

Starting this Thursday, 30 July, la torre des Pi des Català (es Pi des Català tower) will open every Thursday afternoon for public visits, from five to seven in the evening. “The visiting hours,” explained councillor of patrimony Susana Labrador, “are a way for both locals and tourists to discover this aspect of Formentera's past”—a discovery in which the administration hopes school children will also take part. According to Labrador: “School groups will also be able to visit the defence tower by requesting an appointment in advance via the Formentera Council's office of patrimony”.

In May the Council signalled the completion of restoration work at la torre des Pi des Català, which sits alongside Migjorn beach and is part of the 'es Pi des Català' neighbourhood of Formentera. Work at the site ran a total cost of €170,603, which was met in part by funding from the regional programme Leader.

**First defence tower with interior open to public**

With restoration complete, the tower became the first of its kind on Formentera whose inner chambers could be visited. Supporters of the project hailed the decision to leave intact the original structure—which dates back to the second half of the eighteenth century—along with the architectural features employed at the time of building.

La torre des Pi des Català is a monument declared *bé d'interès cultural* (BIC)—cultural heritage site—and included in Formentera's catalogue of cultural patrimony as a site with level A protection. In May 2012 and at no cost, the state ceded the land upon which the tower sits to the Formentera Council, in compliance with the law on patrimony and municipalities ('ley del patrimonio de las administraciones públicas').

**History**

One of the four main defence towers found on the island of Formentera, es Pi des Català defence tower was, along with the three other towers, erected between 1762 and 1763 in strategic locations determined by Francisco de Paula Bucarelli y Ursúa, the then general captain of the Balearic Islands. The project was carried out under the guidance of military engineer José García Martínez. The constructions were used both for defence and –as was most often the case– surveillance until 1867.