

# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Town Hall Garden



### You are in the Town Hall Garden

The layout of the gardens, which still survives today, was started in 1897 by James Backhouse & Son. The company were paid six pounds and six shillings for their work.

1897 was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and was marked by building two 'Jubilee Shelters'. The final location for the shelters is not verified but it is assumed that one of these was the large masonry and timber building constructed within the Town Hall Garden known as the South Cliff Shelter. The shelter incorporated toilets, a reading room and cloakrooms and served refreshments beneath a rustic timber loggia in the Arts and Crafts style. By the 1980s the shelter was in a poor condition and was demolished for safety reasons. The back retaining wall of the original shelter can still be seen above the upper terrace of the Town Hall Gardens. A fountain was installed in the lower terrace of the gardens and, in conjunction with the shelter, emphasised the broadly symmetrical layout of the design. The original fountain was replaced in the 1970s by a three-tiered concrete fountain. The planted beds and rockery walls that can be seen today were originally grass slopes.

In 2003 Felixstowe Seafront Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Over a decade later, restoration and rejuvenation work began, which was completed in 2015. The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including a shelter, fountain, balustrading and seating have been installed in the spirit of the original gardens. Look out for plaques designed by local school children made in celebration of Felixstowe's heritage.

### History of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

The history of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens is well documented and extends from when the present day gardens were scrub covered slopes running down to a sandy shoreline. Much of the gardens are believed to have developed in a piecemeal manner during the 18th century as houses along the seafront were built and embellished by gentlemen landowners, such as Lord and Lady Harland, Philip Thickness, Sir Samuel Fludger and later FT Cobbold.

The town of Felixstowe was rapidly establishing itself as a fashionable destination in the late Victorian era, based around the perceived health giving properties of the 'spa waters' flowing from the natural springs in the cliffs. A visit to the town by the German Imperial family in 1891 increased tourism to the area further. It was during this time that Hamilton Gardens, the Town Hall Garden and the steep ivy-clad terraces edging South Beach Mansion were established. To build on this success the Urban District Council passed the Felixstowe and Walton Improvement Act in 1902 to develop the seafront further. A promenade and granite sea wall were completed in 1904 whilst, in parallel, gardens belonging to the Felix Hotel (now Harvest House) were extended and improved in 1903 by the owner of the hotel, the Hon D Tollenmache.

The gardens at this time were of an exotic and distinctive nature, highlighting the fashion at the time for showcasing unique and exotic planting (much of which was acquired from overseas and nurtured in hot houses), and highly decorative landscape works. In 1919, further extensive landscape works were undertaken by George Burrows, an architect for the Urban District Council. Steps and paths were created to provide public access from the top of the cliff at Hamilton Gardens to the gardens on the seafront. This period coincided with an increase in visitor numbers to Felixstowe as its popularity as a holiday destination grew.



Historic photographs of the original South Cliff Shelter, fountain and 1970s fountain



Plan showing heritage trail and signs

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs



# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Pram Walk



### You are on the approach to the Pram Walk

The Pram Walk is named as such for its use as a route for pushing perambulators. It sits below the South Beach Mansion (still visible at the top of the cliff) which once included the area within its grounds.

In 1891 the German Kaiser and his wife Empress Augusta paid a state visit to Queen Victoria and stayed at the mansion. The property included its own large beach hut and a cottage fitted out for the Royal party. The Princes are known to have ridden along the beach on the donkeys of Charles and Jack Riddle.

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The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including a rustic log seat and replica 'Globe Lights' have been installed. The 'Clock Pond' which is to the north-east has also been repaired. The original clock can now be seen at Mannings Amusement Park towards the south of Felixstowe.

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Historic photographs of a globe light and rustic bench, South Beach Mansion, Clock Pond and Pram Walk path A.



Plan showing heritage trail and signs A

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs



# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Ivy Terrace and Ranelagh Steps



### You are adjacent to Ivy Terrace and Ranelagh Steps

This area of the gardens was conveyed to the Council from Tolleremache Breweries for recreational use in 1921. It was formally associated with the South Beach Mansion which can still be seen above the cliff top to the south-west. A covenant within the conveyance specifically stated that no alcohol could be sold on the land. Notable features of the original design from this period included rustic wooden balustrades along the terraces, with roses cultivated on poles and between ropes on the lower levels.

In 1950 the opportunity arose to return the Gardens to their former glory after a period of reduced upkeep during World War II. This included building a terrace wall across the lower portion of Ivy Terrace made from re-used broken concrete from wartime defences. Between 1990 and 2000 timber and steel balustrading was added to the Ivy Terrace.

In 2003 Felixstowe Seafront Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Over a decade later, restoration and rejuvenation work began, which was completed in 2015.

The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including replica 'Globe Lights' and benches have been installed. The terraces and steps have been carefully repaired and a new raised path has been built to provide level access from Pram Walk.

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Historic photographs of Ranelagh Steps, Ivy Terrace and Hamilton Gardens A



Plan showing heritage trail and signs A

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# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Ivy Terrace and Hamilton Gardens



### You are in Hamilton Gardens

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In 2003 Felixstowe Seafront Gardens were included by English Heritage as Grade II on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Over a decade later, restoration and rejuvenation work began, which was completed in 2015.

The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including replica 'Globe Lights' and benches have been installed. The terraces and steps have been carefully repaired, and a new raised path has been built to provide level access from Pram Walk.

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Historic photographs of Hamilton Gardens, Ranelagh Steps and Ivy Terrace



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## Heritage Trail - Crest Garden



### You are in the Crest Garden

The circular planted bed beneath you is a modern interpretation of the original floral Town Crest formerly laid out in bedding plants. Directly to the north-east are the Dripping Well and Spa Pavilion. The Dripping Well is one of a number of historic water features fed by natural springs running from the cliff. It was built prior to the erection of the Spa Pavilion.

The pavilion site was first developed in 1907 when the Council decided that a small wooden bandstand would be installed for a year to test its popularity. In the 1920s a small come-roofed extension was constructed containing a doorway to the back of the stage and soiral staircase to dressing rooms in the basement. This was built around the original bandstand structure. A new building was completed in 1939 but was promptly destroyed by a bomb in 1941.

In 1957 the structure was rebuilt by the Urban District Council as a permanent masonry building. The pavilion was officially reopened by Harry S Pepper, a popular Radio Variety Production Supervisor from the period, and was a venue for acts including Jimi Hendrix and The Who.

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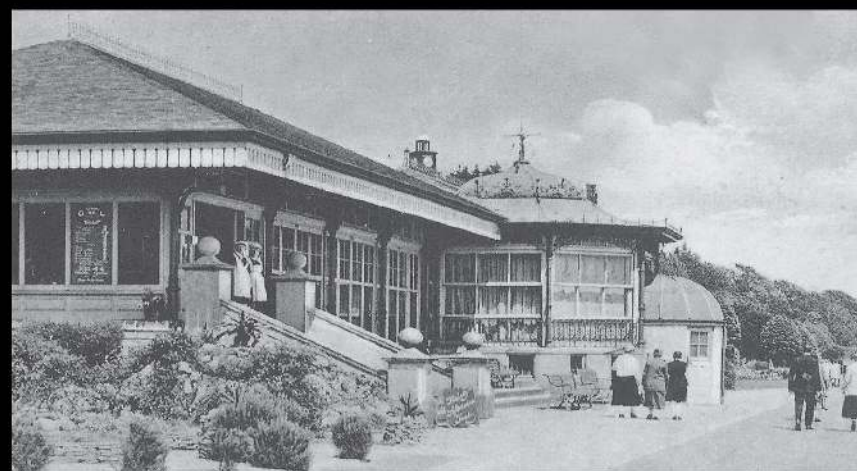
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Historic photographs of the original Spa Pavilion, Band Stand, modern Spa Pavilion and Dripping Well ^



Plan showing heritage trail and signs ^

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs



# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Hamilton Gardens



### You are in Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens have their origin between 1890 and 1895 when they were laid out to feature mounded planting beds edged with grass. Individual clipped shrubs stood in the beds and were surrounded by herbaceous plants. As recent as 1926 the shoreline existed in its natural state before the promenade was constructed. The Spa Pavilion can be seen towards the south-west.

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The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including a bronze sundial have been installed on the lower terrace.

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### History of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

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Historic photographs of the original access steps, Band Stand, modern Spa Pavilion, and original Spa Pavilion A



Plan showing heritage trail and signs A

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# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Serpentine Steps



### You are at the base of the Serpentine Steps

In 1910 the Serpentine Steps were constructed, and the Round Shelter shortly after by RC Nottcutt. The Octagonal Shelter is believed to have once stood in the grounds of the Felix Hotel (now Harvest House and formerly the Balmoral Hotel) to the north.

The hotel was built in 1903 in a neo-Jacobean style, designed by TW Cotman for Douglas Tollenmarche. The building and garden wall along Cobbold Road are now Grade II Listed Buildings. In 1982 Norsk Hydro sold the hotel which became private apartments. To the north-east is the spring fed ornamental water feature known as the Lily Pond.

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The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including handrails have been installed.

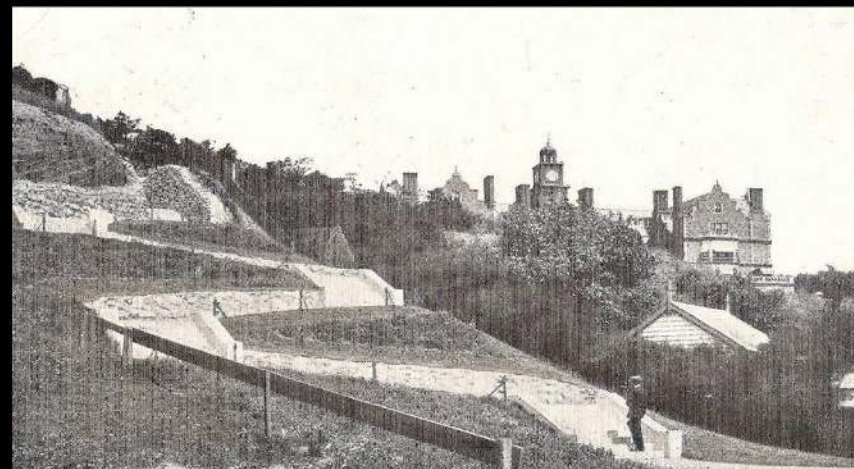
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Historic photographs of the Serpentine Steps, original access steps, Round Shelter and timber hut. A



Plan showing heritage trail and signs A

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs



# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Rose Garden, Pump House and Chalet Bank



### You are adjacent to the Rose Garden, Pump House and Chalet Bank

At the top of the cliff is Harvest House (private apartments which once operated as the Balmoral Hotel and subsequently the Felix Hotel). In 1902 the Felixstowe and Walton Improvement Act allowed the Felixstowe & Walton Urban District Council to acquire this area in preparation for the creation of the gardens.

The pump house had been built between 1903 and 1926 and was used to pump seawater to guests in the hotel. In 1928 the Lord Mayor of London conducted the grand opening of the public gardens. The layout had been designed by Council Surveyor, Harry Clegg who also designed the former Spa Pavillion.

The concrete chalets which are visible to the north-east were built in 1969 to replace the small half-timbered 'Black Huts', which had been present since 1927. Above the chalets a large building called Cliff House can be seen.

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The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored while new elements including a replanted Rose Garden and level access routes have been installed.

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Historic photographs of the original Black Huts, Cliff House, modern Chalets, and timber hut. ▲



Plan showing heritage trail and signs. ▲

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# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Round Pond



### You are adjacent to the Round Pond

At the top of the slope are Cliff House and a set of chalets. In 1902 the Felixstowe and Walton Improvement Act allowed the Felixstowe & Walton Urban District Council to acquire this area in preparation for the creation of this part of the gardens.

In 1928 the Lord Mayor of London conducted the grand opening of the public gardens. The layout had been designed by Council Surveyor, Harry Clegg who also designed the former Spa Pavilion.

The concrete chalets which are visible to the west were built in 1969 to replace the small half-timbered 'Black Huts' which had been present since 1927. Above the chalets a large building called Cliff House can be seen.

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Historic photographs of the original Black Huts, Cliff House, modern Chalets, and timber hut. ^



Plan showing heritage trail and signs ^

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs



# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Cliff House



### You are adjacent to Cliff House

Below you are the Fuchsia Gardens which in 1925 were sold, along with Cliff House, to the Council for use as a public garden.

In 1928 the Lord Mayor of London conducted the grand opening of the public gardens. The layout had been designed by Council Surveyor, Harry Clegg who also designed the former Spa Pavilion.

In 2003 Felixstowe Seafront Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Over a decade later, restoration and rejuvenation work began, which was completed in 2015. The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored.

The Fuchsia Garden has been returned to its original geometric layout and replanted in partnership with the Felixstowe Fuchsia Society.

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Historic photographs of the original garden layout and Long Shelter



Plan showing heritage trail and signs

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# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Arch Cascade



### You are adjacent to the Arch Cascade

The Arch Cascade is one of a number of historic water features fed by natural springs running from the cliff. It was built following the sale of the area in 1925 to the Council for use as a public garden.

In 1928 the Lord Mayor of London conducted the grand opening of the public gardens. The layout had been designed by Council Surveyor, Harry Clegg who also designed the former Spa Pavilion.

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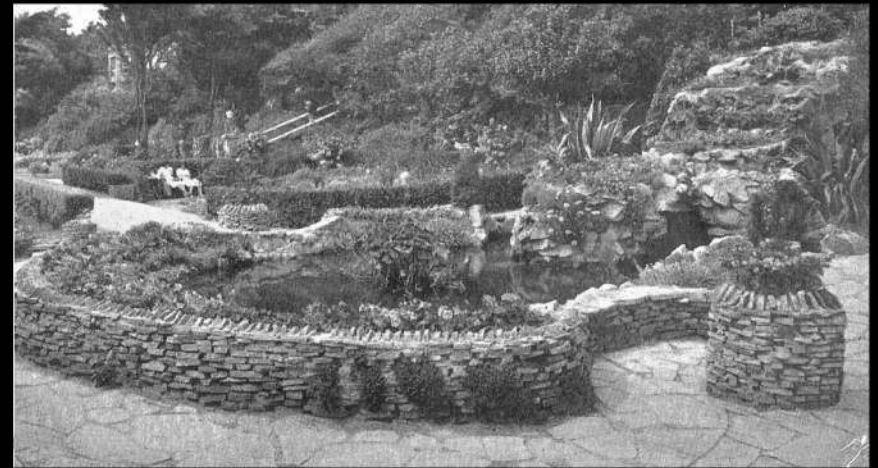
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Historic photographs of the original garden layout and Long Shelter ^



Plan showing heritage trail and signs ^

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# Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

## Heritage Trail - Long Shelter

Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage  
lottery fund



### You are in the location of the former Long Shelter

The Long Shelter was a brick vaulted shelter with seating, constructed following the conveyancing of the area in 1925 to the Council for use as a public garden.

In 1928 the Lord Mayor of London conducted the grand opening of the public gardens. The layout had been designed by Council Surveyor, Harry Clegg who also designed the former Spa Pavilion.

The original Long Shelter was demolished in 2008 for reasons of safety.

In 2003 Felixstowe Seafront Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Over a decade later, restoration and rejuvenation work began, which was completed in 2015. The original remaining features present in 2003 have been carefully retained and restored.

### History of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens

The history of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens is well documented and extends from when the present day gardens were scrub covered slopes running down to a sandy shoreline. Much of the gardens are believed to have developed in a piecemeal manner during the 18th century as houses along the seafront were built and embellished by gentlemen landowners, such as Lord and Lady Harland, Philip Thickness, Sir Samuel Fludger and later FT Cobbold.

The town of Felixstowe was rapidly establishing itself as a fashionable destination in the late Victorian era, based around the perceived health giving properties of the 'spa waters' flowing from the natural springs in the cliffs. A visit to the town by the German Imperial family in 1891 increased tourism to the area further. It was during this time that Hamilton Gardens, the Town Hall Garden and the steep ivy-clad terraces edging South Beach Mansion were established. To build on this success the Urban District Council passed the Felixstowe and Walton Improvement Act in 1902 to develop the seafront further. A promenade and granite sea wall were completed in 1904 whilst, in parallel, gardens belonging to the Felix Hotel (now Harvest House) were extended and improved in 1903 by the owner of the hotel, the Hon D Tollemache.

The gardens at this time were of an exotic and distinctive nature, highlighting the fashion at the time for showcasing unique and exotic planting (much of which was acquired from overseas and nurtured in hot houses), and highly decorative landscape works. In 1919, further extensive landscape works were undertaken by George Burrows, an architect for the Urban District Council. Steps and paths were created to provide public access from the top of the cliff at Hamilton Gardens to the gardens on the seafront. This period coincided with an increase in visitor numbers to Felixstowe as its popularity as a holiday destination grew.



Historic photographs of the Arch Cascade, original garden layout and Long Shelter ▲



Plan showing heritage trail and signs ▲

— Heritage trail ■ Heritage signs