



## Landguard Fort Felixstowe



**Landguard Fort** is a grade 1 listed building situated on the Landguard Peninsula, sharing space with Felixstowe Museum, the nature reserve, View Point café and Felixstowe port. We are an historical visitor attraction owned by English Heritage and run by Landguard Fort Trust.

The Trust is a registered charity. We are proud to report that Landguard Fort is continuing to develop into one of Felixstowe's main tourist attractions. Last year (2017) we welcomed 24,485 visitors which is an increase of 11.5% over the year 2016.

### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES.**

The aim of the Landguard Fort Trust is to enhance public knowledge on the role of Landguard Fort as a building of great historical and educational interest. We open the fort to the public 7 days a week, 10am to 5pm from April through to October. Our objectives are not only to increase the public's understanding of how the fort was used over its long military history but also how it has become a major attraction for special events and activities for the local community. In recent years, we have held open-air theatre productions, exhibitions, Halloween nights, Christmas events, pirate days, car rallies and major events such as the Armed Forces/Darell's Day in 2017, featuring the Battle of Landguard re-enactment. This was a huge success for the fort and the local community.

The Trust continues to promote its role as a Suffolk tourist attraction, using radio advertising and interviews to reach out to local audiences. We encourage visits from younger audiences with a policy of providing free visits for school groups. For adults we provide special tours of the fort's outer defences by our knowledgeable tour guides. We participate in the National Heritage Day event allowing free entry to the public. This gives the opportunity for people who wouldn't otherwise be able to visit the fort, to do so.

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

In 2018 we are looking forward to another exciting year with events that include Darell's Day on the 24<sup>th</sup> June, which is our annual commemoration of the Dutch invasion in 1667 with the Royal Marine's Association, and September 22<sup>nd</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> is our pirates weekend, full of family 'derring-do' fun and 'ooh-arr me hearties'. We have two brand new exciting events this year; a Star Wars weekend where you can watch Star Wars films on the big screen set in the main arena of the fort (there are rumours that 'Star Wars troopers' will be invading the fort bringing the films to 'life'!). Our second new exciting event is the Steampunk Halloween weekend on October 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, which will have a spooky Victorian atmosphere with live music and steampunk retail therapy. These events for all the local residents to come along

and enjoy are specifically aimed at families. Such events would not be possible without the generous support from our Town Council.

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT.**

The Landguard Fort Trustees are immensely grateful to the Town Council, not only for its financial grants but also for the 'hands-on' support provided by Paul Grant and Stephen Rampley. The Trustees continue to liaise with English Heritage, Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, the Landguard Partnership and the Port of Felixstowe. Without these organisations, together with the dedication of the Landguard Fort volunteers, the fort would be unable to operate as a tourist attraction.

The grants donated by the Town Council to Landguard Fort Trust are used specifically to fund the development of the fort's exhibits and interpretations in order to enhance the visitor's experience. In 2017 the fort management team established a 'Fort Forward' group. This dedicated team of volunteers is the driving force behind improving interpretation and creating new areas of interest and learning for visitors to the fort and the local community.

The funds provided by the Town Council have allowed the Fort Forward team to upgrade our TV/Film room with new technology and tables and chairs and to develop the WWII Barack Room with a working radio playing period announcements and music. We have provided new signage on the Harwich Bastion enhancing the panoramic view across the river to Harwich, Shotley and the Port. More recently we have completely replaced the lanterns in one of the magazine lighting passage tunnels. These projects would not have been possible without local funding.

This year the Fort Forward team are working on developing the Cold War Seaward Defence Headquarters (a huge project) to include interactive displays for our visitors. We also aim to develop one of the magazine storage rooms so that we can show the Landguard Fort films and replace the remaining lanterns in the magazine lighting passage tunnels. A new computer network is being installed to help our administration staff and our newly formed archive research team. Another major project, currently being researched, is the interpretation of the Submarine Mining Establishment. Although our highly skilled and dedicated band of volunteers can do most of the practical work, funding is essential to pay for equipment and displays.

We are also at the first stage of acquiring 'flushable' toilets for the fort. Presently we have no waste plumbing which means we have temporary 'portable' loos. Mains water and flushing toilets for the public (and staff!) would allow a greater range of events including hospitality events, weddings parties, business conferences etc. Such amenities would offer the local people and wider community a very unique event and hospitality venue in Felixstowe.

***Nicola Wilkinson***

General Manager  
Landguard Fort Trust  
Tel: 01394 675900