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'Climate change is already happening' A look back at a summer of extreme weather in Sussex

England experienced its joint hottest summer ever this year (tied with 2018) since records began in 1884

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By **Jasmine Carey**

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[overpopulated beaches](#) and wildfires.

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The Joint Helper

The weather is changing and forecasters are more perplexed than ever about what that will look like in the coming months. But summer has seen health alerts, weather warnings and temperatures reaching the 40C mark - here we've taken a look back at what has been a summer of extremes.

READ MORE: [New sewage and pollution warnings issued at eight Sussex beaches after heavy overnight rain](#)

A look back at the 2022 Sussex heatwaves

 Crowds always flock to Brighton's beach and pier in good weather (Image: Adam Gerrard / Daily Mirror)

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Sussex experienced two official heatwaves this year, which saw huge crowds flock to the coastline to soak up the sun. With [temperatures reaching the late 30s](#), Sussex residents were warned of the dangers of the heat, which was stronger than some of us have ever experienced in the UK.

The 'unprecedented' extreme heatwave in July saw the UK set a new heat record by a huge margin of 1.6C and multiple stations across England also exceeded 40°C. The Met Office said: "This heatwave marked a milestone in UK climate history."

In both heatwaves - one in July and one in August - the intense heat lasted well over a week, much to the discontent of many. But the July heatwave was extremely significant and prompted a [severe weather emergency plan](#) by the Government. The first ever red warning for extreme heat and "[danger to life](#)" was also issued by the Met Office.

The disruption was huge. Network rail issued a 'do not travel' warning and rail services were severely disrupted due to tracks buckling and overhead cables sagging. Flights were suspended, the NHS had its challenges with vulnerable people under increased stress and there was a "likely increase in heat related deaths".

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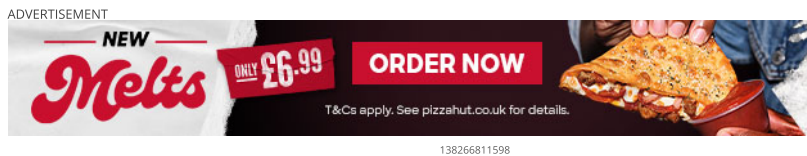
Although the weather was not as severe as it was the month prior, the August heatwave also saw scorching temperatures across the [Sussex](#) and [another extreme weather warning](#) was issued by the Met Office. Both [heatwaves saw changes in bin collections](#) and [NHS institutions offered advice](#). Sussex residents were urged to take caution this summer, which didn't stop beaches filling up with sunseekers.

A look back at the wildfires

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📍 Parts of Sussex were at 'exceptional risk' of wildfires (Image: Sussex News and Pictures)

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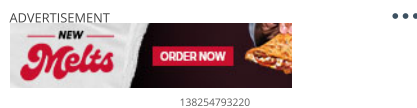
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Following on from the 2022 summer heatwaves, [Sussex was also victim to plenty of wildfires](#), prompting fire services across the county to issue warnings to urge people to [avoid having BBQs](#) or anything with outdoor flames. Some wildfires were minor, for example the one on Upper Kingston Lane in Southwick but there were a number of more extreme blazes, such as [farm equipment setting alight](#).

[Turners Hill](#) saw "plumes" of smoke fill the air when a wildfire broke out, alongside [a fire in Walberton](#). With various wildfires taking place this summer, prompted by the dry ground from the lack of rainfall, [firefighters were on high alert](#) throughout the summer.

Sussex drought and hosepipe bans

📍 South East Water are advising people to not use sprinklers and hose pipes (Image: Photo by Matt Cardy/Getty Images)




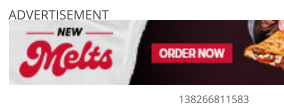
A [drought was also declared](#) in Sussex due to the low rainfall, river flows, groundwater levels, reservoir levels and the dryness of soil. While more rainfall has been experienced over the last week, much of Sussex is still experiencing very dry conditions and some water suppliers are still implementing a hosepipe ban.

South East Water declared a hosepipe ban across parts of East Sussex last month (August 12) and the company has made it clear that this will remain in force until water levels increase once more. No date for the end of this ban has been announced.

Another sign of the drought was the condition of Sussex reservoirs, with levels being very low, especially at Arlington. Despite recent rainfall, water levels at the reservoir remain lower than usual.

The 'dehydrated' South Downs

 **The South Downs were now dry and brown** (Image: Martin Burton/SussexLive)



The look of the South Downs was something which caught many people in Sussex by surprise. Usually full of luscious green grass, the [dry yellow countryside](#) was a popular topic of conversation as the Sussex countryside lost its usual look.

The dry grass contributed to wildfires and so the South Downs were seen as slightly hazardous this summer. Dead grass is extra flammable and so both the [visual appearance of the South Downs](#) and the underlying risk of wildfire was enough to deter many hikers.

The gorgeous greenery of the South Downs is only now just making a return.

The end of summer - but the beginning of extremes

Although summer is coming to an end, temperatures are expected to remain fairly warm for the next few weeks. Rain is forecast and a few storms are on the agenda so the sizzling summer seems to be gone for now.

But forecasters and climate experts say it's only the beginning of these extreme events. A spokesman for the Met Office said: "Climate change is causing warming across the UK.

"All of the [UK's ten warmest years on record](#) have occurred since 2002. Heatwaves are now 30 times more likely to happen due to climate change. The effects of [climate change](#) are real, and they are already happening.

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Entrants must be 18 or over, full T&Cs apply.

"The level of climate change we will see depends on how quickly we cut emissions of [dangerous greenhouse gases](#). Even if we were to stop all emissions today, we would not prevent some changes. However, the sooner we cut emissions, the smaller the changes will be.

"In a recent report, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) showed the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C of global warming. But unless we reduce emissions rapidly, the world is likely to exceed 2°C of warming. By the end of this century, warming could potentially reach 4°C, possibly more."

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