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**£900,000 allocated for projects that support communities and economic growth in the Chichester District**

More than £900,000 of grant funding has been allocated to businesses and community groups across the Chichester District between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 for projects that support economic growth, community infrastructure, people and skills.

Following a bid to the Government in 2022, Chichester District Council secured a total of £1.7 million of UK Shared Prosperity (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to be used by 31 March 2025. This money has funded around 70 grant-funded projects during 2024-2025 and supported a number of additional council projects and schemes.

Money from the UKSPF has been made available to help encourage economic growth and improve quality of life through funding projects that invest in communities and place, local businesses, and people and skills. The REPF is intended for projects that assist with supporting businesses and community infrastructure to address challenges faced by rural areas.

“It’s fantastic to see the amazing variety of projects that we have been able to support with this funding, from small charities to growing businesses and community organisations,” says Councillor John Cross, Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Place at Chichester District Council.

“We’ve used money from these schemes to help boost the local economy and improve quality of life for everyone in our district. During the first round of the funding, 23 projects were approved in our area, all of which were successfully completed by April last year.

“Many of these projects have already made a huge difference to our businesses and community groups, helping them to expand their customer offer and allowing them more flexibility. Some of the businesses have also been able to keep jobs in our district — and increase staff posts — which will support our local economy and ensure that our communities continue to thrive.

“I’m delighted to say that this second round of funding, which covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, resulted in an allocation of £438,500 of UKSPF money and £338,854 of REPF money to some very exciting projects.”

Among the recently completed UKSPF projects, is an initiative that provides skills and employment support for local people. **The Selsey Community Forum** was awarded a grant to provide 1-2-1 support for people of all ages and situations, with a view to helping them find voluntary work or paid employment. The service includes help with CV writing, interview practice and signposting to available courses.

Another project is helping people to learn about an important part of the area’s local history. Funding was issued to the **Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group** to produce a film that recounts the fascinating but ill-fated story of the Selsey Tramway for inclusion in an exhibition on the same topic at The Novium Museum in Chichester — [**www.thenovium.org.uk/selseytramway**](http://www.thenovium.org.uk/selseytramway)**.**

Two businesses successfully bid for grants to help install renewable energy features with the aim of reducing their environmental impact and energy costs. **Berries on Tap** in Sidlesham, which provideslocally grown produce and locally produced goods, installed a solar panel to their innovative customer vending machine, which is also helping them to grow the retail side of their business.

Kathryn Evans from Berries on Tap says: “This funding has helped in so many ways. Installing the new solar panels highlights our farm principle of sustainability, while helping towards the cost of electricity. We have also seen this inspire other businesses around us to install their own panels. We felt well supported by the council when we needed guidance and help with our application, and we’re thrilled with the outcome of the project.”

**Shore Watersports** in East Wittering installed solar panels to their warehouse and purchased a battery to store the energy generated — since the installation, they are 73% self-powered, lowering their environmental impact. Plus, the battery has ensured that they can continue operations if the mains power supply is interrupted.

UKSPF money was also used to part-fund a project that enabled **Chichester Racquets and Fitness Club** to upgrade all of the existing flood lights to LEDs on the Chichester tennis and paddle courts. This has meant that more people can benefit from these facilities.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) has supported a variety of different businesses, including enabling them to purchase new equipment that has improved efficiency and increased output. One example is **Axiom Product Development** in Runcton, which has used funding to develop their business through the purchase of a large-scale 3D printer. This has increased capacity and resulted in a new job role.

**Legends Presents** in Loxwood also received a REPF grant to support their annual jousting festival through the installation of a new arena and viewing area, and a coffee shack. Following a very successful 2024 with great attendance, the organisation is intending to employ more people and for longer in 2025.

Maurice Bacon from Legend Presents says: “We are always working to make the festival one of the best events in district. Prior to this funding, we would hire in people to run a café, but now we can employ a local business to operate the cafe. We also employed locally for building seating. Funds like these schemes are a lifeline, and it is really heartening to see the support from the district council and government in turn.”

In addition to the funding that has been granted to businesses, community groups and organisations, the council has also been directly delivering a number of its own projects. These include introducing a brand-new skatepark event in Chichester; delivering the popular Chichester Summer Street Party and Cross Market and More events; carrying out public realm improvements in parts of the city; and enabling the Culture Spark initiative to organise a special family event to tie in with The Novium

Museum’s popular dinosaur exhibition.

Cllr Cross adds: “It’s wonderful to look back at all of the many projects that have been completed or are coming to fruition thanks to this funding, the result of which has enhanced our support for communities and businesses right across the district.”

**For further information, please contact Terri Foster, Senior Communications Officer at Chichester District Council on 01243 534679**

**Notes to editors:**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

For more information, visit: [**www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus)

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