

## Rural Retailers and Community Enterprises Grant Scheme



The scheme is managed and funded by Hampshire County Council.

It has been set up to support and bolster local rural retailers and community enterprises by providing financial support to develop these services which are offered in rural areas.

We are keen to support retailers to grow, increase their productivity by enhancing existing services and providing new ones. The grants will also aim to encourage development of both new and existing community enterprises, particularly ideas that are innovative, have a retailing element and show potential for economic and social gains. We are also keen to support the introduction of local products and locally produced food and drink into rural retailing outlets. We would particularly like to encourage projects that are looking to introduce or expand their range by collaborating with both Hampshire Fare (a not for profit membership organisation dedicated to support local producers and businesses raise awareness of Hampshire food and drink [www.hampshirefare.co.uk](http://www.hampshirefare.co.uk)) and other local businesses and producers.

### When to apply

Applications are accepted at any time, but once you submit your application, you must be ready to start work within 4 months and complete your project within 12 months of receiving a grant offer. Before submitting the full application, please complete a Project Enquiry Form (email: [emily.preston@hants.gov.uk](mailto:emily.preston@hants.gov.uk)) so that we can feedback on your eligibility before applying.

### Grant Criteria and Eligibility

We can provide grants of between £1,500 and £20,000. Eligible businesses/enterprises must contribute a minimum of 50% of total eligible costs. Therefore the total minimum project cost would be £3,000 (achieving a grant of £1,500). For commercial businesses, the match funding cannot be sourced from any other grant making authority. For community enterprises, the match funding can be sourced from other grants.

### Who can apply?

Applications are competitive and therefore projects must be able to demonstrate how they will grow their business and provide value for money. They must also show how they will enhance the local community. A short 3 year business plan must be included within the application. We can only fund businesses within a population area/village of less than 5,000 residents and applicants must prove that they are not in direct competition with another business in the same village.

The scheme is available to any retailing business/enterprise selling any of the following:- food/drink; essential fresh produce; locally sourced food (many village shops in Hampshire selling local produce are members of Hampshire Fare and applicants are encouraged to consider becoming members). We may consider supporting craft industries if applicants can demonstrate how they would impact positively on other local food retailing businesses. Below is an example of eligible businesses/enterprises:-

- Retailing businesses or community buildings comprising post offices
- Village shops
- Village markets
- Butchers
- Bakeries
- Farm shops
- Cafes and tea rooms
- Newsagents
- Mobile facilities
- Pubs
- Community owned woodlands (if comprising a retail element such as a café)
- Pop up shops/cafes



We aim to encourage innovative schemes designed to boost community services and retailers that can develop profitable businesses that will impact positively on the local area, community and economy. We will also encourage collaboration between businesses that will create joint benefits.

The assessment of applications will give consideration to the impact of a grant upon other retailers offering similar services in the vicinity. Projects may not be supported that provide direct competition for an existing business, individual circumstances will be considered when appraising projects. Projects will also need to demonstrate their long-term viability and ensure that environmental issues have been considered.

### **Eligible activities**

Below is a list of the sorts of projects we could fund, this list is not exclusive. To find out if your idea is eligible, please complete our Project Enquiry Form for feedback on your project.

- Introducing/increasing the range of locally produced high quality foods
- Improvements to sales area – e.g food counters, shelving, lighting and heating etc
- Internal modernisation – e.g flooring, internal fit-out, energy saving devices etc
- External appearance – e.g signage, shop front improvements, window blinds etc
- Development of parking facilities – e.g creating additional parking or improvements to layout of existing parking
- Development of local delivery services
- Security – e.g CCTV, alarms etc
- Developing websites and advertising (to support the eligible retail activity)
- Upgrade of equipment to improve efficiency of business – e.g improved energy efficiency, stock control e.g. epos systems.

- Retail advice and guidance, marketing and promotion. We particularly encourage applicants in need of improving the efficiency of their businesses (that have not already done so), to attain independence advice on how to develop their business models. We can pay for reports/business plans as a stage one of your application. We would then encourage you to apply again for a grant to implement the recommendations made. We would need a copy of the report and recommendations to accompany your grant application.
- Projects supporting creative locations for essential services, such as shops within pubs, village halls, churches or parish halls etc.
- Setting up a community enterprise that will develop rural retail services.
- Collaborative projects with local producers and other local retailers

### **Non Eligible Activities**

The scheme will not fund:-

- Like for like replacement equipment or any general maintenance. We will only fund items that will add new value to the business/enterprise.
- Running costs e.g staff costs, purchase of stock or perishable items
- Standard computer equipment
- We cannot provide funding retrospectively, so you must apply for a grant and receive an offer from us before starting any work or making any purchases.
- We cannot provide loans
- We cannot fund businesses within population areas of more than 5,000 residents. Priority will be given to smaller settlements with limited services.
- We cannot fund non-independent commercial organisations (with more than one outlet)

### **Application Process**

- We must receive your application no less than 8 weeks prior to your expected project start date. Do not submit an application unless you are ready to start within 4 months.
- Once you receive a grant offer, you must complete your project and all purchases within 12 months and send in all information to us required to claim the grant.
- For commercial businesses, once you receive a grant offer, we can fund 50% of the grant upfront. You can then claim the final payment once the project is complete.
- For community enterprises, once you receive a grant offer, we can fund 100% of the grant upfront. Any monies unspent must be returned upon project completion.
- Please send in a completed Project Enquiry Form to express your interest. We will then send you a link to the full application.

Further information or any questions: [emily.preston@hants.gov.uk](mailto:emily.preston@hants.gov.uk)

Project enquiry forms are available from: [emily.preston@hants.gov.uk](mailto:emily.preston@hants.gov.uk) or [Jennie.pell@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Jennie.pell@hants.gov.uk)

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