

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 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*:
Shropshire Good Food Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Jenny Rouquette, jenny@shropshiregoodfood.org , 07453810696
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Shropshire (includes Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils)
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:

Shropshire is a rural county, with just over half a million people in an area of 3,488km². The county has two local unitary authorities: Shropshire Council covers 91.7% of the land area and Telford and Wrekin Council covers the major conurbation as illustrated by the key statistics.

Local Authority	Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin
Population		
2021 Population	323,600	185,500
Land area (sq km)	3,487	290
Pop. Density (per sq km)	101	639
Population composition 2021		
Pop. Growth	5.7%	11.3%
Median age	↑ 48	39
Under 16	↓ 15.9%	↓ 19.9%
16-64	↓ 58.9%	↓ 62.5%
65+	↑ 25.3%	↑ 17.6%
Employment		
Econ. Active Employed	54.8%	56.1%
Gross weekly pay	£637.40	£606.60
Active enterprises 2021	13,650	6,620
<i>Source ONS Census 2021</i>		

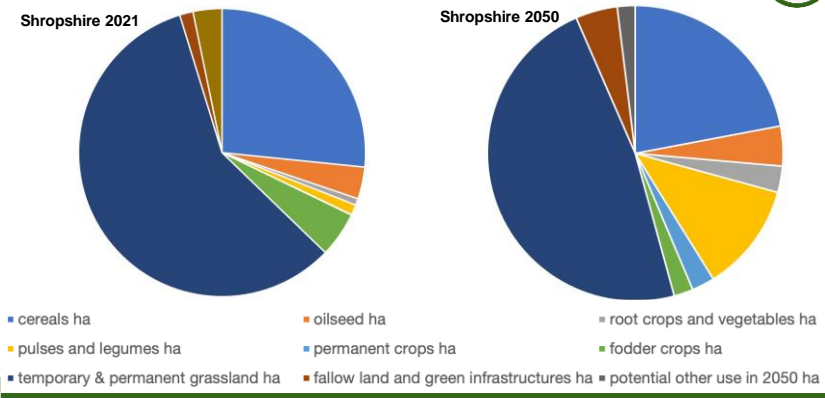


Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have large rural areas, small market towns and two significant urban areas. There is a rich food heritage and huge potential returns from investment in the local food economy.

In Shropshire 78% of the land is agricultural. A large area is upland and used for livestock farming, there is also significant arable and horticultural production, with both organic and conventional agricultural farming approaches. A quarter of the land area is covered by the Shropshire Hills AONB.

As part of our work on a creating a resilient and regenerative food and farming future we have looked at land use transition for an agro-ecological food system. In the diagram overleaf the 2021 figures for current land use are from DEFRA; the 2050 figures have been produced using the FFCC modelling from the national study they conducted on Farming for Change. The implications of this are explored in our work on supporting land-use transitions.

Land use transition for an agro-ecological food system



The county also faces challenges with food and energy poverty, as is the case in many rural areas. Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance provide a snapshot of the situation regarding food poverty:

- Food banks across the county are reporting an increase in referrals
- 81% of respondents to our survey felt that food poverty has increased in the last year
- Citizens Advice Shropshire estimate that 27,000 families in the county will have their food budgets reduced due to changes to the benefits system

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

ANSWER:

We are committed to an anti-racist, inclusive approach in everything we do and to promoting the voices of those who are disenfranchised.

The SGFP race, equity, diversity and inclusion [statement of commitment](#) has been developed over several months and was approved in June 2023 and is shared on our website.

We have delivered a Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion project which is focused on promoting inclusive engagement in the way we and our members work.

We have adopted a 'REDI in all policies' approach to ensure that diversity and inclusion are a part of every project and initiative we launch.

Key outputs of this work are:

-Social media, communications and training/support materials to emphasise the focus on anti-racism, equity and inclusion in the regional food system and promote the conversation.

-Use of these experiences as case studies/knowledge sharing experiences to support improved engagement across SGFP members and the Regional Cluster of Partnerships.

-The activity relating to the REDI funding has been a catalyst for conversations and discussions about equity, diversity and inclusion within SGFP and the partner organisations and is leading to practical changes to communications and governance.

Through the REDI work we are encouraging partners to support their teams to feel confident in being welcoming and inclusive for **everyone**, regardless of who they are, by talking to people, listening to feedback and responding to it. The resources within the toolkit have been very useful to support this approach.

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

[Shropshire Good Food Partnership \(SGFP\)](#) has been established to create a local food system which is good for people, place and planet. We bring people together from across the County representing all aspects of the food system, from growers to retailers, to those involved with food banks and food festivals, community organisations, academic institutions, and the local Councils.

Our aims are to:

- Build community, connecting people through food to each other and the land
- Ensure everyone has access to sufficient nutritious affordable food
- Create livelihood opportunities, forging a strong local food economy
- Enable environmental regeneration and a shift to net zero carbon in food and farming

We support the work of organisations across the county, catalyse new initiatives and collaborations, and enable joined-up, innovative thinking to improve access to good food and to reimagine farming as a partnership between people and nature.

Following an exploratory inception phase from March-August 2021, Shropshire Good Food Partnership was incorporated in November 2021 as a CIC by guarantee with a large membership. We have a small number of Directors and an Advisory Group. The roles and responsibilities of each are outlined:

Membership is made up of individuals and 120 organisations/businesses/institutions. Members must sign up to be part of our Good Food Movement which summarizes the core commitments that we share. Our values are presented through our Good Food

Charter, which presents key considerations for members to examine their own values and journey, and how we can support them.

The role of our members is to:

- Take action in line with the Good Food Charter (see 2B)
- Promote Shropshire Good Food Partnership in their networks
- Engage at AGM and open meetings to share ideas and experience
- Participate in Working Group activities relevant to their area of interest

The **Advisory Group** is made up of people from across the County representing different parts of the food system and who engage in one of these capacities:

- Leader of focus area (working groups)
- Expert (subject matter resource person)
- Councillor Good Food champion
- Institution partner representative

The Advisory Group meet quarterly with a mandate to:

- Provide strategic direction and input to partnership planning (Good Food Movement and focus areas)
- Provide technical advice, sharing expertise when and where appropriate.
- Champion Shropshire Good Food Partnership, facilitate links to resources, support funding proposal development, network and make connections to new people and places.

We have six focus areas, some have established Working Groups which meet regularly and deliver activities, others are informal:

- Sustainable Food Economy: Connects local producers and consumers
- Healthy Food for All: Tackles food poverty and access to quality food
- Wise land stewardship: Promotes agro-ecological approaches and nature-positive farming
- Grow Local: Supports growing initiatives getting more people producing & eating food locally
- Nature Connection: Enables opportunities to be in nature and engage in food production
- Reducing Food Waste: On a mission to halve food waste in Shropshire in 5 years

During 2022 we held three Full Partnership Meetings, two online brought together 30+ participants each and an in-person [food summit](#) in October with over 50 people. These provided valuable opportunities for collaborative engagement, sharing and networking and the co-creation of plans. In 2023 focus area meetings have taken place and a full partnership event with AGM is planned for November.

This platform has been created to enable food systems change, we hold a holistic, integrated perspective and provide the structure in which different organisations, business, institutions, and individuals can come together to work on the part that is most important to them.

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

SGFP developed a strategy at the end of 2021 which came out of our inception phase process. This is in the process of being updated, following a review by the Advisory Group (Sept 2023), the strategy will be available for presentation at our upcoming AGM (Nov 2023). We produce annual action plans which cover the following core partnership areas and objectives:

Governance, Management & Admin - An efficient and effective CIC

Partnership Coordination - A dynamic partnership with strong member engagement

Fund Raising - Secure resources to deliver on strategy & action plan

Communication - Create awareness and a local community around good food

Public participation - Build a good food movement

Lobbying / Policy engagement – Ensure a food system approach is integrated in County Councils policies and plans

External Collaboration - Engagement with national and regional organisations

Quarterly progress updates are produced on these as well as the focus area activities already outlined and shared ahead of Advisory Group meetings, during which any key issues are discussed.

Efforts have been made to engage the County Councils in development of a county Food Strategy and Action Plan. Although well received it has not yet been formally supported. We have instead engaged with existing policy and planning documents to see how a more strategic approach to food and farming could be taken forward. A session at our Food summit led to the submission of a report to Shropshire Council: *Getting Food and Farming on the Table: Response to the Shropshire Plan and Economic growth Strategy*. The report provides an overview of how food and farming are taken into consideration in the current Council strategies and where the opportunities lie to do more. Recommendations to the council integrate the wide partnership model and network that we have been cultivating. This is now leading to a series of productive meetings with the Economic Growth Team and opening engagement on the UKSFP and Rural funding and development of food system related actions and KPIs.

We have also provided policy response to specific opportunities e.g. the Shropshire Healthy Weight Consultation and follow up engagement with the Public health team on systemic responses to the challenge.

With Telford & Wrekin Council engagement was initially through the Borough Climate Change Partnership to which SGFP presented on food system challenges and opportunities. We are now leading a sub-group on food for the Borough Climate Partnership, have presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee and been invited to support on the new Local Plan development.

Our work on Right to Grow (see below) is leading to proposing processes and documents to both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Council to allow community groups and individuals to apply to cultivate and grow food on disused or neglected publicly owned land.

We see significant opportunity to engage at the parish and town council levels on strategic approaches to food. SGFP Coordinator initiated the development of the first local food strategy in Shropshire for the town of Bishop's Castle and created a local food policy council (comprised of community members, SGFP coordinator and the local council). During recent months we have been exploring how to use the Bishop's Castle Community Food Resilience Strategy & Action Plan as a model example to Town and Parish Councils across the county.

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

Councils are both very siloed and over-stretched and the challenge is to take a strategic joined up approach, although it is agreed that it makes sense, no-one 'owns' the food issue.

In Shropshire Council we have identified key allies amongst councillors and Council staff with whom we are starting to work closely. In Telford & Wrekin there has been significant progress with a key senior contact point and a growing team enabling a junior staff member to be assigned to engage with us.

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

SGFP started with the creation of a [Good Food Charter](#), our statement of intent, outlining the principles of good food and how to get involved and take positive action. We have used the Charter to build awareness and drive participation and accountability.

Our communication to inspire and engage the public is centred around the website and social media. Our reach continues to grow, in particular [Instagram](#) which has over 1,300 followers and lots of interaction and Facebook with 600+ followers. A monthly newsletter reaches over 200 people. We use all platforms to share everything we are instigating and to amplify the work of our members, including events, products, trainings, activities, and campaigns. A blog was started with a Fair Trade Fortnight series and we are continuing to develop this area of our website. We have also just set up a podcast in order to explore different ways of reaching a wider audience. We work with local newspapers and radio around our main events; providing press releases to Shropshire Star and doing live interviews on the radio.

In 2022 we tested out informing and inspiring the public through engaging at events. At the Shrewsbury Food Festival in June 22 with a footfall of thousands we brought 10+ members together, sharing everything from organic growing to the carbon footprint of our food choices, fair trade food to composting. We had stands and/or spoke at local community events, working closely with members to effectively share messages and reach a wider audience.

This year we have launched a range of initiatives to engage the public about Good Food including:

- The Shropshire Good Food Trail (June 24-July 9, 2023), this involved 56 venues who Grow, Make, Sell or Serve Good Food spread across the county. There were 10 events taking place over the period and 4,000 maps and 8,000 postcards were distributed, all promoting the principles of good food. The website provides a Directory of places as a legacy document and there is lots of enthusiasm for us to grow the event next year.
- Shropshire Love Nature Festival (July 17 – August 16, 2023), engaging people in nature connection activities and providing opportunities to be on farms and get involved in community growing spaces.
- Marches Real Food and Farming Conference (September 15-16, 2023), this has brought more than 200 people together for a packed and diverse programme focused on creating a regenerative and resilient food and farming system in the region. All sessions were recorded and we will be releasing materials as well as a new podcast episode in the coming weeks.

These events have reached a wide public audience as well as bringing together key stakeholders and we are currently focused on the next steps.

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

At the beginning of 2023 we launched the *Shropshire Good Food Movement*, this builds on from the Good Food Charter to empower individual level change and engagement with food. We are also seeking to reach new members through a broader movement approach.

We believe that fostering food citizenship is also about finding ways to support local level innovation to create a more resilient local food system. We secured funds for a Citizen's Good Food Challenge as a way to engage people in trying out ideas. A call for proposals was issued in October 2022 for grants up to £1k. This led to four awards covering a range of areas of action, totalling £3.75k:

- Shrewsbury Food Hub: Taste with no Waste Shropshire roadshow
- Street Allotment project: Right to Grow campaign
- Fordhall Farm: Celebrations, Good food and friendships
- Glynn's Garden: Greenhouse restoration

These are now concluding and have had a positive impact, however we only got proposals from existing core members rather than 'citizens' and new community groups. We realize that more support is needed in a process-based approach to enable this to happen and have submitted a proposal to Awards for All (10k) for a project called 'Let's Talk About Food', which would support community engagement to develop proposal ideas.

Inclusion is at the centre of our work in creating a good food movement. We were successful in securing REDI for change pilot funding and have worked with a Diversity and Inclusion Champion who is helping us to expand the partnership and individual members reach to people from different social and cultural backgrounds. This has ranged from supporting a community food initiative to find out about service users to access to growing space for a refugee community.

SGFP was instrumental in getting a motion on the Right to Food proposed and approved by Shropshire Council. This will make it easier for people to access un/underused Council land and to use it for community food initiatives. We are working closely with a key partner Street Allotment Project to support people to make the most of this opportunity.

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

The main challenge is how we use the Good Food Charter so that it is not just a one-off signing up but a basis for participation and a tool for accountability. We are developing an Engagement strategy to respond to this, identify opportunities and guide action. We see the Charter's value as the jumping off point for the Good Food Movement linking to existing members.

We have also been reviewing our working groups (6), looking at how they can have the most practical impact. Working groups drive the thematic work of the partnership and are the contact point for members with specific food system interests. Ensuring that these

groups are strong, active, responsive and inclusive is a part of our current optimisation review.

We have a working group on Nature Connection, which falls outside the SFP six areas, but probably fits best here. This is focussed on practical actions to inspire, enable and encourage a greater connection with nature for residents of Shropshire. We feel that this is important in engaging people to take action for a better food system and environment generally so is foundational to a good food movement. Activities have included:

- Coordination of Digitally connected nature project linking day care service users to outdoor growing opportunities.
- Grants provided to 3 initiatives: Dorrington Community Garden, Bronygarth Orchard Garden, Nancy Lowe - The Natural Gardener.
- Shropshire Loves Nature Festival – we were collaborators in 2022, taking over the organisation in 2023, supporting events across the county, connecting people to food and farming green places in particular.

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

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

This work has been led by our member [Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance \(SFPA\)](#) that grew out of the Food Power Initiative. They have been working at the frontline of the response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis, closely coordinating with Shropshire Council. The SFPA's work falls under three key areas: Prevention; Changing the policy landscape; Crisis support.

Prevention: A huge amount of work has taken place responding to the cost-of-living crisis and on wider sign-posting. SFPA developed cash-first referral leaflets with the Independent Food Aid Network and has worked with Shropshire Council to distribute discretionary funds in a cash-first way.

SFPA has worked closely with Shropshire Council's Public Health team and the Trussell Trust's area manager to increase local uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme.

The SFPA has continued to update and maintain the Shropshire Larder, a website which brings together information which helps low-income households to maximise their incomes. A recent focus has been on updating the mental health and debt pages. There were nearly 2,500 unique site visitors in the past year.

SFPA works to tackle stigma and increase understanding of the implications of poverty

Changing the policy landscape: This has involved embedding food insecurity into NHS and council policy, making sure that food poverty is on the agenda of the County's decision makers. Also building awareness of key issues both with the public and among key figures across the county. Centring mental health and wellbeing as a key part of the food insecurity conversation

Crisis Support: SFPA provides infrastructure support to food banks

SGFP member organisations at the frontline of food poverty have been doing a wide range of initiatives, these are a few examples:

- **Shrewsbury Food Hub** support more than 56 groups in providing food/meals/welcome for their community through their food redistribution work and Souper Sonic project turning surplus veg into soup.
- **OsNosh** has been a member of SGFP from the start and have a unique approach to building community through food centred around their 'give as you feel' café and education initiatives for cooking great food on a tight budget.
- **Hands Together Ludlow** has got a new base and are build their capacity for food provision in the south of the county.

SGFP role has been to amplify this work through communication across the partnership and facilitating wider discussion; this was a key theme during our Food Summit in October 2022.

The Healthy Food for All Working Group brings together all those involved in tackling food poverty. In order to take this work forward beyond the mandate of SFPA we have been focused on developing a Partnership proposal to the Community Fund. This project will enable grassroots responses to the current challenges faced by a growing number of people across Shropshire in accessing sufficient, affordable, nutritious food. Our goal is to enable more people to eat nutritious seasonal local food, specifically those on the lowest incomes, to reduce health inequalities and the impact of diet related ill health. The design process prioritised these outcomes:

- Effective coordination across the county, creates a network for shared learning, peer support, collaboration and collective voice.
- Local organisations increase accessibility of healthy, nutritious food and build cooking skills
- Greater engagement in local food growing, increases availability of seasonal produce and develops community food resilience

The proposal is based on 4 core partners and the 20+ local food banks and includes setting up a mentor network as well as direct funding to partners and for a coordination role. This has been a valuable opportunity to plan how we can work together and has highlighted the existing connectivity and the potential to maximize this and optimize shared learning. We are currently amending the proposal based on donor feedback to have more specificity on outcomes and impact.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

As outlined above, our focus is on how to enable more people to eat nutritious seasonal local food, specifically those on the lowest incomes, to reduce health inequalities and the impact of diet related ill health.

Shropshire County has been conducting a Healthy Weight consultation to which we have been able to bring recommendations for action on promoting healthy eating and addressing diet-related ill-health. The resulting Healthier weight strategy takes a more

holistic approach to the issue of weight. Ongoing communication with the Public Health Team has involved input on the Action Plan and we have offered to organise a workshop on their Healthy Environment theme.

We have amplified and supported the work of key organisations working to address the cost-of-living crisis, including the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, the Shrewsbury Food Hub, food banks, the Shaping Places project through Shropshire Council.

On a practical level we have been linking growers with food banks and food hubs to get more local seasonal produce to vulnerable people. However last winter food surplus groups were seeing a drop in supply as demand increased and there is still a huge amount to do to get healthy nutritious food to people on low incomes. We have promoted gleaning but really need a dedicated resource to coordinate this across the county.

Through our Grow Local Focus area we are seeking to get more people involved in growing and eating healthy nutritious food. Our work on Right to Grow, led to Shropshire Council approving this motion in September 2022 to allow community groups and individuals to apply to cultivate and grow food on disused or neglected publicly owned land. We are supporting the processes to support uptake, working closely with the Street Allotment project who take over green space, get people growing and give the produce away. We have secured resources for them to get an e-bike, shredder and promotional materials to build their capacity and extend their reach.

Through a 'Shropshire rural seed savers' initiative we are working with the Gaia Foundation's Seed Sovereignty group to support training needs and upskilling. This supports local level food security with the aims of supporting members to set up their own seed libraries. The Bishop's Castle Community Seed Bank is being used as a model.

We established a project to support community gardens and orchards in Telford & Wrekin. With a part-time grow local coordinator we have been able to: Identify and map existing, or planned projects; support local food growing champions and promote community food resilience.

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

During the cost-of-living crisis a lot of organisations tackling food poverty have been really over stretched and it has been a struggle to develop more collaborative joined up approaches.

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

We are engaging with the local Councils to see how their economic strategies can provide a more enabling environment for local food and farming businesses to thrive. The Shropshire Economic Strategy is limited in reference to food and farming, yet there are plenty of opportunities with the core areas of i) Supporting local businesses; ii) Strategic locations and iii) Employment and Skills. We are currently looking at developing a proposal to access locally allocated UKSPF to explore what is possible.

We were successful in securing funding for our Food Economy initiative, and this has initially been pursued through the setting up of a [Shropshire Good Food Trail](#). This took place for the first time over 2 weeks in the summer, helping people discover businesses and organisations across the county that GROW, MAKE, SELL and SERVE amazing food and drink that is good for people, the planet and the local economy. It provided a great opportunity to showcase the range and richness of Shropshire's sustainable producers and to highlight smaller-scale, more regenerative farmers and artisan producers and the shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants that support them. The Food Trail was celebratory whilst raising awareness of how food is produced and the power of our everyday food choices in creating a shift to more climate and nature-friendly food & farming.

In Telford & Wrekin we have a Coordinator for the Food Economy who has put together case studies of 12 local food businesses to document climate change related strategies and share good practice. We have identified potential for collaboration and future support.

Sessions were put together for MRFFC to showcase what is going on in this area e.g. Market Linkage; Shorter and closer supply chains and a masterclass by Open Food Network. This has opened dialogue on how to support this area further at a bioregional level.

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

Our focus area on Local food Economy has primarily been about building links between local producers and consumers.

Just as we were getting established we were able to secure funds from Shropshire Council Covid recovery support for a project on Building the Local Food Economy (Sept 2021 – March 2022). The aim was to facilitate an increase in direct sales for Shropshire food enterprises and for consumers to access more local, high-quality food.

Five projects took place across Shropshire to support local food marketing. These ranged from support to the expansion of Treflach Farmers market to creating a hyper-localized food network [Oswestry 5 mile food](#), bringing producers, retailers and consumers together to build pride in and commitment to the local food economy. Marches Grow Local worked with producers on communications, from webpage set up and search engine optimization to developing tailored guidelines for social media use. Local to Ludlow looked at how to use digital platforms to expand access to good food beyond southern Shropshire and in

Market Drayton we ensured that local producers benefit from the newly created e-commerce platform and Buttercross market, as well as improving their social media skills.

Facilitating learning and knowledge sharing was a core part of the initiative with both online and in person sessions bringing the local marketing delivery partners together to exchange experience and insight. There were also sessions on market gardening and setting up community-supported agriculture schemes and on community food businesses along the food chain.

We have sought to get more local food on local supermarket shelves. Initial scoping led to a focus on the Mid-Counties Cooperative as the best business to work and we identified local food producers and processors who were keen to scale up and engage with supermarkets. SGFP hosted a series of supplier meetings for these local businesses to engage with the Mid-counties Co-operative buying team to supply a local 'Best of Countries' range. They were all ready to move forward with 10 companies across fresh meat, cheese, bakery, and ambient categories when the company imposed 'a buying freeze' and a key contact point moved on. So far only two companies have been onboarded. We are looking at other ways to move forward on this area.

In 2023 we have helped instigate a pilot initiative which is working with Local 2 Ludlow and the Farmers market there and the Slow Food Birmingham Jewellery Quarter Food Hub. Producers are registering on Open Food Network and their produce is being ordered by people in Birmingham, it is brought along to the regular market day and picked up by an e-van to be distribute along with other produce in the city. This is a pilot to demonstrate how the model can work and we plan to evolve it into more pick-up and distribution points across the county.

We use our online presence to amplify the reach of the sustainable food producers who are our members so that they can reach a wider audience and increase their sales.

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

Keeping a map up to date with producers and their information is a challenge.

The idea of setting up a county-wide Shropshire Good Food marketing hub keeps coming up and yet most producers want a hyper local market. We would need a champion to lead this and the case for a viable enterprise is not clear. Feels like a revolving conversation that is both opportunity and challenge!

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

In 2021-22 we approached both councils on a sustainable food procurement policy as part of a wider county food strategy and got to understand their different approaches, the opportunities and challenges. The most tangible output was the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System Green Plan (2022-2025) consideration of food and nutrition in terms of reducing the carbon footprint of their supply chain.

Following the national initiative by DPUK promoting dynamic procurement we have collaborated with other sustainable food partnerships to explore ideas. SGFP has played an active role in supporting the feasibility study on a Marches Dynamic Purchasing System, getting engagement from both local Councils and participating in internal and external review discussions. This resulted in the NICRE (National Innovation Centre Rural Enterprise) Report: Bringing the Marches Dynamic Food Procurement System to life. Given the cautious approach advised by the consultants, we are currently exploring how greater connectivity with local producers can be evolved within existing mechanisms locally.

SGFPP responded to the government consultation on catering and procurement policy.

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

We link up our members so that connections can be made between producers and retailers and restaurants so that short food supply chains and community food webs are supported.

The legacy of the Good Food trail is in moving from a time-bound event to facilitating the establishment of long-term relationships for both public and private sector. We have been inputting to the Shropshire Hills AONB new Tourism strategy and getting agri-tourism onto the agenda, improving collaborations from farm to fork and showcasing this for both local people and visitors.

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

The issue of quality food in schools keeps coming up, and how SGFP can engage with schools/academies and the council in procurement discussions. This is an essential area of work, but it is difficult to break into. Our coordinators in Telford and Wrekin area are working with Hollinswood School and their catering and gardening teams to reinvigorate the local procurement and healthy meals discussion.

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

This continues to be a core area for us enabled by our Cooperative Foundation Carbon Innovation Fund grant which is focused on innovation, learning and research to create a climate-friendly local food system. We are supporting producers to scale up the use of agro-ecological farming practices and we are building the demand for this climate and nature friendly food.

We have just held a [Marches Real Food & Farming Conference](#) on 15th & 16th September in South Shropshire. The conference brought together people engaged across the food system to explore 'Our Local Food Future'. More than 200 people joined over the two days, including food producers, farmers, chefs, researchers, policy makers and citizens, sharing ideas and experiences on how to create a resilient and regenerative future for food and farming in the Marches.

The packed [programme](#) included panel discussions, workshops, 'In conversation' sessions and practical activities. We looked at economics, from making regenerative agriculture pay, to understanding new opportunities with blended finance and through a more localised food economy. We explored environmental issues, how we can farm with nature, build soil fertility and manage nutrients, water and livestock sustainably, adapt to climate change and reduce inputs and emissions. We debated how a resilient food system can support health and wellbeing, looking at the issue of food quality and the connection between soil, plant, animal and human health.

At the heart of the conference we had a collaboration hub and it culminated in a People's Assembly. Inputs are being used to shape our vision for the local food future, how we can work together to achieve it and what role a bioregional food and farming network can play to support this. The conference has provided many opportunities for new collaborations and we are excited to take forward the ideas, to use the recordings to stimulate further discussion and to showcase the role food partnerships can play.

Over the past 18 months we have carried out a wide range of activities. We managed a call for proposals for local research awarding 3 grants for:

- Carbon accounting - a collaborative learning initiative - Clee View Farmers Group
- Understanding sustainable value of regenerative livestock farming and on-farm community engagement - a case study of Fordhall Farm – Harper Adams University
- Test the Nitrogen Usage Efficiency on Alternative organic-based fertiliser, domestically produced in Shropshire from upcycling local poultry litter - LOHAS Recycling

We held a learning visit to an agroforestry farm and are working with farmers on ideas for collaborative innovation. We are working with GRFFN to engage local farmers in measuring nutrient density and exploring how to improve soil health and food quality and developing a proposal with Innovative Farmers to develop this further.

We have set up a Shropshire Rural Seed bank network with seed stewards from across the County trained to save seed and to run their own rural seed bank in their community.

Training support was provided by the Gaia Foundation Northern Seed Savers group with an in-person session in May 2023 and follow-up support.

Funding has also been made available to local farmer groups, including supporting interim facilitation of North Shropshire Farmers Group.

We have reviewed the Shropshire Climate Action Plan which included little on food and farming, and have made recommendations accordingly. We are collaborating closely with Zero Carbon Shropshire (co-chairing the Land & Biodiversity Group) and sharing outreach and communication opportunities with South Shropshire Climate Action.

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

We have a food waste working group which has a vision that food is valued and not wasted. The focus is on these 4 interconnected areas: i) Food valued; ii) Waste Avoided; iii) Surplus saved; iv) Closing the Loop.

The group coordinates action with the councils and our members who are collecting food waste and redistributing it through food banks and food shares and community meals. There is a focus on awareness raising and national events such as WRAP Food Waste Action week at used to mobilize local voices on the issue.

We are currently working with Shropshire Council on their new food waste minimisation strategy. A workshop was convened in May 2023 for partnership members to input, recommendations have been presented and we are awaiting next steps.

We worked closely with Harper Adams University (HAU) to submit a funding bid on Food Waste Research: ESRC call on Place-based approaches to sustainable living 2023 - Reducing Foodprint: Innovative Place-Based Approaches to Food Waste Prevention in Shropshire. We introduced the idea of Community food labs to reduce food waste and have got commitments from people across the county to be involved.

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

The conference has given us a way forward to work with more conventional farmers, with a great deal of positive feedback on the breadth of subjects covered, the quality of presenters, the organisation of the conference, the representation of women in farming, and the range of farmers who attended.

FOR PANEL USE ONLY

Comments from the panel on your application:
Outcome of application:
Recommendations for onward progress: