Survey results:

Arun Times Reader Survey Report

February 2017

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The recently published Winter 2016 issue of Arun Times has had a re-design. The new version of this publication is cheaper to produce, contains more advertising, and is delivered by Royal Mail. For the first time, it was sent to Arun’s businesses as well as its residents.

1.2 Arun’s Communications Unit\(^1\) wanted to hear readers’ views on the new look magazine. A short article appeared on page 3. This asked for feedback and had a printed link to an online survey.

1.3 Arun Times was sent to 68,939 residential properties and, for the first time, to 782 business properties in the Arun District. Despite offering a prize draw, and posting reminders on the Arun District Council website’s home page, only 34 responses were received, representing a response rate of just 0.05\(^2\).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 More than half of the survey respondents had read “all or most” of the issue; one in five had “read some of it; whilst a quarter say they had “skimmed through it”.

2.2 Female respondents appear more likely than males to have read more of the magazine. Older respondents appear more likely than younger respondents to just skim though it.

2.3 Seven in ten find Arun Times either very or quite enjoyable. Females are significantly more likely than males to enjoy the magazine. Those under 45 are more likely than average to find it enjoyable.

2.4 A majority of respondents would like to see more of the ‘events (what’s on?)’ section. Two sections that just under a half would like more of are: ‘information about services’ and ‘news stories and features’. Only around one in four would like to see more of ‘facts and figures about the council’, ‘pictures/photographs’, and ‘contact emails, names, and numbers’.

2.5 After the Arun District Council website, Arun Times is the second most used source of information about the council. Nearly three in five survey respondents say they use Arun Times for this purpose.

2.6 After the internet; friends, neighbours or relations; and free newspapers/magazines; Arun Times is the fourth most frequently used source of information on local attractions and events. Just over half say they use Arun Times for this.

2.7 Seven in ten feel that Arun Times represents good value for money. There is a marked difference by gender, with nearly 85% of female respondents feeling it

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\(^1\) Arun’s Communications Unit produces Arun Times in-house.

\(^2\) This is subject to a maximum standard error of +/-16.8% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Thus we can be 95% confident that if the whole population had responded the actual figure would lie between 33.2% and 66.8%.
represents good value for money, against just half of male respondents. Older respondents (60+ year olds) appear less likely than average to feel it represents good value for money. These findings mirror the responses regarding how much respondents read and how enjoyable they find it.

2.8 More than four in five say they would be either ‘very’ or ‘quite’ likely to read regularly updated new articles online. More than one in four under 45s say they are ‘very likely’ to do this.

2.9 Asked how they think Arun Times could be improved. All verbatim responses are shown in the report appendix. They fall into three categories: “satisfied”; “suggestions made”; and “negative comments”.

3. KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Please note that this is a reader feedback survey; non-readers are not represented as, by definition, they wouldn’t have seen the article / link to the survey.

3.2.1 The first question asked respondents how much of this issue they had read. More than half had read “all or most of it”, one in five had “read some of it”, whilst a quarter say they had “skimmed through it” (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – How much of this issue of Arun Times did you read? [Base: 34]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Read all or most of it</th>
<th>Read some of it</th>
<th>Skimmed through it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 45</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 59</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Female respondents appear more likely than males to have read more of the magazine (89% of females had read all or some of it compared with 57% of males). Older respondents appear more likely than younger respondents to just skim through it (one in three 60+ year olds did this, compared with one in five under 45s).
3.3 Figure 2 shows that seven in ten respondents find Arun Times either very or quite enjoyable. Females and those under 45 are more likely than average to find it enjoyable (84% females compared with 40% males found it very or quite enjoyable; 80% of those under 45 compared with 59% of 60+ year olds found it very or quite enjoyable).

Figure 2 – How enjoyable was it? [Base: 34]

3.4.1 Figure 3 shows that a majority (61%) of respondents would like to see more of the ‘events (what’s on?)’ section. Two sections that just under a half would like more of are: ‘information about services’ (47%), and ‘news stories and features’ (42%). Only around one in four would like to see more of ‘facts and figures about the council’ (29%), ‘pictures/photographs’ (27%), and ‘contact emails, names, and numbers’ (24%).

Figure 3 – On the whole would you like to see Arun Times contain more, the same, or less of the following? [Base: 34]

3.4.2 All of the sections listed appear popular with the overwhelming majority of readers. The highest percentage saying “less” is only 15% (equally for ‘facts and figures about the council’, ‘pictures/photographs’, and ‘contact emails, names, and numbers’).
3.5.1 Arun Times is the second most used source of information about the council (after the Arun District Council website). Nearly three in five survey respondents say they use Arun Times for this purpose (see figure 4).

![Figure 4 – From which, if any, of the sources provided do you use to obtain information about Arun District Council? [Base: 34]](chart)

3.5.2 Those who say ‘other’ were asked to expand. Five responses were received: 2 for “Facebook”; 1 each for “social media”; “local newspaper websites”; and “local parish notice boards.”

3.6.1 After the internet; friends, neighbours or relations; and free newspapers /magazines; Arun Times is the fourth most frequently used source of information on local attractions and events. Just over half say they use Arun Times for this (see figure 5).

![Figure 5 – How do you get information on local attractions and events? [Base: 34]](chart)

3.6.2 Those who said ‘other’ were asked to expand. Four responses were received; one each for: “Angmering village magazine”; “local posters/signs posted in shops and streets etc”; “social media”; and “Sussex by the Sea website.”
3.7 Figure 6 shows seven in ten feel that Arun Times represents good value for money. There is a marked difference by gender, with nearly 85% of female respondents feeling it represents good value for money, against just half of male respondents. Older respondents (60+ year olds) appear less likely than average to feel it represents good value for money. These findings mirror the responses reported earlier regarding how much respondents read and how enjoyable they find it.

Figure 6 – Arun Times costs around 11p per copy, to produce and deliver. Do you feel that this represents good value for money or not? [Base: 34]

3.8 More than four in five say they would be either ‘very’ or ‘quite’ likely to read regularly updated new articles online (figure 7). More than one in four under 45s say they are ‘very likely’ to do this. Unlike responses to previous questions, there is little difference in views between the sexes.

Figure 7 – If Arun Times was regularly updated with new articles online, how likely would you be to read it? [Base: 34]
3.9.1 The final question invited respondents to say how they think Arun Times could be improved. All verbatim responses are shown in the report appendix.

3.9.2 A selection of general comments is provided below to give a flavour of the feedback.

Some of the satisfied responses:

“I really like the way Arun Times is laid out. The print is just the right size and I didn’t need to put my reading glasses on to read it; which was great and a treat for my eyes! I can’t say there was anything wrong with this issue.”

“Just keep doing what you are doing. It is very informative and good to refer to over the weeks.”

“Love the new format and the colourful photos as well as informative articles.”

“The Arun Times is great. I don’t think it can be improved.”

“Think the makeover has improved it already!”

Some of the suggestions made:

“In the ‘What’s on in Arun’ section, if any admission fees could be included; then it might draw more people in to an event if they could see if they can afford to attend.”

“Make it online only.”

“More local news, sports activities, and events listings.”

“More pages. Would like an article on what and what not to recycle, i.e. what kind of packaging of fruit/food is recyclable? etc. I have to say the photos are superb in the latest issue. More please!”

“Not sure if you have a Facebook page but would recommend one to reach maybe a younger audience.”

“Perhaps make the contents section on page 3 a bit bigger. Compared with other articles and sections in the newsletter it took up the least amount of space and is probably one of the most important aspects!”

“Perhaps you could include discount vouchers for use in local shops/restaurants? It would be welcome, and encourage trade.”

Some of the negative comments made:

“It’s a waste of money. You look at it, maybe read it, then throw it away.”

“Stop publishing it and save the money.”
APPENDIX

How do you think we could improve Arun Times? [all verbatim responses]

**Satisfied: (10 respondents)**

“Already very, fairly balanced with news of up-coming, local events, and voluntary organisations.”

“I appreciate the make-over it’s had. My wife used to be responsible for a newsletter (not at Arun) and people underestimate how much work goes into it, so keep up the good work as it’s very informative.”

“I enjoyed the new look Arun Times. I can’t think of ways to improve it as I think it is very informative.”

“I really like the way Arun Times is laid out. The print is just the right size and I didn’t need to put my reading glasses on to read it; which was great and a treat for my eyes! I can’t say there was anything wrong with this issue (41).”

“It’s very good as it is. A nice balance of articles and not too much council spin (unlike Littlehampton's 'Progress' magazine, which has a picture of the town’s mayor on every page).”

“Just keep doing what you are doing. It is very informative and good to refer to over the weeks.”

“Love the new format and the colourful photos as well as informative articles.”

“No improvement needed.”

“The Arun Times is great. I don’t think it can be improved.”

“Think the makeover has improved it already!”

**Suggestions: (12 respondents)**

“Events section split into areas.”

“If you could make any minor improvements, especially around special times of year, then might I suggest that where possible, and if space permits, in the ‘What’s on in Arun’ section, if any admission fees could be included; then it might draw more people in to an event if they could see if they can afford to attend. Some people likely wouldn't bother to start logging on, cross-referencing and wading through the various websites mentioned by each event. Bearing in mind that some who receive the hard copy of Arun Times may not have internet access. That said; the Arun Times was a nice, interesting letterbox treat to read as I sat down for a cuppa - both quite refreshing! Thank you.”

“Make it online only.”

“More about Arun’s achievements.”

“More local news, sports activities, and events listings.”

“More pages. Would like an article on what and what not to recycle, i.e. what kind of packaging of fruit/food is recyclable? etc. I have to say the photos are superb in the latest issue. More please!”
“Not sure if you have a Facebook page but would recommend one to reach maybe a younger audience.”

“PDF downloadable / email copy.”

“Perhaps make the contents section on page 3 a bit bigger. Compared with other articles and sections in the newsletter it took up the least amount of space and is probably one of the most important aspects!”

“Perhaps more about local schools/kids activities.”

“Perhaps you could include discount vouchers for use in local shops/restaurants? It would be welcome, and encourage trade.”

“Weekly or monthly edition with diary of events in Bognor Regis which I think are woefully under-advertised.”

**Negative comments made: (5 respondents)**

“Check spelling more carefully - page 20 article about voter registration. We have an electoral roll, not an electoral role!”

“If Arun are employing people to generate the Arun Times and don’t know their demographic they should be replaced by professionals. Like most things Arun do, a vast amount of money is wasted on internal bickering.”

“It's a waste of money. You look at it, maybe read it, then throw it away.”

“Stop it now.”

“Stop publishing it and save the money.”