



SUMMARY

GREENING ARUNDEL STRATEGY 2023-27

A Catalyst for Community-Based Change

“It’s only through working together that we can help nature recover.”¹



¹ Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive, 2023

What is Greening Arundel?

In 2019, “Love Arundel”, a major community and business consultation, highlighted the need for “a greener, cleaner” town to enhance quality-of-life for residents and to stimulate tourism in support of business success. In its Strategic Plan for 2023/27, Arundel Town Council has set out objectives, which include: *to reduce and reverse the causes of climate change locally, as well as to sustain and enhance the green spaces of the town.*

A number of community-based organisations have been working towards these goals for some time. In 2023, these organisations came together to form the “Greening Arundel” network, explicitly to build synergy, enhance sustainability and harness collective potential to make Arundel greener. In short to become a catalyst for community-based change.

What are we aiming to achieve?

By coming together to share knowledge, experience, resources, networks and ideas, Greening Arundel will bring greater scale, speed and funding to greening projects. This will enable us ***to help make Arundel “greener,” more efficiently and sustainably.***

We are also aiming to mobilise the community by involving a larger number and a broader range of local residents and businesses in greening activities.

What are our strategic objectives?

Aim 1 - Protecting the Environment

Our objectives are to:

- **Increase bio-diversity and bio-abundance**
- **Protect and nurture endangered species**
- **Improve the environmental value of green spaces**
- **Reduce environmental damage**

Our operating principles are as follows:

- ✓ we collect and use rainwater, wherever feasible
- ✓ we retain coffee grounds and garden waste for biomass/composting purposes
- ✓ we avoid using peat-based products
- ✓ we minimise the use of plastic
- ✓ we reduce consumption as well as reuse and recycle as much as possible
- ✓ we prioritise drought-resistant native and near native trees and plants, which are pollinator-friendly and support wildlife
- ✓ we are working to increase local knowledge of and support for wildlife, particularly bees, bats, hedgehogs, swallows, swifts and house martins

Aim 2 - Engaging People Safely

Our objective is to:

- **Increase participation in greening activities to support community well-being**

Our operating principles are as follows:

- ✓ Greening Arundel is supported by a cohort of volunteers, known as the Green Team
- ✓ local residents of all ages participate in greening events and activities
- ✓ we reach out to those who would particularly benefit from greening initiatives
- ✓ local school children are engaged through growing trees and plants from seed
- ✓ local businesses and residents are donating plants, watering, and fundraising
- ✓ each Greening Arundel member organisation, including Arundel Town Council, implements risk assessment and safeguarding procedures
- ✓ each organisation has appropriate insurance and data-protection policies in place.

Aim 3 - Becoming Sustainable

The goal of sustainability is at the heart of the Greening Arundel initiative. Our objective is to:

- **Ensure the sustainability of all Greening Arundel initiatives**

Our operating principles are as follows:

- ✓ over time, we plan to become self-sufficient in terms of producing compost from kitchen waste; recycling tools and equipment; as well as propagating plants from seeds, plugs and cuttings
- ✓ we will manage green spaces - particularly roundabouts and verges - in a sustainable manner, trimming edges only as necessary for public safety

Why did we choose these objectives?

The 2023 State of Nature report indicates that, on current trends, one in six of all species in the UK is facing extinction, which in turn threatens our own well-being. Yet at the same time, the report provides evidence that targetted conservation can reverse the decline.

“What is clear is that progress to protect our species and habitats has not been sufficient and yet we know we urgently need to restore nature to tackle the climate crisis and build resilience.... We know that conservation works and how to restore ecosystems and save species. We need to move far faster as a society towards nature-friendly land and sea use, otherwise the UK’s nature and wider environment will continue to decline and degrade, with huge implications for our own way of life.” Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive, 2023

The declining populations of native pollinators across the UK is well-documented. Yet they are crucial to the pollinating process that results in food crops. One in three mouthfuls of food we eat depend on pollination. Pollinators also have a direct influence on the numbers and diversity of the local bird population. Therefore increasing the volume of pollinator-friendly plants and trees will help restore crucial wildlife habitats. In addition, pollinators help create a bio-diverse environment, which brings mental health benefits to the community.

“...if the invertebrates were to disappear, the world’s ecosystems would collapse.”

Sir David Attenborough

“The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.” World Wildlife Fund

There has been a drastic reduction in the amount of wildlife once common in Arundel. For example, swallows, swifts and house martins are at the heart of Arundel’s identity, yet habitat loss and climate change have decimated local populations. Arundel has many green spaces of varying size, but much can be done to increase that number, as well as to add to their attractiveness and environmental value in supporting bio-diversity and bio-abundance and creating a haven for wildlife.

Pesticides are having a devastating impact on our environment and urban biodiversity. They kill plants which are relied upon by birds, insects and other wildlife. They contaminate water courses and harm aquatic wildlife. Many pesticides are classified as “probable or possible carcinogens” and are “highly persistent” meaning that their effects last long into the future. This makes them a danger as much to people as to nature.

Climate change is fuelled by consumption, therefore our intention is for Greening Arundel to reduce waste, consume less, and become as self-sufficient as possible.

Arundel’s food waste is currently being sent to landfill, which is not only wasteful and expensive, but also produces emissions of methane. Instead food waste could be converted into compost. Composting the food waste produced by residential and commercial properties will reduce our waste and emissions, as well as creating organic compost to enrich the soil.

Research confirms that spending time in green spaces is mentally beneficial – increasing feelings of happiness and reducing depression. Developing social capital through contact with nature has been shown to reduce loneliness and stress, while leading to greater social and economic cohesion. Everyone, who lives and works in Arundel, could benefit from strengthening community spirit across all age groups, geographic areas, and walks of life. An important way to achieve that is for people to engage with the natural environment.

Residents and business alike have a stake in helping the town look more attractive, as well as in combatting climate change and restoring bio-diversity. Securing green tourism certification for businesses in Arundel and marketing the town as a green destination could help encourage more visitors all year round.

The following organisations are members of the Greening Arundel network: Arundel Agenda 21, Arundel Bee Project, Arundel Community Orchard Group, Arundel Gardens Association, Arundel Tree Wardens, the Community Apiary, Friends of Priory Pocket Park, Juniper cafe/Chamber of Commerce and Norfolk Estate and Arundel Castle Trustees Ltd. The network is coordinated by a committee representing member organisations, as well as Arundel Community Partnership, Arundel Town Council, Arun District Councillor and staff, the South Downs National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council.

Greening Arundel will become more secure, if we are able to solidify governance in a way that spreads workloads and builds shared ownership. Similarly, our financial situation will be strengthened, if we can diversify revenue streams and maintain a high profile with leading funders. Ultimately, we want to generate enough income locally to meet our needs.