

# Arun *at home*

[www.arun.gov.uk/housing](http://www.arun.gov.uk/housing)

Issue no.5 Summer 2023



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Water safety
- Tenant satisfaction measures
- Fire evacuation advice
- Consumer standards consultations
- Striving to become carbon neutral

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# Welcome to Arun at Home

Your resident magazine from Arun District Council

## Contents

Welcome to the summer 2023 edition of Arun at Home. This is my first edition as I am currently in the interim position of resident engagement officer. I was previously a business improvement officer, so this edition features several articles regarding surveys and data – as I am very keen on learning from statistics! I hope this proves interesting. You will also find articles and information from other members of the team, from details about new neighbourhood housing officers to how we are striving to become a carbon neutral council.

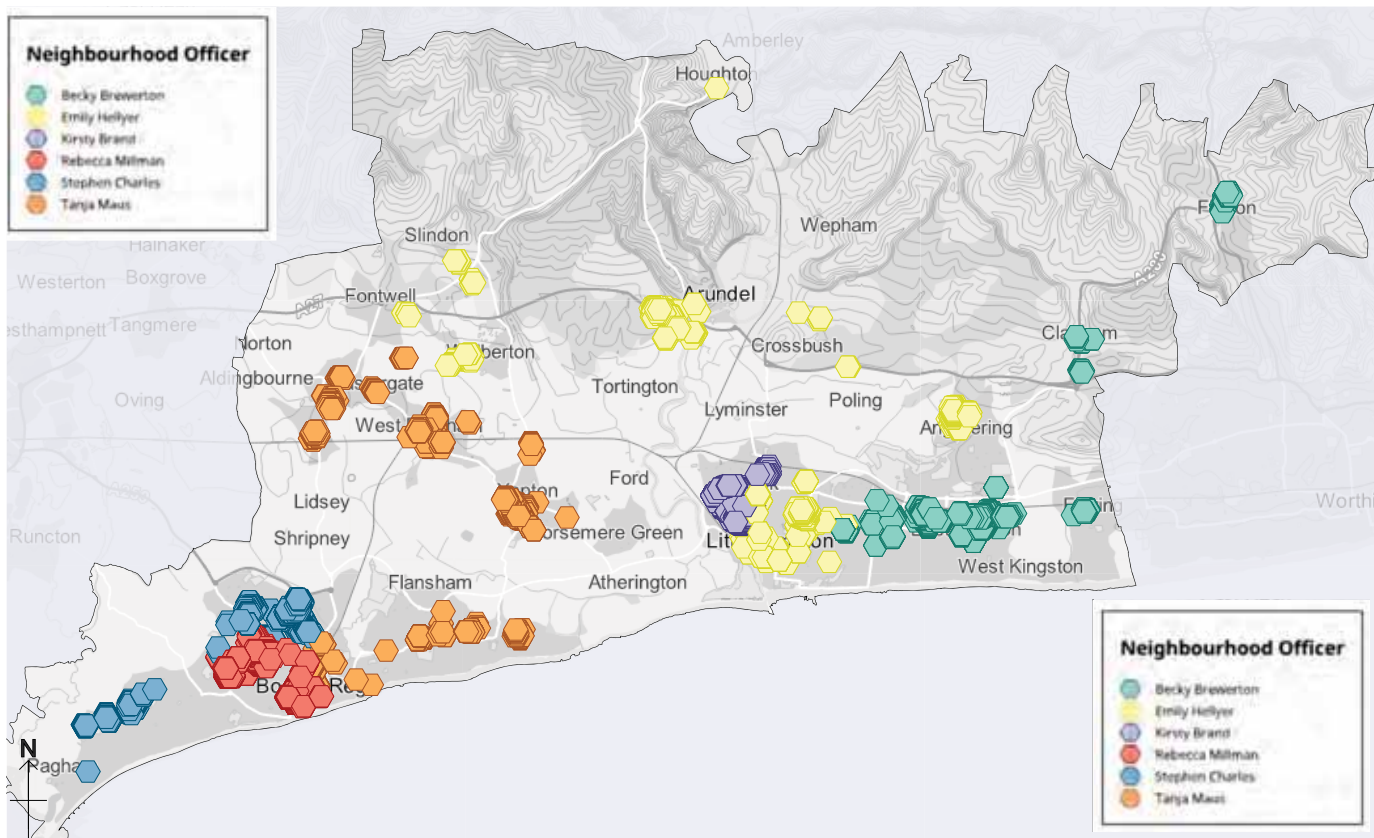
I would like to thank the residents I have had the opportunity to meet so far as it has been very informative. I would also like to thank the residents that have taken the time to review this magazine to make sure it meets the needs of our readers.

Kat Rance-Shilbach  
Resident engagement officer  
[residentengagement@arun.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@arun.gov.uk)

	Page
Changes within the neighbourhood housing team	3
Estate clean up mornings	3
Water safety	4
Community activities	5
Chilgrove House first birthday celebrations	6
CX - a new management system	7
We need you for our Community Grant Fund!	7
A note on complaints and complaints performance	8-9
Tenant satisfaction measures	9
Stonepillow - recycling white goods	10
Energy bill support	10
Fire evacuation	10
Helpful information	11
Arun and Chichester Food Partnership	11
Are your energy bills high because of essential equipment you need for your health?	12
You said, we did	13
Consumer standards consultation	14
Chair Pilates at Bersted Green Hub	14
Striving to become a carbon neutral council	15
Budget-friendly family recipe	16

Arun at Home is produced by Arun District Council and is also available in large print. Please phone 01903 737500 for more information.

## Changes within the neighbourhood housing team



There have been some changes to our neighbourhood housing officers. You can find the name of your officer on the map below. Please be aware that you may be helped by any member of the neighbourhood housing team.

To contact the team please call 01903 737534 or email [neighbourhood.services@arun.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhood.services@arun.gov.uk). In case of an out of hours emergency, please call 01903 737500 where one of the on-call team will assist help you.

## Estate clean up mornings

We have started a new programme of estate clean up mornings around some of our highest populated areas. Our first two were held at the Trees estate in Bognor Regis and the Highfields estate in Wick during the week of 17 July. We were delighted to have the company of two Biffa supervisors, 3 litter pickers/street cleansing staff, 2 staff with a large, caged vehicle to remove bulky waste and a street sweeper and operator. There was also weed removal and graffiti jet washing as well as community wardens, cleansing team members and housing officers present. We will be contacting residents ahead of future dates. We plan to hold these more regularly throughout the year.



# Water safety

## Littlehampton beaches and the River Arun



Due to a rise in the number of people both jumping into or attempting to swim across the River Arun at Littlehampton Arun District Council, Littlehampton Town Council, Littlehampton Harbour Master, Littlehampton Coastguard Rescue Team, and the RNLI share serious concerns for the safety of those taking part in this dangerous activity.

The depth of water can be deceiving due to the varying tides and the shallower areas at the rivers' edge. Hidden dangers exist beneath the water line such as rocks, debris or abandoned equipment which could cause injury, paralysis or death if landed on.

The effect of cold-water shock, even on warmer days, can make it difficult to breathe and swim, and the notoriously strong tidal current of the river Arun can quickly sweep people away from a safe and accessible way of exiting the water.

The Littlehampton Harbour Master told us: "Whilst leaping into our beautiful river

may initially seem appealing in warm weather or an exciting way to blow off some steam, there are many serious hazards that are not always immediately obvious. Those tempted to participate in this sort of unsafe activity should also be aware that the harbour's regulations prohibit jumping or diving into the river from the river wall as well as any jetty, pier, pontoon, bridge or boat without permission. The same applies to swimming in the 'fairway' (the main channel where water remains at low tide) as well as around all pontoons and launching slipways. Swimmers are encouraged to stick to the designated bathing areas on local beaches where buoyed areas protect them from boats, and they remain under the watchful eye of RNLI beach lifeguards when they are present during the peak summer season". Educational resources can be found from the RNLI by following this link: <https://rnli.org/youth-education/education-resources/videos/safe-near-the-water>.

# Community activities



On 1 June 2023, Osbornes and housing officer Emily visited the former play area at Ellis Close in Arundel. Residents were invited to help paint the restored benches in bright colours and children were able to plant a sunflower to look after through the summer months. The grass in the area may be looking long, but as it was only reseeded recently, it needs longer to bed in. Eventually, the aim is for the area to support wildlife with many wildflowers and to be a pleasant community green space.



Vegetable beds and water butts were installed at Stanley Court with thanks to Osbornes for working with our residents!



Arun District Council staff had the pleasure of supporting the Osbourne recycling, wildlife and education initiative with the pupils of Bersted Green Primary school helping the Pupils make some useful additions to their outside area with bird boxes.

The flat packed bird boxes, made by the service users of the Mencap Riverwood Project, use recycled wood and were purchased by Osbourne and donated to schools and community groups.

During the session, the children were able to assemble the flat packed bird boxes and got to use a battery-operated drill and screws and then paint to finish off the boxes. The children worked as a team to complete the bird box task which can help improve confidence, team building and problem-solving skills. The children were able to name many birds and were confident that the new boxes would bring more birds to nest in their school grounds.

Osborne's also visited Mountbatten Court, where their memorial bench and outdoor tables were repaired and also replaced two benches that were un-repairable. Thank you to Neal for facilitating and working on all the projects throughout the year!





# Chilgrove House first birthday

**Saturday 22 April 2023**

On 22 April, the community hub located at Chilgrove House, Littlehampton celebrated their first birthday. It was a fun packed day for all involved and Neal from Osbornes provided some very welcome ice cream for attendees to keep cool! There was a magician, music, a bouncy castle and everyone had a good time! Many thanks to Belinda, Sarah and our community volunteers who made this possible.

The Chilgrove House Community Centre run a variety of activities including exercise classes, gardening activities and arts and crafts activities for children, family support groups, a community fridge, bingo and much more! You can find them on Facebook to find out about their activities or just pop in for a coffee!



## CX – a new housing management system

In the last issue of Arun at Home we told you about our new integrated housing management system called Civica CX.

This new system will improve your access to our services allowing more opportunities for you to self-serve through a customer portal.

We are making good progress with designing the new system and have been working on key areas such as

- anti-social behaviour
- complaints
- rents
- right to buy
- repairs
- customer portal

The new system is expected to go live in 2024, and we hope it will provide an improved customer experience to our residents.

### Testing, testing!

We want to know what you want to be available in a customer portal, and how you want to interact with us as a landlord. Look out for a survey coming out to you soon.

If you want to be involved in testing our customer portal, please get in touch with us now via [residentengagement@arun.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@arun.gov.uk).



## We need you for our Community Grant fund!

We need you! Arun District Council are launching a Community Grant Fund and we are looking for residents who are interested in helping to assess applications.

Arun District Council's Community Grant Fund (CGF) will award non-repayable grants of up to £500 to schemes and improvements that will benefit residents or a defined group of people.

The focus of the CGF is to provide funding or extra financial help to provide estate improvements, wellbeing activities that boost mental and physical health, reduce anti-social

behaviour, improve safety or work with our communities to build and improve relationships. A separate document describes how the CGF fits into the priorities and the relevant strategies of the council. Further information can be provided to anyone interested.

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer grant fund assessor, please contact [residentengagement@arun.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@arun.gov.uk) with "Community Grant Fund assessor" in the subject. Please tell us a little about yourself and why the project interests you.



# A note on complaints and complaints

## Complaints

We want you to live in safe, secure and well-maintained homes. If you are unhappy with our service, remember you can raise a complaint with us in whichever way is easiest for you.

Complaints could include:

- repairs and maintenance
- issues with communal areas
- health and safety issues
- anti-social behaviour
- customer service

Rest assured, you won't be penalised for making a complaint and it will not affect your tenancy.

If you need to speak to us regarding a complaint, you can contact us in the following ways:

☎ 01903 737500

🌐 [www.arun.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints](http://www.arun.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints)

✉ [infomanagement@arun.gov.uk](mailto:infomanagement@arun.gov.uk)

In writing or in person at the Civic Centre, Littlehampton or the Town Hall, Bognor Regis. There are two stages to our complaints procedure. At Stage 1, we will respond to your complaint either in full or with a progress report within 10 days.

If you are not happy after our investigation at Stage 1 you can ask for the Group Head of the service area to look at your complaint. You will have 28 days from the date of the stage 1 response to request a review.

The Group Head will conduct a further investigation of all documents and correspondence and will arrange to visit if the complaint is about something that needs to be seen. We will send a full response or a progress report, if we need more time, within 25 working days.

Throughout the process and once we've concluded our investigation, you can contact the housing ombudsman if you remain unhappy.

You can ask for more information via the following contact points:

☎ 0300 111 3000

🌐 [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

✉ [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

In writing: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

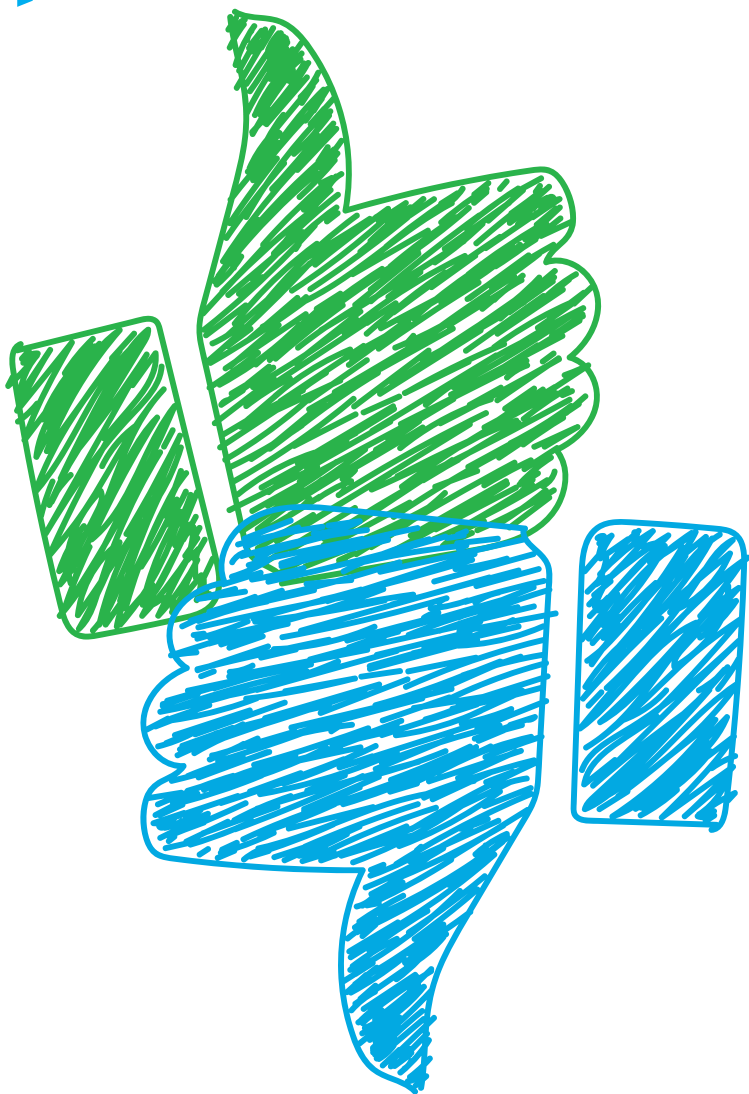
## Complaints performance

We know that we don't always get it right. So that we are being transparent with our performance, we are including some of our complaints data within Arun at Home.

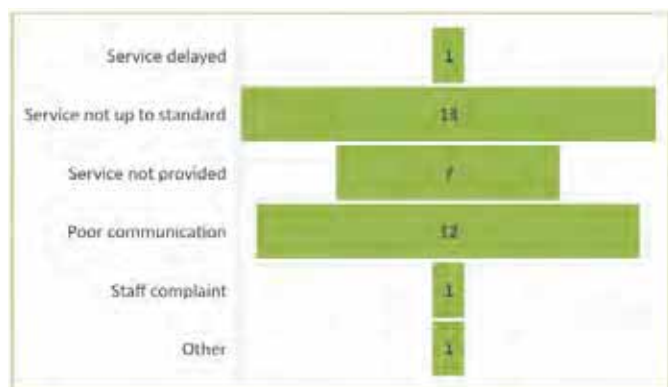
This is the status report for complaints made in June:



# performance



And these were the root causes of the complaints made in June:



We can confirm that the Housing Ombudsman is not currently investigating or determining any cases for Arun District Council. Complaints performance will be updated on our website quarterly starting from September.



## Tenant satisfaction measures

Many residents will have recently received a survey. We asked questions about Arun District Council as a landlord, such as satisfaction with repairs, complaints handling, our communication and more. A huge thank you from us as over 1000 residents responded so we will be busy analysing the responses over the coming months and making improvement plans.

Your views help us shape the service you receive, and we will be publishing the full results on our website, as well as doing a special article in the Winter edition of Arun at Home.



# Stonepillow - recycling white goods

Along with Osbornes and Stonepillow, Arun District Council are trialling a new scheme of recycling abandoned white goods from vacant properties. When the council or Osborne's identify suitable items in void properties, Stonepillow will collect, test and either re-sell at their shop, or repurpose in one of their schemes. This helps to reduce landfill and provides affordable white goods whilst raising valuable funds for the charity. Stonepillow are a homeless charity for the Chichester and Arun Districts, providing a recovery journey for their clients which focuses on the key areas of health, housing and work. Stonepillow operates hostels and hubs in Chichester and Bognor Regis, together with a recovery service, supported accommodation and rough sleeper team.



## stonepillow

prevent - relieve - recover - resettle - restore



## Energy bill support

Following the government's initiative to help people with rising costs of energy bills, we identified that some of our residents did not automatically benefit from the scheme. During April and May, our financial inclusion officer and our resident engagement officer visited the properties effected. They helped many residents complete the online application and we have been told that several have now received their grant. The scheme is now closed. If you applied but have not yet received your payment, you can contact the team the following ways:

✉ [alternativefunding@ebss.beis.gov.uk](mailto:alternativefunding@ebss.beis.gov.uk)

☎ 0808 175 3287

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

## Fire evacuation



Our Estate Officers come out and test the fire alarm systems in all our sheltered accommodation every week to ensure that we not only comply with the law, but to make sure that you are safe.

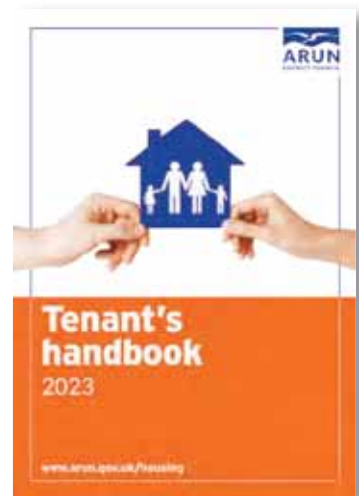
They also carry out a full fire evacuation exercise every 6 months. Our last tests showed that on average only 38% of tenants complied with the evacuation process by leaving the building. This does not include tenants that for mobility reasons are allowed to stay put in the event of a fire.

38% of tenants is a very low response when it is your health and safety that we are concerned about. As this only takes place twice a year, and is so important, when the next fire evacuation takes place, please leave the building as requested.

It doesn't take very long and helps us to identify any tenants who may have difficulties leaving the building in the event of a real emergency.

## Helpful information

We have been working on a new Tenant Handbook. Residents who expressed an interest in being involved in our processes were invited to review the handbook and we're pleased to say it's nearly ready for release. The new edition will be shorter, easier to navigate and, for those who can access it, available online, so that we are not creating additional recycling! We are also working on supplementary informative guides for repairs and compliance. These will be in a "Frequently Asked Questions" style and will hopefully be useful for most common issues.



## Arun and Chichester Food Partnership

Are you interested in getting involved in community food growing? The Arun and Chichester Food Partnership are supporting people to learn how to grow their own food and get out in nature by increasing opportunities for community gardening across the area. If you are part of a community group that could benefit from a regular group session at an allotment or an individual that is interested in learning more, please get in touch with them at [communitygrowing@arunchichestercab.org.uk](mailto:communitygrowing@arunchichestercab.org.uk). They are currently supporting to develop allotments in Wick and Angmering but hoping to find and develop new spaces for community food growing across the Arun district.



# **Are your energy bills high because of essential equipment you need for your health?**

**Help may be available for West Sussex  
households who need to use:**

- Ventilation machines
- Electric wheelchairs
- CPAP machines
- Electric beds
- Hoists
- Feeding pumps
- Dialysis machines
- Extra heating
- Frequent washing machine use
- Any other health-related electrical appliances



**Contact Citizens Advice today on:**

**01243 974063 or email: [energy@arunchichestercab.org.uk](mailto:energy@arunchichestercab.org.uk)**

**for any issues with your energy usage or call**

**0808 278 7969 for any further support**



# You said, we did

An article by business  
improvement officer, Chanelle

We carried out a survey with new residents who have moved into their homes between the end of May 2023, to mid-July 2023. Due to changes we are making in our processes and with our housing teams, we wanted to understand a residents' housing journey better, from their nomination for a property, to collecting their keys and moving in.

You told us that you weren't sure how to contact your local council office, and that you weren't clear on who your neighbourhood services officer is. Since receiving this feedback, we have made changes in our neighbourhood team, to ensure that there are three officers, and a team leader for both east and west of the district, and welcomed some new faces into our neighbourhood roles who will be introducing themselves during visits and community drop ins. We have made sure that all of our staff have the councils' building address and telephone number on our email signatures, and have clearly stated our opening times on our website and at the doors of Bognor Regis Town Hall, and Arun Civic Centre in Littlehampton. We have also updated our Tenant Handbook which outlines the various ways you can contact us.

You also highlighted the allocation, letting and sign up process and property standards. As a result we are exploring how we can move more of our tenancy procedures online, whilst maintaining vital face to face contact. This will enable us to provide a more streamlined service, which is also environmentally friendly. We are working with our repairs and compliance teams to create an improved document to replace the old repairs handbook, which will provide essential and factual information for your health and safety at home. We are also reviewing our standards and timescales, with the aim of reducing the delay in moving into a property and ensuring that doing so is as smooth and comfortable as possible.

Additionally, you told us that you would like more one-to-one interaction with us. We have offered to contact you following your responses to any of our recent surveys, to discuss any feedback you have for us. We have several housing teams who can meet with you at home to discuss any issues, whether it be the efficiency of your home and the cost of living, or to discuss changes in your neighbourhood. We also have a dedicated resident engagement officer who is responsible for making sure we are listening to your feedback and will be looking at new ways we can involve you. Throughout the new Tenant Handbook, we encourage residents to get involved and we hope you do!



# Consumer standards consultation

The Regulator of social housing has re-written the standards following many changes to the law. They are now conducting a consultation period where they are seeking views on the changes. There are four new draft consumer standards that set out the rules and the outcomes expected from social housing landlords. These are:

- the Safety and Quality Standard
- the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- the Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- the Tenancy Standard



The consultation represents an opportunity to influence the revised consumer standards and the Code of Practice. The Code of Practice helps landlords understand how they might achieve compliance to the new consumer standards.

For more information about the changes and for your chance to take part, visit [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards). Any responses must be submitted by 6pm on 17 October 2023. It is expected that revised standards will be in place by April 2024.

## Chair Pilates at Bersted Green Hub

Each week, the Bersted Green community hub run a very successful chair pilates group. Those attending have a great time and are of various abilities and ages. It has a lovely warm atmosphere and the facilitator, Jenny Randolph, is very personable and really cares about the clients. The group use weights, elastic resistance bands, exercise balls and more to aid activities and keep it interesting and different each week. Sessions are just £2 on Thursdays 11.30am to 12.15pm. The group offers a warm social environment and



participants are welcome to stay for a drink and catch up afterwards. These sessions are also held at Chilgrove House community hub on Thursdays 10.00am to 10.45am.



## Striving to become a carbon neutral council

Hello everyone!

I'm Will Page, the Climate Change and Sustainability Manager at Arun District Council. My main focus at work is looking to help the Council reduce its Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

- **Scope 1** is the direct emissions from sources owned/controlled by the council. This includes the burning of fuels for heating and petrol/diesel for our fleet.
- **Scope 2** is the indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased by the council.
- **Scope 3** is the indirect emissions that result from activities occurring in the supply chain of the council, both upstream and downstream. This includes things like purchased goods and services, business travel and employee commute.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face, locally, nationally, and globally. Tackling climate change is a key priority for the council and we have pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 – 20 years ahead of the government target of 2050.

Following an audit of our own carbon emissions, we developed the Carbon Neutral Strategy 2022-2030 and have now also published our action plan for the last two years. This sets out in more detail how we will be reducing our emissions as a council. Both documents are available to review at [www.arun.gov.uk/climate-change/](http://www.arun.gov.uk/climate-change/)

Here is a summary of the projects we will be tackling to achieve our carbon goals.

- **Biodiversity** – protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats within Arun
- **Supply Chain** - encourage, support and educate suppliers to share our carbon-neutral goals and re-write the procurement strategy to favour contractors who are climate-aware
- **Staff** – train staff on the importance of sustainability and encourage them to become more environmentally friendly
- **Planning** - challenge planning requirements to encourage more sustainable homes and developments

### Some quick definitions:

**Carbon neutrality** – refers to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions.

**Net zero** – like carbon neutral and can often be used interchangeably.

**Emissions** – refers to greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, that are emitted through human activity (For example burning coal or gas for heat).

**Global warming** – the increasing temperature of the planet caused by human activity.

**Climate change** – refers to wider effects, such as rising sea levels, caused by global warming.





## Budget-friendly family recipe!

### Tuna pasta bake

Serves 4

Cost - under £1 per portion!

### Ingredients

- 1tbsp oil
- 1 small red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 5 medium-sized mushrooms, chopped
- 150g sweetcorn, canned or frozen
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 3tbsp tomato purée
- 300g penne pasta
- 185g can of tuna fish in sunflower oil, drained
- 25g pack of ready salted crisps
- 100g mature Cheddar cheese, grated

### Method

#### Step one

Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and cook for five minutes over a medium heat, then add the mushrooms and cook for five minutes, until softened. Stir in the sweetcorn, tomatoes and tomato purée and simmer for a few minutes.

#### Step two

Meanwhile, stir the pasta into a pan of boiling salted water and cook according to pack instructions, until just tender. Drain, then put it back in the pan. Set the grill to hot.

#### Step three

Stir the pasta into the sauce, then break the tuna into large flakes and gently mix in. Spoon into the dish. Crush the crisps in the bag and sprinkle them over the top, with the cheese.

#### Step four

Put the dish on a baking tray and grill for about five minutes until the cheese has melted and turned golden brown. Serve hot with salad or greens.