

JUNE 2025 | #DISTRICTNEWS

# DN

MAGAZINE

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**New pumptrack in Lewes**

**Swimmers welcome Ringmer Pool re-opening**

NEWS FROM ACROSS  
THE LEWES DISTRICT



Lewes District Council

# Hello

Welcome to the June  
2025 edition of DN,  
brought to you by  
Lewes District Council

We are always working hard to improve the lives of residents across the district, from investing in local amenities to delivering on our commitment to providing much-needed homes and enhancing the environment in which we live.

Knowing how important leisure facilities are to our communities, it's fantastic to see Ringmer Pool re-opening. In Lewes, the new pumptrack at Landport Recreation Ground is already a popular attraction for young people – perfect timing as we enter the summer months.

Providing quality housing for our residents remains a key priority. We're making innovative use of brownfield sites, transforming garage areas that are no longer fit for purpose into much-needed

affordable homes. This approach allows us to deliver new homes while making the most of existing resources, contributing to the growing pipeline of council properties we are developing.

We love living in Lewes district and we take the responsibility of maintaining a clean, pleasant environment very seriously. That's why we've invested in six new fully electric vehicles to clean the district's streets – see inside about how they are also helping us drive down emissions and work towards our net zero target.

I hope you enjoy reading about a selection of other council initiatives in this edition of DN as we continue to work for the benefit of everyone in Lewes district.



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

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# New pumptrack opens at Landport Recreation Ground



**A new pumptrack at Landport Recreation Ground in Lewes is proving popular with skaters, cyclists, BMX and scooter riders.**

Clark & Kent Contractors, the specialist team that built the London 2012 Olympic BMX track and, more recently, Newhaven Skatepark and Pumptrack, this time brought their expertise to Lewes to construct the pumptrack.

Opened in April, the project was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, community infrastructure levy from the South Downs National Park and Lewes District Council.

A consultation with the local community was held last year and feedback from that helped shaped the design. The council has also enabled local residents to get involved in a DIY style build to the skatepark. A pumptrack is a circuit designed primarily for the use of BMX bikes, allowing riders to race at speed using their body weight to 'pump' themselves around the track.

Alongside this new facility, the council has also recently made improvements to the skatepark and to the biodiversity of the recreation grounds with new 500 m<sup>2</sup> of wildflower margin areas. Bird boxes and solitary bee hotels were added throughout, creating pollinator-friendly zones and boosting the natural side of the park.



**"It's great to see so many bike and scooter riders enjoying this fantastic new pumptrack; it's a welcome addition to Landport."**

**"I am thrilled to see the further improvements at the recreation ground, making it an even more vibrant place for recreation in Lewes."**

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

# Community celebrates re-opening of Ringmer Pool



## Ringmer Pool will re-open on Saturday, June 14, welcoming back swimmers of all ages.

A collaborative effort has paved the way for the pool to be brought back into use for the benefit of the community.

Following a public consultation, its operation has been transferred from East Sussex County Council to Lewes District Council, and Wave Active now runs the pool on behalf of the district council.

Lewes District Council has invested £100,000 in Ringmer Pool as part of a £3 million council investment programme in local leisure services.

Councillor Nick Bennett, Lead Member for Resources at East Sussex County Council, said the re-opening is “great news for the local community”.

Duncan Kerr, CEO of Wave Active, said: “This pool is a wonderful asset for people in Ringmer and the surrounding area and I am delighted that very soon we will be welcoming people through its doors again.

“Along with partners, we have been working hard to get the pool ready and really hope many local residents visit regularly to support the pool, their health and enjoy swimming.”

For more information visit [waveactive.org/locations/lewes-district/ringmer-swimming-pool](https://waveactive.org/locations/lewes-district/ringmer-swimming-pool)



“Ringmer Pool was initially built thanks to the hard work and fundraising of local people and it’s really exciting to be bringing it back for the whole community.

“I am delighted we stepped in to get the pool up and running again and ensure it stays in operation for the future health, wellbeing and enjoyment of young and old.”

**Councillor Johnny Denis, Cabinet Member for Tourism & Leisure**



# Peacehaven public toilets transformed



**Public toilets in Roderick Avenue, Peacehaven, have been refurbished after they were damaged in an arson attack.**

Alongside the wider renovations and redecorations, disability support features have been added, new baby changing units have been installed in both the ladies' and gents' facilities and security has been enhanced.

Outside, overhead lighting and new bicycle stands have been installed, and native wild thyme has been planted near the bike racks. This area is a 'test bed' to see if low-maintenance native plants can be used to enhance, and in some cases, replace, hardstanding to improve both appearance and drainage without increasing costs.

This refurbishment is part of Lewes District Council's commitment to providing facilities that meet public needs.

# Lewes wetland inspires UNESCO Biospheres



**Representatives from UNESCO Biospheres across the UK and Ireland recently toured Lewes's new wetland to learn about the flagship project hailed for its biodiversity regeneration and enhanced flood resilience.**

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are designated learning places for sustainable development and include The Living Coast - the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere, which stretches from Newhaven to Shoreham-By-Sea.

Lewes District Council and Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, two of the partners involved in the project to realign the Cockshut chalk stream and create the 6.8 hectares of wetland in Lewes Brooks, hosted the tour.

Last year, the Cockshut Stream Restoration scooped two awards in the South Downs National Park Design Awards.

# Lewes district blooms brighter with new wildflower initiative

**Residents across Lewes district are set to enjoy an even more vibrant and wildlife-friendly environment this summer thanks to an exciting new phase in the council's wildflower strategy.**

Building upon several years of successful wildflower management, the council is trialling a diverse new mix of native British wildflowers in green spaces of varying sizes from large expanses in parks to smaller roadside areas.

This year's initiative introduces a carefully selected blend of more than 25 annual and perennial native wildflower species. This long-term commitment aims to establish richer, more resilient wildflower areas that will significantly enhance their ecological value, particularly for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The inclusion of perennial species will also contribute to a more sustainable and cost-effective approach to land management in the long run.

The new wildflower mix features a variety of local iconic species including Bird's-foot trefoil, Selfheal, Agrimony, Knapweed, Field Scabious, Kidney vetch and Viper's Bugloss.

This enhanced biodiversity will not only create brighter displays but also provide crucial food sources and habitats for pollinators, supporting vital B-lines – ecological corridors that connect wildflower-rich areas, allowing pollinators to move freely and thrive. The seeds for this year's enhanced wildflower areas were planted in the spring, and the first blooms are now beginning to appear, promising a colourful summer ahead.



**“This exciting wildflower initiative represents a significant step forward in our long-term commitment to enhancing biodiversity and creating thriving green spaces for both our residents and our wildlife. By introducing a more diverse and resilient mix of native wildflowers, we are enriching our urban meadows, providing vital support for pollinators and creating beautiful, sustainable environments across Lewes district.”**

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



# Progress at Newhaven Square redevelopment

Hoarding at the Newhaven Square redevelopment

## The Newhaven Square redevelopment is taking shape with construction of a new roof for Quayside Medical Practice well underway.

New hoarding, bearing artwork from a local graphic designer, has been put up around the entire site while building work is being carried out.

The redevelopment marks a new era for primary healthcare in Newhaven, creating a new Health & Wellbeing Hub. It will include new premises for two GP practices – Quayside Medical Practice and Chapel Street Surgery – and the further development of the Primary Care Network, a new pharmacy and the expansion of Wave Active at Seahaven Swim & Fitness and its partnership with healthcare to support those with health conditions and the rehabilitation of patients.

A creative hub will also be developed to provide space for co-working and start-up businesses.

Completion is on track for autumn 2026.

## West Beach redevelopment moves ahead

Contractors will soon be invited to tender for the redevelopment of West Beach Promenade, a key

project in the rejuvenation of Newhaven.

This exciting scheme includes the construction of a new restaurant with a children's play area, splash pad, outdoor gym, public toilets and Changing Places facility, alongside extensive landscaping and upgrades to footpaths leading to the site.

The new structure will incorporate environmentally friendly features such as a biodiverse green roof along with solar panels and air source heat pumps.

There will also be enhancements to the local ecology including protecting and creating more coastal vegetated shingle habitat, which are important for supporting unique plants, wildlife and helping to stabilise the shoreline.

The redevelopment of West Beach Promenade is set to attract visitors from far and wide, providing a huge boost to the local economy.

## Newhaven North by-election

Voters went to the polls to elect a new district councillor for the Newhaven North ward on May 29. Visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/elections](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/elections) to see the full results.



# Newly restored Newhaven Fort ready for summer



**Newhaven Fort is gearing up for a bumper summer season following a transformative £7.5 million programme of repairs and restoration, funded by UK Government with investment secured by Lewes District Council.**

The 19th-century fort now features a new adventure playground – complete with a giant tubular slide and lookout tower – which has proved hugely popular, alongside enhanced exhibitions and an exciting 1970s-themed escape room.

Visitors can explore previously hidden parts of the fort including a newly accessible Battery Observation Post, which offers panoramic views of the Sussex coastline.

The Romney Hut in the fort’s parade square has been re-clad and insulated, providing a versatile event space for school activities, weddings, community events, corporate hire and more.

Meanwhile, each of the fort’s 18 casemates – vaults within the site – have been revamped to serve as engaging exhibition areas, with two casemates available for venue hire.

Additionally, the fort hosts a vibrant programme of events, including workshops, guided tours, exhibitions and talks.

Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive of Wave Active, the operators of Newhaven Fort, said: “Newhaven Fort truly offers something for everyone — whether it’s a fun family outing, an immersive journey through history, a quiet coffee break or simply a chance to take in the stunning coastal views. Book online now for a great summer day out.”

Alongside a new café run by the Cadence Cycle Club, visitor facilities have been upgraded, including the gift shop and toilets, with improved accessibility and updated signage across the fort.

Booking is essential. For more information or to book tickets – which are valid for 12 months, allowing repeat visits – go to [newhavenfort.org.uk](https://newhavenfort.org.uk)



“Newhaven Fort is a unique landmark, and many key features have been safeguarded through this extensive preservation work that has included structural and drainage repairs, brickwork repointing and electrical and ventilation system upgrades.”

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

# Driving down emissions with a UK first



**The council has taken delivery of six new fully electric vehicles that are cleansing the district's streets and making a significant contribution to the authority's 2030 net zero carbon target.**

Included in the new fleet is a first for the UK. A groundbreaking zero-emissions EV street sweeper – capable of a 200 km range per charge and carrying 5,000 litres of waste – is making its UK debut in Lewes district. The sweeper also carries 880 litres

of water to reduce dust during the sweeping process and can pressure wash surfaces if required.

Through a wide range of initiatives and changes in the way the authority operates, Lewes District Council has managed to reduce its carbon emissions by 41% and greenhouse gas emissions by 17.6%.

Councillor Wendy Maples, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing, said:

"I'm delighted with our progress so far in reaching our 2030 targets. The council is directly responsible for less than 1% of the carbon emissions in the district, so – to achieve the more sustainable future that we all want to see – we are also working to support residents, businesses and community partners to drive down emissions.

"Huge thanks for all the super efforts, including things like putting banana peels in your food waste caddy and making full use of your recycling bin."

Lewes District Council introduced a fleet of all-electric vehicles to collect food waste from homes across the district – another significant step towards its net zero carbon target.

**"An ultra-low emission fleet of council vehicles is a top priority within our climate and nature strategy, and with these new EVs we are taking a major step towards achieving that goal.**

**"These super modern vehicles include the latest driver and safety technology, are clean, green and quiet as they efficiently cleanse the district's streets."**



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



# Council champions care for the River Ouse



**In response to widespread concern about the health of our rivers and seas, Lewes District Council has taken a significant step forward in protecting the River Ouse.**

The council has been working closely with local groups and residents to champion a new set of fundamental rights for the river.

This 'Rights of River Charter' recognises that the River Ouse, like all living things, deserves to be healthy and free from pollution. Developed in strong collaboration with Love Our Ouse and other community organisations, the Charter outlines eight key rights for the river including the right to be free from pollution, its vital role in supporting all life including humans, and its

right to a thriving natural environment.

To help shape the Charter, Love Our Ouse ran a programme of consultation events including community mapping sessions and public workshops along the river, to gather the views and ideas of local people.

The council is committed to improving the health of district waterways and has worked with partners such as Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust for many years. This new Charter builds on that work, strengthening the protection of the River Ouse for future generations and reflecting the care in our community for waterways across Lewes district.



**"This pioneering Charter is the result of collaboration involving numerous working partners, each with a shared purpose and determination to enshrine the importance of the River Ouse for generations to come.**

**"It is a very proud moment for me and many others to celebrate this Charter for a landmark waterway that has such resonance and influence in Lewes district, and I hope that our council's support will mark another step on the journey to change the conversation, so that one day a change in the law will mean the interests of nature are fully recognised."**

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



# Plans for new council homes on garage sites



Architect's image of the redevelopment in Western Road, Newhaven. Credit: Mohsin Cooper Architects Ltd

**The council has submitted planning applications to transform 10 garage sites that are no longer fit for purpose into high-quality affordable homes for local people on the housing register.**

These plans for brownfield sites are yet another way the council is delivering a pipeline of housing projects to meet high demand in Lewes district.

Three of the applications have already been approved. These are for the redevelopment of 30 garages into five one-bedroom houses in Western Road, Newhaven; the transformation of five garages into three two-bedroom houses in Valley Road, Newhaven; and creating two two-bedroom houses on the site of 12 old garages in Chandlers Mead, Cooksbridge.

Detailed design work and tendering for a main contractor will now go ahead on these sites.

The remaining seven sites are under consideration by South Downs National Park Authority – for full details visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDCGarageSites](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDCGarageSites)

Meanwhile, groundworks are being carried out at a Ringmer site formerly occupied by garages, ahead of three modular homes being delivered there this summer.

The three-bedroom homes in Broyle Close for people on the housing register are being constructed to exacting energy performance specifications, including solar PV systems and air source heat pumps to keep running costs low for residents.

Sixteen garages that were no longer fit for purpose were demolished to make way for the new homes which will be completed in early 2026.

The homes are being built by Boutique Modern as part of a four-year framework agreement to deliver council homes across Lewes district. Manufactured offsite at a Newhaven factory, the completed homes are then transported and installed onsite, reducing the impact on the environment and build-time of the development.

# Council scheme is great news for tenants and the climate



**A council project to decarbonise council homes is making a 'positive difference' as 267 properties across Lewes district are being retrofitted to improve energy performance and reduce carbon emissions.**

The sustainability improvements include solar PV, loft insulation, window and door upgrades, draughtproofing, wall insulation and air source heat pumps, and was made possible by a council investment of £2.7 million and a £2 million government grant.

The work being undertaken follows an in-depth study by council officers that looked at the most

realistic and cost-effective decarbonisation solutions.

Councillor Mark Slater, Cabinet Member for Housing, visited a council home in Cooksbridge where the heating system has been upgraded and solar PV and loft insulation installed. He said:

"I was pleased to meet Mrs Tozer and the team from CDS Electrical and hear about all the sustainability improvements that have been carried out on the property.

"With lower energy bills making a positive difference for tenants and progress towards the council's net zero carbon target by 2030, this project is great news for everyone."

"The commitment of our council and the incredible efforts of the teams involved are helping us create a more sustainable future.

"We want to create a better quality of life for our tenants and set a benchmark for environmental responsibility in local communities."

**Councillor Mark Slater, Cabinet Member for Housing**



Additionally, the Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) have secured an extra £300,000 this year to help prevent damp and mould, on top of the work currently carried out by the council on this.

# Support for residents on low incomes



**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://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction)**

If you are having difficulty paying your rent and you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, you can apply for a discretionary housing payment. Visit: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/DHP](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/DHP)

For details about the government's Household Support Fund please visit: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSF)

**"Prices are still rising as the cost-of-living crisis continues, and many people are still struggling with the impact on their budgets, so please get this extra support if you need it."**

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



If there is a risk your power will be cut off, you are advised to 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**. For information, visit [ehu.org.uk](https://ehu.org.uk) or contact your Citizens Advice office.

## Help with buying food

If you are unable to afford food, local community food projects might be able to help. Contact Lewes District Citizens Advice (see back page) to discuss your situation.

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



# Have your say on local government reorganisation



**Residents across East Sussex are being invited to take part in a consultation that will help reshape local government and how services are run in the future.**

The government wants to reorganise local government in East Sussex and has announced that East Sussex will be part of a Devolution Priority Programme. There are various options for how this could happen, and residents are now being asked for their views.

The new council arrangements are expected to be operational in 2028.

Lewes District Council has been working closely with the county's other local authorities – Eastbourne Borough, Hastings Borough, Rother District, Wealden District and East Sussex County councils – on the reorganisation plans and would now like to receive people's views about it.

Survey responses will be crucial in shaping a final proposal that will be presented in September for government to make a decision on how local government in East Sussex will operate in the future.

The consultation is available to complete online at [smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EastSussexLGR](https://smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EastSussexLGR) until Monday, June 23.

More information about Local Government Reorganisation in East Sussex can be found at [eastsussexcouncils.org](https://eastsussexcouncils.org)

An additional change is also underway, with the formation of a strategic authority for the whole of Sussex from May 2026, led by an elected Mayor.

This body will have strategic regional powers covering areas such as transport, regeneration, climate change and public safety.

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

- Benefits – help with all benefits and it has a team of specialist benefit caseworkers
- 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
- Specialist advice for autistic adults

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, Wednesdays and Thursdays 10am-3pm).

### Opening hours

Prior appointments only, excluding Peacehaven, which is a drop-in service, no appointment necessary.

<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>Every</b> <b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Peacehaven</b> Meridian Centre BN10 8BL	10am - 12pm 1pm - 3pm
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Lewes</b> 6 High Street	10am - 3.30pm

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)

A rural outreach drop-in service operates at venues across Lewes district including Ringmer, Chailey, Bishopstone and Newick, no appointment is necessary. Visit [lewesdistrictca.org.uk/community-outreach](https://www.lewesdistrictca.org.uk/community-outreach) for more information.

Lewes District Citizens Advice work in partnership with Lewes District Council | Charity registration number: 1068146