

# SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2023

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at [sfpawards@soilassociation.org](mailto:sfpawards@soilassociation.org) to discuss the process.**



**Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:**

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#)
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#)

## SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (\*= compulsory):

Name of your partnership*:
Lewes District Food Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Stef Lake – <a href="mailto:stef.lake@sussexcommunity.org.uk">stef.lake@sussexcommunity.org.uk</a>
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Lewes District
Award you are applying for*:
Bronze

**Please provide us with background information about your place\*:** Advisory word limit: 400 words

This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

**ANSWER:**

Located in the South East of England, Lewes District covers 292 square kilometres and hosts a population of 102,744. The diverse geographical range of the district provides a unique opportunity for a rich and varied food partnership, which focuses on all elements of food security, in line with the East Sussex Whole System Healthy Weight Plan 2021-26.

Encompassing the fishing industry of the coastal region, the agriculture of the north and the thriving food culture of Lewes itself, Lewes District is abuzz with local producers, community food projects, entrepreneurs & food waste warriors.

Whilst there are areas within the district of relative affluence, there are also significant pockets of deprivation. Newhaven and Peacehaven for example have neighbourhoods amongst the 20-30% most deprived in the country. Newhaven South ward has an unemployment rate of 6.2% (national average = 3.8%; East Sussex County Council, July 2022), there is a high prevalence of depression (14.8%; national average 9.9%) in Newhaven and 27% of residents in Peacehaven East have a limiting long-term illness, significantly above the 18% national average (Sussex Community Foundation, October 2020). Meanwhile, the 2021 census showed that less than 6% of people in Lewes District identify as Asian, Black, Mixed Race or as being from other ethnic groups.

Lewes District is a geographically diverse and sometimes disconnected area, which provides opportunity, but also presents challenges in terms of a cohesive approach. Through the food partnership both formal and informal networks have been established. A key challenge has been to bring existing work together under a whole systems approach: engaging stakeholders to avoid silo working, whilst allowing groups to retain autonomy and ownership of their work.

A further challenge is presented in how access to food connects with other infrastructure. For example many organisations report that vulnerable groups (especially in rural locations, and in particular the elderly), are unable to access healthy and affordable food options due to a lack of suitable transport. It is vital that there is a joined up approach to provision to ensure access for all. Furthermore, emergency food providers repeatedly speak to us about wider systemic problems and describe their frustration with being a 'sticking plaster' for a much larger issue. We therefore argue that food security and health should be tackled in the context of a robust and sufficient benefits system, as well as employment opportunities and skills development.

**How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership \*? Advisory word limit: 300 words**

**ANSWER:**

As defined in our Terms of Reference, LDFP's first core value is to be inclusive & accessible:

*'Using simple language, actively seeking new membership from less represented groups, valuing all contributions whilst still allowing for difference. Engaging everyone in the conversations with an emphasis on making decisions WITH people, not FOR them.'*

Only 6% of residents in Lewes District identify as Asian, Black, Mixed Race or as being from other ethnic groups. However, this does not mean that as a food partnership we don't seek representation and engagement from racially minoritised groups. Rather, it informs the fact that our spaces may feel alienating, due to the fact that they are likely to be dominated (in terms of numbers at least), by white folk, and that additional efforts may be required to promote inclusion and accessibility. As a food partnership we take a clear anti-racist stance and members of our steering group commit to embodying our values in all areas of their lives.

An example of EDI in action within LDFP is [Hospitable Environment](#), which runs monthly Soup & Social events at a community centre in Newhaven. Their relational approach is people-based and place-based and they offer an open invitation to participate in co-creating community action. In celebration of refugee week Hospitable Environment hosted a Bake & Borscht event, to bring together migrant, refugee & asylum seeker groups with other members of the local community, baking bread and sharing food in an inclusive and social space.

Additionally, LDFP are gender inclusive and support our projects to be proactively welcoming of the LGBTQ+ community. For example, we recently received feedback from a member of our local community, who had attended a local food project and was concerned that they were not welcoming of people in same sex couples. LDFP contacted the project directly to establish their stance on this issue. We made recommendations for how they can be more explicitly welcoming to people who identify as LGBTQ+ and provided a template EDI policy to be adapted and implemented. We are planning to offer training in partnership with two specialist organisations for [the Lewes District Emergency Food Network](#).

Finally, a core aspect of our work as a food partnership is leading on developing a set of principles of dignified food support. These include ensuring that people accessing food support have access to a choice of culturally appropriate food, as well as actively working to reduce the stigma around food insecurity.

## SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

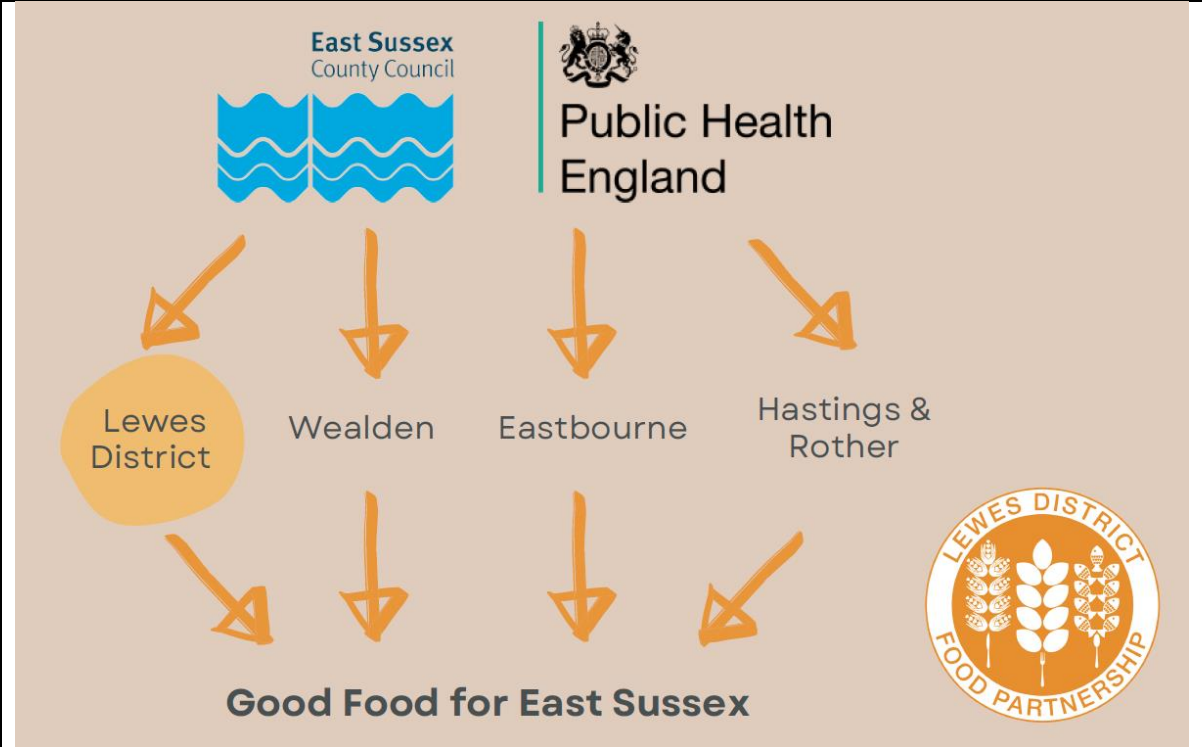
For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact*: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

### Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

#### Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

Lewes District Food Partnership is funded by East Sussex County Council and Public Health England as part of the [East Sussex Whole-System Healthy Weight Plan 2021-26](#). In 2021, ESCC and PHE contracted for the development of five district & borough level food partnerships including Lewes District, Wealden, Eastbourne, Hastings and Rother. The coordinators of each local food partnership, with support from Food Matters, convened [Good Food for East Sussex](#), an alliance of organisations and individuals that focuses on the county and regional level food systems. LDFP is currently funded until April 2026 and is hosted by Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA), who are based in Newhaven.

LDFP formed a local cross-sector food partnership in early 2021. Initially our focus was on the development of a steering group, comprised of twenty representatives from local food businesses and community groups, local councillors and council officers, as well as food activists and academics. Our model has developed to include our [steering group](#), [Lewes District Emergency Food Network](#), the [Grow Cook Eat Network](#), as well as a [wider food partnership involving groups and individuals from a range of sectors and organisations](#), as well as a number of working groups that focus on key issues. LDFP is non-hierarchical and an organisational chart, which shows how the different groups and networks intersect:



LDPP has a clear terms of reference, along with an easy read summary. Our values are:

- **Inclusive & accessible** using simple language, actively seeking new membership from less represented groups, valuing all contributions whilst still allowing for difference. Engaging everyone in the conversations with an emphasis on making decisions WITH people, not FOR them.
- **Optimistic, hopeful & brave** knowing we have strong local knowledge & expertise and that together we have a louder voice to achieve our aims of a more sustainable food system.
- **Friendly & approachable** attending community events and engaging with seldom heard groups, public facing and transparent, asking for and welcoming feedback, and fostering a non-judgemental environment.

Our shared vision is that nutritious, affordable, local, sustainably produced food is available to everyone in Lewes District. The aims of LDFP are to:

- Challenge the status quo whilst taking an asset-based approach in the community to celebrate and promote local community food projects.
- Create strong and new local food networks, developing examples of best practice for sustainable food projects and co-ordinated action.
- Build sustainable, inclusive, healthy communities around food with a participatory approach.

[Our steering group](#) is now made up of fourteen members and meets quarterly, alternating between morning, afternoon and evening sessions to promote accessibility. The steering group includes Anna Card, our commissioner at East Sussex Public Health and Cllr Emily O'Brien, who is the Lewes District Council cabinet member for climate, nature and food systems and who brings a wealth of knowledge of food systems, having previously worked for Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and Food Matters. As a group we always aim to reach consensus, drawing on sociocracy principles for decision making, but in the rare event that we need to vote on an issue, quorum is 50% at meetings. The steering group is chaired by [Stef Lake](#), who is the Community Development & Health programme manager at SCDA.

Lewes District Emergency Food Network is comprised of ten local community food support organisations, including food banks, pantries and community supermarkets. The network meets monthly via Zoom and also communicate via a Google Group to share updates, funding opportunities and to redistribute surplus food. Details of the EFN, including a PDF download of local food support [can be found here](#).

Lewes District Grow Cook Eat Network meets seasonally at local community food projects. We currently have [a directory of 18 Grow Cook Eat projects](#) across the district and this is an area of growth for us.

### **Good Food East Sussex – a county-wide food strategy for East Sussex**

In 2022 East Sussex Public Health commissioned Food Matters to show how the four food partnerships in East Sussex could work together to create coherent food strategies for the county.



Food Matters completed a period of research and development where they identified key strategic areas, as well as identifying key stakeholders at ESCC and within the Public Health Department. Several recommendations came out of this period of development, including to develop a 'co-chair model', whereby each of the partnerships takes the lead on a priority area and liaises with a council officer on how to bring forward the objectives of the shared management plan.

LDFP sit on three of the key strategic areas.

1. Food Inequality and Health (with Wealden FP and Hastings & Rother FP)
2. Community Growing, Land Use & Planning (with Eastbourne FP)
3. Food Procurement & Catering (with Eastbourne FP)

### **Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan**

Lewes District Food Partnership's action plan was published in April 2022. It covers 18 months October 2023, when it is due to be reviewed and replaced with a [3 year food strategy in collaboration with Lewes District Council](#). This action plan was developed by our steering group at an open spaces meeting in early 2022. Stakeholders were invited to put forward suggested aims and areas of focus. These were then discussed and refined, and the six priority areas for our first 18 months were agreed:

- How can local food organisations build community wealth?
- What are the links between food & other essential living costs – how can we ensure a joined up approach during the cost of living crisis?
- How can we move beyond foodbanks and develop a sustainable approach to tackling food insecurity?
- How can we engage farmers & producers to work towards more sustainable methods that promote bio-diversity, soil health & nutrient rich food?
- How can connections be fostered to promote community growing, cooking & eating?
- How can schools become community hubs for the development of a good food movement?

Our food partnership coordinator, Ruby Makepeace-Somerville, is responsible for ensuring that the action plan is being delivered, including the coordination of local action in line with the six priority areas. The activity of the food partnership is measured against a number of Key Performance Indicators, which help us track progress and impact.

For 2023-24 our KPIs are:

- 90% of Emergency Food Network members agree that the network creates a more joined up approach to tackling food security across Lewes District
- 20 groups are part of the Grow Cook Eat network
- 100 people attend 2023 food summit including new stakeholders
- 200 followers across social media channels
- 90% of Inequality Truth Hearing participants agree that the project has given them a platform to share their experience of food insecurity

Additionally, LDFP have [developed a good food charter](#), which uses the six SFP areas as a framework, and can be read and signed on our website, as a mechanism for joining the wider food partnership. The food charter builds on the vision set out in our action plan and gives specific recommendations for how organisations and individuals can work in partnership to support those aims. The charter was launched at our [2022 Food Summit](#), which was attended by over 80 local stakeholders and was facilitated by Stef Lake, along with Ben Messer from Food Matters. The Food Summit, which was hosted in Lewes in October, was furthermore an opportunity to celebrate the work of the food partnership, as well as providing a platform for those working towards creating a better food system in the district. Our four speakers were:

- Carl Walker, University Of Brighton: Hunger Trauma, Dignity and The Community Food Response
- Emily Clarke, Landport Community Café: The Landport Estate in Lewes as a case study for joined up food provision
- Ronald Ranta, Kingston University: Evaluation of the community supermarket model as a way of moving beyond food banks
- Anthony Davison, BigBarn CIC: How BigBarn CIC gets children growing and helps schools to build their own circular economies

Feedback from the event was very positive:

*"Excellent event. Thanks for putting it on. I left feeling motivated, uplifted and optimistic."*

*Robin Van Creveld, The Community Chef*

*"Thank you all so much for facilitating yesterday. It was really inspiring and informative."*

*Michael Kennard, Compost Club*

*"What an excellent afternoon, so much covered in that time. Very well organised!"*

*Sue Fleming, Green Cuisine Trust*

*"Just to say a massive thank you for inviting us three from Human Nature, it was a rich and brilliant event with inspirational work and processes that we all not just learned from, but will connect with as we move forward with our plans. Brilliant work all round."*

*Clarissa Bromelle, Human Nature*

We are planning to host a second food summit this October at [Plumpton College](#), which is the leader in land and environment education and training for the South East. The theme will be Food & Sustainability.

Finally, LDFP have worked with a local designer to develop and promote a coherent brand identity, which includes a logo, colour palette, house font and a number of brand assets. These have been used to [develop our website](#), as well as [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, which promote partner projects and groups that are delivering healthy and sustainable food activity across the district. Our strapline is: Together We Have A Stronger Voice. Our coordinator also produces a quarterly newsletter, and recently has developed a [Grow Cook Eat booklet](#), which will be distributed in community venues to promote upcoming events, campaigns and activities.



**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

In addition to our steering group and two key networks, we also have a number of working groups, who tackle different issues on our 18 month action plan. These include members of our networks, but are open to all in order to bring in wider expertise and passion. For example our School Food working group looks at how schools can promote a culture of good food, as well as seeking to influence the commissioning of school food procurement at a County level. This group meets on an ad hoc basis and primarily acts as a mechanism for sharing information and connecting stakeholders who are doing similar work.

With funding from Sustainable Food Places LDFP recently ran a project called Feeling The Pinch! Have Your Say. This project brought together a panel of eleven experts by lived experience with over 25 community partners, to discuss the issues around food insecurity. The event was extremely powerful and we are using this as a starting point for include people with lived experience of food issues in our decision making and policy design and implementation. Lewes District Council recognise and endorse the food partnership and are keen to explore how this approach might influence activity at a district council level.

## **Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement**

### **Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food**

With support from an SFP Good Food Movement grant, LDFP is developing the provision and connectedness of community food projects across the district, including community growing spaces, social eating projects, community kitchens etc. The aim of the Grow Cook Eat network is to build community resilience and take a broader, longer-term view of food security. Our goal is to empower residents to build positive relationships with all aspects of food from patch to plate.

In the last six months we have:

- Strengthened our current communications output by developing a quarterly newsletter that members of our network can contribute to, thereby raising the profile of community food projects across all stakeholders
- Continued to develop our website [www.lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org](http://www.lewesdistrictfoodpartnership.org) as a resource to signpost residents to community food projects, along with new Facebook and Instagram pages
- Strengthened and grown our Grow Cook Eat network by employing a senior project assistant from within the network for 10hrs per month to engage and inspire community leadership, support with access to community land and venues, and to encourage and support the development of new projects

- Supported some existing food banks in the district to transition to open access community food projects (this builds on the work of our emergency food network, where a desire to transition and become a community food hub has been expressed by multiple food banks)

We also plan to:

- Provide a suite of training resources for volunteer led community food projects including a handbook and series of short videos that support best practice
- Work with community food projects to put inclusion at the heart of their project, furthering engagement with under-represented groups, including people who are economically inactive (this builds on a piece of work that emerged from our food summit about developing a set of principles of dignified food support, but will also encompass other aspects of best practice for community food projects)

This place based, collaborative approach to bringing together local communities has deepened the relationships that are already present through our Grow Cook Eat network, utilising existing physical and growing spaces to engage marginalised groups – in particular people with disabilities, people who are currently struggling to afford sufficient food and groups who might be cutting out healthier foods such as fresh produce due to prohibitive cost – giving them an opportunity to play a more active part in their food system, through their involvement in, and contribution to, community food projects.

An example of this work is [the Landport Estate in Lewes](#), which we use as a model to inspire other areas of the District – The Landport Estate is one of the most deprived areas in Lewes and has a number of interconnected food projects, including a pay-as-you-feel café ([see pages 32-33](#)), a community garden which is used by wellbeing groups and as a forest school for the local nursery, an open access food bank and a community fridge. Much of this work is coordinated by [the local resident association](#) and is driven by an [active team of volunteers who live on the estate](#), including [Debbie Twitchen](#), who was recently awarded an MBE for outstanding activism and community work on behalf of residents. This community rooted approach isn't just about reacting in a crisis but prioritises access to healthy and delicious food for all in a fair and equitable way. The interconnectedness means that there is very little food waste and expertise can be shared – through initiatives such as the Landport Community Café recipe book. The Residents Association also hosts an annual community BBQ on the green, with some of the food provided for free by the local corner shop as a way of thanking residents for their custom.

Further examples of public events and engagement opportunities in Lewes District include:

- [LDFP Food Summit, October 2023](#)
- [LDFP participated in a Food Justice Panel at the Extinction or Regeneration Conference in London, April 2023](#)
- [One Extra Item – The Lewes Food Bank Story \(short film screened at The Depot, Lewes\)](#)
- [Common Cause annual Seedy Saturday seed swaps](#)
- [Lewes Climate Hub Planet Party](#)
- [Lewes Railway Land annual apple pressing event](#)
- [Sharing Skills CIC soup and community hedge planting day](#)

- [The Havens Food Hub Jubilee Street Party](#)

Examples of opportunities for people to learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food include:

- [Healthy eating week at Seaford Head School](#)
- [Community Café at Fitzjohns Food Bank](#)
- [Landport Community BBQ](#)
- [Make your own kebab workshop with Table Talk Foundation](#)
- [Lunch Positive, Meet Up Mondays, Top Fruit and Seed Exchange at Friends of Bishopstone Station](#)
- [Peacehaven Mosque Souper Social](#)
- [Hopsitable Environment Lammas Celebration](#)
- [Tide Mills traditional bread making workshops](#)
- [Seaford Rotary Club Young Chef of the Year](#)

Our good food movement building also links closely with the development our Feeling The Pinch! Have Your Say project, which looks at how current recipients of food aid can take a more active role in community food spaces, leading to positive activity and dignity for community members.

#### **LDFPs Small Grants Programme – Household Support Fund**

We have been allocated four rounds of funding from ESCC to distribute to community food projects. We have used the last two rounds to fund projects that are actively engaging and building a Good Food Movement for Lewes District. Round 3, which ran in the first half of 2023, focussed on partnership work and we encouraged groups to make connections with other projects across the three themes of growing, cooking and eating to build community connections and resilience. An example of this was a local school that applied for a grant in partnership with the CIC Sharing Skills to start a community garden which would be managed by students and incorporated into food technology classes.

The small grant programme allows us to support projects that are building food security, not just through the provision of food but through food education & well-being, food sustainability & local procurement, and ensuring projects are accessible. We also support projects to develop key policies, such as Safeguarding and EDI (which must be in place in order to receive a small grant).

#### **Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement**

We received a Good Food Movement grant from SFP which helped towards setting up our [Grow Cook Eat Network](#). It was established in 2022 and now consists of 18 community groups from across the District. The network meets seasonally at a different community food project to share ideas, expertise and experience, and keeps in touch via a WhatsApp group, where they can share updates and resources. Through the GCE Network, LDFP aims to increase participation in food growing and related activities. The following two case studies demonstrate this approach:

### **Grow, Cook, Eat & Compost at Lewes FC**

Lewes Football Club hosts a Grow, Cook, Eat & Compost project at their ground, [The Dripping Pan](#). The group meets every Tuesday from 10 – 1 for 90 minutes of gardening/compost education sessions with Bradley Pritchard, footballer and founder of the garden project, along with Michael Kennard from [Compost Club](#). The sessions are followed by 90 minutes of vegetarian cooking and eating with Nutritionists and chefs Libby Turner of [Field Food](#) and Lucie Simon of [Feel Good Food](#). The project is funded by Lewes District Council and sessions are free for anyone within the local community.

The workshops provide practical skills and knowledge to develop self-sufficiency and sustainability in a fun and relaxed way. Participants learn how to grow, cook and compost their own fruits and vegetables, and then enjoy eating together. Lewes FC are passionate about using football as an engine for societal change, and believe that circular systems like this are a benefit to the whole community.

*“So far we have sown a variety of fruits, veg and herbs, learned the value of compost as a natural fertiliser, improving soil quality which benefits the health of our crops, our bodies and our environment. We have cooked soups, salads, pastries and even made our own ice cream using mint from the patch, we always enjoy our lunches together within the grounds of Lewes FC, eating alfresco whenever possible. It’s a joyful project to be involved in and we plan to continue through the Summer and Autumn, and are excited about the bountiful harvest to come.” – Brad Pritchard, Lewes FC*

### **The Peverells Community Garden in Seaford**

*(As reported by Gemma McFarlane of [Incredible Edible Seaford](#)): It has been exciting to watch this garden grow from an idea into reality. Miriam Thundercliffe and Dan Ori had a vision to create a community garden from this forgotten corner of Seaford. When they found the space, it was a square patch of grass with two large beech trees at one end.*

*They began by contacting Lewes District Council, who they found the land belonged to. They were directed to the Parks manager who listened to their ideas. The council used the setting up of this garden to refine their policy on the use of their land for a community garden. Because of this, it took a year to get the official go ahead with the garden. Thanks to the Peverells project, the process should be quicker for other new projects wanting to use land belonging to Lewes District Council. Miriam and Dan used this time to talk to the neighbours to make sure they would like a new garden, listen to any ideas or concerns and recruit volunteers to get involved. It also gave them time to get to know the space well and think about what would work. They also needed to apply for funding and were supported by Lewes District Council, Ouse Valley Climate Action and an LDFP small grant.*

*When I went to visit, a small team were putting together a large polytunnel. This will provide a longer season for things to grow and is a great place to work or take a break if it’s cold or wet*

*outside. Dan proudly showed me around the site. Knowing the importance of good compost, the volunteers have built a six bay compost from pallets. Three bays to divide the waste into greens and browns and three to mix them together to get the right mix for the perfect compost.*

*There will be raised beds with plenty of space around them for anyone in a wheelchair to access, as well as plenty of space for local residents to use the space to relax in, which was something the neighbours proposed in the initial discussions. The garden will also be used for workshops and events.*

Additionally, LDFP has supported over 30 good food projects through our small grants programme (see 3C for more information about our grant recipients) and have recently extended this offer to include additional support from our food partnership coordinator to develop an idea, grant application and project. We are currently in the process of distributing another £20,000 worth of small grants to local community initiatives, with a particular focus on developing inclusive practice rooted in an asset based community development approach.

### **Action in Schools**

LDFP's School Food subgroup works on ensuring schools are engaged in Good Food Movements and offers support to schools to achieve Ofsted recommendations around 'food cultures'. Andrew McKechnie works on the Healthy Schools Programme and has this to say: "we work directly with schools to help develop a healthy food culture including through policy development, curriculum support and staff CPD. All schools in East Sussex can access PSHE Association for free and to help schools teach about healthy food choices we direct schools to resources for KS1 and 2 [Health education \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk) and Ks 3 and 4 [Health education \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk). In March 2022 we ran a Healthy Eating in Primary Schools Webinar with a community chef which included demonstration to school staff how to cook in the classroom environment and how to embed food across the curriculum. In February 2023 at our Whole School Approach to Health and Wellbeing Conference we brought in (what was then) Albion in the Community to deliver a Food and nutrition in KS2 workshop which again included practical CPD around cooking in the primary classroom."

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

An important part of the work we do is making sure to promote projects and local movements widely, both locally and nationally. We have created several resources which are available for free such as the Emergency Food Jargon Buster which was recently shared by other groups on the SFP Rise Up List. Our Dignity Toolkit and a toolkit for running micro participatory projects with experts by lived experience of food insecurity (based on the Feeling the Pinch model), will both be free resources once ready. We have also contributed to several webinars and online sessions to talk about the work we are doing on alternative models of food provision, dignity-led service delivery and Good Food Movements. Recently our coordinator has spoken at a Real Farming Trust webinar

on advocacy, a Lewes District Council partnership meeting for the Cost-of-Living, a Public Health 'Lunch and Learn' and is due to talk at a District Councillors Network meeting in September.

### **Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food**

#### **Action area A: Tackle food poverty**

Lewes District Emergency Food Network was established in January 2021 to bring together community food support organisations across the district. The EFN continues to meet monthly via Zoom and is made up of ten organisations including food banks, pantries and community supermarkets. EFN meetings are an opportunity for groups to share updates, trends and to identify any shared challenges.

As a network, the EFN has put out a number of joint statements about [the impact of the cost of living crisis](#), as well as coordinated letters to our local MP asking her to support the Universal Credit uplift. EFN meetings are also an opportunity for other public and third sector workers to share information with relevant stakeholders and as such, we have had a range of people attend meetings including the Fire and Rescue Service, Church Action on Poverty, Pelican Parcels, FareShare and the coordinator of Tribe, a volunteer coordination app from East Sussex County Council. A Google Group is used to connect the network between meetings and is a useful tool for sharing additional information, resources and funding opportunities.

In June 2023, with funding from an SFP Participatory Processes Grant, LDFP concluded a project called [Feeling the Pinch! Have Your Say](#), an innovative participatory project designed to give ordinary people from across Lewes District the opportunity to share their stories and experiences of the Cost-of-Living crisis.

Over 2 months, 11 local residents, each with their own with lived experience of financial struggle, met fortnightly for interactive workshops exploring the challenges they faced and the ways they had found to survive. Together they also started to identify the systemic problems which underlay their personal experiences and develop recommendations about what needs to change.

This phase of our work concluded with an 'Inequality Truth Hearing' bringing our Expert Panel together with 25 community partners including representatives from local councils, the voluntary and statutory sectors. The result was a fascinating and powerful discussion, with lots of lively, respectful interaction and generation of ideas for practical next steps.

Our participants wanted policymakers not only to hear their stories, but to respond by working with them to identify solutions. Their recommendations included:

- Improved access to information, advice and guidance
- Interactions with services that are led with compassion and dignity
- Policy development should start with meaningful community consultation



We are now exploring how we might move this work forward and how we can continue to centre the voices of people with lived experience of food insecurity in our work.

Furthermore, Lewes District Food Partnership has been at the forefront of developing a set of Principles of Dignified Food Support, building on the work of Nourish Scotland to give specific, evidence based recommendations to centre dignity. Our chair, Stef Lake, has worked in partnership with academics [Carl Walker](#) and [Ronald Ranta](#), as well as a wider cohort of food partnership coordinators, activists and volunteers to develop the draft principles. Recently Stef, Carl and Ronald have met with Feeding Britain, Sustain, The Soil Association, Church Action On Poverty, Your Local Pantry, Nourish and IFAN to explore the potential of a National Alliance For Dignified Food Support. This work also includes the development of a charter of rights for community food support users, which includes, for example:

- The right to use other services, including other community food support services
- The right to ask questions or offer suggestions
- The right to contribute to the organisation where possible
- The right to shop or purchase food elsewhere, without judgement, while using community food support
- The right to choose which food I would like to receive and the right to decline without judgement – I should not be made to feel ungrateful if I choose not to accept support or ask for something different

#### **Action Area B: Promote healthy eating**

Lewes District Food Partnership , along with the three other District & Borough level food partnerships, are part of a county wide Healthy Weight Partnership, which was convened to implement the [East Sussex Whole-System Healthy Weight Plan 2021-26](#)

The East Sussex Whole-System Healthy Weight Plan states that: *“Food poverty and resulting malnourishment is an issue, with many people experiencing an inability to obtain affordable healthy food. There are several factors which can influence this, including income, availability of healthy foods, knowledge of what makes a healthy diet and the skills to make healthy meals.”*

The HWP meets quarterly to review progress against the plan, and includes three action areas: food, physical activity and environment.

To increase healthy eating in East Sussex, the HWP commits to:

- Work with partners to improve diet and nutrition for new-born and young children
- Create an environment where healthy food is the preferred choice, whether eating in or out of the home.
- Tackle food poverty and build food security across the county
- Ensure people living with a Long-Term Condition have the knowledge, skills, confidence, and opportunity to improve their diet and nutrition.

One of the five outcome indicators for this action area is that food partnerships are fully established in each district and borough area, with actions plans in place. In line with this, Food

Matters were commissioned to develop a county wide approach to ensure joined up working across the district and boroughs. As a result, [Good Food For East Sussex](#) was developed, with one of the priority areas being identified as 'Food, inequality and health'.

LDFP sit on the East Sussex working group for tackling food inequalities & health with Wealden and Hastings & Rother food partnerships (see 1c). The respective coordinators met with Stuart Ramsbottom from NHS Public Health in the Partnerships Team, who leads on health and care strategies, to talk about county-wide approaches. For a more in depth understanding of the work being done on this area across East Sussex as well as the common themes of work identified, and areas which food partnerships can influence can be found on the Reports and Partner Updates page [here](#).

East Sussex also operates [HALO \(Healthy Active Little Ones\)](#), which is a free programme that helps early years settings to:

- reflect upon their practice in a range of health and wellbeing areas
- celebrate and strengthen what they already do
- identify (and action) areas for further development.

Alongside dedicated coordinator support, settings can access:

- training on a range of health and wellbeing topics
- in-house training and practical support (such as modelling or menu planning)
- downloadable resources.

Settings can also apply for one of two new awards: the HALO Award or the HALO Excellence Award. These recognise:

- commitment to support the health and wellbeing of children, staff and families as part of a whole-setting approach
- continued improvement and the embedding of best health and wellbeing practice.

Latest figures from Celine Woodthorpe the HALO Programme Coordinator:

1. Number of early years settings/providers who have completed baseline health and wellbeing check in Lewes District: 17
2. Number of early year settings/ providers who have completed follow-up health and wellbeing checks in Lewes District: 10
3. Number of early year settings/providers who have completed a Eat Better Start Better check in Lewes District: 17

LDFP are part of the East Sussex Healthy Start Vouchers working group, which monitors data on HSV update across the county and actively promote access to healthy start vouchers through local community groups and statutory services. [Here is an example](#) of Healthy Start Vouchers being promoted by ESCC and shared by Lewes District Council.

Engaging with Lewes Family Hub (previously the Children's Centre), our coordinator recently met with the hub manager to talk about how families can access food support. We are working to improve communications between family hubs and emergency food providers to help identify

families that may need additional support around children's nutrition. This can be provided through a [Henry Course](#) which teaches skills around adopting a 'healthier and happier lifestyle to give your child a great start in life'.

There are also community events across the District, which focus on promoting healthy eating, including those funded by LDFP (see 3C). Examples include:

- [Green Cuisine Trust](#) (a charity that focuses on building ecological food cultures)
- [Feel Good Food](#) (nutritionist Lucie Simon uses science backed research to help mid life women to thrive)
- [Owena's Farm Therapies](#) (which offers food and farming courses to support mental health and wellbeing)

### **The Community Chef (Robin Van Creveld)**

Since 2001, [Community Chef](#) has helped thousands of people to improve their cookery and nutrition skills. The team uses food and cookery as tools for developing communities while promoting health and wellness. The team run indoor, outdoor and online cookery demonstrations, which allow the audience to eat that food that has been prepared. They also offer cookery training courses for cookery leaders, food banks, community cafes and other organisation. The aim of the training is to empower people to set up and run their own food related initiatives which improve the health and wellbeing of their communities. Indeed, many community food projects in Lewes District are led by people who have completed cookery leader training with Robin and his team. Recent cookery courses and workshops hosted by The Community Chef include:

- Man With A Pan (complete cookery course aimed at single men)
- Vital Skills (Healthy eating for the prevention and management of diabetes)
- Cookery for a Healthy Heart (heart protective cookery and nutrition)
- Baking for a Living (a free bakery course for Ukrainians interested in baking professionally)
- Cooking for Cares (a range of workshops aimed at carers including Autumn Chutney and Sauerkraut and Pickles)

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Funded by East Sussex County Council via the Household Support Fund, LDFP has coordinated three rounds of our small grants programme, providing small grants and additional support to projects which are tackling food poverty across Lewes District. Our grants do not fund food banks, unless they are planning to use the funding to develop an additional project which adds value to their existing offer eg. the development of a café area, or a recipe box scheme. Since March 2022 LDFP has distributed £60,000 of funding to local projects including:

- £2,000 to Pippa's Group nursery in Lewes to provide free healthy snacks and growing activities to preschool age children
- £2,000 to Peacehaven Mosque to develop 'Souper Social', a pay-as-you-feel community lunch

- £2,000 to the Havens Food Coop in Denton to develop a slow cooker scheme for local residents
- £2,000 to Seaford Environmental Alliance to develop a free after school club with provision of a healthy meal

Our third round of small grants prioritised organisations working in partnership. We funded several projects including:

- £4,000 to Fitzjohns Food Bank and Lewes Open Door to run free, open access community food events
- £4,000 to Friends of Bishopstone Station and Lunch Positive to host a community lunch for people affected by HIV

We have just launched our fourth round of funding, which will focus on projects who are looking to build connections and can demonstrate how they plan to reach out to marginalised and minoritised groups within the community.

#### **Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy**

##### **Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development**

Both Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council recognise the role and importance of sustainable food enterprises and are actively working to support their development and success. For example [Lewes District Council adopted a new corporate plan](#) in February 2022, following the declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019. The corporate plan, 'Reimagining Lewes District', set out the council's ambitions to achieve net zero, whilst continuing to embed community wealth principles within the district. [The following case study](#) from November 2022 sets out how this has impacted the local economy, with specific reference to a local food businesses.

##### **The challenge**

The past two years have been a challenging time for the local economy. The pandemic resulted in the closure of businesses, particularly in retail and hospitality. Lewes District's economic make up is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a high proportion of self-employed many of which were hit hard by the pandemic. Parts of the district (in particular, Newhaven) had been in dire need of regeneration for some time before this.

Lewes District Council was determined to use the community wealth building and green principles embedded in their corporate plan to drive forward a sustainable approach to recovery.

##### **The solution**

LDC has taken a new approach to local regeneration through [community wealth building](#) (CWB). This takes a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has supported the council in the development of its approach. In January 2023, a dedicated LDC Project Officer for community wealth joined the council to support this work.

One of the key components of the LDC's CWB plans was to ensure that council land and assets are 'socially productive' where possible. In essence this meant that they would look to ensure that all our assets in some way generate wealth or other benefits for local people. To this end, LDC undertook a review of all our council owned land and buildings and looked to determine where there were opportunities for transfers or disposals that would enable community use and/or ownership, or deliver other community benefit, such as through increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Alongside this, assets being given 'meanwhile use', include; in Lewes an arrangement where over the past two years Lewes Community Volunteers (a new organization that started during the pandemic) and Lewes Climate Hub have benefitted from 'meanwhile use' of a vacant council building; and in Newhaven a longer term meanwhile use has been given to [The Sidings, a bistro style waterside café](#).

CLES assert that *"locally owned and socially minded enterprises are more likely to employ, buy and invest locally. For this reason, community wealth building seeks to promote locally owned and socially minded enterprises by promoting various models of enterprise ownership that enable wealth created by users, workers and local communities to be held by them, rather than flowing out as profits to shareholders"*.

The same Getting Building Fund helped LDC to take over the running of 'Marine Workshops' (previously a vacant University Technical College building). This large building, a key location in Newhaven opened in 2023 as a marine, commercial and public space. As well as providing a new office base for council staff, the building provides accommodation for a local college and is being developed into a 'blue space/climate hub' for aquaculture and marine based industry and training.

### **Newhaven – Community Wealth Building in Action**

An innovative project in Newhaven, funded through government 'Levelling Up' monies, brings together all aspects of CWB. Called ['Capturing the Value of the Catch'](#) this project has three aspects;

- The catch – funding two new fish landing stages, working with the crews of local fishing vessels working together as a CIC
- Processing – a new seafood processing plant, auction room and local marketplace
- Retaining – establishing a new quayside fish restaurant and community destination.

The combined effect of these three initiatives is to increase the levels of local fishing activities and to retain more of the financial benefits of this locally in Newhaven. Although not yet a completed

project, this demonstrates in a practical way how LDC's CWB approaches can make a difference in the local area.

Our food partnership coordinator, Ruby, recently visited Newhaven Harbour to learn more about Capturing The Value Of The Catch, writing:

*An exciting prospect is that of a new restaurant showcasing locally caught fish on the menu. It was interesting to hear about ideas of how to get different varieties of fish on to our plates. Wendi Goodsell from Yorwarths Fresh Fish, whose family has been involved in the fishing industry for over 200 years on the Sussex coasts, told me that she is, "hoping to get pop up markets going again... not just fish, but hopefully together with other local producers".*

*Whilst this is all great news for seafood-lovers the reality is that the industry needs new entrant fishermen and women to ensure that small local businesses can continue to operate, the alternative is that large scale, multinational fishing corporations will monopolise the waters catching local fish but exporting them to faraway markets, losing a local industry and the jobs many rely on.*

*None of this is short-term and there are many challenges along the way, including the price of steel, but supporting the local fishing industry is one which Lewes District Food Partnership support and we would like to see it become more common to pop down the fish market to get fresh local produce than rely on supermarkets which do not offer fair prices to fishermen or farmers.*

## **Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers**

LDFP uses multiple platforms including a website and social media feeds to actively promote local good food businesses. Below are two case studies of healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses that form part of our local food partnership:

### **[The Lewes Friday Market](#)**

The Lewes Friday Market operates every week in Lewes Town Centre (with Lewes District Council allowing the not for profit to use council owned space free of charge). The Market is operated by Lewes Local (CIC), with the broad aims of developing sustainable local food systems and making it easier for more people to buy good, healthy, seasonal food. Lewes Local CIC was established in June 2010.

The Market grew from an idea initially developed by members of the Transition Town Lewes Food Group. The Food Group aimed to work towards sustainable food production, supply and access in Lewes District. A market seemed a good way to further these aims, so Food Group members recruited more people to establish the Market Group, which worked with the support of others such as the Lewes Town Partnership and Lewes District Council to get a market up and running.



As a Community Interest Company, the Market is run as a business, employing a Market Manager, but any profits are used to support food-related community initiatives.

The Aims of Lewes Market are:

- To increase access to healthy seasonal food for all.
- To provide an outlet for professional producers and very small amateur sellers, new producers and surpluses from allotments.
- To support distribution methods which reduce carbon emissions.
- To reclaim and develop a sustainable, local food culture.

To do this, the CIC has set criteria for stalls at the market, to reflect their core principles.

Lewes Market states that it: “aims to become a community resource, to provide a viable and economic outlet for local farmers and producers; to give shoppers local access to fresh products; to support local businesses and to provide a regular opportunity for community groups to contribute to the market.”

Stallholders include:

- [Flint Owl Bakery](#) – Sourdough bread and traditional baked goods from Glynde, Sussex
- [Krishna Indian Food](#) – Handmade authentic home cooked Indian food made locally in Ringmer
- [Bluebell Farm](#) – Slow growing chicken plus grass fed, dry hung beef, Southdown lamb and free range pigs
- [Cheese Please](#) – A wide range of handmade cheeses all locally produced in Sussex, as well as local free range eggs
- [Tiny Kitchen](#) – Micro greens grown in Sussex
- Cupboard Stuff – Run by the market, they supply store cupboard essentials with little or no packaging and no single use plastic
- [Veasey & Sons](#) – Fresh and local fish and seafood
- [Forage & Bloom](#) – Flowers locally grown in Ditchling
- [Sussex Wild Food](#) – Locally sourced game, charcuterie and game pies

#### [Lovebrook Farm – Regenerative Food Production & Community Wellbeing](#)

LDFP has developed strong links with owners Lovebrook Farm owners Hannah and Richard. Our coordinator Ruby wrote the following after her most recent visit: *I take every opportunity I can to visit Lovebrook Farm in Kingston Nr Lewes, it's a wonderful place with a deep connection to nature. Hannah and Richard are the custodians of the land and bring their experience of community work to the 33 acres, wanting to share the rewards of being in nature and going back to basics to grow our own food with everyone in the community.*

*“The ambitious project includes a market garden, orchard, therapeutic wellbeing days, farm shop, and plans for a forest garden, areas of rewilding, chalk grassland, woodland planting, camping areas and laying hens.”*

*The first time I visited was on a day trip organised by a Brighton & Hove Project called Soil in the City that aimed to bring people from urban areas in to the rural spaces to see local food production. It was a frosty winter morning and although our toes had frozen stiff, we enjoyed being shown the edible and medicinal herbs growing naturally across the land, we got busy foraging and Richard showed us how to make a tincture in the outdoor communal space.*

*I was lucky enough to visit again in spring and the comparison was great. There was a group of trainees busy working in the polytunnel and in the beds. Hannah is passionate about the space being used for learning and giving people opportunities to learn regenerative practices. There are also regular volunteer days including ones with a well-being focus for those of us who like a slower-pace.*

*Hannah showed me the area which has been given to a local group that brings pre-school children to have a go at growing veggies, plus an area which will be developed in to a food forest, and a well-being space with a fire pit. To round it all off they have a camping field where you can enjoy a night nestled in the South Downs.*

*Lovebrook has four growers that help look after the Veg Bag scheme by growing deliciously fresh and crunchy produce. I enjoyed tasting many different varieties of salad leaves and left with a bundle of tangy coriander. Richard can be found at the Lewes Farmers Market selling local harvest, or produce can be bought in their farm shop.*

*The community work is supported by the commercial venture so that a circular economy is in place where the Farm Shop and Veg Bag scheme, as well as the camping, gives and creates space for the benefit of the community, and vice versa.*

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

[Common Cause](#) is a not-for-profit social enterprise supporting the local community. They do this primarily through food growing projects and by supporting the local food growing economy in Sussex. Common Cause was founded in 1991 and director Katharine Finnegan sits on the LDFP steering group. The aims are social, economic and environmentally sustainable community development, supporting local food production and connections between producers and consumers, agricultural development that is sensitive to the landscape and its biodiversity. This is achieved through:

- Lewes Famers Market (see above)
- Lewes Community Allotment
- Lewes House Garden
- Ringmer Community Orchard

- Seedy Saturday Lewes

Common cause also supports the Land Workers' Alliance campaign for Good Food, Good Farming.

## Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains

### Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

\*\*Key Issue 5 was written in collaboration with Eastbourne Food Partnership, as we both sit within the same local authority. Relevant examples have been provided from our respective localities.

East Sussex County Council are committed to putting good food on people's plates, promoting the four district and borough food partnerships [on their website](#), along with information about HAF programmes, local national food waste services and healthy start vouchers. Additionally, [Your East Sussex](#) shares tips, articles and news to promote good quality, local and healthy food.

Example articles in the past three years include:

[Reduce your food waste and fight climate change - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[How to reduce food waste during lockdown \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#)

[How to reduce food waste this Christmas - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Frugal tips: How to make food shopping for your family more affordable - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Festive foods from Sussex - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[How to ensure your charity isn't just a 'December thing' \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#)

[Grow your own veg – National Allotment Week - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Cheers to our army of volunteers! - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Healthy eating at home - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Cheers! Here's to winemaking and tourism in Sussex - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Reduce, reuse, and recycle this spring - Your East Sussex by East Sussex County Council](#)

[Healthy Start Recipes: Easy Chickpeasy Hummus - Food & Drink \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#)

The two-tier structure of local government in East Sussex means that most public sector procurement policies are executed at a county level, necessitating collaboration with other districts and borough food partnerships to develop a unified strategic approach to good food procurement. With this in mind, 'Food Procurement and Catering' has been identified as a key strategic area under the Good Food East Sussex strategy, with Eastbourne and Lewes District food partnership coordinators leading the working group in this area.

### Adopting Good Food practices in the catering sector

Across Lewes District, there are various examples of catering that values good food, from focus on health and nutrition to sustainability and local sourcing, providing examples of best practice that can be built upon to create a strategic focus on healthy, locally sourced food.

A key example of best practice in the catering sector is [Table Talk's engagement with local schools](#) as part of the Adopt a School programme in Sussex. Table Talk is a Sussex based charity, raising funds for food education for children, and to support our hospitality industry. [Table Talk](#) and Adopt A School Trust fundraising to support the development of a specialist training kitchen at [Plumpton College](#), where students can access state of the art equipment to make real food, as if they were working in a professional kitchen. The aim is to provide food education, and get children engaged with food from an early age so they can make better food choices. At Plumpton College there is also a working farm, which children can tour to see the cows in residence, the butchery and bakery, as well as where they make wine. This gives primary age children an opportunity to see exactly what it takes to bring food to the table, and has the potential to inspire tradespeople of the future. One head teacher at Ringmer Primary school told us that they hope to have the chef come into school to support with the development and improvement of school meals.

**Other examples of Good Food procurement:**

- ESCC vegetarian lunch: East Sussex County Council encouraged its employees to share their favourite veggie recipes, with a free vegetarian meal to be provided at County Hall to showcase one of the recipes
- HALO resources to support early years setting with compliance with voluntary govt. guidelines around early years setting food provision, including HALO Lunch box audit and Eat Better Start Better Checklist (see section 3 for more info on HALO)
- Chartwells provide the catering contract with East Sussex and have implemented various Good Food measures, including Meat Free Mondays at primary school level (see [here](#) for an example Autumn Winter menu), Red Tractor approved chicken and milk and 95% seasonal veg sourced direct from British Farmers.

In the private catering sector, there are plans in place for the development of a Healthy Restaurant Charter as enshrined in the East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership action plan, under the action *“Develop and roll out a healthy food charter which recognises achievements made by food outlets to improve access to healthier food”*, which comes under the ‘Creating a healthy eating environment’ action area (see detailed action plan [here](#)). This would provide an accessible local complement to national schemes such as [Served Here](#).

Finally, the [East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan: East Sussex Reset | East Sussex County Council](#) supports the development of local supply chains, stating that ‘We are initiating a Buy Local supply chain programme across all business sectors to stimulate local enterprise and a countywide Good Food growth campaign.’

Lewes District Council’s Community Wealth Building Strategy includes a section on the progressive procurement of goods and services:

*We are adopting new procurement strategies to maximize opportunities for buying locally and supporting SMEs.*

*Traditionally councils consider outsourcing as a way of creating efficiencies. CWB takes the opposite approach, looking to insource as a way of ensuring jobs are offered to local people, that those jobs are subject to good local government terms and conditions, and that none of the benefits end up channelled away to distant shareholders. Since the previous case study was written, the council has insourced its public convenience cleansing service and also its office cleaning contract.*

*In addition we have moved to more local providers for some aspects of our housing repairs, so that more local businesses are benefitting from the delivery of this work for the council.*

*Our progressive approach to procurement has taken a significant step forward with a framework agreement we have designed and established following a competitive procurement process for the provision of modular housing. Following the successful sustainable affordable housing units we delivered in Newhaven, local contractor Boutique Modern have, through this framework, been able to establish a substantial pipeline programme of works. This has been not just for Lewes District Council, but for Eastbourne and Hastings councils through the same framework agreement. Any other council in East and West Sussex is also able to make use of the same framework, and a number are already signed up for its use. The benefits to date have been; that we have been able to develop new sustainable and affordable units quickly, that we have used a local provider to do this and thus assisted their long term viability, and that other councils have also been able to benefit easily from this local, sustainable approach.*

*When we started working on CWB in 2020 one key strand was to look at the decarbonisation of our council housing stock. Working with Brighton University and experts within the energy efficiency/decarbonisation field, work has been done to show the benefits that can be achieved if Local Government collaborates on a regional programme of housing decarbonisation work. A more certain programme means businesses will invest in technology, ramping up capacity, and colleges will gear up green skills courses. We are currently focusing on photo voltaic panels which was assessed as a ‘no regrets intervention’— where costs are not prohibitive and we are in discussions with local providers to look at ways they can scale up to respond.*

*As part of this we are working closely with a local college – East Sussex College Group – who are now offering a new green Training Hub, located in a council owned building, in partnership with OHM Energy (a local SME) at Hampden Retail Park in Eastbourne. The College was selected to establish this as one of five new decarbonisation academies across Sussex to support the development of skills in retrofitting and green energy installation.*

## **Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain**

More transparent, fairer and shorter supply chains for a geographically spread area such as Lewes District rely on joined-up working that goes beyond the district, extending into wider networks at a county and a regional level.

LDFP attended a meeting in December 2022 with Dynamic Procurement UK convened by Brighton and Hove Food Partnership and Good Food Oxfordshire that included representatives from food partnerships and local authorities from across the Southeast. This meeting allowed interested parties to scope the potential of Dynamic Procurement to support smaller local producers in public sector contracts, as well as create a regional network going beyond individual partnerships and local authority boundaries enabling resource pooling and more joined-up working.

In the same spirit, the Good Food East Sussex strategy unifies the approaches of food partnerships across East Sussex. The strategic area 'Supply Chains and Infrastructure' includes actions to "Engage with Plumpton College to hold forum around supply chains and infrastructure" and "Improve infrastructure for local producers to be able to manufacture and sell directly in East Sussex by taking forward recommendations in A Tale of Two Counties report". Wealden Food Partnership are leading on this key priority area, and they have built superb connections with local farms and farmers. They recently hosted a farmer's summit, attended by over 60 farmers. We are supportive of this work and signpost interested parties over WFP Coordinator, building the momentum of that work rather than replicating a project in silo.

On a smaller scale within the borough, LDFP has been working hard to support the community food sector to access more sustainable and reliable supply chains. Through the Emergency Food Network, LDFP have facilitated a number of local connections between community food initiatives and local businesses. Lovebrook Farm in Kingston Lewes and Louvain Organic Nursery in Peacehaven donate surplus produce to community food projects, and recently a local food wholesaler, Elite Fine Foods, donated 6,500 surplus vegan sausages. These kinds of connections show that we are providing spaces and networks for food to be redistributed rather than wasted, in turn we are building relationships with local food providers and businesses.

This ultra-local, community-based supply chain development is essential to guaranteeing the resilience of affordable food projects that make locally produced food accessible to all.

LDFP will be using '[Good Food East Sussex Month](#)' in October to highlight local food businesses that have sustainability-initiatives or prioritise & supply locally produced food. We have a £400 grant available which small independent businesses can apply for if they would like to take part in GFES month and put on an event which is for the community but could also generate business and new custom for them. Furthermore, we are encouraging any community group who applies for these small grants to be explicit about where they will procure the food for their event, with priority given to those projects who will source food locally or work with local businesses.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

One of LDFPs key areas within the Good Food East Sussex work is Food Procurement and Catering. Much of the conversation around procurement has centred on school food and catering contracts. Our coordinator is due to have a meeting with Andrew McKechnie in September 2023, who works in the Community Health NHS Foundation Trust on 'healthy schools' to discuss opportunities for collaboration. We have also met with the procurement manager within ESCC to talk about school catering contracts. Another area of development has been understanding the role of school governors in ensuring school food meets standards and new [Ofsted guidance on 'Food Cultures'](#) in school. We recently began working with an FY2 Doctor working in Public Health who is scoping out what the current guidance and training is for governors regarding school food.

In a recent Good Food East Sussex meeting our Coordinator brought up that the aim of engaging the ESCC Procurement and Catering team isn't based solely on changing or influencing school catering contracts but to continue conversations around what 'Good Food cultures' can mean for



schools, and to increase transparency and communications so that residents and parents feel included in decisions that impact school-aged children.

## **Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste**

### **Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency**

In 2019 Lewes District Council declared a climate emergency. The most recent Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy report, from November 2022 [can be found here](#). In his introduction to the report, Cllr Matthew Bird (Lead Cabinet Member for Sustainability in 2022), welcomed the partnership approach taken by Lewes District Emergency Food Network and “*the move towards more sustainable models of tackling food poverty*”. He noted that the fact that the EFN is still required is “*a sad reflection of the national social injustices we face.*” The report found that Lewes District Council’s total carbon emissions have reduced by 9.5% since 2018/2019 as a result of the strategy, on track to reach their target of reducing council carbon emissions by 50% by 2025.

The LDC Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy sets out how the District Council address the causes and impacts of climate change in order to meet the Climate Emergency Declaration made in 2019. The strategy includes a strand about Agriculture and Food, with a goal to work in partnership with others to:

*Educate and enable residents to access affordable, local and seasonal food through supporting opportunities for local production and distribution.*

The 2022 Climate Change and Sustainability report noted that:

*The Council works with the Lewes District Food Partnership (LDFP) and others to ensure accessibility to affordable food. This may be through the provision of space for community organisations in order to enable projects to go ahead, such as community larders and community fridges. Enabling and supporting local food markets where we can and engaging with landowners. The LDFP is bringing together communities, food businesses, local growers and producers, emergency food providers, food waste activists and other organisations from across the district at the October 2022 Lewes District Food Summit, in order to connect the dots and create better food systems for everyone. Council tenants have had active participation and encouragement in food growing through the ‘Not Costing the Earth’ project and the council has reviewed landholdings for potential food growing use. 2. Implement a district and Sussex wide food strategy The food partnerships within Sussex are working together along with SCDA and others to explore how we can make the local food system in East Sussex work for its people, boost the local economy, and protect and enhance the environment through a regional event in October 2022. 3. Enable and support local food growing using regenerative farming methods 29 The Council continues to promote more sustainable farming methods whenever there are conversations with landowners and farmers occurring. This is a crucial strand of how, Sussex wide, we can ensure local food businesses have the opportunity to thrive and tackle the climate and nature emergency at the same time. This action links to projects occurring within other action areas such as biodiversity.*

In order to promote community growing LDC [provides guidance for community growing on Housing Revenue Land](#) in partnership with Homes First and Not Costing The Earth, which notes:

*The importance of community food growing is recognised for its contribution to increased food security and helping communities lower their carbon footprint by producing locally grown food. Other benefits include increased health and wellbeing, giving residents access to a natural environment, and a healthy lifestyle, and creating a shared community space, that can increase the social capital of a neighbourhood or area. Growing schemes should aim to engage fully with the local community and the views of neighbours and residents need to be considered when designing a project. We have provided tips and advice on how to conduct community engagement and have made suggestions on connections with other groups and services within the community - schemes should be inclusive to all. A growing space can just be a simple area for flowers and wildlife which requires very little maintenance, or a space to grow food for or with local residents.*

In collaboration with Eastbourne Food Partnership, wrote an article to promote community gardens on HRA Land ([page 8 and 9](#)) which include:

[Landport Community Garden](#), which provides growing, cooking and social eating opportunities for anyone in the community, including open access vegetable gardening groups as well as specialist groups for people living with dementia, sessions for the local nursery 'Pippa's Group', where children are able to grow their own fruit and veg, and a Men's Shed.

[Peverells Community Garden](#), which was developed with the support of a small grant from LDFFP. Peverells offer a wide range of community gardening activities including kids sessions throughout the Summer holidays, community meals and regular volunteering days. In particular, the team focuses on increasing biodiversity through food growing and recently partnered with [Greenhavens](#) to deliver a Buglife session for children and young people to identify invertebrates living in the garden.

## **Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste**

Lewes District Council publishes a monthly Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Bulletin that is emailed to residents of Lewes District. [The July 2023 edition can be viewed here](#) and includes simple tips and guidance to make the most of food at home and to promote behaviour change. The bulletin links to the WRAP Love Food, Hate Waste campaign. LDC also offers every household a free kitchen caddy, a kerbside caddy and compostable caddy liners to promote the recycling of food waste. These can be collected from points across the district. More information about the [Lewes District food waste scheme can be viewed here](#).

Furthermore, in July 2023 Lewes District Council [began a trial of electric food waste collection vehicles](#). Under the pilot by Lewes District Council, refuse crews are collecting food waste using the electric vehicles on selected rounds. This first stage of the scheme is providing important insights on recharging requirements and waste tonnage that will inform the district-wide roll out of the scheme from September. Councillor Wendy Maples, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Wellbeing, said: *"Using electric vehicles to collect food waste - and then composting it - is an important step in our ambition of becoming carbon net zero and fully climate resilient in Lewes district by 2030. As a council we are committed to*

*making the fundamental changes needed to prevent climate change, and using ultra-low emission vehicles for food waste collections is a significant part of our plans."*

**Community Initiatives to promote sustainable food production include:**

[Grow, Cook, Eat and Compost sessions with Lewes FC](#), which develop skills for self sufficiency, sustainability and creativity. This series of free workshops showed people how to grow their own vegetables, reduce food waste and cook a variety of tasty meals with limited ingredients. The workshops were delivered in partnership with [Compost Club](#) and including the development of composting skills.

A community fridge at [Lewes Climate Hub](#) redistributes surplus food in the town centre. LCH have built strong relationships with three local food banks and many local businesses in order to effectively redistribute surplus food to anyone who can make use of it. As part of [Good Food East Sussex Month](#), they are also planning a week of events in October around 'Making The Most Of Our Food' – People are invited to come and celebrate local food and producers, explore ways to minimise food waste, make the most of produce on our doorstep and discuss what's needed to ensure that everyone in Lewes can get access to healthy, local food.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

LDFP hosted a series of 'Planet Friendly Plates' events in 2021 to raise awareness of sustainable food choices. Other LDFP activity around reducing food waste and sustainability include:

- [Havens Food Cooperative, which is a scheme to reduce waste, repurpose items and redistribute food on a daily basis.](#)
- [Wasting Sausages is the Worst – redistributing 6,500 sausages through the surplus food network.](#)
- [Seahaven Community Food, which produces over 100 meals a week from surplus food, which are available through their community supermarkets.](#)
- [Food Use Places. SCDA in Newhaven is part of a CAF funded project led by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. This has funded a compost tumbler and a number of small pilot projects to promote the use of surplus food.](#)

**FOR PANEL USE ONLY**

**Comments from the panel on your application:**

**Outcome of application:**

**Recommendations for onward progress:**

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