

BMSDC Grants - Communities

Mid Suffolk District Council

Sustainable Communities Food Fund Guidance

1. Introduction

Mid Suffolk District Council offers Community Grants to organisations that deliver community support, projects or activities within the District. [The Mid Suffolk Plan](#) outlines the priorities of Mid Suffolk District Council. All funding awarded by the Councils aligns to one or more of our priorities.

These notes are designed to help you complete our Sustainable Communities Food Fund application forms and we suggest that you read them through fully before you complete the forms.

Details on our available Grants can be found on our website. View information on Community Grants in [Mid Suffolk](#).

2. Sustainable Communities Food Fund

2.1. About the Fund

Mid Suffolk District Council is looking to support community-based food projects with capital and revenue funding, with a particular focus on community pantries & fridges, small food producers and makers, cultural venues, pubs and food banks.

The intention is to:

- Support small scale and start-up (new entrants) food producers
- Create or support sustainable, community led initiatives
- Improve access to affordable, quality food
- Ensure the re-distribution of food waste or food surplus, thereby reducing the environmental impact of food production
- Create quality opportunities for community members of all ages to learn new skills and build confidence
- Enable community food projects to be opportunities for 'warm handovers' and the sharing of support around prevalent issues such as social isolation, diet and nutrition, money management and employment issues
- Address food insecurity.
- Support food production.
- Improve productivity
- Encourage new growers
- Increase food processing capacity

The Fund has been separated into two themes:

2.2. Theme A – Community Food and Drink Projects

Funding is available towards new or existing community food initiatives. Limited to constituted Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations such as charities, community pantries, community orchards or community pubs and shops.



Between £250 and £5,000 can be applied for. For VCFSE organisations match funding is not required, and up to 100% of project costs can be supported.

2.3. Theme B – Community Supported Agriculture

Funding is available to support small-scale and start up primary food producers and small businesses looking to grow. Applications can be submitted by food producers such as fruit and vegetable growers, bakers and artisanal producers, including both VCFSE organisations and businesses.

Between £250 and £5,000 can be applied for. For VCFSE organisations match funding is not required, and up to 100% of project costs can be supported. For businesses each application will require provision of 20% contribution from the business as match funding.

2.4. Timescales

Applications will be assessed on a first come, first serve basis. The deadline for applications is 31st March 2027, though the Fund may close for applications prior to that point should funding be fully allocated.

Funding must be spent within 8 months of the grant being awarded. Proof of expenditure, e.g. invoices and receipts, must be submitted to the Grants Team.

2.5. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Purchase of tools or equipment which will help with the preparation, storage and preservation of food e.g. white goods, food storage equipment, kitchen equipment
- Purchase of equipment to assist with community food growing schemes
- Purchase of equipment to assist with project administration/volunteer management e.g. laptop, scanner
- Tools for allotment project to supply local after school food club
- Cooking equipment to transform near-end-of-life food supplies into other products to reduce food waste
- Credit/debit card payment machine to allow card payment (including acceptance of Healthy Start vouchers)
- Course materials (cooking equipment, lunch boxes)
- Costs associated with delivering upskilling sessions/course to clients, staff or volunteers (venue hire costs, course application costs, training materials, refreshments for specific activities and events)
- Web hosting costs to allow project to promote its work, increase visibility, accept online donations etc
- Capital items to support income generation
- Advertising/marketing costs to recruit new volunteers
- Research and trials to enable more sustainable farming.

2.6. Ineligible Projects

Direct purchase of food supplies and other perishables for ongoing food provision projects. If you need guidance on where to access food supplies for your organisation please contact the [Community Action Suffolk Food Officer Team](#) who will be able to support you.

2.7. Funding Priorities

Projects must address food insecurity within communities, and should be measurable through impact reports and case studies at the end of your project.

Applicants should be seeking for their project to enable one, some or all of the following themes.

- Supporting organisations to become more self-sufficient, sustainable and resilient for the future
- Streamlining processes and ways of working to become more efficient
- Supporting clients out of hardship
- Improving skills and knowledge in the community to support themselves
- Creating local solutions to improve food supply and logistics
- Increasing opportunities to offer a broader range of local, nutritious and culturally and dietary appropriate food
- Enabling more sustainable farming
- Increasing food processing capacity

Should your application be successful, you will be required to evidence how your project has aligned to the priorities selected in your application.

3. Terms and Conditions

3.1. Who can Apply?

3.1.1. VCFSE Organisations

Applications for grants will be considered from constituted Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations which:

- Provide a service for the benefit of Mid Suffolk residents
- Are capable of obtaining from its own funds or other sources sufficient funding to cover the total project costs
- Are financially viable, as evidenced by audited or independently examined accounts.
- Have Safeguarding, Health and Safety, and Equal Opportunities policies for employees, volunteers and attendees. If not, the development of these through Community Action Suffolk would be a condition of any offer: [Governance and Organisation Development - Community Action Suffolk](#)
- Provide services which align with the Council's priorities, do not duplicate services already being provided/grant aided, and will meet proven identified needs. Organisations must be place-based and already be providing a service to residents of Babergh or Mid Suffolk.

3.1.2. Businesses

Applications for grants will be considered from micro (those with 1-10 employees) and small sized businesses and enterprises (those with fewer than 50 full time equivalent employees and an annual turnover of no more than £6.5m). Priority will be given to micro businesses.

- Businesses must be based or operating within Mid Suffolk.
- Applicants must demonstrate as part of their application evidence that their project will be community based and demonstrate social value.
- Community-based businesses are those based in local communities – such as villages, small settlements or market towns - serving a rural hinterland, and who seek to deliver social and

community benefits alongside financial sustainability. These businesses are often owned or operated by people living locally or are owned by the communities they serve

- Each application will require a 20% match funding rate, which can be decreased in exceptional circumstances. This means the business has to cover 20% of the total project cost. You must provide evidence within your application of other match funding which has been secured / you are seeking and how you will fund the remaining costs of the project.
- All payments are made at the end of the process, so you will need to be able to fund the project fully by yourself before any reimbursements are made. We may be able to phase payments to assist with cashflow, but please contact us prior to applying to discuss this. Funding cannot be used to pay for items purchased prior to the grant being determined

3.2. VAT, Costs and Funding Package

Applicants must include all project costs and, if project costs exceed the amount applied for, details of the total funding package must be included.

If your organisation is registered for and can reclaim VAT, any Grant awarded will be exclusive of VAT. If your organisation is unable to reclaim VAT, Grants awarded will be inclusive of VAT.

4. Process

4.1. Pre-Application

Applicants may wish to have pre-application discussions with the Grants Team. This can be started with a Grant Enquiry Form or an email enquiry to the Grants Inbox. Site visits to prospective projects may also be available.

4.2. Application Process

Application forms can be found on each District Councils' Community Grants webpage: [Babergh](#) or [Mid Suffolk](#)

Completed grant applications are to be emailed to: BMSDCGrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk by no later than the **31st March 2027**.

Each completed application form to be accompanied by a copy of latest accounts and (if a capital project) a minimum of 2 quotes for any proposed works, or a valid reason if a single quote is provided. Copies of Policies (Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Child and Adult Safeguarding) should also be linked to, or provided.

4.3. Offer Letters

Successful applicants will receive an offer letter setting out conditions, outcomes and the period during which the service/project needs to be completed and the grant offer claimed. Offers are valid for **4 weeks**, and after this period the offer will expire.

If any service/project fails to meet any of the conditions contained in the grant offer letter or the agreed targets/outputs, then consideration will be given to the grant offer being withdrawn and any grant monies already paid being recovered together with any interest applicable.

4.4. Post-Award

The application form asks applicants to create one outcome for their project and two indicators to show how the outcome will be met. Successful applicants will be sent a monitoring form alongside their offer asking for reporting on the outcome up to 6 months after being awarded funding. Capital projects will need to submit receipts or invoices relating to capital purchases to the Grants Team.

As this funding has been provided by the UK Government, acknowledgment of such is expected in any promotion or publicity of the project, in line with UK Government branding guidelines.

5. Additional Information

5.1. Community Action Suffolk

Website: [Suffolk Community Food Team - Community Action Suffolk](#)

5.2. Contact

If you have any queries, would like more information or would like to discuss a potential project and funding application, please email the Grants Team at

BMSDCGrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.