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# LOCAL FOOD ACTION TOOLKIT

A guide to setting up  
community food initiatives



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DISCLAIMER

We are extremely grateful to everyone who supported with the creation of this guide, particularly to all who contributed their stories which we are excited to share. In this guide, we have included examples to illustrate ideas. This does not constitute official opinion or endorsement by the Arun & Chichester Food Partnership; these details are provided to help readers understand the possibilities of each model. This is not a comprehensive guide, there will be other ideas, but this is compiled for inspiration and consideration.

**This toolkit was created by the Arun and Chichester Food Partnership in November 2023.**

**To contact us please email [foodpartnership@arunchichestercab.org.uk](mailto:foodpartnership@arunchichestercab.org.uk) or call 07483 172353 to speak to a Development Officer. If you are hoping to start a community food action or already work on one in the area, we would love to hear from you.**

**Thank you for reading.**

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# INTRODUCTION

Can you imagine a world where everyone has access to enough healthy food?

Local initiatives often focus on making food more affordable, but there are many different types of initiatives which will increase the amount of food available to people, improve the quality of people's diets or reduce the impact on the environment or on people's budgets.

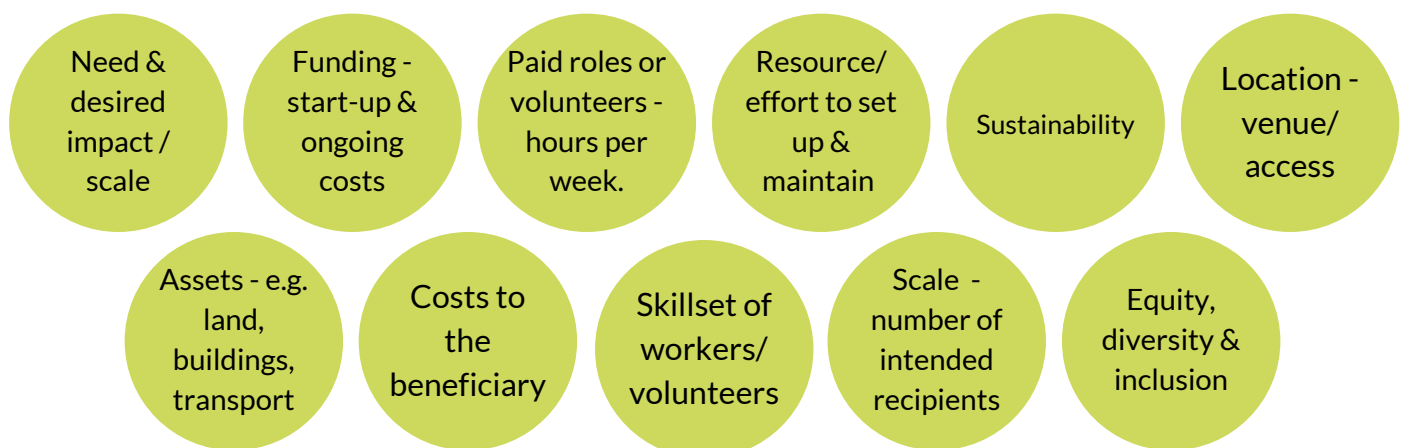
Food will always have a cost, whether this is:

- A person's money
- An individual's time or effort
- Someone else's money, time or effort (charity, family, friends)
- The producer (including poor pay and working conditions)
- The environment (damage to the environment)

This guide looks at the wide variety of options when considering setting up a community food activity or provision, with some notes on requirements, benefits, vulnerabilities and limitations.

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# CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SETTING UP A COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVE



**It helps to be clear on the objectives of the project from the outset- what are you hoping to achieve?**

**Example objectives include: increase resilience at individual or community level, reduce the number of people in food insecurity, meet an emergency need in food crisis, reduce food miles, reduce social isolation.**

# DECIDING ON AN ACTION

Most local food actions regarding individual or household food insecurity can be categorised as targeting one or more of four aims, being:

- Take some food costs outside of the household budget
- Reduce food costs
- Reduce barriers to access
- Increase food budget

For example, here are some ways that sample options might be categorised:

## Take food cost outside of the budget

- Community garden or orchard
- Community fridge or larder
- Food bank
- Free shop
- Holiday meal clubs / free school meals

## Reduce food costs

- Community pantry
- Group buying scheme
- Co-op
- Community shop
- Cookery classes

## Reduce non-financial barriers to access

- Delivery scheme
- Meals on wheels
- Group purchase and delivery
- Community shop
- Local community meals

## Increase food budget

- Income maximisation
- Decrease expenditure in other areas
- Promote take-up of Healthy Start Vouchers
- Training which leads to employment
- Promote take-up of Free School Meals

The focus on the areas above is specifically on reducing individual food insecurity, but improving resilience at community level helps to reduce food insecurity in a long-term and broader way.

## Increasing long-term food sufficiency

- Community garden or orchard
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Food preservation group
- Community buying club
- Include food growing in local plans

## Changing the environment in which people live

- Local food clubs
- Local markets
- Community shop
- Campaigning for changes to systems

Community-level action has other benefits too, such as community building, community cohesion, integration, increased skills and employability, work experience or training, better health, combating isolation and loneliness, reducing food waste and more. For each idea, it is necessary to consider the benefits, vulnerabilities and liabilities of the response.



# CONTEXT - A FOOD LADDERS APPROACH

The Food Ladders framework was developed by Dr Megan Blake of the University of Sheffield. It is a multi-scaled community development approach to everyday food security and community resilience. There are three levels of intervention and each one is an essential part of the approach, though strengthened community resilience and reduced need for outside action is reached by travelling up the ladder.



Rung 1 includes emergency interventions such as a food parcel or soup kitchen, as well as mental health services, crisis and immediate support. This stage helps people faced with an unexpected financial or other shock; there are clear providers and recipients and the action relies on external work or funding.

Rung 2 includes outside help to create and maintain projects such as cookery lessons, pantry schemes, support with budgeting, employability and business skills. These expand a community's pool of assets to enable more social innovation. Users are actively engaged and involved, learning and developing.

At Rung 3, the community runs projects, with very little or no outside help. Community members exchange and contribute. Activities diversify the foodscape and involve positive relationships with food, organised and funded sustainably and reduce dependence at a community level. Vouchers may work alongside community projects to enable food assistance and improve viability of projects.

Food actions vary hugely in terms of time, cost, intervention and effort, with varying desired impacts. The actions in this guide are coded according to these three rungs. The interventions or actions have correlating amounts of money and time given by outside agencies, moving to independence from this support.

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# MENU OF FOOD ACTIONS

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# FOOD ACTIONS

## FREE FOOD AND SERVICE PROVISION



### Food Banks

Food banks are frontline community organisations which support people who cannot afford the essentials in life at a specific time of crisis. Foodbanks usually operate by referral, responding to emergency food need, giving limited choice but sufficient food to last 3 days for a household. They are not intended as a long-term solution or subsidy for low food budgets. Food banks usually provide only ambient food which doesn't require refrigeration or a freezer, but some provide fresh, chilled or frozen foods. Foodbanks usually cover a specific geographic area and are available to everyone in that area who needs crisis help.

Chichester District Foodbank, Bognor Foodbank and Littlehampton Foodbank are part of the Trussell Trust network and require a third party referral. Other foodbanks such as Kirdford and Plaistow Foodbank and Love Your Neighbour Foundation (run by One Church in Southbourne) may have different processes.



### Free Shops and Free Food Tables

Free shops or free food tables are locations where people can give or receive food or other items for free, usually without referral. Popular items may be food, clothes, toys, school uniform, shoes, tools, books or household essentials. There may be a donation box but there is no charge for taking or giving items. These are usually run by volunteers and can help significantly with reducing household financial pressures, as well as building community, reducing items going into landfill and reducing food waste. Items can be donated or sourced from the community, including allotment holders or gardeners, excess food from supermarkets or other food producers or distributors and redistribution charities such as UKHarvest or FareShare. Items may also be donated by organisations or community groups.

Petersfield Free Shop is a partnership with the East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership, using a disused room at the local rail station, and is open three days per week. [easthampshirerail.co.uk/free-shop](http://easthampshirerail.co.uk/free-shop)

Is there a room locally which could be used for this purpose, and people who would volunteer to run it?



## Community helping projects

Some communities set up local projects to meet specific local needs. Sometimes referred to as mutual aid groups or community helping groups, many of these emerged during the initial Covid crisis in 2020. Groups have local volunteers who help with shopping, collecting prescriptions and more.

Some areas have designed other projects to meet local needs, such as creating an additional collection point for food bank deliveries, delivering food parcels to households in need or more.

For example, the Rotary Club of Bognor Regis created the Square Meals Project, helping to feed hungry children in the town via food vouchers, and collects donations to do this: [bognorrotaryclub.org](http://bognorrotaryclub.org). Some communities also develop community transport or liftshare programmes - contact Community Transport Sussex for examples and advice: [ctsussex.org.uk](http://ctsussex.org.uk)

## Soup kitchens and free meals

A soup kitchen or meal centre is a place that provides free meals, often in low-income areas and provided by charities. In recent times, there have been variations of this locally with different intentions - such as offering a free meal at a warm hub or Warm Welcome centre, or through FoodCycle, which provides free meals using surplus food: [foodcycle.org.uk](http://foodcycle.org.uk)



## Community fridges and larders

Community fridges and community larders are called different names by some organisations. Arun & Chichester Food Partnership uses these definitions:

Community larder: provides free non-perishable food without referral.

Community fridge: provides free perishable (and maybe non-perishable food) without referral. This can be combined with preparation of ready meals, see [realfarming.org/resource/ready-meal-toolkit](http://realfarming.org/resource/ready-meal-toolkit) for guidance.

Where does the food come from?

- Donated or surplus food, which may be sourced directly from growers, allotments, garden surplus, redistribution charities, supermarkets, restaurants or other food suppliers
- Purchases from cash donations, fundraising or grants
- Surplus food from individuals using the fridge, ensuring it meets the fridge's health and safety policies and procedures.



These are examples in Arun & Chichester:

- Littlehampton Community Fridge (including Community Fridge on Tour in Angmering, Rustington and East Preston): [faredivide.org.uk/littlehampton-community-fridge](http://faredivide.org.uk/littlehampton-community-fridge)
- St. Peter and St. Paul Food Pantry, Rustington: [sspeterandpaul-rustington.org.uk/pantry](http://sspeterandpaul-rustington.org.uk/pantry)

For further inspiration, see [hubbub.org.uk/community-fridge-network](http://hubbub.org.uk/community-fridge-network)

Some similar food providers offer a selection of food for a suggested donation (see page 19 for more information under 'community pantries, food hubs and social supermarkets'). Local food redistribution charity UKHarvest has pop-up 'community food hubs' providing food, signposting and cookery skills support, and ask for a contribution of up to £5.

Find out more here: [ukharvest.org.uk/education/community-food-hub](http://ukharvest.org.uk/education/community-food-hub)

## Local Story – Littlehampton Community Fridge

Littlehampton Community Fridge prevents perfectly edible food from ending up in landfill predominantly by collecting surpluses from local supermarkets and businesses, as well as receiving food from local surplus distribution charities UK Harvest and FareShare. The food is then stored safely and offered to the community who can visit a regular session and choose from a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as chilled and frozen items, breads, and pastries. In addition to the five days a week they open in the centre of Littlehampton, they go 'on tour' to four other locations in neighbouring villages and the outskirts of the town to ensure they are accessible to the wider community. Since July 2018, they have provided over 650 tonnes of food for the community that would otherwise have gone to waste. They are starting a pay-as-you-feel café using surplus produce which will extend their offer as a welcoming community space where people can share a meal and some company.



One volunteer said about the project:

*"Knowing that after a collection, no matter ... how late I go to bed, I am part of this amazing project, being an active member of the community and tackling food waste in the Arun district."*

# COOKING AND EATING TOGETHER



## Community Cookery – cookery demonstrations, classes and clubs

Many people like to learn by doing things together, which allows sharing of ideas as well as the opportunity to make friends and build community. Seeing how something is done can be easier for people than reading a recipe, and any questions can be answered. Cookery demonstrations show and explain how something is made, so require less facilities. Cookery classes have an identifiable teacher and normally a set number of classes, in which participants prepare their own food. Cookery clubs can be long-term and ongoing, in which people prepare a meal together, perhaps each making a dish, and sharing not only the work but also a meal. Pricing can vary from free to course fees, contributions to membership fees.

Cookery classes and clubs often work best with groups of people who consider each other peers, so are less likely to feel embarrassed to ask questions or risk errors. These can be a fun way to pass along skills and knowledge.

## Local story – Cookery demos at Petworth Good Food Days

The Arun & Chichester Food Partnership local group organised two Good Food Days in October 2022 and February 2023 for families with children in Petworth and NE Chichester, funded by Hyde Foundation and enjoyed by about 30 people each day.

We asked people in advance what they wanted from the day and popular responses were ideas on how to eat well for less money or general cookery tips, ideas and skills.

Kate from Petworth Community Garden ran cookery demonstrations at both days, and Regi from the Food Partnership also demonstrated some easy cookery ideas on the first day. Kate showed how to make healthy meals using fruit and vegetables, including how to use slow cookers and how to make the food that was served for lunch. People were surprised at how easy and inexpensive it was to prepare food which they normally bought prepared, such as couscous or popcorn. Parents and children enjoyed a variety of foods, such as couscous salad, refried bean wraps, butternut squash soup and more, and left with ideas and a goody bag to try making the food at home. Free slow cookers were available for people who wanted them, as well as recipes. The events were popular, local residents and agencies want more, so we are planning more days.

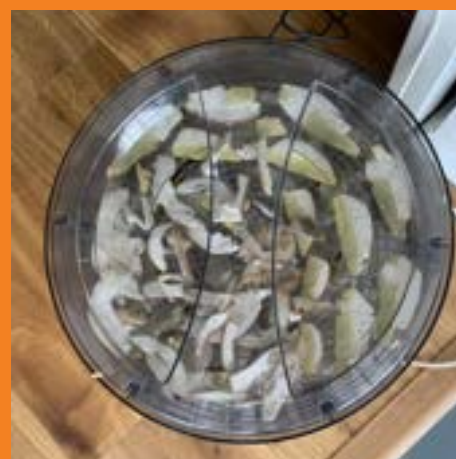




## Food Preserving Projects

Food is often best and cheapest when it is in season, and those who grow their own food know that sometimes there is too much food in season and then there is the “hungry gap” in late winter to spring- those months when fresh food is limited. Preserving extends the amount of time when people can use homegrown or cheaper produce. There are various methods such as chilling, freezing, sugaring, salting, smoking, dehydrating, canning (preserving in glass jars) and vacuum packing.

People often may not have enough freezer space to accommodate gluts of food, unless they have a separate freezer, which increases electricity usage. Canning, preserving, vacuum packing and dehydrating would work well as a community or group project or a short course, as they require equipment and/or knowledge to work safely and effectively. As food is stored, food safety knowledge is required.



*Fresh mushrooms.... to dried mushrooms in a dehydrator*



## Community Cafes

Community cafes bring together the local community for low-cost or pay-as-you-feel hot drinks and refreshments. These are often good places to provide informal help or information sessions, with speakers or demonstrations to help people find the help available locally or learn skills to live better within their budget. For example, Door 84 in York is a Youth and Community Centre offering a café with information sessions and a “Community Food Stall” - a community fridge. Community Cafes are often kept sustainable by donations from users. This could work well as part of a warm space initiative.

Creative Heart in Littlehampton: [creativeheart.org.uk](http://creativeheart.org.uk)

A guide: [sustainweb.org/reports/cracking\\_community\\_cafes\\_your\\_people](http://sustainweb.org/reports/cracking_community_cafes_your_people)





## Community meals

Communities or community groups, open or with specifications, arrange group meals on a one-off or regular basis. These can include faith groups, schools, local areas, groups associated with specific ages or requirements, a social aspect and more as a “common bond.” At a specified (often subsidised) cost, by donation or free, this meets the objective of feeding healthy, nutritious food to people at a reduced or no cost, building community connections, combating isolation, taking part of the cost of food and fuel out of household budgets and enabling a place to offer additional help.

Many communities do this for Christmas or other special occasions, why not consider doing this more often?

### Local Story - Bognor Community Diner: piloting an intergenerational shared food and fun day

*“(the best part was) the community coming together in hard times”*

In February half term, a group of families and older people came together for a free social morning followed by a sit-down meal. After a morning of crafts, cards, games and lots of cups of tea, one hundred people sat down together to share a delicious feast freshly prepared by F.E.D. CIC, with guests from Family Support Work, Age UK and the Salvation Army. There was also a workshop by the West Sussex County Council Waste Reduction Team who demonstrated how to make a hay box cooker to reduce energy bills and cook more efficiently. The event, supported by the Arun and Chichester Food Partnership, demonstrated the value of working in partnership and bringing people together over a shared meal, as well as highlighting the need for more low cost or free family events during school holidays. Events like this have the potential to build community connections and inspire attendees to take action within their community.





## Community canteens

During World War II, the Ministry of Food required employers to put in canteens to feed their workers, and many workplaces and towns provided hot meals in this manner. Additionally, village halls and other community assets were used to create “British Restaurants.” This was a way to feed the community in an efficient, low-waste way. Perhaps it is time to bring back this idea, which would reduce plastic and food waste, reduce the cost of cooking, reduce social isolation and encourage consumption of warm, healthy meals in a community setting.

Often staffed by volunteers who saw this as part of the war effort, and using existing community buildings or temporary buildings put on unused land, these restaurants resembled a work canteen. Tokens were used to minimise cash handling; tokens could work as a mechanism to provide food for people unable to afford it (giving physical or digital tokens to those in food need). As this is a paid-for model, this is sustainable and it could be an effective way of addressing multiple issues, including food insecurity, loneliness, food waste, reducing energy costs, community building and more.





# FOOD GROWING



## Community gardens, orchards, allotments and more

A community garden or orchard is a public or semi-public piece of land cultivated by a group of people, individually or collectively. Community gardens are community-managed projects working with people and plants, often developed by and involving volunteers. They range from wildlife gardens to fruit and vegetable plots on housing estates, to community polytunnels or a space on an allotment site used as a community allotment.

People benefit from learning about growing, exposure to different plants and techniques, developing community and access to fresh fruit and vegetables, usually for free. Community gardens can have therapeutic value as well, particularly in helping increase mobility, helping recover from injury, improving mental and physical health and more.

Arun & Chichester Food Partnership has produced a guide to starting and running a community growing space which can be downloaded here: [arunchichestercab.org.uk/acfp](http://arunchichestercab.org.uk/acfp)

We also held a Community Food Growing Webinar in 2022 with speakers from local growing projects:

[youtube.com/watch?v=8jObzDIWwKc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=8jObzDIWwKc)

## Local Story - The Arun Community Growers

The Food Partnership is helping to get more people involved in community food growing in Arun. Compared to neighbouring Chichester, Arun has less community food growing spaces yet consultation with residents and local groups showed it was something that people want to see happen. Working to develop new sites as well as hold regular sessions in existing spaces has made it easy for people to give food growing a try.

Through setting up the online group the Arun Community Growers and working with a community gardener, we are bringing together like-minded people to support them to get involved in and establish food growing projects in their neighbourhoods.



For more information search for the [Arun Community Growers on Facebook](#).

## Microsites (including verges and small public sites)

Community gardening doesn't need to be at larger sites or allotments; it can be on small sites for other purposes. From hanging baskets at train stations, to verges, disused land next to railways and small patches at civic or community sites, churches or schools, this is a way to bring small pieces of land into use to provide free food for the local community while improving local areas. Often organised by greening clubs, gardening clubs, climate change or transition movement groups, this involves a person or small group taking responsibility for growing food at a specified site.

The Incredible Edible movement promotes the use of "unloved" spaces for food growing, encouraging anyone to take it, and start thinking differently about the future. They believe that small actions can help people lead happy, healthy, prosperous and connected lives. There aren't any Incredible Edible groups currently in Arun & Chichester- the nearest ones are in Portsmouth and Gosport. The network can help with everything from compost, safety assessments and working with local authorities.

Find out more here: [incredibleedible.org.uk](http://incredibleedible.org.uk)

To adopt a verge in West Sussex, see [westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-licences/planting-licence/](http://westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-licences/planting-licence/)

### Local Story – Adopting a verge in Midhurst

Inspired by Incredible Edible, Emily Sacco (founder of Mi-CAN) applied for a license with highways to plant a community allotment outside her house. With restricted time due to young twins and a full-time job, being able to create a beautiful allotment right outside her house was ideal. Emily's twins love helping with weeding and watering.

Many neighbours are enjoying picking the fruit and vegetables produced as well as helping with watering when Emily hasn't managed it. It has been a fantastic way to bring the community together, make the street look more attractive and produce delicious fruit and vegetables. Many locals voiced concern "that will get destroyed by vandals" or "that's not your land, you'll get in trouble". However, she has had no trouble at all, quite the opposite in fact. Applying for a license took 5-minutes by filling in a free form that can be found online on the local highway's website (link above). It has now developed with a community food swap station where people exchange excess food they have grown.





## 'Grow your own' schemes

Grow your own schemes promote local growing on an individual level. The National Garden Scheme promotes this, stating “whether it’s a few herbs in a window box, a humble veg patch or an abundant allotment, using the garden to grow your own food is not only a great way to get outside but cuts your food bills too!” They promote the environmental benefit of zero food miles and growing chemical-free food. Seed or seedling sharing days or events could work well with this.

[ngs.org.uk/grow-your-own/](https://ngs.org.uk/grow-your-own/)

## Community Gardening Clubs or Horticultural Societies

These exist in many areas of Arun & Chichester, bringing together people who are interested in gardening. They often have people who are willing to share information, seeds or seedlings, plant sales, garden visits and more. There are about 50 gardening or horticultural clubs in Arun & Chichester affiliated with the Royal Horticultural Society.

To find a local group, see:

[rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/community-groups](https://rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/community-groups)

## Garden sharing

Many people want to grow food and are on waiting lists for an allotment. Other people have gardens that they can no longer tend and may have experience and skills to pass on. Garden sharing could bring land into use for growing food, meet local needs and bring many other benefits.

There are schemes to connect landholders and potential gardeners, including:

- Lend and Tend, which has very helpful ground rules, legal information and a guide to the risks as well as the benefits. [lendandtend.com](https://lendandtend.com)
- The Permaculture Association connects landholders and potential gardeners, and offers access to courses at a discounted rate: [permaculture.org.uk/articles/land-share-how-gardens-are-shared-grow-food-and-community](https://permaculture.org.uk/articles/land-share-how-gardens-are-shared-grow-food-and-community)
- AllotMe connects people with gardens with people who would like to grow. Rent can be free and ranges from 0-£50 per month, and Allotme makes its profit from a percentage of the rents. [allotme.co.uk](https://allotme.co.uk)
- Sproutclub is currently running a pilot project in Chichester to develop this idea locally: [sproutclub.com](https://sproutclub.com)
- Garden sharing can also be done by groups, effectively creating a community garden. For an example of how dedicated community gardeners created a garden share with one landowner, see: [incredibleedible.org.uk/news/incredible-garden-sharing-finding-more-space-to-grow/](https://incredibleedible.org.uk/news/incredible-garden-sharing-finding-more-space-to-grow/)



## Community Supported Agriculture

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared. CSA helps to address increasing concerns about the lack of transparency, sustainability, security and resilience of our food system. It is one of the most radical ways that people can re-take control and ownership of our food system.

The approach can vary. Consumers, often described as CSA members, are closely linked to the farm and the production of their food. This involvement may be through ownership or investment in the farm or business, sharing the costs of production, accepting a share in the harvest or providing labour. Read about some of the different types of CSA in the UK in these case studies: [communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/case-studies](http://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/case-studies)

The most common produce for CSA farms is vegetables, but they can also include eggs, poultry, bread, fruit, pork, lamb, beef and dairy produce. CSA farms are also developing around fish and woodlands for firewood.

People who buy a share in the CSA receive regular boxes of produce. It is also possible to have solidarity shares, community shares or shares funded by an organisation to be distributed to people who would benefit from the additional fresh produce.

Farmers receive a more stable and secure income and closer connection with their community, and consumers benefit by eating fresh healthy local food, feeling more connected to the land where their food is grown and learning new skills. To learn more about community supported agriculture, see:

[communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk](http://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk)

## City Farms

These are similar to community gardens, but normally include livestock and can generate income through visiting arrangements.

[ecoandbeyond.co/articles/city-farms](http://ecoandbeyond.co/articles/city-farms)

[farmgarden.org.uk/10-uk-city-farms](http://farmgarden.org.uk/10-uk-city-farms)

Further reading:

[theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/gallery/2017/oct/27/uk-city-farms-and-community-gardens-in-pictures](http://theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/gallery/2017/oct/27/uk-city-farms-and-community-gardens-in-pictures)

# ALTERNATIVE SHOPS



## Food Cooperatives

Cooperatives are an ownership model. There are many different ways of creating a local project as a cooperative. Generally community food co-ops and buying groups are not-for-profit enterprises that are run by the community for the community, supplying food at affordable prices and relying on the support of volunteer members, either in the day-to day running or on the committee.

Every food co-op, buying group or community food enterprise is unique, and the way they run will depend on the community they serve and the people who run it. Food co-ops can differ in almost every way including what, when, how and where they sell. Some exist solely for use by members, some serve the wider community, some give discounts to members. Sustain has created a toolkit to look at many of the issues around food coops: [sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit](https://sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit)

For more information on setting up a coop, see [uk.coop](https://uk.coop) and also Cooperation Town, a movement of self-organised community food co-ops with a comprehensive toolkit: [cooperation.town](https://cooperation.town).

## Group buying clubs

This is a very simple type of food action in which people come together to buy food from the same supplier(s) at wholesale prices. This may suit friends, people who live geographically close to each other, or people who meet regularly in one place (such as a school or place of worship), especially if they have common, locally difficult-to-meet requirements such as halal or kosher food.

Buying groups are simple to run, there is very little paperwork. There are also no real costs involved if you are operating from members' houses or a community premises, unless you arrange local delivery for those who need it.

The main disadvantage is that buying groups generally have to stay quite small to be manageable. Members need to be able to pay in advance and/or may need one trusted "distributor" to pay for the entire group's order. Bulk buying also requires food storage space for the consumer as well as the distributor. Therefore, being part of a buying group may be more difficult for those on low incomes or in cramped accommodation.

Useful links: [sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/buyingclubs](https://sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/buyingclubs)  
[infinityfoodswholesale.coop](https://infinityfoodswholesale.coop)  
[suma.coop](https://suma.coop)





## Community pantries, food hubs or social supermarkets

These provide discounted food for a small sum (such as £15 worth of food for £2.50-£5) without referral, either by membership or each visit. These may also be called Community Food Hubs or social supermarkets. This food may come from food waste charities and donations, but may also include food brought in from their receipts, fundraising or other income. They may have permanent premises or operate on a pop-up basis, such as the ones run by UKHarvest locally. Details and schedule of the UKHarvest community food hubs are available at [ukharvest.org.uk/education/community-food-hub](http://ukharvest.org.uk/education/community-food-hub)

There is a well-developed network of community pantries in Hampshire, details at: [yourlocalpantry.co.uk](http://yourlocalpantry.co.uk)

In Brighton there is a 'community-led social grocery store' that operates a membership scheme: [brightstore.org](http://brightstore.org)

## Community Shop (Community Benefit Society or Co-operative)

A Community Benefit Society community shop will operate for the benefit of the community. For a Community Benefit Society, all profits are returned to the shop, to keep food and prices accessible. This can be a way of building local employment, increasing accessibility of food, supporting local growers, creating or developing a community hub and providing many other services to the local community. Local vouchers could enable local food help and make these more viable.

Here are examples of this in Arun & Chichester area:

[kirdfordvillagestores.co.uk](http://kirdfordvillagestores.co.uk)

[millandstores.co.uk](http://millandstores.co.uk)

[Lodsworthlarder.com](http://Lodsworthlarder.com)

Some places also use a community benefit society to build a local food delivery service – such as [Somerset Local Food: localfooddirect.co.uk](http://Somerset Local Food: localfooddirect.co.uk)

Help and advice is available from the Plunkett Foundation (a registered charity) on setting up Community Benefit Societies. For an example on how they helped setting up a Community Shop in Hampshire, see: [plunkett.co.uk/candover-valley-community-store](http://plunkett.co.uk/candover-valley-community-store).

Help may be available from Arun and Chichester District Councils.

[arun.gov.uk/business-support](http://arun.gov.uk/business-support)

[chichester.gov.uk/businesssupportandadvice](http://chichester.gov.uk/businesssupportandadvice)



## Local markets

In our 2022 survey, 47% of respondents wanted more food to be made available locally through a local market or community shop. Having fresh food on a weekly or bi-weekly basis within walking distance, especially in areas which are not well served currently, could make significant improvements to diets and affordability, as well as helping to keep money local and developing community. Many areas of Arun & Chichester would benefit from the creation of new markets.

## Local story – Chichester Farmers Market

Chichester Farmers' Market operates on the first and third Friday of each month. The stalls are set up in Chichester on East Street between 9am and 2pm offering a tantalising selection of local produce ranging from fresh fruit vegetables, fine cheeses, tasty cakes and pastries, plus fish from Selsey, locally bred meat, and condiments. All stallholders are required to grow, rear, bake, make, or preserve their produce within a certain distance of Chichester, so it's also a perfect opportunity to chat with traders and hear their stories all accompanied by local artists and musicians.

The market is delivered by Chichester District Council, who are always on the lookout for new and exciting local growers, producers and artists. So if you're interested in becoming a stall holder or would like to find out more about current or possible markets in the city, please contact the team by either emailing [farmersmarket@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:farmersmarket@chichester.gov.uk) or give them a call on 01243 785166 asking for the Events & Promotions Officer.

Stay up to date with Chichester Farmers' Market and other events on [chichester.gov.uk/whatson](http://chichester.gov.uk/whatson) or [facebook.com/ChichesterDistrictEventsAndMarkets](https://facebook.com/ChichesterDistrictEventsAndMarkets). Join their mailing list for the Farmers' Market by contacting [farmersmarket@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:farmersmarket@chichester.gov.uk).



## Community shop (owned by a person, organisation or local shareholders)

These shops respond to local food needs in a community and are run for profit. They can be very responsive and support local producers, or grow their own food in a market garden. They can also increase local employment, connection with local food, skills and more.

Examples:

Harting Stores: [hartingstores.co.uk](http://hartingstores.co.uk)

Angmering Village Greens: [angmering-village-greens.co.uk](http://angmering-village-greens.co.uk)

Fittleworth Stores - [fittleworthstores.co.uk](http://fittleworthstores.co.uk)

Bunches - [visitpetersfield.co.uk/bunches-farm-and-shop](http://visitpetersfield.co.uk/bunches-farm-and-shop)



# DELIVERY OPTIONS

## Community meal delivery

A local group or organisation provides meals to the local community members on a referral, purchase or membership basis. Meals can be hot, room-temperature, chilled or frozen. In Arun & Chichester, this is currently available through HILS.

[westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/support-in-your-own-home/meals-on-wheels/](http://westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/support-in-your-own-home/meals-on-wheels/)

## Delivery club / group deliveries

This concept allows for deliveries to be sent to one or more convenient spots, or hubs, within an area. For example, this would include orders to a fruit and vegetable box scheme to be delivered to one location (such as a school, church, village shop, pub or village hall), to be collected by people locally. This accommodates people who are unable to remain at home all day to receive food, and can be extended by volunteers to take boxes to individuals locally who are unable to travel to the site. Each person would order their own food or products; there could also be an arrangement to split larger boxes for single households, increasing the financial benefit. In order to help rural or isolated business to survive and meet the needs of providing this hub, this could include a fee or donation to the shop or site. This could help to make rural businesses more viable, or extend the budget of schools or charities to make other provisions.

An additional benefit of this, particularly in small communities, would be the ability to provide food assistance anonymously through this scheme. For example, a local charitable fund could be used to buy boxes for a family in need.

# FINANCIAL MODELS AND IDEAS

These are financial models, concepts and ideas which could be adopted within or used by other projects (including those above) to adapt to meet community development, integration and many other targets. These can be very simple to very complex and have varying amounts of short-term or long-term impact.

## Cash First

The aim of Cash First is to reduce the need for charitable food aid by helping people access any existing financial entitlements and advice on income maximisation. By ensuring that people can afford enough nutritious food, this eliminates or minimises the need for emergency food assistance.

Cash First is sometimes also used to describe the approach of giving people cash instead of goods, so that they can choose how they will spend the money according to their own needs or priorities. Find out more at [foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first](http://foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first)

## Pay it forward

“Paying it forward” is a concept in which people do a good deed for someone and they do it without personal gain. If a recipient wants to return the favour, the first person suggests that they “pay it forward” to someone else.

In a food context, sometimes referred to as a 'suspended coffee / meal', customers can pay extra when they order to pay for food or drink for someone who needs it. Creative Heart Cafe in Littlehampton operates a pay it forward scheme: [creativeheart.org.uk](http://creativeheart.org.uk)

## Pay as you feel

In this model, people pay what they are able or what they would like towards a service, most commonly at a café but it can be in a community shop or supermarket.

This approach can often be seen to 'level the playing field' as they are often open for all to access, sustained by some people paying more while others may need to pay less. Pay does not always refer to money and can include 'paying' with time or skills in some initiatives. See the Real Junk Food Project for inspiration: [trjfpcentral.co.uk](http://trjfpcentral.co.uk)

## Time banking

Timebanking is a way of exchanging skills without any money changing hands - you do what you are able to do, when you want to, and receive some help back. For every hour you spend helping someone, you earn an hour back from your time bank.

You could earn an hour by helping a time bank member with their shopping, for example. You can spend your timebanking hour on skills offered by other time bank member, maybe learning a skill, or getting some help in your garden. [timebanking.org](http://timebanking.org)

# FINANCIAL MODELS AND IDEAS 2

## Local Currency

Many people would like to build a more vibrant local food economy, but think that they have to shop at supermarkets or online to get the best deals. Much of the money which is spent then leaves the local economy, leading to decreased food options on the high street. What if people could consider dedicating part of their monthly expenditure to local purchases? Could this increase the options for everyone, as well as building local employment? This is the idea behind local currency.

This is a challenging process, but may have other benefits.

See [thelewespond.org](http://thelewespond.org)

## Local Community Fund

This can work well for a small geographic area or community with strong links. A trusted charity with the purpose of relieving poverty or local organisation can accept donations toward the assistance of local or eligible people.

Fittleworth Angels is run by Fittleworth Stores, which is a community store owned by local people through shares. They accept donations from local people and grant funding to allow them to provide food boxes for people in need in the local community. [fittleworthstores.co.uk](http://fittleworthstores.co.uk)

## Local voucher scheme

It is possible to create a local voucher scheme to support or encourage preferred behaviours such as increasing intake of fresh fruit and vegetables. In addition to the national Healthy Start scheme, some areas have vouchers which can be redeemed in local markets to encourage people to use more fresh fruit and vegetables. For example, the Alexandra Rose charity runs a Rose Voucher for Fruit and Veg project, in which households get £4 per child per week (or £6 for a child under 1) for families which are eligible for Healthy Start and receive benefits. This operates in Glasgow, Liverpool, Barnsley and 5 London boroughs. [alexandrarose.org.uk](http://alexandrarose.org.uk)

## Universal Basic Income (UBI)

UBI is a cash allowance given to all citizens without means test to provide them with a standard of living above the poverty line. It must be universal, individual, unconditional, regular and a cash payment to count as UBI, but the details and parameter of programmes vary. This is a high-level ambition, not suitable for individual or small group implementation, but could be part of an experiment or an ambition at regional or national level.

It has been suggested that this could be paid for by taxing income or assets at a higher level, therefore acting as a redistribution mechanism.



# OWNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

Arun & Chichester Food Partnership does not give legal advice about ownership models and structures. Detailed advice is available from Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester: [vaac.org.uk](http://vaac.org.uk). They provide free help for community and voluntary groups in the area. They can help organisations from the smallest voluntary groups which are not incorporated up to registered charities. The information below highlights some of the options available and provides links for further research.

## Ownership

It may be worth considering a co-operative or community share model. These keep money local and increase engagement and community benefit. A co-op is owned and controlled by its members, who may receive reduced prices. The members can be customers, employees, residents or suppliers, who have a say in how the co-op is run. The Community Shares Handbook is a useful resource for understanding Community Shares: [uk.coop/resources/community-shares-handbook-cs](http://uk.coop/resources/community-shares-handbook-cs)

## Difference between a co-operative and community benefit society

Co-operatives are formed primarily to benefit their own members, who will participate in the business of the society. They should aim to meet the criteria set out in the International Co-operative Alliance's Statement on the Co-operative Identity. In contrast, community benefit societies reflect commitment to the wider community, with profits being returned to the business. [ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles](http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles)

## Advantages of being a community benefit society

There are three principal advantages to being a community benefit society:

- Firstly, the issue of withdrawable shares by community benefit societies benefits from exemptions to regulated activity and financial promotion prohibitions under the Financial Services and Market Act 2000. In short, this means that societies may issue withdrawable shares to the public, without needing to comply with the restrictions on financial promotions (such restrictions make public share offers very expensive for companies to undertake).
- Secondly, community benefit societies benefit from legislative provisions which mean that re-organisations, particularly mergers between societies, are relatively easy to do.
- Finally, many people are drawn to the idea of societies, because they offer a democratic structure, where membership is drawn from the community and each member has one vote, regardless of how many shares they own in the society.

## Structure

There are multiple possibilities for structure. Here are some examples:

- Informal: This does not have any legal status. As an informal network of friends, neighbours or part of a community group, this gives the least amount of protection for individuals if anything goes wrong. It suits an environment of low risk and high trust.
- Sole trader: [gov.uk/set-up-sole-trader](https://www.gov.uk/set-up-sole-trader)
- Co-operative: A co-op is a business or organisation that is owned and controlled by its members, to meet their shared needs. The members can be its customers, employees, residents or suppliers, who have a say in how the co-op is run: [uk.coop](https://www.uk.coop)
- Community shares: Community shares are a way for people to invest in what matters to them. Community members buy shares in enterprises providing goods and services that meet their needs. In turn, the enterprise is controlled and governed by the community it serves. See [communityshares.co.uk](https://www.communityshares.co.uk) and [uk.coop/support-your-co-op/community-shares](https://www.uk.coop/support-your-co-op/community-shares)
- Social enterprise: [gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise](https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise)
- Company Ltd by Guarantee with charitable status (CLG)
- Community Interest Company (CIC): [gov.uk/government/publications/community-interest-companies-how-to-form-a-cic](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-interest-companies-how-to-form-a-cic)
- Community Benefit Society: The purpose of a community benefit society is to serve the broader interests of the community. The 2014 Act requires a community benefit society to “carry on a business, industry or trade” that is “being, or intended to be, conducted for the benefit of the community”. There can be no alternative or secondary purposes, including any that may preferentially benefit the members. This is in contrast to a membership-based organisation, which may for example give special prices to members. [uk.coop/resources/community-shares-handbook/2-society-legislation/21-bona-fide-co-operative-societies/211](https://www.uk.coop/resources/community-shares-handbook/2-society-legislation/21-bona-fide-co-operative-societies/211)
- Limited company: [gov.uk/set-up-limited-company](https://www.gov.uk/set-up-limited-company)
- Registered charity: [gov.uk/set-up-a-charity](https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-charity)

You can find out more about options for structure at:

[resourcecentre.org.uk/information/legal-structures-for-community-and-voluntary-groups/](https://resourcecentre.org.uk/information/legal-structures-for-community-and-voluntary-groups/)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

- More on Food Ladders from the University of Sheffield: [sheffield.ac.uk/research/features/food-ladders](https://sheffield.ac.uk/research/features/food-ladders)
- A community food project toolkit from the USA: [nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/planning\\_successful\\_community\\_based\\_food\\_projects.pdf](https://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/planning_successful_community_based_food_projects.pdf)
- UN IDO Guide to short food supply chains for local markets: [suster.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SHORT-FOOD-SUPPLY-CHAINS.pdf](https://suster.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SHORT-FOOD-SUPPLY-CHAINS.pdf)
- Article from US NGO on local and regional food systems: [foodprint.org/issues/local-regional-food-systems](https://foodprint.org/issues/local-regional-food-systems)
- Information about food buying groups and co-ops: [sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/buyingclubs](https://sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/buyingclubs)
- Range of resources from Sustainable Food Places including how to build a good food movement: [sustainablefoodplaces.org/resources](https://sustainablefoodplaces.org/resources)
- Feeding Britain's 'What Works Centre' with case studies and guides on affordable food clubs, healthy holiday programmes and more: [feedingbritain.org/what-works-centre](https://feedingbritain.org/what-works-centre)
- Social Impact Toolkit for community food businesses: [social-impact-toolkit.co.uk/](https://social-impact-toolkit.co.uk/)

## CONTACT

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- X. [@ArunChiFood](https://www.x.com/@ArunChiFood)

