the Grade II-listed Sandsfoot Castle by reinstating a wooden footbridge. The Friends donated £5,000 towards the £16,000 project.

The uprights and handrail of the replacement bridge have been built of oak to complement the natural landscape. The infill to the handrails are stainless steel wires and the footway is formed of softwood profiled deck panels.





Reinstated footbridge

### Human Sundial

The Human Sundial Project, in which the observer wishing to know the time acts as the gnomon and her or his shadow indicates the time, was conceived as an attraction that was somewhat unusual, practical, useful, very robust and replaced the original sundial that was there that had been redeployed to the Crematorium many years ago (and is still there). It has proved to be very popular with children and adults alike who spend time working out how it works, which proves half of its enjoyment and even for very young children a counting game as they hop from number to number.

The Friends project was largely funded by local triathletes with the remainder being made up by the Friends and the Borough Council.



Even little people can tell the time





Official unveiling of the sun dial by the triathletes who raised a majority of the funding

### Signage

Brown visitor attraction signs have been placed on the corner of Old Castle Road and on the Rodwell Trail, which direct people to the gardens.

An interpretation panel, funded by the lottery, is situated adjacent to the café at the garden entrance.

## SANDSFOOT CASTLE - An introduction

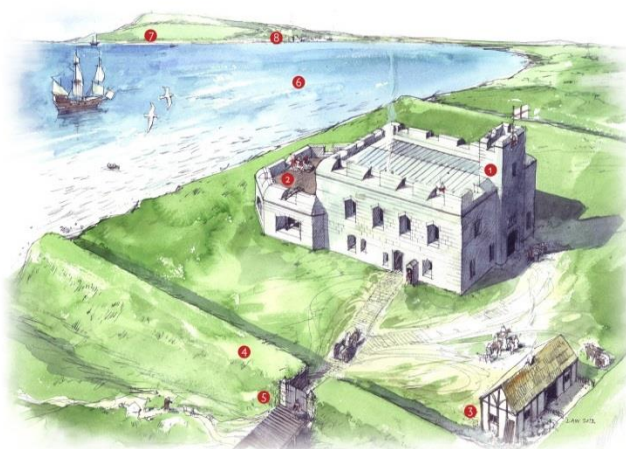
By 1541 Sandsfoot Castle was complete. It was built rapidly by order of Henry VIII, along with Portland Castle, to defend this part of England's coast against attack by the French and Spanish. Henry was threatened with invasion after his divorce from Catherine of Aragon and the break from the Roman Catholic Church.

Sandsfoot was built partly with stone from Bindon Abbey, re-used after its suppression during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. A close look at the walls will reveal pieces of finely-carved stone from the abbey. Costing £3,887.4s 1d (about £1.5 million today) Sandsfoot was described as 'a right goody and waryke castle' in a strong position on the cliff overlooking the Portland Roads, facing Portland Castle across the harbour. Both castles provided protection during the Spanish Armada crisis in 1588 and the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 17th century.

When England fell into civil war in the 1640s, Sandsfoot became important again as a fortification for soldiers and as a mint where coinage was made and stored safely. Soldiers kept cold and lonely watch on the castle walls, looking for an enemy approaching and warmed themselves, off duty, by the fireplaces that can still be seen.

The sea and the weather were the most effective enemies in wreaking damage on the castle. By the end of the 17th century it was becoming a ruin, its proud gun floors fallen into the sea as the cliffs below crumbled under wave and tide.

Since then, much facing stone was removed and used elsewhere, including the foundations of Weymouth's Town Bridge which still stands. The final insult for this unique fort came by 1930 when it was declared unsafe and closed to the public. In 2012, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the castle was made safe once more and opened to the public.



This is an interpretation showing how the castle would have looked after the addition of the earthworks prior to the threat of invasion from the Spanish Armada in 1588.

- 1 Main entrance & tower
- 2 Gun emplacement
- 3 Stables
- 4 Defensive earthworks
- 5 Service entrance to the barbacan
- 6 Portland Roads
- 7 Isle of Portland
- 8 Portland Castle

[www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk](http://www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk)



An example of one of four interpretation panels within the walls of the castle



Sandsfoot Gardens noticeboard fixed to the café

## Safe and Secure



Floodlit castle

## Lighting

Lighting is provided both in the gardens and in/around the castle as a result of the Sandsfoot Castle lottery project. Lighting of the castle is timed to encourage legitimate use after dark for up



to 2 hours but then shuts off so as to prevent the area remaining illuminated facilitating the potential for gatherings of young people late into the night.

### CCTV

A closed circuit television camera has been fitted to the café building by the owners and provides protection of the gardens immediately surrounding the café footprint.

### Police Community Support Officers

PCSO's have been appointed and are active in the central Weymouth area, including Sandsfoot Gardens. The two officers who cover the area have attended the "Friends of" meetings to obtain information and listen to users' concerns. They patrol within the gardens as part of a patch approach, the frequency and timing being based on information received about specific nuisances or incidents. The policy is one of education and persuasion in the initial stages. As a result of group working between the "Friends", the cafe owner, local residents and the officers of WPBC, we have established a good line of communication with the PCSO's/Police when requesting assistance or resolution to any incidents that may be seen or reported to them.

The Friends have also created Rodwell Trail pocket cards, which supply details of how to report any incidents that people may witness.

### Garden Byelaw Revisions

The byelaws covering the gardens were revised in 2005/6, the revision allows for action to be taken against more modern activities that can cause nuisance to other users of the gardens.

### Graffiti Policy

Although the gardens suffer little from graffiti, it is recognised that graffiti presents an image of neglect and raises fear of anti-social behaviour. The character of the gardens being formal does not allow for the tolerance of 'low level' inoffensive graffiti.

Financial and practical working constraints do, however, have to be considered to produce a policy that meets the overall aims of 'Graffiti Free' whilst ensuring it is deliverable. To that end, the basis of the policy is that:

- The site is checked for graffiti on a daily basis through the summer and through the working week in the winter.
- Graffiti that is obscene, racist or contains swear words or sexual content will be removed on that day, wherever possible.
- Lower level graffiti will be removed within a few days.

## **Conservation & Heritage**



Sandsfoot Castle was completed in about 1539 on the order of King Henry VIII, to provide, in conjunction with Portland Castle, a defence for shipping in the safe anchorage of 'Portland Roads' (Portland Harbour).

It had two storeys and a basement, providing an emplacement for heavy cannon, powder magazines and quarters for about fifty men. It was protected by a ditch and earth rampart, remains of which account for some landscape features of these gardens. Evidence suggests that some of the building stone came from earlier local ecclesiastical buildings destroyed after the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The castle was in bad repair by 1584 due to undermining by the sea. Remedial works were undertaken in 1610/1611 and again in 1623. It was held for the King during the Civil War until 1644/1645, when the Royalists withdrew considering it of no further use to them. For some of this period it was probably used as a mint for striking coinage. Sandsfoot was dropped from the Military Register in 1665 but remained as a storehouse until 1691. It never saw serious military action.



The Royal Coat of Arms, carved in stone, was removed from the castle and is now over the south door of All Saints' Church, Wyke Regis.





Weymouth Corporation purchased the ruined castle in 1902 from the Department of Woods and Forests for £150. A stereo-card of about this time shows the castle with prominently painted figures of two men and two women in bustled dresses on each of the window reveals on the south wall which may have been done on behalf of the Corporation as part of the coronation celebrations of Edward VII.



Pre-tennis courts



At some time after World War I tennis courts were laid out between the defensive earthworks and Old Castle Road with Dorothy's 'Tea Lawn' providing refreshment to players and visitors in the 1920s.



In 1931, with the help of a landscape artist, Tudor style gardens with ornamental pond and sundial replaced the tennis courts with a bridge spanning the defensive ditch to give direct access to the castle.

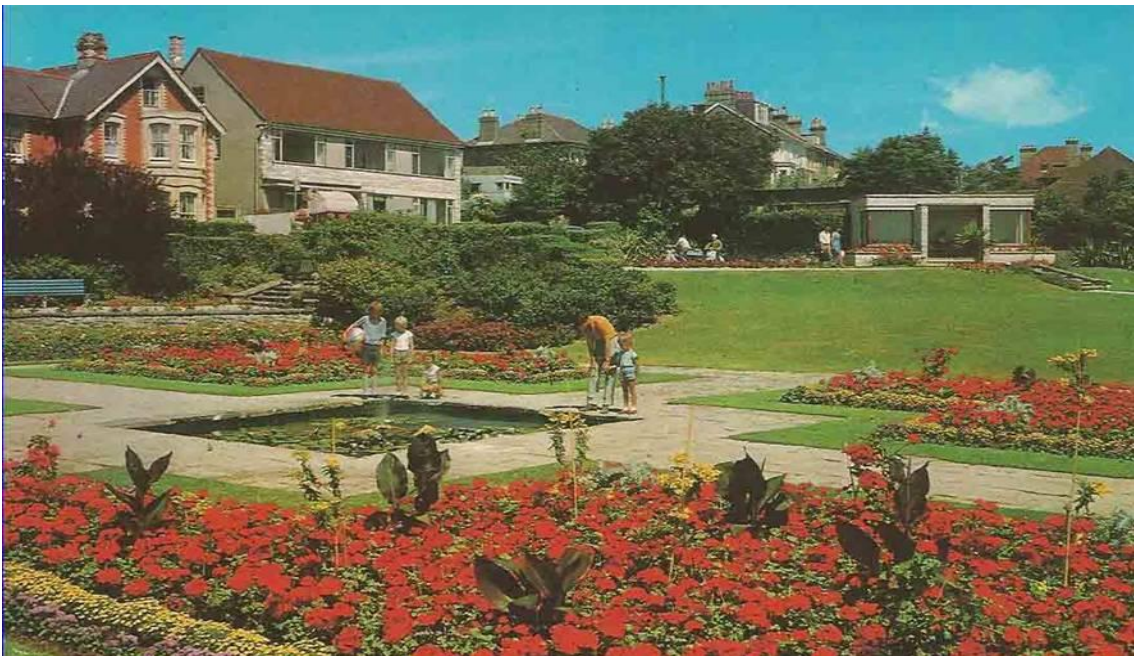




S Alkin, 1803

A pathway was also constructed around the northern defensive ditch and through the earthworks in the location of the original access gateway built in the 16th century and shown in Alkin's painting of 1803.

The castle and gardens remained popular with local people and visitors even after the castle ruins became dangerous with unstable masonry exacerbated by rampant vegetation and uneven surfaces required the castle to be fenced off from the public in the latter part of the 20th century.



Sandsfoot in the 1970s

Today the castle looks little different from 18th century images. Over the years it has been robbed of much of its stone facing, especially from the easily reached lower levels. Some of which, it is said, was used in the 19th century for the first stone bridge between Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.



Sandsfoot Castle as it is today

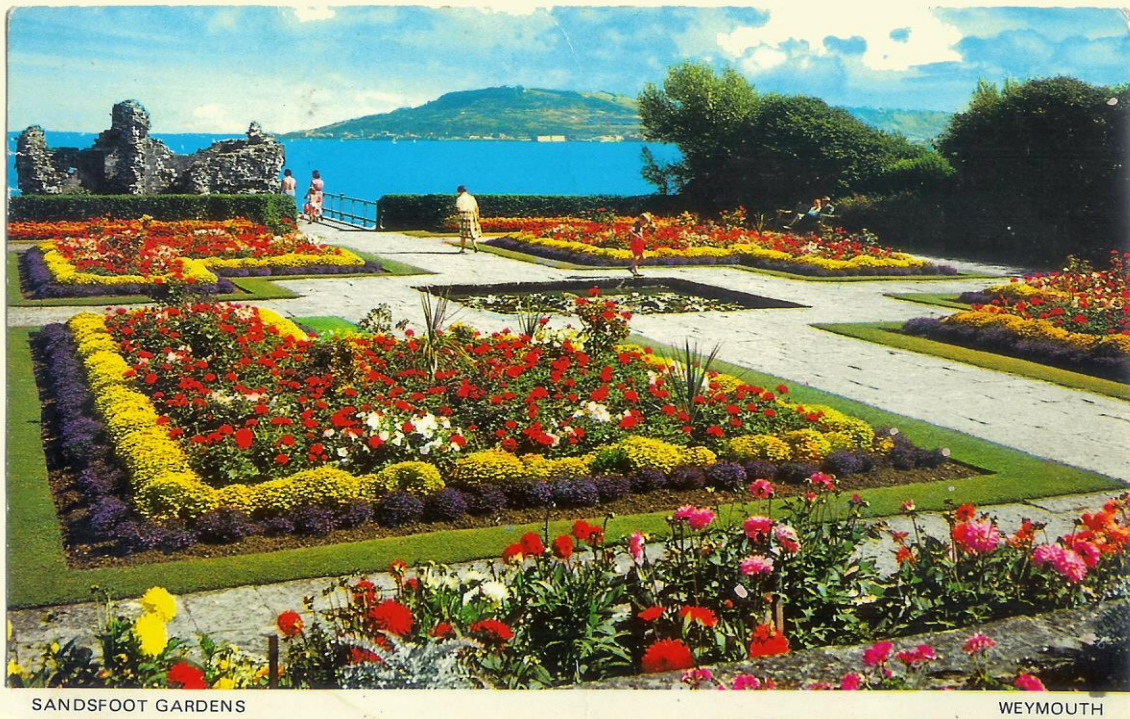
Throughout its life there has been an uncontrollable, if disrespectful, urge for locals children to climb all over the castle and carve their name for posterity, which has resulted in a wealth of incriminating evidence dating back to the 19th century when the style was to lovingly carve ones name and date in a fine serif font with great skill.

However its great importance was formally recognised by being recorded as a Grade II\* Listed Building in 1953 and a Scheduled Monument, although it was to suffer its final ignominy by being placed on the 'English Heritage At Risk Register' in 2008.

Since the enclosure of Portland Harbour was completed in the late 19th century, the threat is less from the sea and more from land instability which the sea had caused. This led to some further limited erosion of the structure in relatively recent years. Ongoing erosion to the land occurs either side of the gardens but the borehole samples, taken for the foreshore management plan, show the castle and gardens to be sited on well cemented sandstone, which has resulted in a significant slowing of erosion/ground movement post breakwater construction that is giving the castle an extended life.

The first half of the 20th century was the golden age of the postcard and due to it romantic silhouette high on a cliff overlooking Portland and the English Channel it was a popular subject with over 200 images recording its appearance, and subtle changes, over the years.





Picture postcard in the 1960s



Picture postcard 50 years on (produced in 2013)

In 2006 a café and toilet was re-established and a year later a project to restore free public access to the castle was initiated by the Friends of Rodwell Trail (a community group supporting an adjacent disused railway line that had become a popular traffic free cycle and walkway) and the Parks Department of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

During the following five years, with the support of a significant Heritage Lottery Fund grant the castle was surveyed using the latest laser technology and the structure stabilised sufficiently to allow once again free public access with a walkway at the original ground floor level allowing everyone the opportunity to view the details of this once great building and be able to enjoy the stunning views from its vantage point overlooking the English Channel.

With the addition of interpretation boards, floodlighting and an audio guide, which can be downloaded from the website, Sandsfoot Castle has once again become a popular heritage tourist attraction.

At some time in the future it is inevitable that further parts of the castle will be lost as the weather slowly reshapes our island but until then Sandsfoot Castle will continue to dominate the cliffs over Portland Harbour where it has seen Tudor warships sail off to defeat the Spanish Armada, been a strategic target in the English Civil War, seen the might of the Channel Fleet being reviewed in the early years of the 20th century, watched the Battle of Britain being fought above it in World War II and the departure of the US Army's 1st Division to Omaha on D-Day and in 2012 provided a viewing platform for the sailing events of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Long may the castle and gardens remain a reminder of our heritage and one of England's hidden treasures.

On 11 March 2016 was the centenary of the birth of the poet, Jack Clemo. Clemo was a very popular, unusual and powerful poet, who lived in Rodwell for the last 10 years of his life and wrote extensively on it. He wrote a poem entitled 'Sandsfoot Castle Gardens' from the memorial shelter.

Sandsfoot Castle Gardens  
Damp-haired in the stone memorial shelter,  
We sit while a shower veils Portland harbour  
And the palms look strange, marking no oasis,  
Rejecting the desert image, since their fruits,  
Like the buds of the neighbouring rose-bowers, swell  
Between the cove and suburban Rodwell.  
Along the railings of the Tudor castle,  
Now a ruined fort, the new drops run,  
Abreast of today's history –  
Our history even, freed from siege and dungeon  
And the monastic relics filched, misplaced  
When our royal goal could not be traced.  
Soft Channel rain glides, too, from the slim green banners  
Hoisted by sap on the live ringed pillars,  
The palm trunks. You watch the leaves dance,  
While I recall white crystals and the red  
Fanatic tinge on humped hills as dawn broke,  
Etching a scraggy thorn-clump. How different here, instead,  
Is the push of the delicate palm-roots,  
Strong and confident through dense English earth,  
With no shift and cackle of dry grains,  
No whirlwind on a scorching horizon.  
Outside, near the steps, the naked sundial  
Has ceased to show the hour: it's a graven stump,  
But not a silent sphinx. It was warm with sun



When we passed it, and it spoke,  
Not of time but the unshadowed smile.  
I have questioned often, questioned the worth  
Of the long pain and mirage, the rotten clay-fields,  
Or the cruel fate distorting clay-fields and me.  
I hardly care where the blame goes:  
Five pattering minutes more  
And we shall caress together  
The laughing tongue of the palm.



The old memorial shelter that Jack Clemo sat in whilst writing Sandsfoot Castle Gardens

## Community Involvement

### Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens

The Parks Section works closely with the Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens to improve and enhance the existing facilities in the gardens for the use and enjoyment of local residents and users.

The Friends of Rodwell Trail have been in existence since 2005 and were fully constituted in the same year. Open public meetings are currently held every six months and are well attended with an average of 20 attendees, including stakeholders, café proprietors, members of the public, councillors and representatives from the local police in the form of Community Support Officers.

Initially meetings focussed on establishing what is best appreciated in the gardens and where problems exist. It was envisaged that this would then allow for the preservation of popular features and the specific character of the site and to facilitate targeted improvements, which would make best use of a limited Local Authority budget and allow the group to make bids for funding for larger projects. It is the feeling of Council Community Officers that the Group represent a reasonable cross section of garden users and interested local residents.

All of the Friend's activities have been dictated and enabled by residents in the borough and, as such, they are as representative and influential as it is possible for them to be. The Friends have held numerous events and activities aimed at engaging with the wider community and visitors to

the borough, all of which have been successful in raising the profile and use of the sites from their former levels.

### **Friends Successes between 2004 and 2017**

- Designed and then obtained a Lottery grant for an information board in the gardens.
- With Lottery funds and Section 106 monies replacing the bridge over the earthworks from the gardens to the castle
- Replacement of the fountain in the ornamental pond with a new pump and purpose built stainless steel housing.



The Friends promote the new fountain

- Twice obtaining the restocking of the ornamental pond with lilies from the National Plant Collection of Water Lilies at Bennetts Water Gardens.
- Friends received £2,000 from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to combat anti-social behaviour.
- With funding from Sandsfoot Café Racers introduced a 'Human Sundial' into the gardens.
- Built new website with web-builders Digibug, ([www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk](http://www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk) and [www.rodwelltrail.org.uk](http://www.rodwelltrail.org.uk)).
- Instigated Budmouth College students to paint a mural, depicting the history of Sandsfoot Castle, to soften the castle hoarding.
- Provided project management support to the HLF bid funded project to renovate the castle to provide free public open access to this Scheduled Ancient Monument and enable it to be taken off the English Heritage at Risk Register.
- Undertaken video and photographic records, including "old graffiti", ecclesiastical stonework from Bindon Abbey and original architectural features.
- Arranged aerial photographs of castle and earthworks.
- Arranged for 60 members of the 10 Field Squadron Royal Engineers from RAF Lemming to return back to the castle 64 blocks of stone, which had fallen from the castle onto the beach, for reuse in the repair works.
- Develop a Sandsfoot Castle free guide, including archive research for history of castle and gardens.
- Publish a children's quiz 'Henrietta Hedgehog' for the Castle
- Publish a children's quiz 'Cyril the Squirrel' for the Gardens
- Wrote and recorded an audio guide for Sandsfoot Castle available as a download from the website.



- Wrote and published a Sandsfoot Castle booklet.
- Arrange for a piece of Bindon Abbey still to come up off the beach.
- Created a Sandsfoot Castle display in Weymouth Museum.
- A local volunteer built a model of Sandsfoot Castle.



Model of Sandsfoot Castle being displayed at the local library

- Given talks on the history of Sandsfoot Castle and Gardens.
- Runner-up in the Dorset Archaeological Committee Awards for the greatest contribution to Dorset archaeology in the previous 2 years.
- Given guided tours of the Castle and Gardens.
- Undertook archiving research and adding 'Coxon Papers' to Weymouth Museum database.
- Hosted a 'Grand Opening Event' for Sandsfoot Castle on 31 March 2012.
- Friends organised Tudor Picnics I, II, III, IV and V in the castle and gardens.
- Guided Julia Bradbury around Sandsfoot Castle and the Rodwell Trail for her 'Great Railway Walks'.
- For a hoarding built around the castle during the renovation works the Friends organised the painting of a mural, which remained for the duration of the works and was researched, designed and painted by eleven Year 12 & 13 students from Budmouth College, as part of their BTEC Art Diploma Course.



Year 12 & 13 students from Budmouth College show off their mural

- The 'Friends of Rodwell Trail' were represented at Wyke and Rodwell COPS meetings.
- Entered and did not win English Heritage Angel Award but got a 'well done' letter from Andrew Lloyd Webber & Simon Thurley.
- Interview given at Sandsfoot Castle to Ridgeway Radio for the local hospitals
- Sandsfoot talk given to pupils at Beachcroft Primary School.
- Guided tour of Sandsfoot Castle given to the Dorset Archaeological Committee.
- Sandsfoot Castle was the venue for the 'Eyebrow' free concert part of Cultural Olympiad, over 650 attended.
- Breech chamber from one of Sandsfoot's Tudor "cannons" located in store at County Museum.
- 'Picnic & Paint in the Park' with the 3rd Painting-by-Numbers day with the Quangle Wangle Choir in the castle.
- Friends manned checkpoints in the gardens for the Annual Parks Charity Walk in aid of the British Heart Foundation and Dorset Wildlife Trust's Walk for Wildlife.
- Guided tour of the castle for Dorset Archaeological Committee's 'Dorset Archaeological Days'.
- With the help of local Brownies, create a bug hotel in the Garden.
- Vegetation clearance and reinstatement of part of Sandsfoot Castle Halt platform.
- Organised Bug Hunts in the gardens.
- 8 Annual Butterfly Surveys led by the Friends have started from and included the gardens.
- Star Gazing event held in the gardens in association with Weymouth Astronomy Society.





Local brownies make a bug hotel

An update from the Chair of the Friends Group, Claudia Moore.

*Since our inception in 2004, the Friends have been pivotal in raising money and contributing practically to projects within Sandsfoot Gardens, such as, working in partnership with the Borough Council to secure HLF lottery funding to renovate and open up the castle, replacement of the bridge over the earthworks, replacement of the fountain in the ornamental pond, restocking the ornamental pond, the creation of two herb borders, the planting of an herbaceous bed, improved reporting links to the Police and PCSO's. We've held many events within the gardens that attract large numbers when they are held. For example, the five annual "Tudor Picnic" events were annually attended by over 500 people, bug and butterfly hunts have been popular and currently we are about to hold our second 'Star Gazing' event in collaboration with Weymouth Astronomy Society, the last one was attended by over 100 enthusiastic star gazers.*

*I am very proud to be the chair of Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens.*

*Claudia Moore*

Chair of Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens

## **Other successes**

- English Heritage published the Sandsfoot Castle case study on their Heritage at Risk 2011 website. [www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/case-studies-har/943187](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/case-studies-har/943187).
- Sandsfoot Castle was the location for a 'Saturday Kitchen' TV programme.

- Sandsfoot Castle filmed for BBC2 programme, 'Britain at Risk', with Jules Hudson and John Craven, to be shown in 2012.
- BBC2 programme, 'Britain's Heritage Heroes', with Jules Hudson and John Craven featured Sandsfoot Castle.
- Julia Bradbury's 'Great Railway Walks' episode on Sandsfoot Castle and the Rodwell Trail.
- Sandsfoot was the preferred venue to watch the Paralympic Sailing
- The Civic Society Special Award bronze plaque was installed on the castle. Baroness Andrews Chair of English Heritage made an informal visit by to view castle and the work done by volunteers.

## Events in Sandsfoot Gardens 2017-18

3 Mar 2017	Star Gazing Live
17 Jun 2017	Civic Day
6 Aug 2017	8th Annual Butterfly Survey
19 Aug 2017	A Dreamy Late Summer's Evening
3 Dec 2017	Sandsfoot Santa Special
9 Feb 2018	Love Stargazing
23 Mar 2018	Wyke Tunnel Mural Competition Award event/exhibition
27 May 2018	Butterfly Walk
5 Aug 2018	9th Annual Butterfly Survey



Jazz in the Castle





Local re-enactors set off on their tour of Weymouth from the grounds of the castle



Dancers at the Tudor Picnic





The apothecary talks plants and herbs used for cooking and medicinal purposes in Tudor times



**Friends of the Rodwell Trail**  
Part of 'Spirit of the Sea' Maritime Festival 3<sup>rd</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> July 2010

## Tudor Picnic II

### 'Meet the Elizabethans'

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010, 11am-4pm**  
**at Sandsfoot Castle & Gardens, Weymouth**



**Free Entrance & Period Entertainment**

Demonstrations of Elizabethan cooking, music, dancing, archery, musketry and 16<sup>th</sup> century combat.

Elizabethan games to play, Skittles and Aunt Sally to try, Story Telling and a Mummers play to watch.

Let 'Sir Francis Drake' guide you around Henry VIII's Sandsfoot Castle and hear how the men of Weymouth, who fought under Sir Martin Frobisher, defeated the Spanish Armada detached to attack Portland Harbour on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1588

**Bring a Picnic or try the Castle Café**

# ASTRONOMY LIVE

A FREE Introduction to Astronomical Observing

**THE WEYMOUTH ASTRONOMY CLUB BRINGS YOU AN EVENING OF STAR GAZING AND FASCINATING TALKS BY WAC MEMBERS**

**MEET AT THE GAZEBO BY SANDSFOOT CAFE**  
**HOT DRINKS AVAILABLE**

**EVENT WILL BE WEATHER DEPENDENT. PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS EVENT PLEASE BRING THE FOLLOWING IF POSSIBLE:

- BINOCULARS
- A FOLDING CHAIR TO SIT ON
- SOMETHING TO STEADY BINOCULARS, TRIPOD/MONOPOD OR EVEN A BROOM HANDLE
- A RED TORCH (A REAR BIKE LIGHT WILL DO THE JOB)

**FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2018**  
**7.00-8.00PM**  
**AT SANDSFOOT CASTLE**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE WEYMOUTH ASTRONOMY CLUB AND THE FRIENDS OF THE RODWELL TRAIL AND SANDSFOOT CASTLE

[www.weymouthastronomy.co.uk](http://www.weymouthastronomy.co.uk)  
[www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk](http://www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk)

WEYMOUTH ASTRONOMY


Tudor picnic and Astronomy event posters designed by the Friends





Local children take hold of their muskets

### **Stakeholders**

It is important to recognise that there are several significant stakeholders in the site and their involvement and association with the site is differing in its typology.

#### **Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens**

As can be seen from the previous section, the Friends have a significant involvement in the gardens. Coming from varied backgrounds, diversity is their strength but it may also be classified as a weakness as it means they will inevitably have conflicting interest areas as individuals. The formal constitution of the group should enable (through the democratic process) an overall group view to be established on any important issues arising regarding the gardens.



Friends members in their Christmas outfits 2017

The Friends' major stake in the gardens is that of users and to represent their views.

### Café Operator

There is one café type operation, privately owned, that is run from premises in the gardens. There is a lease of some land for a seating area to accompany the cafe. The lease is for 6 years from 25 April 2007 and there are no maintenance/repair, etc. obligations on the Council in terms of this lease.

The operator has a significant commercial interest in the gardens as any changes or development would directly affect their potential trading position in terms of both potential customer numbers and physical premises.

The cafe can be contacted directly on site or via Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's Parks Section on Tel. 01305 838297.

### Residents of the Borough

Sandsfoot Gardens are embedded within the community of Weymouth and, to a lesser extent, Portland. It provides numerous facilities but, above all, is an area for peaceful contemplation and relaxation, offering superb views across the best coastal bay on the south coast. This means that there is good use of the facility by residents and it is regarded as a key part of Weymouth's seafront/esplanade by them. It is also viewed by many as an indicator of how the Authority shows civic pride and professionalism in service delivery. The Friends Group is comprised of residents but many more use the gardens that would never attend a Friends Group meeting, they have to be recognised in having a stake in the gardens as they form the main group of users.

- Residents enjoy the gardens as a destination to visit or call into as part of a wider visit.
- The gardens provide access to facilities for people using the Rodwell Trail (part of the National Cycle Route 26) and the South West Coast Path.
- Access to Sandsfoot Castle provide residents, particularly escorted parties of school children, the opportunity to see it at close quarters and obtain an appreciation of this unique Tudor castle and its relationship with its surroundings.
- The gardens are viewed with civic pride and indicate Council competency and policy.



Residents enjoying the gardens



### Visitors to the Borough

Weymouth is a major resort in the central and south west coastal area and, as such, has a large number of visitors. These visitors have the same needs as the residents and use the gardens in a similar way but are more likely to visit more frequently if they stay for more than a day. They, along with the residents, are the consumers of the garden product and expect a good quality facility to be provided.

- Visitors enjoy the gardens as a destination to visit or call into as part of a wider visit or walk.
- The gardens provide access to facilities for people using the Rodwell Trail (part of the National Cycle Route 26 and the South West Coast Path).
- Access to Sandsfoot Castle provides visitors the opportunity to see it at close quarters and obtain an appreciation of this unique Tudor castle and its relationship with its surroundings.
- The gardens form part of a wider resort package that visitors wish to use during their stay. This was particularly relevant during the Olympics and Para-Olympic Sailing events in 2012, as the gardens provided a prime view point for the sailing.

### **Sustainability**

The site is mixed, the garden area is highly maintained as a formal pleasure garden but relatively small in size and, as such, with the exception of the pond, offers little potential for the development of wildlife areas that would be in-keeping with the character of that area of the site, such as a wildflower meadow habitat for example.

Public consultation has shown that the gardens are used and enjoyed for their current character and purpose and the Friends Group confirmed this by their listing of the character of the gardens as one of their greatest “likes”, therefore, the garden area has not had overt nature or wildlife areas introduced but changes in planting practice to use herbaceous and permanent planting in some of the beds has improved wildlife value. It is possible, however, to address wider environmental issues as part of the management practices for the other areas of the gardens within the legal restrictions and environmental constraints placed upon them. Maintenance practice in selected areas will be undertaken to facilitate use by wildlife, e.g. less frequent mowing of outer moat embankment and encouragement of wildflowers.

It is also possible to address wider environmental issues as part of the management practices and policies currently applying both to the operational management and the gardens themselves.

- Bio–diesel at the highest acceptable organic ratio is used in all diesel powered service vehicles. The two stroke engine equipment is being replaced on renewal by four stroke alternatives, if they are available, and the use of two stroke engine powered machines is kept to a minimum where possible. Electrically powered service vehicles have been trialled but the inability to garage the vehicles overnight on site and the current limited range makes their use inappropriate at the current time. Gas powered vehicle alternatives have also been investigated but the lack of a supply source within Weymouth currently prevents use. This will be monitored in the future with a view to changing fuel types. No hybrid vehicles are currently suitable for use.
- Pesticide use has been reduced year on year and no residual herbicides are used in soft landscape applications. Path edge applications are limited to one application per year using the least harmful chemical available having carried out a COSHH assessment. Herbicide application to shrub beds has been discontinued.

- Herbicide application to annual beds has been limited to the use of non-hazard rated Glyphosate products. Due to infestations of both Celandine and Oxalis, Glyphosate is used on annual beds at the end of the bedding season. This is in conjunction with a programme of deep hand digging and organic matter incorporation initiated in autumn 2008. A major part of this initiative is the removal, by hand, of corms/plants found during the operation and it is hoped by undertaking this work that applications will cease by 2010. Annual applications of Glyphosate are applied, if needed, in the central area of the castle and on the renovated structure itself to ensure complete removal of weed mainly *Bubddleia* spp injurious to the structure.
- Soft turf capping will be used on the castles upper walls to remove the need for repeated pesticide applications.
- Aquatic weed is controlled by mechanical removal to the edge of the pond where it is left overnight, before removal, for primarily insects and molluscs to return back to the pond. No pesticides or chemical water clearance chemicals are applied to the pond. The pond is maintained "in balance" by cultural methods.
- Water use is monitored and controlled. Some topping up of the pond is required in summer. Due to the bedding and herbaceous plants involved, artificial irrigation is essential. The southern facing aspect of the site exacerbates water stress problems for new plantings and established herbaceous plants and also leads to significant drying of the soil in the summer. The displays would not be possible without artificial irrigation. To enable a reduction in the amount of water applied, along with other aims mentioned in this section of the plan, a deep digging and organic matter incorporation programme was commenced in 2008. It is anticipated that this will improve water retention capacity in the soil and, by removal of former cultivation pans that were present, allow for deeper water and root penetration in the soil profile. In addition, mulching of the herbaceous borders is carried out annually to assist in water retention. Water collection from buildings is feasible but will not offer a significant volume in comparison to need and some buildings are not located in positions appropriate for such practice.
- Electricity use is monitored and controlled and use is maintained at a practical minimum. Time switches will apply to the decorative lighting of the castle.
- Low energy lighting will be used in the castle/garden project.
- The use of alternative methods of sewage treatment is not appropriate to the site.
- Materials purchased for use on site are, whenever possible, sourced locally to reduce carbon emissions due to transport and where available products are used from sustainable sources. All new public seating in the gardens will be using fully recycled materials.
- Bedding plants are sourced from the Authority's own nursery within Weymouth to reduce carbon emissions due to transport, as much as possible. The nursery has climatic zones so that energy use is reduced significantly in the winter and a grant has been secured (installation completed Autumn 2008) for a biomass boiler to heat the facility using waste wood, woodchip produced by the Authority's tree maintenance gang.
- Peat use was reduced in the compost mix for annual bedding starting with trials in 2002. A reduction of 50% was achieved but this was not considered good enough so further trial to test peat free alternatives. This trial was carried out in the nursery in the summer of 2006 on the winter bedding crop planted in the autumn of 2006. On-going use has shown that peat can be almost eradicated with the exception of the growing media used by plug plant suppliers for seedling geraniums, etc.



- Recycling is carried out in the gardens in line with the overall policy of the section. The onsite composting of all green waste is not possible due to the small size of the site but all green waste is taken to the Authority's composting facility at Lodmoor, approx. 3 miles away. Here the material is processed and returned for use on the site as both a soil conditioner and mulch. The soil is also improved by the use of well-rotted farmyard manure. Any arising's from tree maintenance works are chipped on site and returned to the shrub beds. Non segregated litter and rubbish collected from the bins in the gardens is currently sent to landfill. There is a recycling bin in the gardens to enable the streaming of recyclables into paper, glass, plastic bottle and cans/tins, which are then collected and recycled in line with domestic recycling already carried out by the Authority. Any metals from the site are recycled. The café owners use crockery for food and drink, wherever possible, to reduce waste production and litter.
- Artificial fertilizers are not used in the gardens, with the exception of the bedding plants as part of the nursery compost mix. Where artificial fertilizers are used in bed preparation (if it is required but not as routine) we will use organic fertilisers.
- Due in part to the ornamental nature of the site, no formal wildlife surveys have been carried out. However surveys of birds, insects and animals have been carried out by the Friends Group. These have revealed a significant wildlife presence in terms of birds visiting the gardens, especially the hedgerows on the lower western and southern boundaries. We will enhance this by planting further hedgerows on the eastern boundary and managing the existing to favour use by wildlife. Bats have not been observed. Small mammals do inhabit the site and urban foxes do visit occasionally but are not resident. Insects are present. Reptiles and amphibians have been discovered by the staff in low numbers.
- Further planting of nectar species will be carried out adjacent to the café in a former shrub bed to encourage insects into the garden and sea buckthorn will be planted once the restoration project is completed to specifically appeal to returning migrant Brimstone butterflies, which move through the Weymouth area in late spring/early summer.

#### Disability Discrimination Act/Accessibility

A disability discrimination act audit was carried out on the gardens in January 2011. This was based upon previous open space audits carried out in December 2005 by Martin Affleck RIBA, NRAC, a Disability Access Consultant, on behalf of the Authority. His audit was wide reaching and produced many findings which were then prioritised for improvements to be carried out. The more recent audit used the principles applied previously and built on the good work already carried out such as:-

- Painting contrast nosing on steps.
- Installation of ramped access to the formal garden area.
- Installation of wheelchair accessible seating at the café.
- Installation of a disabled friendly toilet facility at the café.
- Removing obstacles in paths.

## Site Information

The following sections detail all site specific information.

### Topography/Climate

#### Climate

Weymouth is situated at the western end of the central southern coast of the United Kingdom. It has a maritime climate with weather patterns predominantly Atlantic in origin. As such, the wind tends to be south westerly and warm. A range of hills known as the Ridgeway, approx. three miles to the north, effectively renders the whole Weymouth area in a rain shadow due to their effect on relief rainfall. This results in a lower annual rainfall for Weymouth than the overall average for Dorset and higher than average sunshine figures when compared with the rest of the United Kingdom. Below is a summary based on figures supplied by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council readings:

Rainfall annual average approx 750mm per year

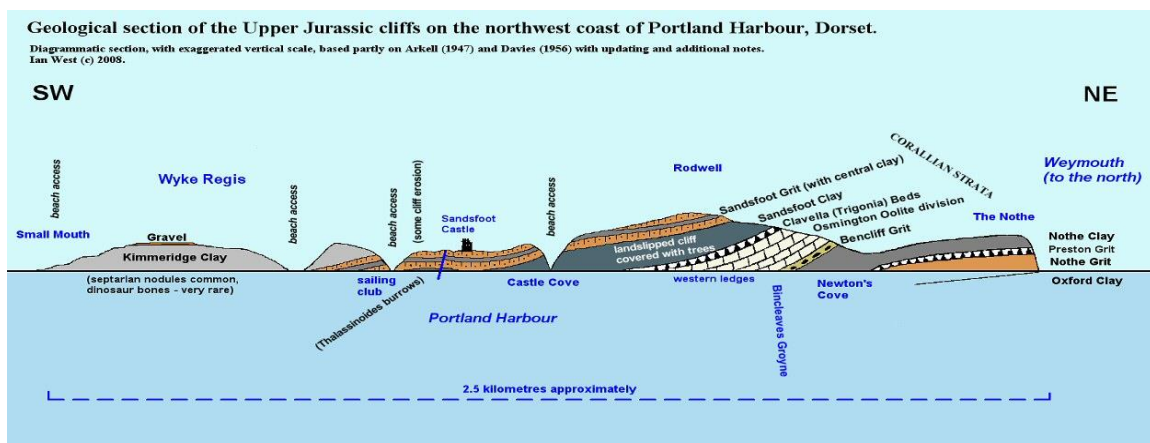
Sunshine hours average 1600-2000 per year

Temperature range -6 to +30 degrees Celsius

In the United Kingdom there is a general trend towards milder winters and warmer summers. It is projected by some sources that rainfall may increase where others suggest a reduction, so a clear conclusion on which to base planning cannot be drawn except to say that recent trends indicate an increase in the frequency of, eg. heavy rainfall over a short period, events. As far as wind is concerned, there are no indications that the direction from which the wind predominates will change or indeed that the overall average wind speed will increase although recent trends show an increase in the frequency of high wind speed events. These tend to be from the south or south west in this region, directions from which the gardens have limited protection. Easterly and south easterly winds do fall directly upon the gardens and bring problems with scorch from both wind and salt due to the very close proximity of the harbour/sea. Air temperatures tend to remain above freezing due to the influence of the sea approx. 5m away and only fall below freezing when large cold air masses move in from the continent.

### Geology/Soil Structure/Texture

The northwest shore of Portland Harbour has a complicated geological section, as can be seen below.





Kimmeridge Clay predominates to the west, the Sandsfoot Clay is present on the eastern side of the gardens and the Sandsfoot Grits crop out around the promontory with the Castle above. These "grits" are brown, carbonate-cemented sandstones full of the ichnofossil (trace-fossil) *Thalassinoides*. A fault runs through the gardens on their western side but it is stable and causes no problems.

The promontory is referenced in the recent WPBC Shoreline Management Plan and this shows the grits under the gardens to be hard, resistant to erosion, so reducing risk to the castle.

### Hydrology

The site, being based on grits, tends to absorb both rain and irrigation water off the surface, where it then flows by gravity through the section down to the foreshore. Here the presence of pebbles and shingle allows percolation of surface water out to the sea.

In the case of true ground water, the dip of the underlying strata tends to be south westerly along the length of the gardens. A fault exists in the section and ground water will percolate through this to the sea. It is not evident that this causes any significant issues.

### Drainage

No specific drainage system now operates within the gardens. As mentioned above, natural conditions facilitate drainage to an acceptable degree. Overspill from the pond is drained into the area of the fault to soak away naturally and this is efficient. Service access can be gained via the manhole situated on the northern slope of the castle moat embankment.

### Electricity

Electricity is supplied to the café in the gardens from the main cable the adjacent road. A spur is then taken from the café to power the pond pump. It is anticipated that a second separate supply will be installed as part of the castle works to supply light and power to the castle and, it is hoped, the upper garden area.

### Water

Water enters the gardens in three places all being fed from the main in the highway with meters in the footway of Old Castle Road. One WPBC service tap and meter is positioned within the gardens to allow for watering and general use.

### Sewerage

Sewers take both foul and waste water from the Sandsfoot café back into the main on Old Castle Road.

### Boundaries and Access

The site has four clear boundaries and two clear entrances.

### Access

Old Castle Road, off the A354, provides access to the gardens. Pedestrian and cycle access can be gained 60m away via the Rodwell Trail, which is part of the South West Coast Path and the National Cycle Route 26.

On-street car parking is available throughout the year.

## Signage

Brown visitor attraction signs have been placed on the corner of Old Castle Road and on the Rodwell Trail, which direct people to the gardens.

## The Borrowed Landscape

Sandsfoot Gardens offer commanding views over the Portland Bay area. The marine landscape comprises Portland harbour and the significant feature of the Isle of Portland. To further enhance this view, vegetation management works will be carried out. Please see action plan.

To the west and north of the gardens the landscape is urban, comprising relatively modern housing. This is partially screened by trees and shrubs on the western boundary but is open on the northern boundary. The eastern boundary comprises of a caravan park, which is aesthetically detrimental to the borrowed landscape. Please see hedge planting action plan.

## Path Networks

The main path network within the gardens is of tarmac construction and broadly follows the layout that was put in place when the gardens were created. Formal edges do not exist, the tarmac originally being edged with timber which has now decayed. The changes in levels in the gardens are accessed by a combination of slopes and steps. Due to the gentle "soil creep" that is occurring, some degradation of the path surface in the old Moat area is observed. Path levels have degraded in the past and significant monies were spent on remedial works in 2004 and during construction of the café. Paths currently show signs of cracking or fretting but are safe and acceptable.

The formal garden is laid out in a symmetrical pattern with a grid of paved paths around the central pond. The riven paving slabs were introduced in the early 1980's and were bedded on mortar and sand. The soil is mainly clay and over time clay shrinkage has caused the joints in the slabs to open up. As part of the renovation works associated with the replacement of the footbridge, many cracked slabs were replaced. A precise match could not be obtained but the match is acceptable. In 2010 "Groundwork UK" work placement trainees removed all the old broken pointing and re-pointed the paved area. As of 2011 it is clear that the cement mix used was not strong enough as again the pointing is breaking up in places and will need to be replaced during the life of this plan. Other than this the paving is level and in a safe condition.

## Walls and Gates

Dwarf boundary walls exist on the northern edge of the gardens where they abut Old Castle Road. These are of random Portland stone construction capped by Portland stone copings. Pillars exist either side of the main entrance being of similar construction. The main entrance has had the gates removed and is open. A smaller pedestrian entrance is sited further east and has a galvanised metal gate which is in good working order.

Dwarf retaining walls hold up the main access path from the entrance which borders the lower formal garden area. These walls are again of random Portland stone construction and have riven type P.C.C. paving slab copings. The walls are displaying some lateral heave but this is still within safe and acceptable limits. The flights of steps down into the formal garden area have dwarf walls either side, again of similar construction coped with random rubble in a cock and hen type arrangement. They are in good condition.

The dwarf walls either side of the steps leading to the café terrace are of similar construction but have PCC copings, these have been broken and loosened as a result of use by skateboards as a grinding, etc. These will require replacement by random cock and hen stone capping as used elsewhere in the gardens as a priority.



### Seating

Since 2006 seating within the gardens has been renewed as part of the council's seat donation scheme. The style of seat chosen is manufactured from fully recycled wood effect plastic and recycled cast aluminium and the design is in keeping with the gardens. In all there are 6 seats. They are positioned around and overlooking the formal garden. The one exception to this is the seat in the seat bay. This bay is poorly constructed and the surface is currently loose and dangerous. There is a significant drop to the front of the seat and insufficient space to allow safe use; this also precludes use by wheelchairs or prams/buggies. The seating bay is not fully and safely accessible and requires urgent renovation as a priority.

### Litter collection/Clearance

Two Litter bins are present in the gardens and are in good condition. Staff will clear litter on a daily basis throughout the year. This will also include Saturdays and Sundays from May through to October. Clearance duties will include inspection and removal of all litter, debris and any fly tipping from all landscape features and facilities within the gardens. Where a problem exists or visitor numbers are high, especially during events, this frequency may be increased again based on an inspection of the site by the staff. Similarly bins are emptied on the same regime. The only exception to this will be on at Christmas when no operations will take place on the bank holidays and every other day between 27th and 31st December.

## **Clean & Well Maintained**

### Litter and Waste Management

The gardens are litter picked and the bins emptied daily. This will include Saturdays and Sundays from May to October, which is undertaken by the café owner. The only exception is Christmas when no operations take place on bank holidays but will occur every other day between 27th to 31st December. For further information on the above, please see the 'Management of Green Flag Gardens'.

### Grass Areas

#### The Moat Embankment

The embankment is situated around the Castle approach. The banks have a slope of approx. 45 degrees. On the northern edge it is bordered on one side by a hedge, which marks the boundary of the formal garden and on the lower side by a path. On the eastern boundary the moat becomes more convoluted having several curves, it is topped by grass and has a path in the bottom as a boundary. The slopes preclude formal maintenance to a high standard but in the northern area it is regularly cut using strimmers, no collection. In the eastern section it is less regularly cut and could be utilised for wildflower improvement. The quality is good but soil creep is a problem in limited areas.

#### The Castle Approach Lawn

The approach lawn and earthworks is part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument site. The area is relatively flat and comprises fortnightly cut grass, which is used by the public as an open area to picnic and play ball games.

#### The Café

The grass in this area is ride on rotary mower cut weekly to give a high visual appearance. The area is south west facing and suffers from drought in the summer. There are specimens of

Cordyline australis and several donated trees sited within it. The grass is used for picnics and informal play.

### The Formal Garden

The grass, from the café area above, flows into the formal garden and as such has an influence on its appearance and character but is separated by a paved path. The grass surrounding the annual bedding is cut weekly by hand mower with collection and is formally edged and maintained. The quality of sward and ground levels are weak and require improvement.

### Hedges

#### Main Road Hedge

The hedge Ligustrum spp provides a valuable green screen to visually block passing traffic from users of the garden. It is prone to wind and salt scorch as well as drought in the summer months and growth is affected as a result. Mechanical cutting using hand held machines when required, avoiding nesting birds, min. two operations per year. Quality is acceptable but growth is patchy. Hedge provides limited traffic noise reduction. Height is maintained to allow for view into gardens from Rodwell Trail and Old castle Road. Removal of Hedera spp is required.

#### Formal Garden Hedge

The hedge Ligustrum spp provides a visual boundary to delineate the formal garden from the embankment. It is prone to wind and salt scorch as well as drought in the summer months and growth is affected as a result. Mechanical cutting using hand held machines when required, avoiding nesting birds, min. two operations per year. Quality is acceptable. It provides a valuable wind break to the formal garden and the new (under construction) herb beds.

### Shrub Beds

#### Western Boundary of Formal Garden

A mixed shrub bed containing various species, Symphoricarpos, viburnum, Ribes spp, Weigelia spp, Spirea spp, Fuchsia spp and Sambucus spp. In addition, there are mature trees, Acer pseudoplatanus, which form a canopy over most of the shrub beds. Light is restricted in places and shrub growth limited as a result but acceptable. Further south in the border light improves and growth is good. Shrubs and trees provide valuable screening of adjacent residential property.

#### Herb Beds

Two beds of mixed culinary and medicinal herbs available in Tudor times. Species include, Thymus, Allium, Mentha, Rosmarinus and Salvia. These are intended to promote learning by school children about Tudor life. They will replace the existing (at time of plan development) beds of Rosa rugosa spp. The soil is reasonable and will require addition of composted organic material and mulching with composted woodchip.

#### Herbaceous Borders

Mixed herbaceous borders planted in 2008. The plantings have been successful and growth has been good. The soil is prone to drying out, irrigation and staking/tying is required. Routine thinning/division etc. will be required over the life of the plan as will the application of rotted FYM or composted organic material on an annual basis.



### Café Shrub Bed

An overgrown shrub bed containing nuisance weed *Convolvulus* spp and specimens of woody *Hebe* spp. The bed requires renovation, cultivation and replanting. Consideration should be given to the use of insect attracting nectar rich species. The soil is relatively good but suffers from drought in the summer months.

### Lawn Crown Shrub Bed

A small rectangular shrub bed containing various species planted in a pattern around a crown theme. The original design was well conceived but growth has been particularly good and has exposed weaknesses in original plant variety choice. Several specimens are overgrowing others and the original concept is now lost. The bed still remains attractive but consideration will have to be given to replanting or re-working the bed over the life of the plan.

### Seating Bay Shrub Bed

This mixed shrub bed comprises various species and also several trees of *Crataegus* spp, *Pittisporum tenuifolium* and *Salix* spp. The trees throw a medium shade and growth of some shrubs and is reduced as a result although not extensively. The bed is bordered on one side by grass and on the other by paths. Shrub species include *Hebe* spp, *Escallonia* spp, *Leycesteria formosa*, *Viburnum* spp, *Forsythia* spp *Lonicera* spp There is a problem with soil washing onto the paths and this will need resolving over the life of the plan to improve the appearance of the path and the bed. Mulch will be required to both retain moisture and suppress weed.

### Annual Bedding

Annual bedding provides the main theme for the formal gardens and comprises four beds. In all some 7,000 summer bedding plants. In general the quality of the displays is acceptable but there has been a lack of organic material added to the beds in a consistent manner for the last decade so the soil profile on which the plants are growing is showing significant structural problems. There are significant persistent weed problems in the form of *Celandine* and *Oxalis* in the beds. A programme of deep cultivation and organic matter incorporation commenced in 2006/7. Quality is generally good.

### Trees

Within the gardens there are a total of 56 trees which are located in the seat bay shrub bed, around the café building and on the western boundary. A lone specimen of *Pinus* is located on the eastern boundary. The significant species are:-

- X 9 *Acer pseudoplatanus*
- X 8 *Crataegus monogyna*
- X 1 *Salix alba*
- X 4 *Prunus cersifera Nigra*
- X 1 *Pinus nigra*
- X 4 *Sorbus aucuparia*
- X 1 *Fraxinus excelsior*
- X 1 *Pittisporum tenuifolium*

Several of the younger trees located near the café and near the eastern boundary of the gardens were donated as part of the Council tree donation scheme; several have commemorative plaques.

## **Legal Issues**

### Local Byelaws (2005)

The current Pleasure Garden byelaws were confirmed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in October 2005.

These byelaws replaced the original byelaws made in July 1925. Further details are contained in appendix.

### Dog Fouling

The Fouling of Land by Dogs (Weymouth and Portland) Order 2009, which prescribes areas where dogs are banned, have to be on leads or are allowed to exercise off the lead. In response to the new Act, Weymouth & Portland BC employed an additional dog warden (2 full time wardens in total) with a remit to include the ultimate action of prosecution but, trying initially, to focus on education and awareness within the community.

Sandsfoot Gardens are designated as a “dog on lead” area. Further information is contained within the relevant sections of the plan.

### Charitable Status

Sandsfoot Gardens are not affected by any covenants relating to charitable status.

### Leases and Covenants

There is a lease of land for a seating out area to accompany the privately owned cafe. The lease is 6 years, starting from 25 April 2007, and there are no obligations on the Council, in terms of this lease, in relation to maintenance/repair, etc. On 25 April each year the lease increases by RPI +1%.

### Sandsfoot Cafe

In 2005 the gardens contained a former shelter that was burnt out and was a centre for anti-social behaviour as well as an old public toilet block that was closed due to persistent vandalism. These structures, combined with the closed off castle, led to an air of dereliction and decay about the gardens. WPBC's Parks Section and the Property Services Section worked jointly to resolve some of these issues by inviting tenders for the sale of the two structures with a view to providing a café with associated toilet facilities available to users of the gardens during café opening hours.

As a result of this, the sites were sold and the current café owners began building work to create a brand new facility. This has been very successful and the gardens now have a small cafe and its owner/operators, Sam and Josie Wait, are active members of the Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens. They have been very supportive, from the earliest meetings, both physically in terms of collecting user information and comments from users of the gardens, establishing visitor numbers by monitoring garden visitor numbers and till transactions, talking directly to and building up trust and respect of younger people using the gardens and acting as a distribution point for information leaflets and interpretation material already produced by the Friends of Rodwell Trail & Sandsfoot Gardens. In terms of financial support, they have and continue to be the major sponsor of the “Tudor Picnic” and supply electricity at their cost to events as well as the pump for the fountain situated in the gardens.

Operating conditions attached of relevance to the gardens:-

- 1) No posters, placards or signs to be attached to the exterior without the Council's approval.



- 2) Not to do anything to cause a nuisance to the Authority or neighbours of the site.
- 3) To maintain the building.
- 4) To keep the vicinity of the premises free of litter.
- 5) Keep the paved terrace swept and free of litter.
- 6) Permission is given for the cafe owners to set out tables and chairs on the terraced area.
- 7) Not to install any loudspeakers or similar apparatus for the relaying or amplification of music or speech without the Council's approval.

### Scheduled Ancient Monument

The castle and the immediate surroundings are designated as scheduled ancient monuments and, as such, are protected by the relevant areas of legislation. For the purposes of this plan the main conditions are as follows:

- No material changes can be made to the fabric of any structure.
- No excavations can take place without the presence of a qualified archaeologist unless agreed to specifically by English Heritage.
- No fixings of any description can be applied to structures
- There can be no removal of structural material from the site.
  
- The boundary of the designation extends to the outer slope of the moat ditch so it can be seen that the main open grass area is included within the designation and, as such, any developmental works would require approval.

Significant information relating to the castle and its surrounding area is contained within the HLF bid documentation. For the purposes of Green flag judging these documents will be presented in an evidence folder at the time of assessment or can be requested in advance by emailing the above.

## **Future Planning**

### KMC Performance Management System

The KMC performance management system is designed to provide data in site specific format that provides very detailed information about individual sites that can then be collated to provide a general overview of a service or area of delivery.

The system assesses the quality of service provision, the value of the open space to the community, resource allocation and customer satisfaction. It enables the Parks Service to measure improvements and introduce the concept of community involvement in the management of open spaces. The management plan will be monitored through two stages:

- A Professional Audit
- Residents' Consultation Exercise

Inspectors from KMC Consultancy carry out audits of parks and open spaces through the performance management system. For the purposes of this management plan the emphasis will be on Greenhill Gardens.

These audits are carried out regularly and the results can be used to determine whether the objectives of management plans are being achieved. The next audit will be carried out in 2017.

The audit procedure requires each park or open space to be categorised into a hierarchy so that comparisons can be made between parks of a similar quality, with similar facilities. This then enables an effective comparison to be made against other providers of similar facilities.



Inside the castle



# KMC Performance Management Professional Independent Audit Scores

Sept 2017

## Sandsfoot Gardens

Design	Staffing	Signage, etc	Maintenance	Facilities	Health and Safety	Accessibility	Usability	Usage	On-site marketing	Security	Overall quality of the site
8	8	7	9	6	8	6	8	8	2	8	8
+2	+3	+3	+3	Change from 2010			+2	+1	+1	+1	+2
<u>National Averages</u>											
6.83	6.28	4.26	6.31	6.09	7.67	7.09	6.94	6.79	2.24	7.74	6.55

## DESIGN

The site is relatively well designed and is beginning to take further advantage of the views that could be available. The design of the formal areas is very good, although consideration could perhaps be given to increasing the size of the fountain.

## STAFFING

No staff were seen on the site, but the standard of maintenance would suggest that work is done on the site as regularly as it ought to be. The formal gardens in particular were of a very high standard.

It would not be appropriate to consider full time staff on this site. However, the Council may like to think about the possibility of patch based working.

## INTERPRETATION AND SIGNAGE

This was very good indeed.

## MAINTENANCE

Generally, the standard of maintenance was very good.

## FACILITIES

The facilities were limited to those for passive recreation, but there is nothing wrong with that as long as it is clearly stated as the aim of the site in any management plan. Given the size of the site, to have toilets and a café on site is rare, but good.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

There were not any health and safety issues identified, other than those mentioned in the walk through.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The site appeared to be fairly inaccessible even on foot. However, it is not a site that one would make a special trip to; it is more a site that one would use as a local or if in the area for a brief respite. Much of the site was inaccessible to wheelchair users, but this is due to the topography of the site as much as anything else.

The site is very well interpreted but general information is less accessible.

## USABILITY

The site is very usable for passive recreation.

## USAGE

The site and the café were being very well used at the time of the visit.

## ON-SITE MARKETING

The opportunity should be taken to promote other sites owned by the Council, and the work that the Council does, to visitors to the site.



## SECURITY

The site felt 'safe' due to the location, overlooking houses, good level of maintenance and relatively high usage, etc.

## OVERALL QUALITY

Overall the site is relatively well designed and extremely well maintained. The facilities are limited in number but of a high calibre when provided.

Note: In 2010 Sandsfoot Gardens was ranked 152 nationally in the scheme whereas in 2017 it was ranked 10th.



OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	DUE BY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED
<b>Carry out general maintenance operations and agree priority with on-site staff and stakeholders</b>	Rub down and paint seats	April 17	PT	✓
	Re-point loose slabs around the fish pond	April 17	PT	✓
	Clean welcome sign	April 17	PT	✓
	Clean bins	April 17	PT	✓
	Replenish the Bug Hotel	April 17	PT	✓
	Remove buddleia and other vegetation from the structure of the castle	April 17	PT	✓
	Clean fish pond	April 17	PT	✓
	Maintain the fountain pump	April 17	PT	✓
	Maintain tools/machinery/tools	April 17	PT	✓
	Check water points	April 17	PT	✓
	Trees to be independently surveyed	April 17	FG	✓
	Re-point seating bay	April 17	PT	✓
	Point in steps by seating bay	April 17	PT	✓
	Undertake patch repairs to path network	April 17	PT	✓
		March 17	PT	✓

**PT: Parks Team**

**FG: FOGG**

**PS: Property Services**

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	DUE BY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED
<b>Grounds maintenance operations in winter/spring</b>	Digging beds	October 16	PT	✓
	Planting bulbs and bedding plants	March 17	PT	✓
	Hoeing and weeding	Fortnightly	PT	✓
	Dead Heading	On-going	PT	✓
	Edging	Fortnightly	PT	✓
	Designing beds	October 16	PT	✓
	Top up gravel	March 17	PT	✓
	Prune/trim and shape shrubs and roses	March 17	PT	✓
	Weed spraying	April 17	PT	✓
	Grass cutting	Monthly	PT	✓
	Clearing leaves and blowing off paths	On-going	PT	✓



OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	DUE BY	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED
<b>Grounds maintenance operations in summer/autumn</b>	Digging beds	May 17	PT	✓
	Planting bedding plants	May 17	PT	✓
	Hoeing & weeding	Fortnightly	PT	✓
	Edging beds	Fortnightly	PT	✓
	Replace dead or stolen plants	On-going	PT	✓
	Planting 'welcome' bed	June 17	PT	✓
	Planting floral clock	June 17	PT	✓
	Creating the carpet bedding design	June 17	PT	✓
	Hedge cutting starting in May	Monthly	PT	✓
	Grass cutting	Weekly	PT	✓
		Weekly	PT	✓

## Projects 2016-2018

### Art in the Park

The Friends of Sandsfoot Castle and Rodwell Trail have a long history of 'art based' events and projects, including school painting competitions of Sandsfoot Castle and 'Wall of Boats' that were displayed in the gardens followed by a mural by the students of Budmouth College on the hoarding around the castle during the renovation works and several large (32 feet by 8 feet) 'Painting-by-Numbers' murals during our 'Tudor Picnics' in which the public of all ages have come to the garden and these works of art completed in a day.

On the adjacent Rodwell Trail that leads the public to Sandsfoot Gardens there is a 47 metre long tunnel that suffers from random and not very enlightening graffiti. The Friends have for the past year or so been working on a project to paint the entire 350 square metres with a design initiated by the public through a design competition that will be implemented by a professional graffiti with help from up-skilled local volunteers. Events have been held in Sandsfoot Garden and at other venues using a 1:50 scale model of the tunnel and paper to fit the surface of the model at which the public can develop their ideas and then try them in situ in the model. The design competition concludes in early 2018 and it is hoped that work can start on the tunnel later in the year.



Art poster produced by the Friends

The project will provide a significant opportunity for a cohesive group of 15 local young people to see and be involved with making positive things happen. The expert Mural Training will provide these volunteers with excellent experience of safe team working in a creative setting learning how to control and make valid use of equipment and learn to paint under instruction to communicate artistic ideas in a public space.

**'Rail to Trail' Markers** - easy to spot and great to find and they lead you to Sandsfoot Gardens

The Rodwell Trail is a shared walk/cycleway 3,366metres long, just over 2 miles, between Weymouth and Ferrybridge where the Weymouth to Portland Railway ran from 1865 to 1965.

The hand carved markers are located every 500 metres and at 1 and 2 miles. Each one has a symbol representing a creature, a plant or historical feature of the Trail.

The start (on Abbotsbury Road) - a red Robin

500m - a WWII Anti-Aircraft Gun, just south of the old WWII gun emplacement

1,000m - a Pipistrelle Bat, look out for them at dusk

1,500m - a Jersey Tiger Moth, spot them flitting through the hedgerows

1 mile - a Great Green Bush-Cricket that hides in the verge

If going from the Weymouth end of the Trail, after the 1 mile (1,609m) marker and just before the 2,000m marker is the remaining south end of Sandsfoot Castle Halt (1,818m) and the exit to Henry VIII's Sandsfoot Castle and Green Flag Gardens (1,920m).

2,000m - Henry VIII can be found just south of the access road to his castle

2,500m - Weymouth's RNLI Lifeboat, 'Ernest and Mabel'

3,000m - 'Little Robin' flower, it is very rare so you are lucky if you spot it

2 miles - the old Ferrybridge Railway Bridge, it used to cross the Fleet

3,366m - a Whitehead Torpedo, that used to be built in a nearby factory

A free guide, 'From Rail to Trail' about the Castle, Gardens and Trail can be obtained at Sandsfoot Castle Café in Sandsfoot Castle Gardens.

The £6k project was funded by the 'Dorset Coast Forum' as part of their 'Natural Choices' programme.



Young designers seeing their art within the tunnel





1000m marker on the Rodwell Trail

### Events for 2017

The Friends will provide free entertainment within the gardens throughout the year. Check out the events page for full details [www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk](http://www.sandsfootcastle.org.uk)



## Awards

Weymouth and Portland Civic Society gave a Special Award for 2012 to Sandsfoot Castle for its restoration and the gardens were awarded a 'Green Flag', the benchmark national standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom, managed by a consortium of Keep Britain Tidy, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the charity Greenspace, which has been maintained to this day.



2012 Civic Society Award

In 2013 the restoration of Sandsfoot Castle was Runner-up in the Dorset Archaeological Committee Awards for the greatest contribution to Dorset archaeology in the past 2 years and English Heritage (now Historic England) removed the castle from their 'English Heritage At Risk Register' and Baroness Andrews, Chair of English Heritage, made an informal visit by to view the castle and the work done by volunteers.

In November 2016 the Parks team were presented with an award by the Weymouth Civic Society.



The Parks team with their 2016 Civic Society Awards



The award recognised the Society's appreciation of the fine planting and maintenance of the public gardens in the Borough, and the Esplanade flower beds. They continue to delight the eye and are greatly enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike. The work of the Parks & Open Spaces Service of the Borough is most commendable.

In 2017 the Green Flag was retained for the fifth year.



### Winner 2016/2017

The mark of a quality park or green space.

Given in recognition of achieving the national standard for parks and green spaces.

Supported in the UK by



*Jillian Kay*

Jillian Kay  
Director of Local Government Policy

Managed under licence from



Managed by





