

AUTUMN 2025 | #DISTRICTNEWS

DN

MAGAZINE

In this issue:

Leader condemns 'Brighton takeover' bid
Artwave 2025 ready to launch

NEWS FROM ACROSS
THE LEWES DISTRICT



Lewes District Council

Hello

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

At the time of writing, I am deeply concerned, on various levels, by Brighton & Hove City Council's (BHCC's) proposals to take over parts of our district.

We are well aware of the housing crisis affecting our cities, including Brighton. However, solutions must be found within the city's brownfield sites, not in the green spaces of neighbouring boroughs and districts.

This proposed 'Brighton takeover' threatens the unique identities of our villages and coastal towns, potentially turning them into suburbs of a sprawling mega-city. I know many residents feel strongly against this.

If you'd like to support our petition to prevent this from happening, visit chng.it/fw2NmxT6D. I

passionately believe residents deserve a say in their own future, and that voice must be heard.

As we head into autumn, I urge everyone to enjoy the fantastic Artwave festival. Now in its 32nd year, Artwave celebrates the incredible creative talent across our district, with more than 160 free-to-visit exhibitions and open studios. It's a brilliant opportunity to discover new work and connect with local artists and makers.

Finally, don't miss the immersive exhibition celebrating 200 years of the Newhaven to Dieppe ferry line, arriving in Newhaven this autumn. This historic connection has profoundly shaped our district, and the exhibition offers a compelling look at the stories of those who travelled and worked aboard these iconic cross-channel ferries.



Councillor Zoe Nicholson
Leader of Lewes District Council

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Cover: Rust and Water by Graham Sendall. Visit Graham at Venue 88, in Lewes, during Artwave 2025. artwavefestival.org

Triple delight as Cockshut project scoops more awards



From l to r: Helen Meade, CEO of Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust; Peter King, Director of the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust; and Cllr O'Brien with the three Sussex Heritage Trust awards at the Cockshut wetlands

The collaborative efforts behind the Cockshut Restoration Project were celebrated when the scheme proudly took home three prestigious accolades at the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards 2025.

The project, a partnership between Lewes District Council, the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART), and the Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust, was recognised for its outstanding achievements in landscape, ecology, and its positive impact on the South Downs.

It involved the realignment of the Cockshut chalk stream and the creation of six hectares of wetland within Lewes Brooks, which is now a vital habitat for a wide array of wildlife, including herons, kingfishers, egrets and many species of

dragonflies, as well as a popular spot for local residents to enjoy nature.

The scheme received the Landscape and Gardens Award, the ECO Award, and the South Downs Award, adding to its previous honours including the South Downs National Park 2024 Design Awards for Landscape and the coveted People's Choice Award.

Judges praised the Cockshut Restoration Project for its 'remarkable creation of a chalk stream wetland with community, council and water management teams,' and said it was 'a model project in managing a process to maximise diversity'.

Peter King, Director of the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust, said "Collecting three awards was wholly

unexpected and is a testament to the hard work of everyone involved in the project from its initial conception all the way through to now."

"This project truly embodies what we can achieve when we work together — it's a shining example of how strong partnerships can deliver incredible results for nature and our community."



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

Funding for the project was provided by South Downs National Park Authority, Veolia Environmental Trust and Lewes District Council.

Do you want to become a Brighton resident?



Brighton & Hove City Council is considering plans to take over parts of Lewes district.

The move is its response to the government’s Local Government Reorganisation. In response, Lewes District Council held its own consultation on the Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) proposals.

Local Government Reorganisation will see new unitary councils established across East and

West Sussex, including Brighton & Hove. A unitary council provides all the public services that are currently split between district/borough councils and the county council.

Lewes District Council has also launched a petition for residents to sign if they want to remain residents of Lewes district – chng.it/fW2NnmXt6D



“The UK’s housing crisis is better described as an affordable housing crisis, most obviously solved by building more council homes on brownfield sites and ending the right to buy scheme.

“Lewes District Council is one of the few councils in the UK that is building council homes. Up to 2024, we’ve built and acquired up to 250 homes and have another 200 in the pipeline. Additionally, every brownfield site in the district that isn’t earmarked for commercial development, is designated in our Local Plan for new homes.

“The green spaces in between our coastal towns are not the answer to any housing crisis. These are critically important areas that bring huge benefits to local communities, and I will resist any proposals that might jeopardise that.”

Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council

Marking 25 years since the devastating Lewes floods

Flood damage at Harvey's Brewery in Lewes

This October marks the 25th anniversary of the 2000 Lewes floods when – following days of very heavy rain – the River Ouse burst its banks, devastating over 600 homes and 300 businesses.

The collective response by the town to support those affected – including from emergency services, the RNLI, local voluntary groups and individual residents – was inspiring. Many people have vivid memories from those days and the weeks and months that followed.

On Saturday 1 November, free anniversary events are being held at Lewes Town Hall to commemorate the 2000 floods and explore what needs to be done to prepare for flood risk in the future.

The day will include:

- An exhibition curated by The Friends of Lewes featuring local people's images, artefacts and audio memories from the 2000 floods.
- Talks, stalls and activities for all ages, including interactive flood mapping, the Lego Flood House, and a puppet show.
- A public meeting, from 2pm to 4pm, with a panel of experts, chaired by former Lewes MP Norman Baker, to discuss the cause of the floods, current risks and actions needed for flood resilience in the future.

Everyone is warmly invited to attend. A Flood Symposium specifically for emergency, environmental and flood professionals is also being held on Friday 31 October – email lewesfloods@lewes-tc.gov.uk to attend.

“The 2000 Lewes floods left a lasting impact. Now, twenty-five years later, we’re embracing a meaningful chance to revisit the past, consider lessons learned, and explore how individuals, communities, first responders, and local councils can better face future flood risks.

“Experts from across the country will join a Town Hall session in the afternoon to share insights and respond to public concerns. Throughout the day, there will be hands-on resilience workshops and displays celebrating Lewes’s remarkable strength and unity during and after the October 2000 floods.”

Councillor Laurence O’Connor, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure



New generation showcase creative talents at Artwave



Artwave festival is returning for its 32nd year with more than 160 free-to-visit exhibitions and open studios across Lewes district.

People can enjoy art trails between 6 and 21 September and discover work by almost 1,000 artists and makers within this hugely creative corner of the county.

Continuing its founding mission 'to make the arts accessible to all', Artwave welcomes a new generation of young creatives this year, with 20 venues featuring work by artists aged under 25.

Priory School exhibits at Lewes Town Hall, the second 'Wonderfully Surreal' Student's Exhibition from the Farley Arts Trust will be at Newhaven's Marine Workshops, as will a Young Makers' Market.

Artists aged 14-25 are invited to join the Emerging Sussex Open Call, organised by Hospitable Environment and Talent Accelerator. Visit hospitable-environment.com for information.

Pick up a printed Artwave guide from Lewes, Newhaven or Seaford Tourist Information Centres, from Charleston Lewes, or browse the guide

online at artwavefestival.org

This year, some venues will be opening for both Artwave and Heritage Open Days – a nationwide festival of history and culture running between 12 and 21 September. For more information, visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk/ or email Kelly.VanDoorn@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Artwave is brought to you by Visit Lewes on behalf of Lewes District Council and supported by generous local businesses, with particular thanks to the 2025 headline sponsor Gorrings's.

Enjoy Gorrings's Friday late event with a DJ and bar from 5pm to 7pm on 12 September, at their auction rooms, 15 North Street, Lewes, BN7 2PE.



"I love Artwave! It's such a great opportunity for our artists to showcase their work to the wider public, and for visitors it's a fabulous chance to seek out a wide range of art right across, and even beyond, the district. With our focus on widening participation this year, I can't wait to see what the rising generation of younger artists have in store for us."

Councillor Johnny Denis,
Cabinet Member for Arts, Culture, Tourism & Leisure

Young people enjoy playground makeover



Cllr Janet Baah (left) and Cllr Wendy Maples (right) at Harvard Close playground

Harvard Close playground in Lewes has undergone a comprehensive upgrade, with the replacement of some old equipment and new life breathed into others.

The revitalised playground boasts a range of exciting new features including a trampoline, scramble climber, spinning bowl, talking tubes and a basket swing, which is hugely popular.

Additionally, colourful floor markings now adorn the entrance to the play area and new surfacing has been laid.

The upgrade to Harvard Close playground follows a £400,000 council investment into improving playgrounds across Lewes district.

Family fun at The Sidings

This month (August) and September, The Sidings in Newhaven hosts FREE FORM, a new family-friendly, interactive art installation by Leap Then

Look. Families are invited to visit The Sidings courtyard every Saturday and Sunday from 2-5pm until 28 September to enjoy it.

Bicentennial ferry exhibition set to arrive in Newhaven

Newhaven residents and visitors can look forward to a unique historical experience this autumn as an immersive exhibition celebrating 200 years of the Newhaven to Dieppe ferry line makes its way to the town.

The free exhibition, which officially launched in Rouen in June, tells the fascinating stories of those who travelled and worked on the iconic cross-channel ferries.

Presented by Seine-Maritime County Council and Transmanche Ferries, this milestone celebration has already been showcased in Seine-Maritime County Hall and is currently at Dieppe Town Hall. It will then, fittingly, cross the English Channel to be housed in the Marine Workshops in Newhaven from early October.

Revitalising Newhaven town centre



Plans for the regeneration of Newhaven town centre

Residents and businesses in Newhaven have welcomed exciting new designs that are set to breathe new life into the town centre.

It's the latest step in Newhaven's Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvement Scheme, as it continues to revitalise the town by creating a more welcoming, accessible and vibrant environment for everyone.

Work on the town centre project will begin in early 2026, helping to deliver Neighbourhood Plan and Town Investment Plan objectives, having been shaped through engagement with high street traders and members of the community. A final public exhibition at Marine Workshops showcasing the designs received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Key elements include making the town centre more pedestrian friendly, introducing green spaces with places to rest, lighting upgrades, more planting, sustainable drainage solutions, decluttering public

spaces and enhancing key entry points to the town centre.

Newhaven's Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvement Scheme, funded by the UK Government with investment secured by Lewes District Council, is one of twelve projects funded through the Re-imagining Newhaven Investment Programme.

Projects already completed under the scheme include last year's Look Again Supergraphics Festival and soft landscaping projects at Riverside North, Chapel Street and Meeching Road.

The wider scheme includes improvements along Railway Approach and pedestrian links between Egrets Way, the town centre, West Quay and the port.

Meanwhile, a new 50m Fish Landing Stage is being built on the West Quay as part of a programme to support Newhaven's fishing industry – scheduled for completion this winter.

Free expert guidance for business start-ups



Anyone living in Lewes district who is thinking of starting their own business, community enterprise or co-operative could benefit from free support.

Fully funded by Lewes District Council and delivered by 'always possible', Lewes District Start-up Programme is split into three modules to help entrepreneurs at different points in their start-up journey, and businesses don't have to start at the beginning.

'Module 1: Ideas to Action' is for people who have an idea for a business or a side hustle but

don't know where to start.

'Module 2: Business Basics' focuses on strengthening the operational foundations of a new business.

'Module 3: Preparing to Grow' is about preparing the business for scaling and expanding.

Those that have been trading for under 24 months can also participate.

For more information, or to check your eligibility and sign up to the programme, visit ldstartup.co.uk/home

"Starting a new business can be an exciting but daunting prospect, and we want to ensure our residents have every opportunity to succeed. The Lewes District Start-up Programme offers fantastic, free expert guidance for anyone looking to launch their own venture, whether it's a small business, community enterprise, or co-operative. I strongly encourage aspiring entrepreneurs, and even those who have recently started trading, to take full advantage of this brilliant initiative and unlock their potential."



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

Council commits £500,000 to net zero support for homeowners

The council has approved funding for a loan scheme to help homeowners access improvements that reduce carbon emissions, lower their bills and make homes warmer.

As part of the council's drive to achieve carbon net zero by 2030, the authority is enabling low-cost finance for retrofitting projects, including cavity wall insulation, low-carbon heating systems, new windows, and energy generation.

Currently, around 44,000 local homes account for 35% of the district's carbon footprint.

Loans will typically range from £10,000 to £20,000 per household, with an average borrowing term of 10 years, up to a maximum of 15 years. As repayments are made, funds will be recycled within the scheme to support future lending.

Council officers will now conduct a procurement process to select a Retrofit Loan Provider, responsible for managing all lending

agreements on behalf of Lewes District Council.

This provider will oversee application processing, borrower risk assessments, pre-contract property checks, loan setup, and finalisation of legal documents.

The council is carrying out additional work to support tenants and people in private rented accommodation.



“Our commitment to reaching net zero by 2030 is unwavering, and a key part of this involves equipping our residents with the tools and resources to make a real difference. This loan scheme represents a practical step, empowering homeowners to invest in sustainable improvements and collectively drive down our district's carbon emissions.

“The Retrofit Loan Provider we partner with will conduct the necessary borrowing checks, and a referral partner will visit homes to ensure suggested energy improvements are appropriate for the property.”

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

Helping low-income earners access banking



The council will be launching a scheme early next year to support local people who are on a low income or those who struggle to access conventional banking services.

The services will be operated by Wave Community Bank, a not-for-profit co-operative dedicated to providing ethical and affordable financial services to residents across East Sussex and neighbouring areas.

This is a significant step in the council's ongoing efforts to empower all residents, especially those facing financial hardship.

To implement the scheme, Cabinet members agreed a loan of up to £100,000 to Wave Community Bank, which is a trading name of East Sussex Credit Union Ltd and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), and savings are 100% guaranteed by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. It offers vital services such as low-interest loans, savings accounts, and financial advice to those often impacted by financial exclusion, helping to alleviate the detrimental effects of poverty.

“This scheme is a really important step in our work to ensure all our residents, particularly those on lower incomes, have access to the financial support they need. It will provide practical tools and advice that can make a real difference in people’s lives and help build stronger financial foundations across our district.”



Councillor Christine Robinson, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing

New wetlands project set to bring wildlife benefits



The first phase of work is underway to restore the wetland habitats of Landport Brooks in Lewes to create a better environment for wildlife.

Lewes District Council and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust are carrying out the improvements during late summer and autumn.

The project will bring back features like ditches and enhance the marsh landscape by forming shallow pools called scrapes. This will help hold water on the site during the late spring and summer, which will benefit a variety of wildlife and restore much-needed habitats for amphibians.

Landport Brooks was once home to Sussex's largest breeding population of common toads, but their numbers have declined over the last 20 years due to the area's changing water levels.

Major upgrade for sports pavilion in Seaford



Work has started on the refurbishment of the sports pavilion at Walmer Road Recreation Ground in Seaford.

The upgrade is being funded by £36,000 from the community infrastructure levy (CIL), a charge local authorities can make on new developments to help deliver infrastructure projects in their area, and money raised by young members of Seaford Town Football Club.

The initiative also has strong community backing from the Friends of Walmer Road Rec and local tradespeople.

The renovated pavilion will feature restored, weather-protected changing rooms, a refreshment hatch, disabled access, a water refill point, a defibrillator, storage for the community group and a community noticeboard.

Council looks at moving to alternate weekly bin collections



The council is considering making changes to its refuse (black sack waste) collections, to increase household recycling in the district.

Under the proposals, most properties would change from weekly to fortnightly refuse collections. Recycling collections would stay fortnightly and food waste collections would stay weekly. This system is called Alternate Weekly Collections.

Central government has set all councils a target recycling rate of 55%. Increasing to 65% by 2035.

Lewes district residents are great at recycling and what is sent for processing is generally low in contamination. It is clean, dry and consists of the right items.

However, the district does not perform so well in the amount of food waste separated for composting and this is a particular focus for the council. The composting process is more environmentally friendly than incinerating this material at the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility.

The overall recycling rate in Lewes district is currently around 41% and has been for several years.

Alternate Weekly Collections are a proven way to encourage householders to recycle more of their waste. Most councils in England have already moved to alternate weekly collections, including all other district and borough councils in East Sussex.

The council is inviting feedback on the proposals via a survey until 5pm on Monday 8 September, which can be found at lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/AWC

Please sign up for free food waste collections at lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste

When you join the service, you will get a small caddy to go in your kitchen with a roll of liners to get you started. You will also receive a separate bin to go outside. Food waste is picked up at the same time as your refuse (black sack waste) collection.

Collected food waste is recycled into soil conditioner and fertiliser which is then used by farmers and gardeners across the district.

Groundbreaking plan for all-electric waste vehicles



Cllr Maples (centre) and council staff with electric waste vehicles

Alongside improvements to air quality and people’s health, Lewes District Council has taken a major step towards its net zero ambitions with Cabinet approval of an innovative plan to convert its entire waste and recycling collection fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030.

Seven new smaller electric vehicles will be purchased, but the heart of the plan is upcycling the existing large fleet, converting 20 diesel vehicles to electric. Upcycling the large vehicles will extend their lifespan and reduce the emissions that come from new production as well as disposal.

Vehicles that are unsuitable for the change to electric will be replaced with state-of-the-art electric models featuring modern safety enhancements. Both upcycled and new vehicles will include features that improve working conditions for operators, as well as being emission-free at the tailpipe, so helping to improve air quality for all.

The first phase of upcycling is set to begin this year with the purchase of two second-hand vehicles, providing ‘cover’ for the first pair of existing vehicles to go through the upcycling process, and allowing for a phased transition that ensures no disruption to current waste and recycling services. It is anticipated that a fully ultra-low emission fleet will be operational by 2029.

The fleet transition aligns with Lewes District Council’s Climate and Nature Strategy, which commits to achieving net zero emissions across council operations by 2030.



“This is a landmark investment in our district’s future.

“By choosing upcycling alongside new electric collection vehicles, we’re transforming the way our waste collections are carried out, keeping us on track for our 2030 net zero target.”

Councillor Wendy Maples, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing



**citizens
advice**

**Lewes
District**

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.

Monday	Seaford 37 Church Street BN25 1HG	10am - 3.30pm
Tuesday Wednesday Thursday	Newhaven 15-19 Chapel Street BN9 9PN	10am - 3.30pm
Every Wednesday	Peacehaven Meridian Centre BN10 8BL	10am - 12pm 1pm - 3pm
Friday	Lewes 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