

Arun District Council

leisure operating contract annual report

Oct 2023 - Sept 2024

“ improving lives
through leisure ”



www.freedom-leisure.co.uk



Introduction

freedomleisure commenced a 10 year contract to manage Arun District Councils leisure facilities on 1st April 2016. These facilities include:

Arun Leisure Centre
Littlehampton Wave Leisure Centre
The Windmill Entertainment Centre
Bersted Park Community Centre

In November 2024, Arun District Council committee members voted unanimously to extend the contract by a further 5 years from 2027-2032.

'The leisure operating market continues to be a challenging environment but our working partnership with Arun District Council has enabled the continuation of our service delivery to the residents of Arun and has also achieved some significant external funding towards our joint objectives of healthy active communities and protecting our environment.

The newly awarded contract extension will see further investment into both leisure centres as we strive to ensure the community have access to the leisure services they need to live longer, healthier lives'

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:

Originating from the leisure services of Wealden District Council, Freedom Leisure set up in 2002 with 6 leisure centres. Since then, we have grown to 129 leisure Centre's, 30 individual clients and over 6,000 employees.

Nationally we were selected as the preferred operator of 3 new leisure contracts in this reporting year.



129

Leisure Centre's, including 2 theatres, on behalf of 30 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

Our ethos is to.....

- 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
- Grow and develop as a company in a sustainable way
- Develop our people

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.

31.4%

of adults not reaching recommended levels of activity



19.7%

people have a disability under the equality act



168,000

residents live in Arun (51% female, 49% male)



63.8%

of adults are overweight or obese



10 years

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



2.7%

of people aged 16-49 years who said their health was bad or very bad



7

wards within 20% most deprived within the country - IMD2019. (3 within 10%)



Participation:



	2022/23	2023/24	Oct 22-Sept 23	Oct 23-Sept 24
Arun Leisure Centre	511,560	524,157	498,690	538,739
Littlehampton Wave	770,206	775,136	765,604	805,044
Windmill Entertainment Centre	13,183	4,251 (Closed)	11,400	7,423 (Closed)
Bersted Park Community Centre	12,318	14,529	16,927	13,560
Total	1,307,267	1,318,073	1,292,621	1,364,766

Learn to Swim Members	March 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023	Oct 2024
Arun Leisure Centre	1683	1826	1832	1788
Littlehampton Wave	2365	2457	2040	2018

Memberships	March 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023	Oct 2024
Arun Leisure Centre	1642	1356	1369	1397
Littlehampton Wave	3952	3206	3110	3294





Participation:



April 2023 – March 2024
Program numbers:

97,093
Contract group
Exercise visits



446,177
Gym visits



139,295
Public swimming
visits



- There continues to be a positive increase in participation year on year across Littlehampton Wave, Arun Leisure Centre and Bersted Park.
- Overall participation has increased despite The Windmill closure.
- Our fitness membership base continues to grow on an upwards trajectory, increasing year on year since the significant decline following the impact of the covid-19 pandemic.
- Our commitment to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle within our communities is evident through notable increases in public swimming, gym visits and overall group exercise participation.
- There is a lot of focus on our swim school provision, most notably at Littlehampton Wave where our current occupancy level fluctuates between 70-75%. We remain one of the most competitively priced swim school providers in the South of England, and we're working hard to retain our members through regular reviews of our swim programme, improved parent/guardian communications, and the overall customer journey.

203,078
Learn to swim
attendances



Energy & environmental



One of our continued focuses over the last year is what we could further implement and action to mitigate any further pressures following the energy crisis and reduce our carbon footprint. We are also continuing to implement, monitor and review both our Energy Saving Non-Negotiables and Reactive Energy Action Plans (REAP's).



Energy Saving at Wave

- Destratification Fans installed on Poolside and Gym.
- Increased filter cleaning to AC units in high use areas (Gym/Spin) for more efficient running.
- Decreased Air temperature to poolside by 1 degree to run in line with Pool water temperature so these are now the same level.
- More regular cleaning of pool grates to reduce chemical usage.
- Change of BMS Strategies for AHU running schedules so that these can be controlled better.

Energy Saving at Arun LC

- Installation of PV solar.
- Reduction of run times of larger sports hall AHU'S and adjust accordingly to user needs.
- Destratification Fans installed on Poolside and Gym.
- Completion of gymnasium heating system installed over the Summer and commissioned. Upgrade to ASHP.
- Replacement of old first and second Gen LED units in areas.

We are proud to announce that we have become the first leisure operator in the UK to be Bronze Carbon Literacy accredited.

We now have 4 members of the Arun team who have recently completed the Carbon Literacy course:

- Paul Abbie – Wave GM / Ben Lucas – ALC GM
- Gavin Lee – Area Technical Manager / Ricky Trainor – Area Manager



<https://www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/news/carbon-literacy-accreditation/>

Investments



This year we have invested in the 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.

Investments Wave

- Blower replacements for pool inflatables
- Replacement track hoist in Changing Places
- Upgrade to pool pod chair Changing Places
- Replacement mats for Little Leap Frogs
- Replacement matting for gymnastics
- Upgrade to man safe system on roof
- Wi-Fi upgrade

Investments ALC

- Replacement flooring to poolside viewing area
- Repainting of dry side changing rooms
- Replacement of dry side ceiling tiles in changing rooms
- Replacement of poolside family doors as not included in refurbishment of Village change
- Repairs to gutter on wet side
- Replacement water softener wet and dry side
- Chemical dosing unit replacement



Last year 2023/24:

April 2023 – March 2024	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£3,387,243	£2,237,450	£75,339	£62,763	£136,646	£5,899,441
Expenditure	£2,483,288	£2,491,715	£98,860	£86,453	£40,426	£5,200,742
Net surplus / (deficit)	£903,955	-£254,265	-£27,511	-£23,690	£96,219	£698,699

The start of the 2023/24 financial year saw us in a much better financial position compared to 2022/23.

Participation figures increased across the area, and given the support received off the back of the global energy crisis, we experienced a healthy growth in the first half of the year.

The final quarter of the year experienced slower growth, attributed in part by the cost of living crisis which affected participation numbers, as the public became more conscious around discretionary income spending.



Current year to date:

April 2024 – September 2024	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£1,661,882	£1,169,766	£39,667	£67,131	£73,321	£3,011,767
Expenditure	£1,333,607	£1,327,775	£63,776	£67,652	£25,395	£2,818,205
Net surplus / (deficit)	£328,274	-£158,009	-£24,109	-£521	£47,926	£193,562

Following on from the challenges in the latter part of the last financial year, we experienced a slower start to the year than that of 2023/24.

Participation in general continued on an upwards trend in the second quarter of the year.

We continue to tightly control our expenditure lines, ensuring resources are allocated strategically across our priority areas of the business.

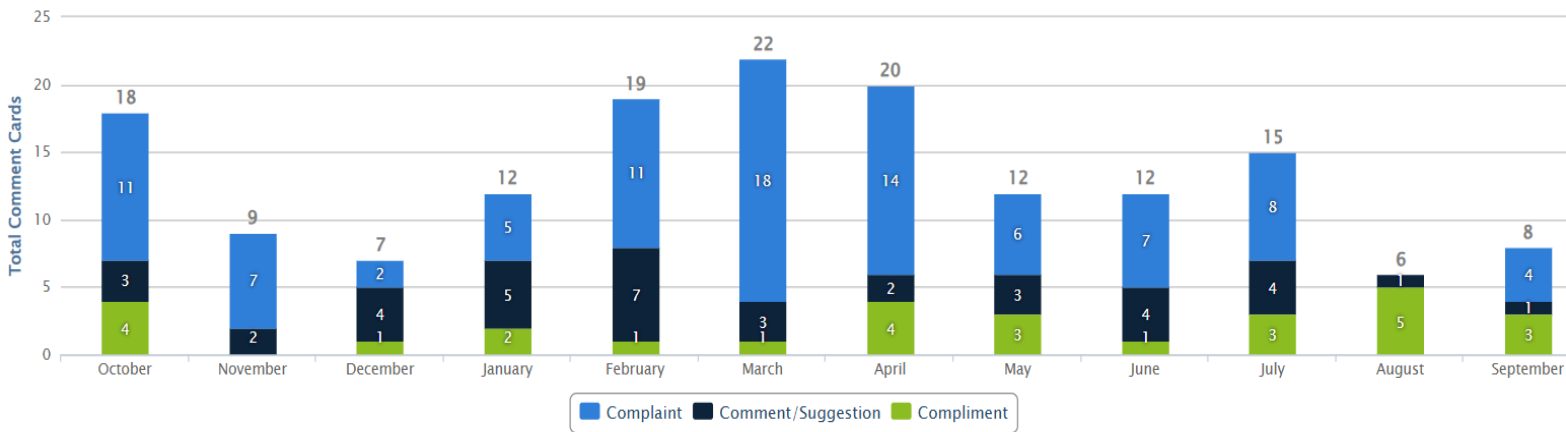
The focus for the second half of the financial year includes a commercial drive to maximise revenue, encourage, promote participation and a commitment to enhancing the overall quality of service we're providing.

Feedback

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



Total Comment Cards
 Start Date: 01-10-2023 / End Date: 30-09-2024
 RE: SOUTH EAST SOUTH / CO: ARUN / LC: All
 Type of Comment: All



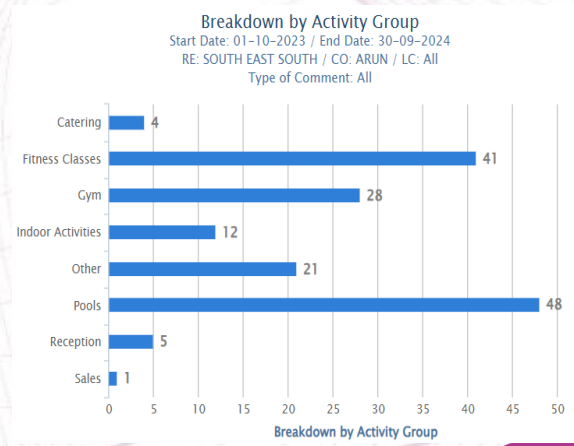
In 2023/24, we received a total of 160 comments via feedback focus.

- 28 compliments
- 39 comments/suggestions
- 93 complaints – 0.01% of total visits / 94% of which were resolved 1st time.

There have been a number of challenges with the length of time in which our gym machines had taken to be fixed across the area. We've implemented a much quicker process, working closely with our maintenance contractors, along with updating our communications with members to highlight the specific issues, providing lead times for fixes, and advice on alternative exercises.

Cleanliness across both Wave and ALC was highlighted, and as such, we have increased cleaning resource across the contract to ensure improved cleanliness standards within our facilities.

The implementation of a number of new sessions and classes across both Wave and ALC have been highlighted as just a number of key successes in the area, from additional aqua fit classes, to comments received with regards to our little leapfrogs and gymnastics provisions.



Testimonials



Group Ex Testimonial

First aqua aerobics class for me and it was great fun, felt very welcomed



Gym Testimonial

Since coming to the gym I have been able to walk, before I could not. Coming to the gym keeps me out of a wheelchair. I now feel more confident and fitter. My COPD is kept in check. I can walk further before becoming breathless. Thanks to the fitness team.



Testimonial

Wonderful well designed clean modern facilities with friendly professional staff throughout. The swimming pools and coaches are all beyond incredible here. Our son has just turned 4 and the coaches have already got him swimming front crawl. The teaching pool is always really warm and is a nice learner friendly depth too. Every teacher has been really friendly, patient and encouraging and have really gone to great efforts to get to know our son and the other children in the group lessons individually which is so lovely! The children all have a wonderful bond with the teachers which gives them the confidence and trust to learn their swimming. The cafe staff are lovely and friendly too and will always take the time to serve you with a smile and ask how your day has been. I really do feel that the standards of Wave do deliver to a very high level comparable to private gyms I've been to. Can not recommend enough.



Soft Play Testimonial

The kids absolutely loved this play area, Jane was very helpful and pleasant, really appreciate it... definitely worth going and we will be returning again soon



Café testimonial

Warm, clean and friendly place. Good café for an after swim drink.



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 but this is supported by traditional methods to ensure we are able to reach our targeted demographics.

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.

Active Play Summer Sessions 2024

Look out for the Freedom Leisure Park and Play van this summer, packed full of play equipment! Sessions last for two hours and are FREE of charge. Please be aware that children cannot be left unattended. Children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult over the age of 18 at all times. Suitable for 5-12 years but all the family are very welcome!

Sessions are weather permitting and run during the week in the summer holidays from Wednesday 24th July – Friday 30th August

Day	10.00am – 12.00noon	2.00 – 4.00pm
Monday	Angmering Decoy Drive – Palmer Road Rec	Wick Water Lane
Tuesday	Ferring North Ferring Green	Yapton King George V Playing Field
Wednesday	Angmering Play Flower Park	Wick Water Lane
Thursday	Bersted Bersted Park off Berry Lane	Rustington Woodlands Recreation
Friday	(Starting Thursday 1 st August) Bersted Jubilee Fields (Starting Friday 2 nd August)	Wick Water Lane

No need to book!
For further information please contact: 01903 725451
hcarun@freedom-leisure.co.uk

COLD WATER CLAIMS LIVES. TO REDUCE SHOCK, STAY CALM, AND FLOAT TO LIVE.



AWARDS FINALIST 2024

NEW FITNESS CLASSES

Starting on Thursday 2nd of May
Beginners spin 6:15 – 7pm

Starting on Monday 3rd of June
Beginners Yoga 5:15 – 6:15pm

Book at reception, online or via the Freedom App

LITTLEHAMPTON CONCERT BAND PRESENTS

TIME

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

WINDMILL THEATRE
LITTLEHAMPTON
SATURDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2024
7:30PM

Schools out for Summer!

OPEN WEEK
for all teachers & school workers at Littlehampton Wave!

5 - 11 August 2024

REFER A FRIEND & get one month HALF PRICE

*Terms and Conditions apply

Christmas Holiday Day Camps now available to book.

Call 01243 826 612

SWF AND KAPOW PRESENT WRESTLING

THE NUMBER 1 FAMILY SHOW IN TOWN!

The wedding singer

Opening Night Offset 2 weeks for £25

9th - 12th August 2023
The Windmill Theatre Littlehampton

Book by Chad Bequelin and Tim Merihly
Music by Matthew Sklar
Lyrics by Chad Bequelin

Based upon the NewLine Cinema film by Tim Merihly

GOING FOR GREEN PLEDGE

We've signed the

swim school

learn & develop an essential life skill

contact us today!

I'm learning to swim with freedomleisure

Alpha Steps

Social media coverage



Centre	Facebook followers	Instagram followers
Arun Leisure Centre	4,014	1,105
Littlehampton Wave	8,082	1,857
Windmill Entertainment Centre	619	N/A
Bersted Park Community Centre	836	N/A
Active Communities Arun	370	N/A



Arun area team

In April 2024 Freedom Leisure gave all job roles a 3.5% pay award increase, in addition to the 5% pay award increase in October 2023. This is another factor in the journey to become an employer of choice in our industry.



Ricky Trainor – Area Manager

Worked for freedom leisure for 14 years in total. Joined the Arun partnership as the Area Manager in October 2024, and has previously worked across the Guildford, Woking and Tandridge partnerships, in various senior roles.

Paul Abbie – General Manager, Littlehampton Wave.

Working in the leisure industry for over 25 years, Paul kicked off his career as a receptionist before working his way up the ladder to General Manager. Previously worked at The Triangle in Burgess Hill, The Dolphin in Haywards Heath, Steyning Leisure Centre, K2 Crawley and most recently as General Manager of King Alfred LC in Hove. He has also spent 15 years teaching first aid and Pool Lifeguarding.



Ben Lucas – General Manager, Arun Leisure Centre.

Ben joined the team as general manager almost 18 months ago, way back in August 2023. He has a vast background in leisure having previously worked locally at The Arena in Bognor Regis. Ben has done a fantastic job with the team, streamlining the operational running of the leisure centre, implementing a number of new initiatives within his team, and overseeing a number of key projects in partnership with Felpham Community College and Arun District Council.

Arun area team



New to the Arun team:

Steve Hawes - Area Fitness Manager of Arun.



With a wealth of 25 years' experience in the leisure and fitness Industry, Steve has worked with a number of health clubs and leisure providers over the years. Steve is spearheading the development of our health and fitness pathways in Arun, including; fitness, GP referral and group exercise classes.

Grace & Dannii – Area Sales & Marketing leads.

Joined the Arun partnership from October 2024. They manage our website and social media for 4 centres, design graphics, and handle all things sales & marketing, helping to promote everything the facilities in the area have to offer, along with linking with our partners and engaging with the local community on a daily basis.



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 upskilling Duty Managers gaining qualifications in their roles.

Training: Our teams in all departments have a number of additional CPD courses available to them. We are continually engaging with the teams to upskill, develop and train the teams to ensure operations and services we offer, are to the highest possible standards.



Our year in numbers

There has been some excellent examples of growth, with the below highlighting just some of the fantastic results achieved over the last 12 months.

203,078

Learn to swim & school swimming attendances



1,364,766

Centre visits overall



18

Children on our Talented Athletic Programme



11,066

Over 75 year old free swims



38

Volunteer walkers trained up in total



650

On average per week attending Our healthy walks



8,984

Attendees to Little Leapfrogs - 83% growth since 2022



446,177

Visits to the gym





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