What is Arundel Community Network?

The aim of Arundel Community Network (ACN) is to improve communication between residents of Arundel electronically, using a combination of email bulletins and online surveys.

All residents are encouraged to:

- sign up for email bulletins,
- submit items for broadcast and
- take part in ACN surveys.

There will be no charge to residents for using the network.

Communicating to Arundel

The Network will send out an **email bulletin** when there is some information that is **urgent** or **important**.

Urgent news could be about road or rail closures.

Important information might be local flood warnings or proposed traffic plans.

The network is **not** intended to operate as an advertising forum for businesses or events, a newsletter, or a public forum, since other media already perform these functions very effectively.

Information submitted to the network will be reviewed by a Steering Group to assess its urgency or importance. This includes information from Councils, Highways Authority etc., or from residents and businesses.

Listening to Arundel

Online surveys make it quick and cost-effective to ask residents for their opinions and to compile and analyse the data submitted.

The Steering Group will assess whether particular questions and the answers are relevant and valuable to the town.

F.A.Q.

- Why do we need a Network?
- Who runs the Network?
- Where does the Network operate?
- How does the Network function?
- What is the Arundel Community Partnership?

Why do we need a Network?

The main advantages of the Network are that electronic communication is **quicker** and **more cost effective** than traditional methods.

Putting printed leaflets through letter boxes is expensive, needs willing volunteers, and not quick enough for urgent issues. Questionnaires have to be printed, delivered, posted back, opened, and manually collated. The time and expense severely limits the number of times that residents can express their democratic opinion on critical issues.

A swift e-mail, and an easy tick-box reply to it is so simple that it can dramatically increase response, giving a much more accurate reflection of residents' opinion - and the software can collate those opinions automatically.

A typical situation where this can be used to the town's advantage is where a grant is being sought to do something specific in Arundel - we can use the answers provided from a survey to clearly show whether the proposal has genuine support from the community.

This ability for in-depth analysis is the feature that sets the Network aside from Arundel's various Facebook pages and websites. Many do an excellent job of providing information amd forums for discussion, but they're not designed as an 'opt-in' space to **track** and **analyse** specific responses.

Who runs the Network?

The **Arundel Community Network** operates under the umbrella of the **Arundel Community Partnership**. There is more information about the Partnership on page two. The Partnership gets a grant from Arundel Town Council which it uses to fund work on the Network.

A **Steering Group** oversees the day-to-day running of the Network. Registered residents are welcome to volunteer to serve on the Steering Group.

The main function of the Steering Group is to look at incoming information to decide what is really **urgent** and **important**. For instance, a jumble sale is neither, but a major disruption of the A27 certainly would be.

It also vets requests to use the Network for canvassing the town's opinion to ensure **neutral** and **non-commercial** use.

For instance, if an outsider wanted to ask whether residents would like a shoe shop in the town, that would be **commercial** and therefore not appropriate.

An enquiry from the Council as to whether the town would support spending £10,000 on a particular project might be allowed, as long as the project was seen to be **neutral**.

Where does the Network operate?

The prime audience for the Network is **registered residents of Arundel**, loosely defined as within BN18.

The Network will not exclude people with a commercial interest in the town such as business owners and staff, and will share information with them. However, non-residents' opinions on specific issues may be collated separately from residents.

The Network will also not exclude people with a social interest in Arundel like residents' relatives, regular shoppers or frequent visitors. However, they would be identified separately, and would not necessarily be canvassed for their opinions on town issues.

The Network will develop, attracting new registrations, and using the full potential of the software; and it will change as it develops. However, it will not change uncontrollably. Precisely because the Network is able to ask residents their views, it can ask them how they want it to develop, and react to "Arundel's" opinion.

Decisions like this will be made by the Steering Group, but the Network itself can be used to ask registered residents how they would like it to operate.

How does the Network function?

The Arundel Community Network holds the email addresses of residents who have agreed to register and contact them using **Mail Chimp** software.

Mail Chimp is a popular and well established software used by millions of clubs, businesses and voluntary groups to communicate with members, customers and clients. It has strict data protection and privacy settings, and residents' data will not be shared with any third parties.

Surveys are conducted using software called **Survey Monkey**. Again, data protection laws mean that only the Network will have access to individual users' data. This will not be shared to any third parties.

A Steering Group will oversee access to, and use of, the Network; but the interactive nature of the Network allows easy feedback from residents, so they can suggest how the Network develops, and the Group can respond to that.

The Steering Group is well aware that having a register of residents is a privilege that should not be abused, and that residents do not want to be drowned in emails. At present, there is a self-imposed limit of 12 emails in a 12 month period.

What is the Arundel Community Partnership?

A Community Partnership is a distinct legal entity created by an Act of Parliament. The advantage of a Partnership is that it has the legal right to apply for grants, and use that money for the benefit of the community.

This is a very valuable source of funds because many small clubs and societies just don't have the legal structure to apply for grants. (Even the Town Council can't apply for grant funding!)

The Arundel Community Partnership began in 2003, and has run many excellent projects under the chairmanship of Mike De Lara; ranging from the pontoon at the Quay, bus shelters, tourist signs, pedestrian paths, and even a drinking fountain. A major initiative of the Partnership was Arundel's first Community Plan.

More recently, the Partnership wanted to revise the Plan to include any new projects that the people of Arundel might want. However, getting objective views of what 'Arundel' wants was very difficult. So the idea of the Network began to arise as a way of gaining residents' opinions.