

SUMMER 2022 | #DISTRICTNEWS

DN

MAGAZINE



In this issue:

Making a difference where you live

Cost of living crisis – your guide to support

NEWS FROM ACROSS
THE LEWES DISTRICT



Lewes District Council

Hello

Welcome to the summer 2022 edition of DN, brought to you by Lewes District Council

Residents may recall that when we went into lockdown in 2020, we paused DN to focus all our efforts on supporting residents and businesses through the worst of the pandemic.

We hope the darkest of those days are behind us and our attention has now turned to addressing how we can best support the district through the cost of living crisis.

Sadly, the council can't reverse the rising prices at home and in the shops, but we are doing all we can as a local authority to help the most vulnerable and signpost free help and advice. For that reason, this magazine contains lots of

helpful information about coping with increased costs and bills, as well as news from our partners about the vitally important work they are doing too.

Developments that we are sure many people will welcome at this time concern our investment in outdoor areas, spaces that anyone living in local communities can enjoy. The projects that are getting underway include a renewal of 20 play areas across Lewes district, new sports facilities and green initiatives that will increase biodiversity in the district, as well as helping the council become carbon net zero by 2030.

There are also plans for greater access to the countryside, creating a new wetland and wildflower meadows and enhancing local parks and gardens. You will find more information in these pages and we'll be keeping everyone up to date with progress in upcoming issues and in the local media.

You can also visit www.makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com

Whatever your plans for the coming summer, we hope you find time to enjoy the wonderful outdoor environment that makes Lewes district so special.

Councillor Zoe Nicholson
Leader of Lewes District Council

Councillor James MacCleary
Deputy Leader of Lewes District Council

Councillor Chris Collier
Cabinet Member for Performance & People

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Get in touch

DN is available in large print, audio disc or in another language upon request.

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

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Combatting the cost of living crisis: energy

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Surging energy costs are putting increased financial pressures on families and individuals across the district.

However, support is available and if you are at risk of either eviction or being cut off by your energy supplier, please access this help as soon as possible.

There are also various agencies offering advice on cutting energy use in the home.

Free energy bill health checks

Community energy company Ovesco and Lewes Climate Hub are offering free energy bill health checks to help ensure you are getting any help you may be eligible for and help you to reduce how much you use. The service will help you understand your latest gas and electricity bills, check if you are on the best possible tariff or find out if you qualify for a discount.

Visit: lewesclimatehub.org/energy-bills-health-check

Freephone: **0800 458 9045**

Text or call: **07909 816664**

Email: energyadvice@ovesco.co.uk

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/

Text: **WARM to 80011**

Phone: **0800 464 7307**

Fuel vouchers

If you are struggling financially and have a pre-payment 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.



The vouchers are available with a referral from Citizens Advice (see page 6 for contact details) or by phoning **03444 111 444**.

If you are at risk of your power being cut off

Citizens Advice has set up an Extra Help Unit for people who are vulnerable or at risk of being disconnected by their energy provider. They can help raise complaints with your energy provider.

Visit ehu.org.uk for more information.

Grants to help pay off your energy debts

If you are in debt to your energy supplier, you might

be able to get a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust to help pay it off.

This is an independent charity and these grants are available to anyone – you don't have to be a British Gas customer.

Visit: 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/

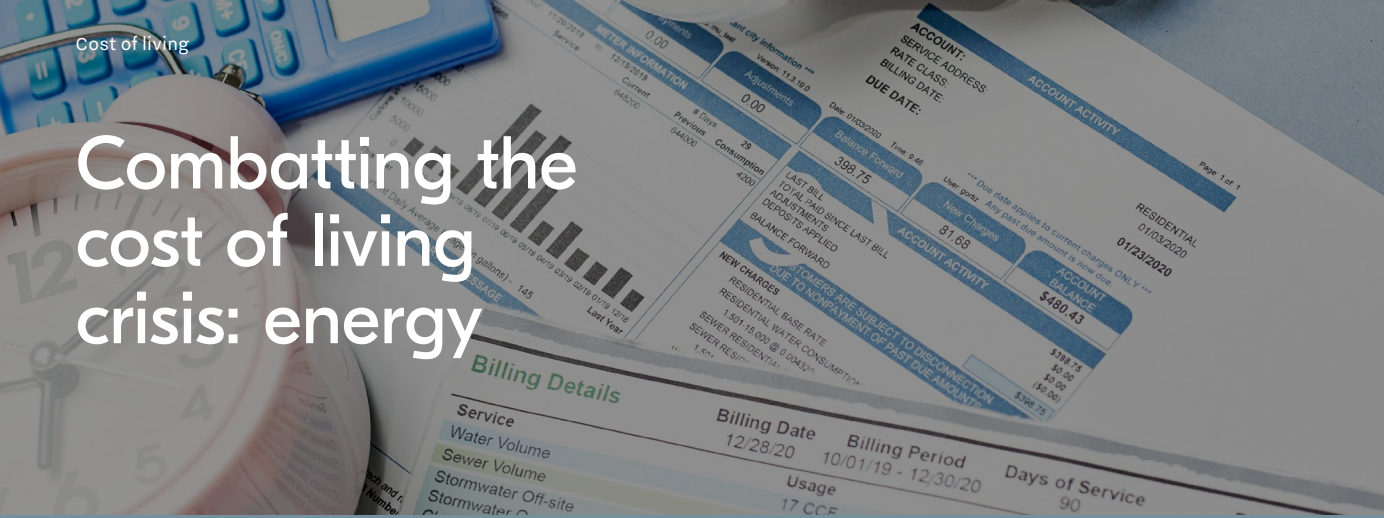


“We are working hard to deliver more affordable homes in the district that include many energy efficiency and sustainability features.

“If you are having difficulty with paying your energy bills, please reach out to the organisations on this page.”

Councillor William Meyer, Cabinet Member for Housing

Combatting the cost of living crisis: energy



Tips for reducing energy use in your home

- Don't heat the whole house if you spend all day in one room. Use radiator thermostats to set the temperature of each individual room.
- Close your curtains at night
- Turn off lights when you leave a room
- Wait to fill the dishwasher up and cut down on machine use
- Use 'eco' mode on appliances where possible
- Decent draught-proofing can cut 2% off energy bills
- Do full laundry loads – half loads save very little energy
- Fill your kettle just to the level you need it, not up to the top
- Switch to LED bulbs
- Don't use standby mode – unless switched off at the wall, appliances can continue to use energy

Citizens Advice in Lewes District

Citizens Advice provides trusted, free and confidential advice to help with your problems, including debt, consumer issues such as difficulties with bills, employment, benefits, housing and much more.

The service is currently operating a mix of face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and email assistance.

Citizens Advice Newhaven headquarters at 15-19 Chapel Street (BN9 9PN) is open for pre-booked appointments from Tuesdays to Thursdays. This is in addition to telephone and email assistance five days a week.

Drop-in surgeries are due to open soon in Lewes and Seaford and the Citizens Advice Peacehaven office will re-open shortly for booked appointments.

Phone the Adviceline on **0808 278 7892** (freephone) for direct access to an adviser.

Or call locally on **01273 007557** and leave a message. An adviser will try to call you back within three to four working days.

Email: info@lewesCA.onmicrosoft.com

Website: citizensadvice.org.uk

Combatting the cost of living crisis: financial assistance



Help if you are struggling to pay your Council Tax or need to claim Housing Benefit

Help if you are struggling to pay your Council Tax or need to claim Housing Benefit.

Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible to claim Housing Benefit, which helps people on low income pay their rent, or a reduction on your Council Tax.

Visit: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction

Exceptional hardship payments

The exceptional hardship payment fund has been set up to support our most vulnerable residents who have seen a reduction in the government support which helped to pay their Council Tax or are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances.

Visit: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/EHP

Help if you might get evicted

Discretionary housing payments help those who are in receipt of Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit (UC) to meet the cost of their rent. This is normally awarded where there is a shortfall between the eligible rent and Housing Benefit or UC.

Visit: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/DHP

Household support fund

You can get help with food costs and utility bills for any form of fuel that is used for domestic heating, cooking or lighting. Residents who receive means-tested benefits (including Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Working Tax Credit) can apply.

Funds are allocated on a first come, first served basis, so apply as soon as possible.

Visit: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF



“The cost of living crisis is unprecedented in our lifetimes, but as a council our priority will always be those in most need across Lewes district.”

Councillor Johnny Denis, Cabinet Member for Communities and Customers

Combating the cost of living crisis: food



With rising food prices, some people are finding it difficult to feed themselves and their families properly. If you need help, please access the support below.

For more information visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/help-with-food](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/help-with-food)

Food banks

If you are struggling to afford food, food banks could help.

Contact your local Citizens Advice (see page 6) to speak about your financial circumstances and they can issue you with a food voucher to use at some food banks. If for any reason you can't be supported by your local Citizens Advice, then community hubs, voluntary and community sector organisations and local authorities can also refer people to food banks.

Once you have been issued with a voucher, you can exchange this for a minimum of three days of

emergency food at your nearest food bank.

Free school meals

Your child may be eligible for free school meals.

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

The Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) provides emergency help in certain situations. It does not provide cash or loans but may provide the food or utilities that you need. Your household will usually only be able to receive support from the scheme once in 12 months.

Lewes District Food Partnership

A new district-wide initiative about food is looking for members of the community to get involved. Its aim is to set up a cross-sector food partnership that will work together to improve local food security.



“Speaking to local people, I understand the huge pressure caused by increases in food prices and encourage those who need help to seek the support they need; they are not alone.”

Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Devolution

Community fridges and pantries

Community fridges and pantries redistribute surplus food from local shops and producers. Food is available for free to the whole community on a first come, first served basis.

Havens Food Cooperative

Located at 2a Thompson Road, Denton, BN9 0RS.
Open every day, 365 days a year, from 9am.

Website: havenscommunityhub.co.uk/foodcoop

Social media: [@havensfoodcooperative](https://www.facebook.com/havensfoodcooperative)

Email: havenscommunityhub@gmail.com

Landport Community Café

Located at 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes, BN7 2TA.
Open on Fridays from 5pm to 7pm.

Social media: [facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/LandportCommunityCafe/)

[LandportCommunityCafe/](https://www.facebook.com/LandportCommunityCafe/)

Phone: **07598 087455**

Email: landportcommunitycafe@gmail.com

Additionally, Landport Community Café offers meals on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

Community Supermarkets

Community Supermarkets are a membership scheme. There are no criteria to join and once you are a member you can come for as long as you like.

Food and other essential items are available on a pay-as-you-feel basis. Both Newhaven and Peacehaven Community Supermarkets also provide tea and coffee, and advice workers also offer drop-in support and help with benefits, housing and wellbeing. Some people may be eligible for food deliveries.

Newhaven Community Supermarket

Located at Denton Island Community Centre.
Opening hours are Mondays 11am to 3pm.

Website: sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/community-food/

Social media: [@seahavenfood](https://www.facebook.com/seahavenfood) on Facebook and Instagram

Phone: **01273 516032**

Email: food@sussexcommunity.org.uk

Peacehaven Community Supermarket

Located at Kempton House Day Centre. Opening hours are Thursdays from 11am to 3pm.

Website: sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/community-food/

Social media: [@seahavenfood](https://www.facebook.com/seahavenfood) on Facebook and Instagram

Phone: **01273 516032**

Email: food@sussexcommunity.org.uk

See our back cover for a budget meal recipe from Landport Food Bank.



“We want food poverty to be eradicated. Our thanks to these community food services for their fantastic work.”

Councillor Chris Collier, Cabinet Member for Performance and People

Making a difference across our district: nature



New programme of community projects

Lewes District Council is driving forward with an ambitious and far-reaching programme of community projects that will see a host of new developments and improvements across the district over the next 12 months and beyond.

These projects include a renewal of play areas, new sports facilities, green initiatives that will increase

biodiversity in the district, tackle the impact of climate change and help the council become carbon net zero by 2030.

There will also be greater access to the countryside, a new wetland and wildflower meadows created, and enhancements in local parks and gardens.

For more details about any of these council projects please visit [makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com](https://www.makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com)



“Enjoying the great outdoors brings so many benefits, not least for people’s health and wellbeing, and we are looking at various ways to ensure that even more residents can access the wonderful countryside in Lewes district.”

Councillor Julie Carr, Cabinet Member for Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces



Helping wildlife is second nature

The scale of the crisis facing our insect life couldn't be more stark. Studies have shown a 76% decline in flying insects, including the pollinators that play such a vital role in the world's food production.

In response, the Co-operative Alliance launched a pollinator strategy, pesticide reduction policy, a climate change and sustainability strategy and biodiversity strategy.

The pollinator strategy puts the focus on nature-based solutions and opportunities for natural regeneration, increasing biodiversity on council land, enabling community-led and nature-based projects and maximising opportunities for gains in

biodiversity on all new developments.

One example of how the council is encouraging pollinator-friendly plants and habitats can be seen and enjoyed at the Downs Leisure Centre in Seaford, where council officers have created a new wildflower meadow.

The council is mowing grass less often to allow wildflowers to develop and wildlife to move in.

It has reduced mowing in a number of areas, including the Peacehaven and Telscombe cliff top, where new wildflowers are already developing. This is great news for bees and other pollinators who need this food source, especially early in the year when other sources of food are scarce.



“Our drive to become climate resilient has to be all-encompassing, from action on the ground to putting council policies in place.

“Thanks to new planning policies, sustainability and biodiversity are now central considerations for every major development in the district.”

Councillor Stephen Gauntlett, Cabinet Member for Planning

Making a difference across our district: play and recreation



Making play a priority

The council is spending £400,000 over the next two years on bringing play areas up to the high standards residents expect.

The work has already started, with play area plans being drawn up and user group consultation underway.

Play areas in Ditchling, Newhaven, Lewes,

Peacehaven, Seaford, South Chailey and Ringmer will all see upgrades and equipment replaced.

Some 20 play areas across Lewes district are to be renewed.

The play areas will be designed to be all-inclusive and to provide a range of play facilities for different age groups, depending on the area where they are located.



“Local play areas in Lewes district have suffered from underinvestment and I have made it a top priority to commit significant funding to improving them for local families.”

Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council



Transforming Newhaven Recreation Ground

The council has secured £2.4 million from the Towns Fund to undertake major improvements across Newhaven Recreation Ground in Fort Road.

A dedicated council officer has been employed to focus on this transformative project and designs will soon be shared, showing how the existing buildings will be redeveloped, and how the park will

be remodelled to accommodate new recreation opportunities and a new playground.

Following consultation with local stakeholders a planning application will be submitted. It is hoped work will be completed in 2024.

This extensive redevelopment follows the creation of a very popular pump track and complete rebuild of the skate park.



“I came into politics to make a difference in towns and villages across the district; it gives me great pride to know this investment is going to bring great improvements to our recreation ground. Living in Newhaven with two young children I know how important this facility is to local people.”

Councillor James MacCleary, Deputy Leader of Lewes District Council



Coastal management in action

The chalk cliffs provide magnificent views and are in themselves a stunning part of the natural scenery in the district. However, they are also vulnerable to erosion from sea, storm force winds and rain.

While it is central government's responsibility to make the country more resilient and reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion, Lewes District Council is working with the Environment Agency and other key partners to understand the risks posed by sea level rise and climate change along our coast.

The council is also investing in existing coastal defences at Peacehaven and East Saltdean, ensuring they are maintained and repaired to maximise their life expectancy.

Following the winter storms, which cause ongoing wear and tear, council officers undertake extensive surveys to monitor and plan repairs. The works are prioritised according to the hazards and risks posed.

The works this year are likely to focus on repairs behind the sea wall to ensure the integrity of the defences when waves pound these structures.

Putting your safety first

The council positions safety buoys in the sea at Seaford, Newhaven and East Saltdean, marking the limits where boats with motors may approach the shore. This helps protect those swimming and paddling.

It also provides life belts along the coast and at key points in Lewes. These life belts save lives but are occasionally stolen or damaged. If you see anyone interfering with them please contact Sussex Police on 101 and report it.

The council supports the Seaford lifeguard and Newhaven National Coastal Institution to help those using the coast for recreation to do so in a safe way.

It helps to coordinate and support initiatives that improve water and cliff top safety along the coast from Eastbourne to East Saltdean, providing clear and precise messages about how to treat the coast with respect and enjoy it safely.

Along the entire coast, working with key landowners, the council will be installing new signs reflecting the changing hazards along our dynamic coastline at key locations.



Managing our natural environment

Climate change is bringing more frequent periods of intense and heavy rain that can cause serious flooding and damage to property. Working with the Sussex Flow Initiative and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, along with a range of other partners, including landowners, the council is implementing natural methods of flood management to reduce this risk, increase biodiversity, improve water quality and help make our district climate resilient. One practical method has been the building of numerous leaky dams across the catchment, including Chailey Common, Plashett Wood near Isfield, Hoath Wood above Newhaven, and West Wood near Wivelsfield. Leaky dams are a natural flood management method that involve positioning branches and twigs across channels and flow

paths to help slow the flow and hold water in the landscape, and then draining the water when flood flows have passed.

On the outskirts of Lewes the council is managing a project that will see the realignment of a local stream and the creation of a new wetland habitat. The project is a partnership between the council, Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust and South Downs National Park Authority and will bring huge biodiversity benefits and reduce flood risk in the area. Adjacent to the Lewes Brooks, the Cockshut is a chalk stream that is currently clogged up by a non-native invasive plant called parrot's feather. By realigning the stream, the old channel can be filled in, eradicating the problem plant, and the stream will flow into a newly created wetland.



“Instigating nature-based solutions to climate change is a vital part of our plans. The creation of this new habitat will help support wildlife and nature at a time when they are facing huge threats and ensure that this landscape is resilient to flooding and other climate change impacts.”

Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability



An idea for cooking a healthy meal on a budget

Easy Sausage and Bean Casserole

Recipe from Debbie Twitchen at Landport Food Bank

Serves: 4 people

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

Ingredients

1 tablespoon oil
8 sausages (meat/vegetarian/vegan)
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
800g cannellini (or other beans), drained
3 tablespoons tomato puree
1 stock cube
1 tablespoon brown sugar
400g chopped tomatoes
150ml of hot water

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and brown the sausages. Stir in the onion and allow to cook for five minutes.
2. Add the garlic and cook for a further three minutes.
3. Add all the other ingredients to the pan.
4. Bring to the boil and then reduce the heat. Allow to simmer for one hour, with occasional stirring to prevent food sticking to the pan.
5. Serve with rice or mashed potatoes.