

MARCH 2025 | #DISTRICTNEWS

DN

MAGAZINE

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NEWS FROM ACROSS
THE LEWES DISTRICT



Lewes District Council

Hello

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

This year we continue to deliver on our commitment to improve the lives of residents and enhance local communities. Our wide-ranging initiatives include helping those in most need, building new council homes, providing first-rate facilities and services, enabling the district to achieve a net zero future, and much more.

We have been working hard with our partners East Sussex County Council and Wave Active on a rescue plan for Ringmer Swimming Pool and I am really looking forward to seeing residents enjoying this much-loved venue again.

I am also acutely aware of the impact the cost of living crisis continues to have on our residents. We are doing everything we can to help, and you

can find a range of support and advice within these pages.

Great strides are being made on providing much-needed council housing for Lewes district residents – we have developed a pipeline of over 250 council properties since 2019. We are also driving ahead with various regeneration projects, not least the exciting redevelopments in Newhaven Square and on West Beach promenade.

Finally, my thanks to the many people who took part in our recent phase one consultation on the Local Plan to help shape the framework for future development in Lewes district. I hope this strong engagement will be carried through into the second phase which will be held later in 2025.



Councillor Zoe Nicholson
Leader of Lewes District Council

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Council improves town centre access for people with disabilities



Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee members including Chairperson Zena Gibbs (front row, right) with Cllr Maples (far right) and Mat Townshend of the council's Neighbourhood First team (second from right).

A community disability group has welcomed new accessible parking spaces at West Street Car Park in Seaford.

Members of Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee, which raises awareness of disability issues and campaigns for disabled access to public places, have voiced approval for the improvements made by Lewes District Council.

As part of recent work to install new EV charging points, the council took the opportunity to redesign elements of the car park, which is located behind Seaford Town Council offices.

The improvements include:

- New, better positioned accessible parking.
- Wider hatchings to the accessible spaces, making them easier and safer to use.
- Path resurfacing.

Zena Gibbs, Chair of Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee, said: "We welcome these new accessible parking spaces which will make a real difference to the lives of people with disabilities in Seaford. Parking is now safer and easier, and this will make trips to the town centre more enjoyable."

Garden waste renewals

Customers have until Monday 31 March to renew their garden waste service and ensure there is no gap in collections. The service will run from April 2025 to March 2026, so any customers who are new to the service are encouraged to sign up soon and benefit from a full year of collections. To renew or join the service, visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/gardenwaste](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/gardenwaste)



"We are committed to making our town centres accessible to everyone and the modifications we have made at West Street Car Park are just one example of how we are achieving this. My thanks to members of Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee for their advice and feedback."

Councillor Wendy Maples, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing

Swimming pool to re-open thanks to council collaboration



Councillors at Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council have welcomed the signing of a lease that puts Ringmer Swimming Pool on track to re-open in May.

Following a public consultation by the county council, Lewes District Council came forward with their partner Wave Active, and both councils put plans into place to bring the venue back into use.

A lease has been signed that transfers the operation of Ringmer Swimming Pool from East Sussex County Council to Lewes District Council – Wave Active will run the pool on behalf of the district council.

Councillor Nick Bennett, Lead Member for Resources at East Sussex County Council, said: “I am very pleased we have been able to support the

re-opening of Ringmer pool. It is great news for the local community that people will soon be able to use this much-valued local facility again and we look forward to its re-opening in the spring.”

The £100k being invested in Ringmer Swimming Pool by Lewes District Council is just one strand of a £3 million council investment programme in local leisure services.

Duncan Kerr, CEO of Wave Active, said: “This is terrific news for community leisure services in the district and a just reward for all those who have worked so hard to breathe new life into a much-loved facility.

“This venue has the potential to thrive if as many local residents as possible make use of the pool, and my team can’t wait to make them all very welcome.”



“This news is hugely welcome. The process has taken longer than we hoped, but Ringmer residents have been incredibly patient and all of them will be delighted that the re-opening of this wonderful community pool is now within touching distance.

“The funding from both Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council has made the replacement of essential pool machinery possible and that work will now be completed in readiness for when the doors open in May.”

Councillor Johnny Denis, Cabinet Member for Tourism & Leisure

New partnership scheme to tackle business crime



A new scheme for Lewes district businesses has been launched to crack down on shop thefts and anti-social behaviour, and make pubs safer for customers and staff.

Funded by Lewes Community Safety Partnership over a three-year period, this is an expansion of a similar scheme that has been operating successfully in Eastbourne for 11 years and offers businesses across the district the opportunity to join up for free.

The newly formed Eastbourne & Lewes Business Crime Reduction Partnership is a partnership of local businesses and agencies including Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and Sussex Police.

It is working closely with Neighbourhood Policing

Teams to help target the most persistent and problematic business crime offenders and assist with protecting businesses. Alongside this, it is also working with Sussex Police's Licensing Team, offering enhanced support to existing Pubwatch schemes in the area to make venues safer places to visit and work in.

The council's Specialist Advisor for Business Crime, Adam Godden, is running the new Eastbourne & Lewes Business Crime Reduction Partnership, having previously operated the Eastbourne partnership for 11 years.

If you run a business in Lewes district and wish to be part of this scheme, or for more information, contact: adam.godden@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

“This is great news for businesses and customers alike across the district and as a testament to that, nearly 40 businesses had already joined the scheme by launch day.

“I look forward to even more business sign-ups and the benefits this will bring in making our town centres and evening venues even better and safer places to visit.”

Councillor Christine Robinson, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing



New processing plant supports fishing community

The local fishing industry in Newhaven has been given ‘a real boost’ with the opening of a new fish processing plant.

The fishing community are now using the plant, which operates in an industrial unit on the Oak Estate in New Road, to process, prepare and store their catch that has been landed nearby.

Equipment includes a chiller, freezer, forklift truck, pallet truck, an ice making machine and storage containers.

The government granted £12.8m to improve the infrastructure of the local commercial fishing industry with Lewes District Council directing over £1 million to creating the plant.

To oversee the creation of the plant, Newhaven Fishing Community Interest Company (CIC) was set up, with a focus on sustainable fish products and sustainable fishing techniques.

David Guy, Fisheries Consultant and Secretary of Newhaven Fishing Society, said: “This is a great opportunity for the fishers to research new markets and work on adding value to their catch. We welcome the council’s support with this project. We have some exciting ideas in mind and are looking for further innovative ideas to take forward that support the local fishing industry which is vital to the West Quay area and supports many families and local businesses throughout the south east.”



“This new fish processing plant is a real boost for the local fishing industry, supporting the livelihoods of hard-working fishermen and women.

“Providing these facilities close to the source not only enhances the efficiency and value of our local catch, but also unlocks the potential for growth into wider markets to and bring in new customers.”

Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Leader of Lewes District Council

Council carbon emissions down 41%

Lewes District Council has achieved a reduction of 41% in carbon emissions and 17.6% in greenhouse gas emissions.

The figures are part of a new Climate and Nature Strategy Update 2023/24 and Action Plan that provides detailed insights into the council's ongoing work and future plans.

The Climate and Nature Strategy Update also highlights the various projects and initiatives contributing to these reductions, including the procurement of green tariff electricity, rationalisation of office accommodations and the council's transition to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) for fleet vehicles in early 2024 – this move is anticipated to substantially reduce fleet emissions in the coming years, demonstrating the council's proactive efforts to meet its ambitious targets.

For more information, please visit lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/climate-nature-strategy

A blueprint for cleaner, greener water

A council panel set up to monitor Southern Water has published a report outlining a series of recommendations to improve water quality in the district and across the country.

The comprehensive report by Lewes District Council's Southern Water Panel calls on the government to address the serious problems that have been identified.

To read the full report, visit lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/water

“We have made significant reductions in carbon emissions and are continuously exploring innovative solutions to further decrease our environmental footprint.

“However, in reality we are directly responsible for less than 1% of carbon emissions in the district, so it's only through the work and support of our amazing community partners, businesses and residents that we can really achieve the greener, more sustainable future we all want.”



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

Residents have their say on Local Plan

Lewes District Council Cabinet members have extended their thanks to local people for contributing comments in the latest round of consultation over the Lewes District Local Plan.

The consultation, which ran throughout January and February this year, focused on early site proposals within towns and a limited number of villages, as well as detailed policies covering topics including the natural environment, health, Homes for All, water, climate change, economy and regeneration.

A further phase of consultation to be held later in 2025 will have a greater emphasis on more rural parts of the district, while also re-evaluating areas considered during phase one.

Local plans set out where future development will take place, such as new homes and locations for business growth, as well as the local policy requirements against which future planning applications will be judged.

Council officers are now working through the many comments received and preparing for the next round of consultation.

To find out more and to join the mailing list, visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/lewes-local-plan](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/lewes-local-plan)

Huge rise in food waste collections

Lewes District Council has seen an increase of almost 50% in the amount of household food waste taken to be composted.

From March to October 2023, the council took just under 497 tonnes of food waste to Woodlands, where the council partners with a composting facility. For the same period in 2024, this increased to 742 tonnes – a rise of 49.34%.

The council is encouraging even more residents to recycle their food waste using its free service. Visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/foodwaste)



“I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who responded to our recent stage of consultation in the development of our Local Plan. Your comments will help ensure that our Local Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities.”

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



More council homes soon to be completed

Lewes District Council has secured 17 new homes on the site of a former pub in Peacehaven.

Work on Chalk View Villas is due to complete this spring and includes one and two-bedroom flats. Since acquiring the unfinished development last year, the council has been finalising all the remaining work required.

At a time when less than 25% of local authorities have built any council housing in the last ten years, Lewes District Council has developed a pipeline of over 250 council properties since 2019.

Survey on energy options for homeowners

Lewes District Council is running a survey to find out residents' views on home improvements that could either save money on energy bills or help improve the environment.

Responses to the survey will help the council develop solutions for residents or make recommendations to government.

The survey, for residents who are owner-occupiers in Lewes district, will stay open until Monday 31 March. For more details and to complete the survey, visit [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/home-energy-survey](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/home-energy-survey)



Progress on Newhaven Square scheme

The Newhaven Square redevelopment, which is set to transform primary healthcare in the town, is progressing well and on track for completion by autumn 2026.

The project will create a new Health & Wellbeing Hub including a new home for Quayside Medical Practice and the 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.

Landmark development at West Beach

Ecology work has been completed for the redevelopment of the promenade above West Beach in Newhaven which is set to attract visitors of all ages.

Detailed designs are now being drawn up and work is expected to start on site later this spring.

This landmark development includes a new restaurant, outdoor gym and children's play area for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Following the demolition of existing structures, it will also see extensive landscaping, footpath upgrades that will provide a continuous footpath between the town centre and the waterfront, and new toilets including a Changing Places facility.

Council 'lifeline' continues for struggling residents

Cabinet councillors at Lewes District Council have recommended that council tax support for the worst-off people in the district continues for the next financial year.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) provides financial support to around 3,250 of the most disadvantaged working-age residents by helping them meet their council tax liabilities and allows about 2,000 of those experiencing the greatest hardship to not pay any council tax at all.

Since it was first introduced in 2022/23, the CTRS has been instrumental in helping residents cope

with the ongoing cost of living crisis, alongside a raft of other council initiatives offering support.

Cabinet councillors also recommended continuing with the Exceptional Hardship Payments Scheme in 2025/26. This scheme provides additional support to those who are most in need.

The CTRS and the Exceptional Hardship Payments Scheme are just two of the ways in which Lewes District Council is supporting residents through the cost of living crisis.

Full Council will consider adopting Cabinet's recommendation at its next meeting.

"With the cost of living crisis continuing to impact on so many people, it's crucial that we maintain our support for the district's most vulnerable residents.

"The CTRS is a lifeline for many people going through extreme hardship, and I am glad my Cabinet colleagues have agreed we should continue to offer this essential help."



Councillor Mark Slater, Cabinet Member for Housing

Council awards nearly £250k in community grants



Lewes District Council has agreed almost £250,000 in community grants to 20 local charities and projects supporting a range of causes and helping residents through the cost of living crisis.

The programme was hugely oversubscribed with more than 50 applications submitted across two categories.

Among the beneficiaries in the 'Cost of Living Crisis Support' category are community hubs, day centres, support for older people, youth clubs as well as vital infrastructure support for charities and community groups and continued funding for Lewes District Citizens Advice which offers information and advice on a range of issues including welfare, benefits, housing and employment rights, as well as debt.

The second category of 'Equality and Inclusion' sees grants awarded to disability groups and community events.

Successful applicants will receive the first of three annual grants this year.

Apply now for a business grant

The Newhaven Business Grants Programme has returned after an incredibly successful first round, and there are just a few spots left for interested businesses.

The programme provides Newhaven businesses with grants of up to £15,000 for 50% of the cost of a project that supports business growth, job creation, and social impact in the town. There has already been a huge amount of interest, so any businesses that haven't already applied are encouraged to do so now.

For full details about the Newhaven Business Grants Programme, please visit: eastsussex.gov.uk/newhavengrants



"This community grants programme is a key part of our commitment to supporting the invaluable work of local voluntary organisations and has a real impact on improving residents' lives."

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

Help 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 the council website at 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

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

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 or contact your Citizens Advice office.

If you are unable to afford food, local community food projects might be able to help (visit lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org and click on Emergency Food Network).

Cultural centre drawing crowds in Lewes



Some 41% of visitors enjoyed access to Charleston in Lewes for free last year. With exciting new initiatives – including Sussex's first weekend Pay-What-You-Can Day, a membership scheme now offering free entry and free admission for young people under 18 – the venue is making art more accessible than ever.

The cultural centre, which opened in 2023, is a partnership between Lewes District Council, Charleston and East Sussex College Group.

Later this month, Charleston in Lewes will open the largest ever exhibition dedicated to the trailblazing modernist Vanessa Bell. Spanning over 100 works, Vanessa Bell: A World of Form and Colour celebrates her extraordinary legacy through her paintings, textiles, ceramics, furniture designs, and book covers, cementing her place as a radical pioneer of 20th century British art.

The exhibition runs from 26 March to 21 September.

Also opening alongside is a free-to-visit exhibition by contemporary artist, Koak.

For more information about visiting, see charleston.org.uk/charleston-lewes

Joy for pétanque players as new pitch opens



Celebrating the launch of the new pétanque piste

A new pétanque piste in Lewes is a free sports facility available for anyone to use.

Situated near Lewes FC's Dripping Pan ground, at the foot of the Mount, no booking is needed to play pétanque there.

In 2022, local resident Tom Davies and a friend had the idea of setting up a club to raise funds to build the facility.

The newly formed Lewes Pétanque Club approached Lewes District Council for support and together they identified a suitable location and fundraising began.

Three years on, the money for construction was secured through crowdfunding from local residents, East Sussex County Council's 'Building Stronger Communities' Fund, Lewes District Council and Lewes Town Council Community Infrastructure Levy funding, and match funding and support in kind from Lewes District Council.

To find out more, visit lewespetanqueclub.org

Saxon House reception has reopened



People can now visit the reception at Saxon House, Meeching Road, Newhaven, from 10am to 2pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays to access council services related to council tax or benefits.

Visitors to Saxon House can drop off documents, make basic enquiries and get advice on how to get in contact with relevant organisations and services.

Visitors should keep in mind the reception space is small and has limited privacy, in case they are bringing others with them or want to discuss sensitive matters.

Residents can also use the council's new reception at 6 High Street Lewes which is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday where similar services are provided.

Residents can find information about all council services at lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk and problems can be reported online at lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/report-a-problem without needing to phone or visit council offices. Additionally, while out and about, people can use the Report It phone app (lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/report-it) to tell the council about street problems.



**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
- Debt – in-house money advice 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
- 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