

Arun District Council

leisure operating contract annual report
April 2022 - September 2023

“improving lives
through leisure”



www.freedom-leisure.co.uk



introduction

freedomleisure commenced a 10 year contract to manage Arun District Council's leisure facilities on 1 April 2016, these facilities include:

Arun Leisure Centre

Littlehampton Wave Leisure Centre

The Windmill Entertainment Centre

Bersted Park Community Centre

The winter on 22/23 was particularly difficult for the leisure sector as energy prices trebled principally in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Freedom Leisure and Arun District Council worked closely together on measures to mitigate the impact of this on the service and indeed the Council provided financial support in both 2022 and 2023. The significant changes put through the business during 22/23 as well as a softening of energy prices in 23/24 has resulted in a much more positive picture in the current year. We continue to work very closely with Arun District Council on our agenda of improving lives through leisure and indeed are keen to explore opportunities for extending our partnership.

Ivan Horsfall-Turner | Managing Director - Freedom Leisure

The council's strategic priorities for the community are as follows:

- Supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community
- Protecting our environment
- Enhancing sporting, cultural, community and recreational facilities

the health and wellbeing strategy identifies the following priorities for the local area:

- Encourage residents to take part in regular physical activity to benefit their health and wellbeing and for enjoyment
- Encourage young adults to take up sport to lead to life long habits
- Improve quality and accessibility of leisure activities
- Enable lower income residents to access high quality leisure

This report provides a summary of the new initiatives that have made a real difference to the Arun community.



An introduction to the UK's second largest genuine charitable leisure trust:

2022-2023 has been a challenging 18 month period for the sport and leisure sector as a whole, coming out of the back of Covid we were all affected by the utilities crisis, cost of living crisis as well as supply lines being interrupted; but Freedom Leisure has worked closely with their local authority partners to provide the best service possible during this time. Nationally, Freedom Leisure were selected as the preferred operator for 2 new leisure contracts in the last 6 months alone, increasing their portfolio to 115 Leisure Centres with 24 individual partners and now has over 4000 colleagues employed.



115

Leisure Centres, including 2 theatres, on behalf of 24 individual clients across England and Wales.



not for profit

Freedom Leisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK to realise our vision of “improving lives through leisure”



focus

Committed to providing and developing inclusive leisure facilities for everyone. Delivering a service to exceed our customers' expectations

freedomleisure ethos

- Provide affordable and accessible health, leisure and sport facilities for everyone, therefore having a positive impact on the local communities in which we operate and serve – we aim to inspire people to be more active more often
- Reinvest surplus into quality services
- Exceed our partners' desired outcomes for local communities
- Enhance our reputation and status
- Grow and develop as a company in a sustainable way
- Develop our people
- Renew existing contracts and win new ones

freedomleisure corporate vision



Area Insight

Our approach is to provide partners and customers with a bespoke service that will inspire and excite communities to increase participation in activities. Understanding local communities is at the heart of what we do, and we have worked closely with Arun District Council to ensure the community is fully supported and engaged in our local services. We have been able to gather a proven record of success in the Arun area through our commitment to understand the specific needs of Arun residents.

36.9%

of adults not reaching recommended levels of activity



27.8%

people have a long-term life limiting illness or disability



164,889

residents live in Arun (52% female, 48% male)



63.8%

of adults are overweight or obese



11 years

difference in male life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived areas



2.7%

Fewer active young People (16-34) than 6 years ago (Nov 15-16)



7

wards within 20% most deprived within the country (IMD2019)



Throughput summary:



	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	April 23- Sept 23
Arun Leisure Centre	49,054	453,608	511,560	248,569
Littlehampton Wave	76,385	552,312	770,206	463,535
Windmill Entertainment Centre	2,843	25,988	13,183	4,051 Closed
Bersted Park Community Centre	1,263	14,422	12,318	7,715
Active Communities	20,810	38,923	37,635	24,424
Total	150,355	1,085,253	1,344,902	748,294

Learn to Swim Members	April 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023
Arun Leisure Centre	1683	1826	1832
Littlehampton Wave	2365	2457	2040

Memberships	April 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023
Arun Leisure Centre	1642	1356	1369
Littlehampton Wave	3952	3206	3110



Throughput summary:



April 2022 – March 2023
Program numbers:

131,535

Contract group exercise visits
(75,035 – 2021/22)



9,096

Contract badminton games played
(7,835 – 2021/22)



4,154

Children attended holiday camps



There has been a steady increase in our overall user numbers at both Arun Leisure Centre and Littlehampton Wave year on year. The standout achievements include an increase in gym usage at Arun Leisure Centre as well as similar in public swimming at Littlehampton Wave. These successes underscore our commitment to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle within our community.

While we have encountered a decline in gym membership at Littlehampton Wave, this is a common occurrence for new facilities, and we anticipate a natural stabilization over time. The impact of Covid has undoubtedly affected our growth, but we remain optimistic about the future, with plans to foster steady gym membership growth through ongoing support, personalized inductions, and consistent engagement. We aim to work with those who would not usually feel comfortable in a gym environment so that we can increase our impact on those in our community who may not have access previously. We are currently talking with the Wellbeing team in Arun District Council to explore using the Community Transport Service to reach deeper into our local areas and explore removing as many hurdles as possible for others to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Despite a decrease in swimming lessons at Littlehampton Wave and slowed growth at Arun Leisure Centre, we recognize the challenges faced by parents in our area. The tough economic climate has prompted some to withdraw their children from lessons earlier, citing both sufficient progress and the need to manage expenses. We have also seen a significant drop in schools booking lessons in term times with the cost of transport being their main decision maker. We also recognise that The Windmill Cinema did not provide user figures for 2022 onwards which lowers the average slightly.

As we navigate the challenges, that our communities face, our unwavering commitment to their health and well-being remains steadfast, and we look forward to overcoming obstacles and continuing our positive trajectory in the years to come.

2868

Soft play visits
(1711 – 2021/22)



Energy Saving Measures



One of our largest focuses for this last 18 months was what we could action to mitigate any further pressures following the energy crisis. We made immediate decisions such as turning shower cycles from 1 minute to 30 seconds and turning off the air conditioning in our gyms during quieter periods and in the cooler months. On a larger scale, we reduced all flow rates on centrifugal pumps to all of our pools. We have changed the timeclocks in our public spaces to become more energy efficient, isolated our heating and reduced the radiator circuit to just 4 hours a day. We will continue to implement the Freedom Leisure Energy Saving Non-Negotiables and improving on our already reduced impact on the environment.



Investments



This year we have invested in our facilities and been fortunate enough to collaborate closely with our partners. Some of the investment packages have been those that our customers may not see but make a huge impact to the quality of service we provide.

- Investment in replacement of the Swimming Village at Arun Leisure Centre in conjunction with ADC
- Replacement Plate Heat exchangers at Arun LC from Old Calorifiers
- New Windows Dryside at ALC in conjunction with WSCC
- £11.3k on New Pool Grates
- £12k investment by both Freedom and ADC for new Inflatable for Both Sites.
- £4k on new cleaning machines for Arun Leisure Centre.
- £5k for brand new Little Leapfrogs and child activities equipment.
- Replacement Poolside Lighting on over 40% of LED's
- Replacement flooring in Bramber and room upgrade in conjunction with WSCC
- £1.8K on New Tables and Chairs for Parties

Feedback

Our leisure centres continually gather valuable feedback from our patrons. We value the feedback received and are committed to continually enhancing our services to meet the expectations of our community.

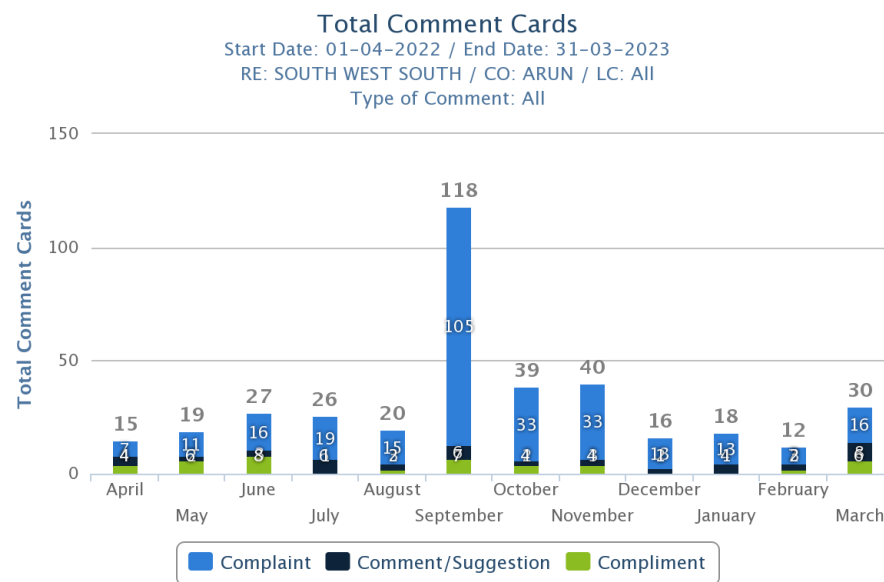
One notable concern was related to the functionality of our app, the Freedom leisure app was causing issues for users which took some time for us to resolve as we had to work with our LMS provider but this is now resolved. Additionally, we acknowledge a spike in complaints in 2022 when pool temperatures were adjusted as a mitigating action amid the energy crisis in which the pool received 45.1% of complaints through October and November.

A significant improvement that has shown a significant swing in feedback involves the complete transformation of the aging changing facilities at Arun Leisure Centre. Thanks to a substantial investment from both the Arun District Council and Freedom Leisure, we have revamped the changing village to provide a modern and more comfortable environment for our visitors.

We are always thrilled to share the positive feedback we have received for our performance in various areas. Specifically, our swift reaction times and exemplary care levels in handling first aid situations have garnered praise from individuals who have experienced such incidents. The recent decision to bring our Day Camps in-house has proven to be a resounding success, as both parents and children eagerly anticipate the upcoming half-term holidays. Furthermore, our receptionist team consistently receive commendations for their friendly, positive, and caring demeanour. Recognising that their primary role is to enhance our customers' days, they consistently contribute to creating a welcoming and positive environment for all.

In 2022/23 Arun received a total of 377 comments via feedback focus.

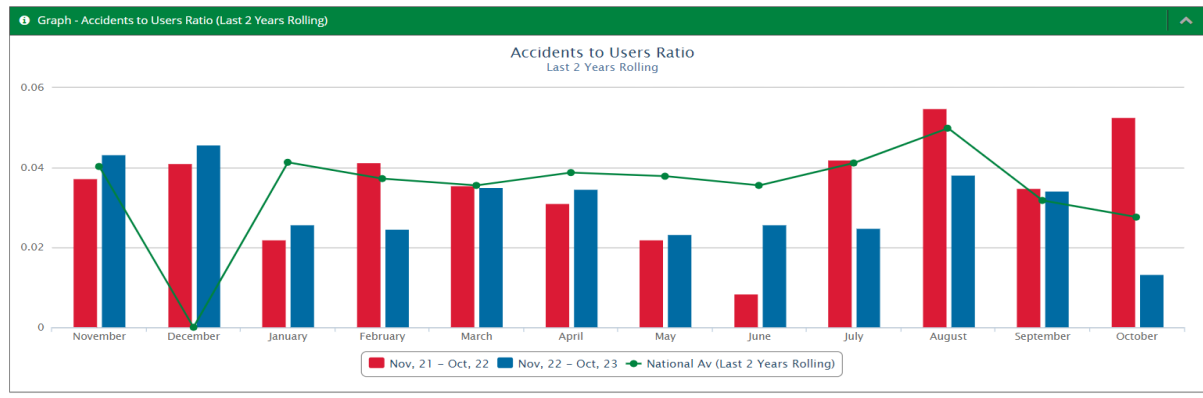
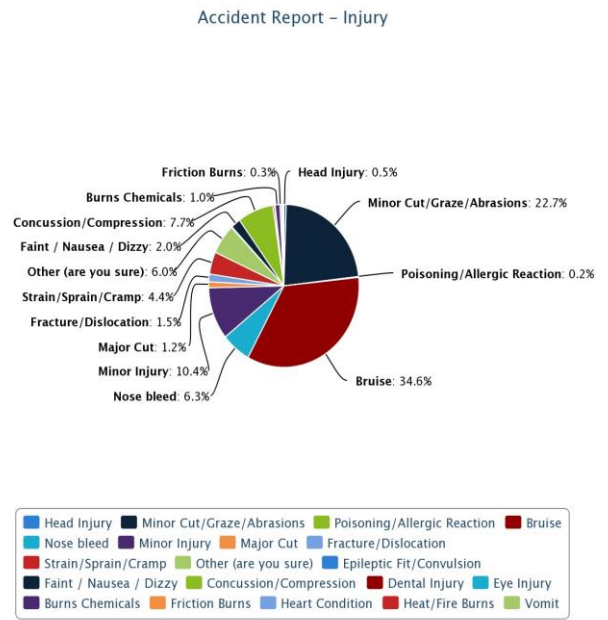
46 compliments
46 comments/suggestion
285 complaints – 0.02 of total visits





Accidents to Users Ratio

Freedom Leisure are committed to reducing accidents in our facilities and preventing them is at the pinnacle of all health and safety decisions. Across the contract between April 22 and September 23 we had just 612 recorded accidents in 1.3m visits. This equates to just 0.04% of all visits. When looking into it further, 74% of those accidents recorded on site resulting in injury have been bruises, nose bleeds or other minor injuries. The teams have a robust plan for all types of first aid incident and participate in regular monthly training.



Accidents to Users Ratio

CON AV: 0.03%

NAT AV: 0.74%





April 2022 – March 2023	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£2,641,650	£1,326,415	£42,674	£127,487	£125,192	£4,263,418
Expenditure	£2,207,424	£1,992,812	£98,860	£110,688	£41,870	£4,451,655
Arun Council Support	£265,001					£265,001
Net surplus / (deficit)	£434,226	-£666,397	-£56,186	£16,799	£83,322	-£188,236

At the conclusion of the 2022/2023 financial year, the Arun Area faced a deficit primarily attributable to the global utility crisis. As we continued to grow following the recovery of the Covid pandemic this was an unforeseen challenge. Despite efforts to manage other budgetary aspects effectively, the utility crisis proved to be a significant burden on the financial health of the Arun Area, contributing substantially to the year-end deficit. Arun District Council offered £265k support in 2022 for that financial year which helped greatly reduce the deficit.



April 2023 – September 2023	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£1,806,124	£1,086,685	£33,953	£46,656	£67,210	£3,040,628
Expenditure	£1,365,067	£1,353,933	£57,163	£42,020	£14,887	£2,833,071
Arun Council Support	£205,255					£205,255
Net surplus / (deficit)	£402,972	-£267,248	-£23,210	£3,635	£52,323	£168,472

Looking ahead to the 2023/2024 financial year, the Arun Area has strategically positioned itself for a much stronger financial standing. Along with £205k support for utility costs from Arun District Council; several key initiatives have been implemented to mitigate the impact of utility expenses, including securing preferential utility rates. Additionally, spend line controls have been established to enhance financial discipline and ensure that resources are allocated judiciously. The focus for the upcoming year also includes a commercial drive to maximise revenue, coupled with an unwavering commitment to enhancing the overall quality of service provided. These measures collectively aim to not only rectify the previous year's deficit but also to position the Arun Area for sustained financial stability and growth. Financial stability allows us to invest more into the services that we offer the wider community.

Team in Arun

Over the course of the year we have seen a turnover in various roles along with the employment market tightening and becoming more competitive. Freedom Leisure have added new roles into the business recognising the growth it has undertaken and the support sites require to perform to the best they can.

In October 2023 Freedom Leisure gave all job roles a 5% pay award increase as another factor in the journey to become an employer of choice in our industry.

Matt Eden – Area Manager of Arun – Matt has worked in the Health and Fitness Industry for over a decade and has worked with providers such as Nuffield Health and The Village. He joined us in July 2023 after running the flagship Fitness First in Baker Street.



Ben Lucas – GM of Arun Leisure Centre – Ben has a background in Leisure having worked at The Arena in Bognor Regis amongst many other projects; Ben joined us in August 2023.

Matt Williams – GM of Littlehampton Wave – Matt was the General Manager of Arun Leisure Centre before taking the helm down the road. He has been in the industry since being a Lifeguard at just 17 years old.

Internal Progression: Trish Causabon-Vincent – Multifunctional Duty Manager – Trish has a wealth of experience and is an expert with Day Camps, Reception, Friday Night Project and many other depts, she has now started to train as a Duty Manager

Kaylee Raynsford: Multifunctional Duty Manager – Kaylee has been with Freedom for roughly 18 months and along with stepping up to be a Duty Manager is also part of the team that liaises between Management and the Lifeguards to increase communication.

Apprenticeships: We are proud to currently be investing in 5 people on different apprenticeships. From Lifeguards and Membership Advisors working towards becoming PT's, to Duty Managers gaining qualifications in their roles. We hope to grow this number of participants in the coming months.

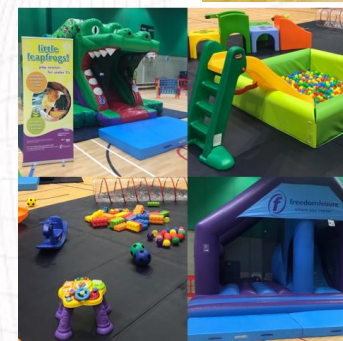


Marketing

Freedom Leisure actively promotes healthy lifestyles across the communities . Ensuring that everyone feels welcome within our centres.

In the recent few years, we have focused more on digital marketing as this leads to more interaction this is supported by traditional methods to ensure we are able to reach our demographic.

Our marketing displays a wide range of activities to ensure that there really is something for everyone and that we offer an all-inclusive service. To match our bespoke offering, we try to personalise our content along with our National campaigns. Our content will always be informative, fun and localised.



Social Media Coverage



Centre	Social media followers as of Nov 23
Arun Leisure Centre	4,504
Littlehampton Wave	9,440
Windmill Entertainment Centre	550
Bersted Park Community Centre	821
Active Communities Arun	376
Six Villages Sports Centre	667



Photo 1- Santas Elves- day camps/ Photo2- walk leaders AGM/ Photo 3- Christmas Zumba. Photo 4- Cardiac

Testimonials



Cardiac Rehab Classes

"Since attending the cardiac rehab sessions I can now do everything that I used to be able to do before my heart attack. I feel more positive and I am happy with the progress that I've made. I enjoy coming to the class because it provides me with extra support and company" - Sue

Testimonial



Swimming Lesson TESTIMONIAL

"Dannii has helped my child so much with her swimming, she is improving so much since having Dannii.

I spoke to Mum and she said that this is the third swimming school she has used and her child has progressed the best with us.



Cardiac Rehab Testimonial

"I feel so much better in myself and have seen a significant improvement in my strength and coordination. I can also see the progress being made by the others in the class"

COLIN



“

Day Camps Testimonial

My daughter attended the children's day camp for the very first time. I never would normally email, but I just wanted to let you now she had an amazing time! From the moment we arrived the staff were brilliant and in particular Gemma, was great with my daughter, very friendly and couldn't do enough. I will definitely be recommending and sending my daughter again!"

”



TESTIMONIALS

"I have the ability to work harder now without the feeling of being breathless and over tired.

I feel more able to do things with confidence now knowing I can work hard without any problems.

I can now push myself harder without the worry"

Elaine



our year in numbers:

The last 18 months have been record breaking for the Arun Contract in many different areas. We have been able to support the community more than we ever have before. The numbers below reflect just January until September 2023.

126,000+

Learn to swim
attendances in 2023



1,309,064

Centre visits



37

Children on
Talented Athletic Programme



6,781

Over 75 year old swims in 2023



12

New volunteers walkers
trained up in 2023



700

On average per week on
Healthy Walk Sessions in 2023



8,986

Attendees to
Little Leapfrogs sessions since April
2022



291,327

Nearly 300,000 visits
In 2023





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