

AUTUMN 2023 | #DISTRICTNEWS

# DN

MAGAZINE

In this issue:

New cultural centre in Lewes

Support amid the cost of living crisis

NEWS FROM ACROSS  
THE LEWES DISTRICT

# Hello

Welcome to the autumn  
2023 edition of DN,  
brought to you by  
Lewes District Council

Our second winter of the cost of living crisis is approaching with sadly no let-up on the financial pressure to people's household budgets. The added cost of heating a home as the cold weather sets in means many people will feel the squeeze even more acutely, on top of food price increases, high interest rates and rising rents.

With all of these factors in mind, it was without hesitation that this council decided to continue providing extra help for our most vulnerable residents in the district. Having already set aside £750,000 to support local people in need through these difficult times, just last month we agreed a grant of £20,000 for Lewes District Citizens Advice. This money funds the continuation of a specialist Universal Credit advice service. Alongside this, we have a range of support for those in need, from Community Spaces to financial help, that is detailed in these pages together with useful information on help being offered by our partners.

Turning to our efforts to tackle climate change, we

have taken great strides in making our food waste collections more environmentally friendly with the introduction of all-electric collection vehicles and are installing 64 public charging points across 11 car parks in the district. These are among various initiatives we are pursuing towards becoming carbon net zero and fully climate resilient in Lewes district by 2030.

It is a priority for this council to make positive impacts on the lives of Lewes district residents, whether that's building new homes, upgrading playgrounds or making sure our streets are clean. Visit [makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com](https://www.makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com) to find out more about our community projects.

I am excited too about our partnership with East Sussex College Group and Charleston for the new cultural centre in Lewes. With extensive educational opportunities on offer there, it is particularly fitting that art students were among the first visitors. I am delighted the centre will make great artworks and exhibitions more accessible to district residents – Charleston in Lewes is well worth a visit.



**Councillor Zoe Nicholson**  
Leader of Lewes District Council

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## Get in touch

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To receive DN by email visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/district-news](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/district-news)

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# Art meets education at new cultural centre in Lewes

CHARLESTON

**The former council offices in Southover Road have been transformed into a new public cultural centre.**

The new venue, a partnership between Lewes District Council, Charleston and East Sussex College Group, will run a free programme of community projects and a learning programme for local state schools, further education and higher education groups.

It opened in September with two exhibitions, *Bring No Clothes: Bloomsbury and Fashion* and *Jonathan Baldock: through the joy of the senses*. Some of the

first visitors through the door were a group of art students from East Sussex College Group visiting for an exhibition tour and careers talk.

Rebecca Conroy, Principal and CEO of East Sussex College, said: "East Sussex College is so excited to be involved in the new centre and partnership with Lewes District Council and Charleston. The space really is inspiring - we will deliver courses and develop the skills to enhance the lives of our students - both in terms of adult education and for young people. The new partnerships will add huge value to our community which is so exciting."

Alongside the extensive educational opportunities, it is estimated that the new space - which has a shop and café - will generate £4.2m of new visitor spend in the town. This aspect is particularly welcomed by the council in its support for town centre businesses as high streets across the country struggle with vacant shops and a reduction in footfall.

During this initial season, visitors to the space are being asked to share how they think a new cultural centre can support the town. Meetings are also being held with community groups, education providers and residents' groups to discuss ways the building can be used by the town.

"I'm delighted that education is at the heart of our partnership with Charleston and East Sussex College Group. It's fantastic for shops and businesses too that many more visitors will be coming to Lewes as a result."



**Councillor Johnny Denis, Cabinet Member for Arts, Culture, and Tourism and Leisure**

# A 'landmark moment' for local biodiversity

**A project to create a new 6.8-hectare wetland habitat in Lewes is progressing well and set to improve biodiversity while reducing the risk of flooding.**

Diggers have broken through a riverbank, allowing water from the Cockshut stream to rush into the new wetland area.

Adjacent to the Lewes Brooks, the Cockshut is a 3km long chalk stream that flows from springs at the foot of the South Downs in Kingston, eventually joining the River Ouse before flowing out to sea. The Cockshut became clogged up by a non-native invasive plant called parrot's feather, but having been realigned, the old course of the stream will now be filled in to help eradicate the problem plant.

With new footbridges installed and contractors working to create a raised walkway all the way around the wetland, there are huge learning opportunities for local schoolchildren, people who just want to enjoy a walk in the countryside and those who want to get closer to nature.

The project is a partnership between Lewes District Council, Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Lewes Railway

Land Wildlife Trust and South Downs National Park Authority and will bring a wealth of biodiversity benefits and reduce flood risk in the area.

For more information visit [cockshutstream.org](http://cockshutstream.org)



“Creating this new wetland is a landmark moment in the council's drive to improve levels of biodiversity in the district, as well as alleviating the risk of flooding in the area and the creation of a fantastic new wetland that residents, local schools and visitors to the area can take advantage of.

“The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, so to see birdlife already at the water's edge and know that so much other life will soon follow, it's incredibly exciting for everyone involved in this superb project.”

**Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems**



## Tackling the sticky issue of chewing gum

**Lewes District Council has successfully applied for a £25,000 grant to remove chewing gum that blights pavements in Lewes district.**

The council is one of 56 across the country to be awarded funds from the Chewing Gum Task Force, now in its second year, to clean chewing gum off pavements across Seaford, Newhaven and Lewes and prevent them from being littered again.

Established by Defra and run by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, the Chewing Gum Task Force Grant Scheme is open to councils across the UK who wish to clean up gum in their local areas and invest in long-term behaviour change to prevent

gum from being dropped in the first place.

The Task Force is funded by major gum manufacturers including Mars Wrigley and Perfetti Van Melle.

Monitoring and evaluation carried out by Behaviour Change has shown that in areas where action was taken last year a reduced rate of gum littering is still being observed six months after clean-up and the installation of prevention materials.

Estimates suggest the annual clean-up cost of chewing gum for councils in the UK is around £7 million and, according to Keep Britain Tidy, around 77% of England's streets and 99% of retail sites are stained with gum.

“These funds are very welcome to help clear our streets of chewing gum, which is expensive and difficult to remove.

“We also want to remind people to make sure all litter, chewing gum included, always goes in the bin and not on the ground.”

**Councillor Christine Robinson, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing**





# Electric vehicles collect food waste across district

**Food waste collections in Lewes district are becoming more environmentally friendly with the introduction of new all-electric collection vehicles.**

Lewes District Council refuse crews have already started collecting food waste using electric vehicles on some rounds across the district and will be rolling out separate food waste collections

“This is an important step in our ambition of achieving carbon net zero and becoming fully climate resilient in Lewes district by 2030.



“Residents may notice that refuse crews are taking one of their bins and leaving the other bin behind – but be assured this is because refuse and food waste are now being collected separately.”

**Councillor Laurence O'Connor,  
Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure**

to all rounds throughout autumn and winter.

Residents are asked to leave both their food waste bin and their refuse bin in a clearly visible spot outside their property by 6am on collection day. As weekly food waste and other refuse are being collected separately, all bins should remain outside until they are emptied.

To sign up for free food waste collections, including all the kit to get started, visit:

[lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste)

## **New electric vehicle charging points**

The installation of 64 public charging points for electric vehicles in 11 car parks across the district is nearing completion.

Once finished, they will be located at five car parks in Lewes – Mountfield Road, Little East Street, Phoenix Causeway, West Street (Needlemakers) and Friars Walk; three in Seaford – Sutton Road, Saxon Lane and West Street; two in Newhaven – Bay Vue and Lower Place, as well as Barcombe Car Park.

# Council builds affordable homes



**Lewes District Council is forging ahead with its commitment to building new affordable homes across the district.**

The development of 19 affordable homes at Stowe Place, on the site of the old police station in Newhaven, is progressing well and completion is expected by spring 2024. The site will include three flats adapted for disabled people.

“We are committed to building new homes to help meet the increased demands on our housing waiting list, reduce the reliance on temporary and emergency accommodation and secure more affordable housing options for residents in Lewes district.”



**Councillor Mark Slater, Cabinet Member for Tenants and Those in Housing Need**

The council is also moving forward with plans to build 16 homes on a piece of land close to Peacehaven Golf & Fitness.

Meanwhile, a home in Ringmer specially adapted for a family, three of whom have multiple and highly complex disabilities, is in its final stages and will soon be ready to move into. A specialist occupational therapy team has helped design the new home – ramps, hoists and a room for a 24-hour carer are amongst the many bespoke features being incorporated into the property.

Also nearing completion is a development of four affordable homes being delivered by Ringmer Area Community Land Trust.

Thanks to over £200k community infrastructure levy funding from Lewes District Council and donations from local charities, the homes at Parsons Green will be offered for rent at much lower rates than are available on the open market.

Additionally, the council has set aside a new Revolving Loan Fund of up to £350,000 to progress more sustainable community-led housing initiatives within Lewes district.



# New facility 'enhances quality of life'



## A new Changing Places toilet for people with mobility issues has opened in Lewes town centre.

This larger accessible toilet in Friars Walk Car Park is for people who cannot use standard disabled facilities, with equipment such as hoists, screens, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers.

An interactive map showing the location of all Changing Places toilets in the UK is available at: [changing-places.org/find](http://changing-places.org/find)

## Council commits £105,000 for business start-ups

The council has earmarked £105,000 for the continued funding of a business start-up programme for Lewes district that has seen the successful launch of a number new enterprises.

Since 2013, hundreds of budding entrepreneurs have benefited from workshops, one-to-one mentoring and social media training. The most promising businesses taking part in the programme are shortlisted and in with a chance of winning £2,500.

The council will invite business support providers to tender for a three-year contract starting in April 2024.



“This is a fantastic addition to the facilities we already have in Lewes and makes the town more accessible and

inclusive than ever. Having access to these much-needed facilities will hugely enhance the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities and their families and friends.

“My thanks to all those involved in opening this Changing Places toilet, particularly the Lewes Area Access Group who have been instrumental in making this happen.”

**Councillor Wendy Maples,  
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing**

# Council continues its support for the most vulnerable



**Lewes District Council will continue to provide extra help for the most vulnerable residents in the district amid fears of a deepening cost of living crisis over the winter months.**

The council quickly brought in a raft of measures to help local people during the pandemic and extended vital support as the cost of living crisis gripped the UK.

“Since we declared a cost of living emergency, we’ve introduced a range of support that I know is making a difference for people who are in most need.



“We are now working on making areas available during the winter months where people can keep warm and feel secure, developing our outreach work in rural communities and continuing to provide clear and helpful advice to residents.”

**Councillor Zoe Nicholson,  
Leader of Lewes District Council**

Rising rents, rising interest rates and inflation in the price of household goods, mean that the financial challenges being faced by families are likely to become even greater over the winter when costs to heat homes are also factored in.

The council has agreed a grant of £20,000 for Lewes District Citizens Advice to support the continuation of specialist Universal Credit advice and a renewed commitment of its dedicated support and coordination of the cost of living response in the district.

Over the last year the council created a ‘safety net fund’ of £500,000 to address a gap for low-income households that did not meet criteria for additional government support, a council tax reduction scheme for households on benefits or low incomes, with 100% reduction for eligible residents and discretionary housing payments for those may be facing eviction.

Previously, cabinet councillors agreed a £250,000 cost of living crisis fund to provide vital support to voluntary sector partners in the district as they responded to extreme challenges faced by residents.

# Financial help for people on low incomes



**Lewes District Council is offering funds to residents on a low income who will miss out on the government's £900 cost-of-living payments.**

The 'Safety Net' payment is available to eligible residents who are struggling to keep warm, buy enough food or pay for essentials.

To qualify, you must currently receive housing benefit or a council tax reduction, but not one of the means-tested benefits that would qualify you for a cost-of-living payment from the government, unless you also qualify for a disability or carer's benefit.

The award is a one-off payment of £400 and will be paid into your bank account. The funding is limited and will be paid out on a first-come, first-served basis. Apply via the grants portal [grantapproval.co.uk](https://www.grantapproval.co.uk)

## Extra council support

If you are struggling to pay your council tax or need to claim housing benefit, find out if you are eligible for help by visiting: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction)

Information on exceptional hardship payments for our most vulnerable residents is available at: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/EHP](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/EHP)

If you might get evicted, you could qualify for discretionary housing payments. Visit: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/DHP](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/DHP)

Help with food costs and utility bills for any form of fuel that is used for domestic heating, cooking or lighting is available through the Household Support Fund. To check whether you can apply, visit: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF)

## Community Spaces

The council is supporting Community Spaces again this winter, where local people can go to enjoy a safe, warm place and hot drink.

To view a directory of these, visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living) and click on Community Spaces. New Community Spaces are added as soon as they become available.

# Support with buying food

**If you are finding it difficult to afford food, local community food projects might be able to help. Contact Lewes District Citizens Advice (see page 15) to discuss your situation.**

They can give benefits, budgeting and debt advice while also offering support including a referral to your local food bank and they may be able to help with a fuel voucher.

“It is distressing to hear of people going hungry because they cannot afford to eat or parents dreading school holidays because it means no free meals for children. Thankfully there are places that can assist in these cases, so please reach out if you are in need.”



**Councillor Chris Collier,  
Cabinet Member for Innovation, Delivery and People**

Community hubs, voluntary and community sector organisations and local authorities can also make referrals to food banks. Once your referral has been received by your local food bank, they will be in touch to arrange collection of emergency food parcels.

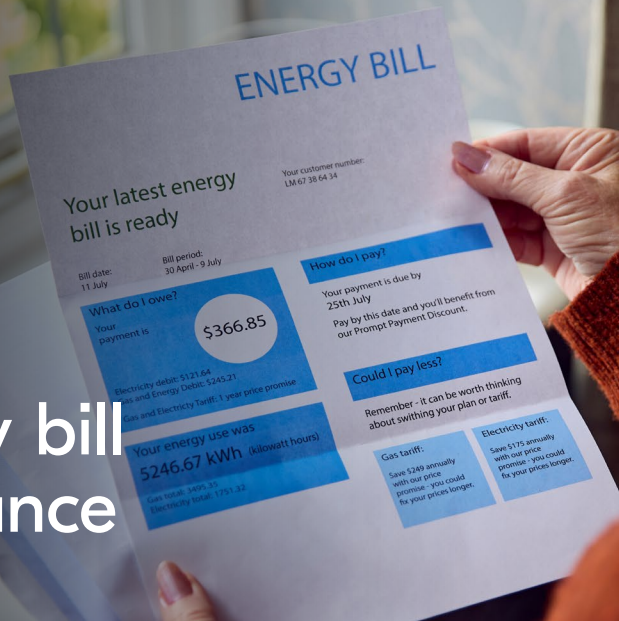
For a full list of food banks and community food hubs in Lewes district visit: [lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org](http://lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org) and click on Emergency Food Network.

If you would like to support your local food bank or community food hub, the best way to help is by contacting them directly to find out their specific needs. Financial donations are often preferred so that products most in demand can be bought.

The council has compiled a comprehensive list of support available such as free school meals and how to access the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) which provides emergency help in certain situations.

Visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living) for more information and links.

# Energy bill assistance



## If there is a risk your power will be cut off

Please seek help as soon as possible. Citizens Advice has set up an Extra Help Unit for people who are vulnerable or at risk of being disconnected by their energy provider. Referral is needed through the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133. Visit [ehu.org.uk](http://ehu.org.uk) for more information. Alternatively, contact your local Citizens Advice office (see page 15) for advice on your personal situation.

## Fuel vouchers

If you are struggling financially and have a prepayment meter with less than £4 on it, and are not due a payment for a while, you can seek help. You can phone your utility company and ask for a fuel voucher – worth £49 for a family – which you can apply for twice a year. This does not have to be repaid. A PIN number is sent to your mobile phone. You show this at your top-up shop, along with your gas card or electricity key.

## Energy Bill Support Scheme

Support is available if you are experiencing increased energy costs, but pay for energy as part of a larger charge such as within your rent or as

a service charge for the property you live in. Visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

## Energy debts

The British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charity set up to support families and individuals facing financial hardship and energy debt. You do not need to be a British Gas customer to access help. Visit [britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

## Advice on reducing energy use at home

The Energy Saving Trust offers help to save money on bills at the same time as reducing your carbon footprint. Visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/)

## The warm home check service

This free service for East Sussex residents offers telephone advice for anyone struggling to afford to keep warm at home, with money-saving advice and tips on how to stay warm for less. It also provides eligible households with a holistic home energy efficiency assessment.

Visit [warmeastsussex.org.uk/services-and-support/winter-home-check-service/](http://warmeastsussex.org.uk/services-and-support/winter-home-check-service/)

Text: WARM to **80011** / Phone: **0800 464 7307**

# Saving money and the planet by sharing and repairing



Skilled volunteers at Repair Cafes fix people's household items – ranging from kettles to lawnmowers, clocks to clothes and much more – for free, with tea and cake available.

**Lewes Repair Cafe** operates on the first Saturday of each month at Landport Community Hub, Landport Road, BN7 2SU from 2pm to 5pm (last orders 4.30pm).

Visit [lewesrepaircafe.org.uk](http://lewesrepaircafe.org.uk)

**Seaford Repair Cafe**, run by Sharing Skills Community Interest Company (CIC), is held on the fourth Saturday of each month at the Mercread Youth Centre, Seaford, from 1pm to 3.30pm.

A 'pay as you feel' lunch is available from noon. Visit [sharingskills.co.uk/seaford-repair-cafe](http://sharingskills.co.uk/seaford-repair-cafe)

**Newhaven Repair Cafe**, run by Newhaven Green Centre, usually takes place on the second Sunday of the month from 2.30pm to 4.30pm at Meeching Hall, 2A Fort Road.

The next Repair Cafe is on Sunday 26 November. Check [newhavengreencentre.com/repaircafe](http://newhavengreencentre.com/repaircafe) for

dates and further information.

While all repairs are free, there are also donation boxes with card payments accepted.

**Library of Things** are sharing libraries where people can borrow household items and things used only occasionally.

To browse the stock of Newhaven Library of Things, visit [newhavengreencentre.myturn.com/library/inventory/browse](http://newhavengreencentre.myturn.com/library/inventory/browse)

Things can be reserved online and collected on a Thursday morning at Newhaven Library or from Riverside Hall on a Tuesday evening by arrangement.

Lewes Library of Things is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm at Landport Community Room, 2a Horsfield Road, BN7 2TA. Visit [leweslibraryofthings.org.uk](http://leweslibraryofthings.org.uk)

Sharing Skills CIC ([sharingskills.co.uk](http://sharingskills.co.uk)) also runs a pre-loved school uniform exchange in Seaford, a community gardening group – Incredible Edible – and practical skill-sharing workshops.



# citizens advice

## Lewes District

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential and impartial advice to anyone living, studying or working within Lewes district. It provides information and advice which will help people resolve problems in areas such as:

- Benefits – help with all benefits, and it has a specialist Universal Credit adviser and benefits caseworkers
- Debt – generalist and specialist in-house money adviser to help with your debts
- Work – help with redundancy, unfair dismissal, grievances, flexible working and more
- Consumer – problems with your fuel bills, disputes with tradespeople
- Relationships – divorce, relationship breakdown, powers of attorney
- Housing – homelessness, eviction and tenancy problems
- Cost of living crisis – food bank referrals, emergency fuel vouchers, tailored household support grant advice

For details of a new outreach advice programme, visit [lewesdistrictca.org.uk/get-advice](https://www.lewesdistrictca.org.uk/get-advice)

For information and to contact Citizens Advice visit [lewesdistrictca.org.uk](https://www.lewesdistrictca.org.uk)

Local freephone Advice line on **0808 278 7892** (lines are open Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am-3pm, Thursdays 10am-2pm).

### Opening hours

Prior appointments only – no drop-in service available

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Seaford</b> 37 Church Street BN25 1HG	10am - 3.30pm
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Wednesday</b> <b>Thursday</b>	<b>Newhaven</b> 15-19 Chapel Street BN9 9PN	10am - 3.30pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Peacehaven</b> Meridian Centre BN10 8BL	10am - 3.30pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Lewes</b> Relocating soon to 6 High Street	10am - 3.30pm
<b>Last Tuesday of the month</b>	<b>Telscombe Civic Centre</b> 360 South Coast Road, BN10 7ES	10.30am - 12.30pm Drop-in information

Out-of-hours advice options:

Website: [lewesdistrictca.org.uk](https://www.lewesdistrictca.org.uk)

Telephone: **0808 278 7892**

Self-help website: [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

For details about a new community outreach programme visit:

[lewesdistrictca.org.uk/community-outreach](https://www.lewesdistrictca.org.uk/community-outreach)

**citizens  
advice**

**Lewes  
District**



# Could you become a volunteer?

**Lewes District Citizens Advice is recruiting volunteer advisers to help deliver its much-needed advice services.**

Here, Sharmila Bayliss shares her experiences of joining the service as a volunteer adviser.

“Challenging, rewarding, empowering, fulfilling and fun are just a few words to describe my experience at Citizens Advice Lewes.

“I started the comprehensive training programme last September with a great group of like-minded people, all committed to helping our local community. Our trainer was excellent, patient and despite there being a great deal of information to absorb, it never felt too overwhelming.

“It was a revelation to realise the variety of subjects that Citizens Advice offer with their free impartial service and a wonderful opportunity for me to broaden my horizons and learn new things.

“The transition from training to being an adviser on the ground was seamless.

“We started by answering emails, then answering the phone lines and, in the future, I hope to see clients face to face. On a day-to-day basis, we have access to excellent resources and continuous support.

“A supervisor is always at hand to help with any queries and then of course there are the other paid staff and volunteers. What an amazing group of people! It is a privilege to work alongside them and I just love it.”

If you would like to find out more about joining the Lewes District Citizens Advice team, visit:

[lewesdistrictca.org.uk/volunteering](https://lewesdistrictca.org.uk/volunteering)

or contact [recruitment@lewesdistrictca.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@lewesdistrictca.org.uk)



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