

UKSPF News Items and Case Studies 2023 - 2026

News: Shropshire Council launches a £150,000 fund to support community projects

27th September 2023

Shropshire Council has today announced an £150,000 fund to make it easier for people in the county to improve their local area.

In partnership with Spacehive, the community fundraising platform, the Crowdfund Shropshire programme will enable local residents across the county to exclusively access funding for community improvement initiatives.

The crowdfunding nature of this programme, in collaboration with council funding, maximises the amount campaigners can raise in order to deliver transformational community projects that matter to them.



Shropshire's Shared Prosperity Community Fund has been made possible due to funding under the Communities and Place theme of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund managed by Shropshire Council.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the Government's levelling up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The 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.

Shropshire Council and Spacehive are keen to hear from Shropshire residents who have an innovative idea to improve their local area and encourage them to get involved. No fundraising experience is necessary; 65% of Spacehive creators are creating a community project for the first time. Spacehive assists project creators with online workshops, one-to-one support and resources, providing advice on everything from project costs to campaign promotion.

The Crowdfund Shropshire launch event is on Wednesday 11 October 2023 at Wem Town Hall, with tea and coffee on arrival for a 2pm start (online attendance is also offered on booking). Shropshire VCS Assembly, Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership and Shropshire Council are encouraging individuals and community groups to come along and find out more.

To register, people can visit this link : [I'd like to book for the Crowdfund Launch Event](#)

All project ideas should be launched on the Spacehive platform and pitched to the available funds by the end of December 2023 for year 1 funding. The programme will extend into 2024.

For the full story click [HERE](#)

News: UK Shared Prosperity Fund empowers Shropshire communities

4th October 2023

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is set to make a significant impact in Shropshire by providing crucial support for improving numeracy and digital skills, as well as supporting individuals back to employment or to start their employment journey.



Earlier this year, Shropshire Council called for applications for the Government-allocated fund under three priorities: People and Skills, Communities and Place, and Supporting Local Business.

Under the banner of People and Skills, £1.6m was allocated. Organisations were encouraged to apply to fund projects that would support economically inactive individuals, and/or provide access to essential digital skills.

Additionally, the 'Multiply' initiative aimed to enhance numeracy skills in the workplace, in daily life, and at home.

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:-

"We were thrilled to receive 10 outstanding applications.

"These applications underwent a rigorous evaluation process, and we're delighted to announce that we have successfully allocated all the funding available in this first round, and have full confidence in the ability of our selected applicants to deliver the required outcomes. These projects hold immense promise and are poised to deliver sustainable benefits to individuals and communities across Shropshire."

Among the successful applicants was The School of Coding which will offer 'Digital Shropshire', a project that will deliver training in skill areas which there is currently a shortage in the county including skills for employability and digital marketing.

Manny Athwal, Project Leader, said:-

"We are planning delivery hubs and course centres in north, central and south Shropshire, where the learners will be able to attend classes. We plan to offer training in everything from basic IT skills to web development, and then will help and support individuals to find jobs."

Another noteworthy beneficiary is the Shropshire Sports Collective.

Calvin Lord-Latham, Education & Employability Manager, Shrewsbury Town FC Foundation, said:-

"We recognise that sports and physical activity have the potential to inspire, motivate, and empower individuals. It can cultivate essential skills, help them to unlock their potential, and pursue meaningful employment opportunities.

"By utilising sport and physical activity as a catalyst, we will create tailored programmes that address the specific needs of each community, fostering a supportive environment where individuals can improve their basic skills, enhance their employment prospects and achieve sustainable outcomes."

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund initiatives in Shropshire reflect the dynamic approach the council is taking to fostering skill enhancement and employment opportunities. One of the key focuses of these projects is working with local people to improve their employment chances.

There will be a further call for projects against People and Skills priority for delivery in 2024/25, but what these will be is still under development and will be announced later this year.

News: Have you got a community project which needs funding?

19th October 2023

Shropshire Council recently launched a £150,000 fund to make it easier for people in the county to improve their local area. This was made possible through the Community and Place strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Named Crowdfund Shropshire, the programme, which is being run in partnership with the community fundraising platform, Spacehive, enables local residents across the county to exclusively access funding for community improvement initiatives.

The crowdfunding nature of this programme, in collaboration with council funding, maximises the amount campaigners can raise in order to deliver transformational community projects that matter to them.

Those who have a project ready to go are encouraged to launch them on the Spacehive platform and pitch to the available funds, but the council, working with Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership and Spacehive, are offering further support to those who have an idea, but aren't sure how to proceed.

No fundraising experience is necessary: 65% of Spacehive creators are creating a community project for the first time. Spacehive assists project creators with online workshops, one-to-one support and resources, providing advice on everything from project costs to campaign promotion.

There will also be a number of face-to-face workshops next month led by Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership's voluntary and community sector support team, and everyone is welcome.

These include:

- Tuesday 7 November at 9.30am at The Roy Fletcher Centre in Shrewsbury.
- Monday 13 November at 9.30am at Ludlow Women's Centre.
- Tuesday 21 November at 9.30am at Ellesmere Town Hall.

This is the first funding round, and it will remain open until Wednesday 29 November 2023.



For more information, people can visit Crowdfund Shropshire here: [Crowdfund Shropshire – About \(spacehive.com\)](https://spacehive.com)

Or contact:

partner@spacehive.com or crowdfund@shropshire.gov.uk

To read about how effectively business and the local community can work together read our latest blog: [Why bringing together businesses and the local community is good news for everyone](#)

To find out more about the UK Shared Prosperity

Fund see: <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/relocating-and-investing/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/>

News: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund supports the Chamber's 'Business Growth Through Upskilling' programme

31st October 2023

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is supporting the Chamber's 'Business Growth Through Upskilling' programme, which will see new initiatives launched in various locations including Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth, and Ludlow.

The aim of the project is to 'level up' the availability of upskilling and reskilling opportunities, making them convenient and accessible to businesses in all corners of the county.

Fully-funded leadership up to the value of £4,500 will be offered, alongside coaching and mentoring, with delegates entitled to three hours of one-to-one coaching. Shorter, separate upskilling courses will also be on offer as part of the programme.

A total of 100 places are being made available on a first come, first served basis – with a maximum of two per company.

Ruth Ross (*pictured right*), Shropshire Chamber chief executive, said: "This funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help us expand the support we are able to offer to local businesses in Shropshire.

"It is a bold initiative which will take training opportunities to the wonderful market towns located across the county – we're really excited about it.

"The Chamber is actively working with partners and stakeholders to ensure that businesses can access as many opportunities as possible, and will be publishing more details of the programmes very soon."



She added: "These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to supporting economic growth and prosperity in Shropshire, and we not only look forward to commencing our project but also supporting businesses to engage with other programmes."

Shropshire Council secured a £12.4 million share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund earlier this year – a Government-allocated fund to be managed by local authorities in partnership with local stakeholders and aimed at reducing inequalities between communities.

Ruth said: "Our programme will play a key role in upskilling and reskilling existing managers and employees across Shropshire, providing the knowledge and skills to improve productivity and create employment opportunities.

"Working alongside other programme delivery partners, the Chamber will play a key role in helping businesses to navigate the funding and programmes on offer through the UKSPF fund."

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.

The 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 about the Chamber's Business Growth through Upskilling Programme contact projects@shropshire-chamber.co.uk or call the Chamber's business support team on 01952 208200.
- For more information about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, visit <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/relocating-and-investing/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/> ; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus> or email: ukspf@shropshire.gov.uk

News: School of Coding & AI Launches 'Digital Shropshire' with UK Shared Prosperity Funding

14th November 2023

School of Coding & AI, the UK's largest coding and computer science educator for children and adults, has been successful in a bid for funds from Shropshire Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund

It's Project 'Digital Shropshire' is looking to support over 500 Shropshire residents over the next two years in Digital and Communication Skills for Life.

Digital Shropshire is designed to provide every individual over 16 living in Shropshire with the chance to enhance their digital skills. Whether this is to learn how to get safely online, get ready for employment, general upskilling, or needing help with digital inclusion and accessing healthcare and other essential services online.



The courses will cover a broad spectrum, including essential digital skills and communication skills for life.

The aim of the courses is to ensure Shropshire residents are well-equipped to tackle the demands of accessing the digital world we live in, but also today's job market.

Clare Norton, Operations Manager of SoC, said: "We will provide courses that upskill our Shropshire residents, whether this is in basic digital skills, or getting online safely, or more advanced techniques such as improving your CV and presenting skills to take your next step on your career path. Initially we will have two courses available: Essential Digital DSkills & Communication and Life Skills. The courses are available to anyone over 16 and living in the Shropshire Council area – it's rare to find a project such as this where funded courses are available to anyone, even if they are in education, employment or training.

Our courses will run on a weekly basis in market towns throughout the County and if you book both Digital Skills and Communication and Life Skills courses we will include a £25 gift voucher for each of our participants on completion of course 2!

We cannot wait to hear about the outcomes from our participants after joining us for these insightful and relevant full day courses.”

We will deliver the courses starting with three key locations throughout Shropshire, beginning November 6th, 2023 and running through until Christmas in the towns of Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton. Participants can look forward to engaging in our courses, with the flexibility for extended learning and the prestigious recognition of accredited certificates upon completion.

Councillor Mark Jones, Cabinet member for economic growth and regeneration, Shropshire Council adds: “We realise that many people feel excluded because of the increased digitisation of our daily lives. This project, made possible through our UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is a major response to this issue in Shropshire. It will provide much needed support and training in what have now become essential life – and work – skills for residents.”

For more information on School of Coding & AI’s Digital Shropshire project and courses or enrolment details and criteria, please visit <https://schoolofcodinguk.com/digital-shropshire/> or contact 01902 509 209 | info@schoolofcoding.co.uk

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and places, supporting local business, and people and skills.

Further general information may be found on: <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/relocating-and-investing/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/>

To read or hear more about the current projects that have been supported see:

[Unlocking Potential: Exploring the Latest Updates on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#)

News: Nearly £15m will fund vital initiatives across Shropshire

17th January 2024

In 2023 the UK Shared Prosperity Team at Shropshire Council successfully secured nearly £15m to fund vital projects across Shropshire.

The money was provided as part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda, with three key investment priorities: Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. Its overall objective is to build ‘pride in place’ and increase life chances.

In Shropshire the funding is being used to kickstart and/or support a number of exciting initiatives across the county.

From nearly 200 applications to date, and following a rigorous assessment process, the team have identified 37 projects that already have received, or will receive, funding during early 2024.

Gary Spence, Shropshire Council’s external funding and technical lead officer in the business growth and investment team, said:-

“We received a great number of excellent applications and some terrific project ideas. We have been able to work with existing partners, but also to develop new partnerships and work with some truly

inspiring and entrepreneurial organisations. We are very excited about the initiatives that are currently being rolled out.”

The successful projects have proved diverse and varied. They range from the creation and improvement of community facilities in a number of Shropshire’s towns, to wellbeing and development projects, the creation of a crowdfunding platform for community groups, programmes supporting individuals back into work, and a focus on upskilling Shropshire’s workforce.

The funding will also support the launch of a new Capital Grant Scheme for small businesses.

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:-

“The schemes we are funding will benefit communities, individuals and businesses across the county. We know this will make a real and long-lasting contribution both to the economy and the wellbeing of our residents.”

Shrewsbury Food Hub’s community kitchen is one of the successful projects currently being contracted.

Tammy Bloodworth, the Hub manager, said:-

“Our community kitchen project aims to minimise food wastage by making it into delicious meals, and to benefit and support marginalised groups and individuals in our community. Through the cookery activities people can learn new skills, gain confidence, and connect together over shared food and conversation. Funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has made this project possible. We are super happy and super grateful.”

Nearly £8m from the total funds have been allocated, and the team is currently in the contracting phase for an additional £4.9m. Just over £2m of additional funding was also secured for specifically rural projects that promote green space, active travel and small business grants.

To read about some of the projects currently being supported see
: <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-projects/>

News: Next round of UKSPF funded ‘Crowdfund Shropshire’ soon to open

2nd February 2024

Crowdfund Shropshire, the new civic fundraising platform where community groups can get their projects funded by public and grant funding, is opening in the next month (during February 2024).

Campaigners are encouraged to come along to an online workshop on Tuesday 20 February 2024 to find out about how their project could benefit, how it works and learn some top tips for their campaign.

For this next round of funding, projects can bid for up to £10,000 from the Shared Prosperity Community Fund (in partnership with Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership), and up to £20,000 from the Green Spaces and Active Travel Fund (in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, and Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin).

Crowdfund Shropshire is being run in partnership with the community fundraising platform Spacehive, which enables local residents to exclusively access funding for community improvement initiatives.

The crowdfunding nature of this programme, in collaboration with council funding, maximises the amount campaigners can raise in order to deliver transformational community projects that matter to them.

Gwilym Butler, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for finance, corporate resources and communities, said:-

"We're delighted to be able to announce a second round of funding as part of Crowdfund Shropshire, offering community groups another chance to transform their local area.

"If you have an idea please come along to the workshop next month, where you can find out more and explore the abundance of support available to help you make it happen."

Crowdfund Shropshire launches at Wem Town Hall on Wednesday 11 October 2023

There are currently five projects crowdfunding. They are: Rural Art Hub, Walking in Wem, Multicultural Children's Day, Little Stars in the Community, and Get Crafty With Words. Both Rural Art Hub and Get Crafty With Words have almost reached their fundraising target. People can check out their projects here for inspiration, and donate or spread the word to help them reach their goal.

Gwilym added:-

"We already have five great projects on the platform which are bidding for your support as part of the first round of funding, which was made available in October 2023.

"Please support them as much as you can and help to make them happen."

Shropshire's Shared Prosperity Community Fund has been made possible due to funding under the Communities and Place theme of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, managed by Shropshire Council.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the Government's levelling up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The 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.

Contact: partner@spacehive.com or crowdfund@shropshire.gov.uk

News: UK Shared Prosperity Fund helps individuals gain employment

26th February 2024

UK Shared Prosperity Fund money is making a definitive and positive impact on individuals across Shropshire.

For the last two years the funding has been used to fund "Multiply", a programme designed to improve numeracy skills for people in the workplace or those looking to find employment.

Multiply is funded by the Department for Education through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the team at Shropshire Council have been working with partners to deliver courses across the county.

On receiving the funding Shrewsbury Colleges Group engaged ANTA Education Ltd as a delivery partner. ANTA reported that, within eight weeks of promoting the programme, 40 people had signed up to courses.

Corinne Brown, Business Development Manager at Shrewsbury Colleges Group, said:-

“It seems many people have an aversion to maths, which can often date back to schooldays. So I was delighted to work with ANTA Education Ltd, who identified a key enabler for employment with their health and safety in construction courses, embedding numeracy that was relevant to real life work situations. It just seemed to make sense, and the participants have thrived as a result.”

Jason is a student who has benefitted from the training. He studied for a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card after being out of work for over a year, and took the health and safety course as part of this qualification.

After qualifying Jason managed to gain employment almost immediately, so was able to put his new skills to good use right away.

Jason said:-

“My experience with ANTA was amazing. The level of support they offer cannot be matched, and they made the process feel effortless. Gaining a new job has helped me in so many ways, thank you.”

Craig Howard, Managing Director of ANTA Education Ltd, commented:-

“Through participating in the course Jason gained confidence and overcame various personal barriers to achieve his goal. We are very proud of him. He’s been in touch recently to let us know he’s gone on to gain further qualifications ,and can now operate 10-tonne excavators on site.”

Amy Farley, part of Shropshire Council’s economic growth team dealing with UK Shared Prosperity Fund money, said:-

“This is a great example of UK Shared Prosperity Fund money in action. Partners and businesses working together with the funding we’ve provided. It’s gratifying to know that the money is successfully filtering through, reaching the people who can benefit, and making a real difference to them.”

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:-

“Our economic growth team worked hard to secure this funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and it is now starting to yield results. We have funded a great many exciting projects, and look forward to more positive stories about how the funding has supported individuals and communities across the county.”

To read about some of the projects currently being supported see

: <https://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-projects/>

News : Could you benefit from Shropshire’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects?

19th April 2024

On Friday 10 May 2024 businesses and individuals will have the chance to discover how they could benefit from Shropshire’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies.

For the past year over £15m, secured by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund team at Shropshire Council, has been actively supporting and making a difference to the lives of people and businesses across Shropshire.

“Shropshire Expo: Business Support, Skills and Championing Your Community” is at Shrewsbury Town FC’s stadium on Friday 10 May 2024 from 11am-2pm. It includes an exhibition and presentations on the active projects across the county.

Gary Spence, Shropshire Council’s external funding and technical lead officer in the business growth and investment team, said:-

“The aim of the event is to get businesses, individuals, and community organisations together to network but also to find out what support is available to them from the numerous UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects we are currently funding.

“There is a raft of business support programmes, but businesses will also discover how they can get involved in their local communities and offer support for those seeking employment.

“For individuals, there is help around upskilling and how to find work. For community and voluntary organisations, the event offers a chance for promotion and engagement with local businesses.

“Representatives from all the projects will be on hand to talk in person to visitors about their projects and guide them through the process of accessing the support. “

The diverse range of programmes available under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund includes assistance for starting a business, business growth and expansion, innovation, prototyping, manufacturing, energy-saving initiatives, tourism development, leadership and management coaching, as well as improving digital and numeracy skills.

There are also initiatives to support businesses in generally upskilling their workforce through access to educational support, retraining and qualifications including vocational licences. However, and perhaps most importantly of all, the support on offer is free to anyone wanting to take advantage of it.

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:-

“ Our UK Shared Prosperity Fund team and the providers who have formulated these projects are to be applauded. The funding has facilitated a comprehensive programme of support for businesses and individuals, as well as highlighting the work of the voluntary sector across the county. From the projects on offer, it is clear the funding is already making a substantial contribution to the economy of Shropshire. I urge people to attend this event and take advantage of the free support available to them.”

To find out more, see who should attend and to book, please see [The Shropshire Expo: Business Support, Skills & Championing your Community](#)

News: UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects are a success across Shropshire

9th September 2024

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund has successfully supported local businesses, benefitted communities, and improved skills across Shropshire.

Shropshire was awarded approximately £15m from the fund and received over 200 applications from all over the county. Following a rigorous selection process 65 projects were eventually selected.

All the projects are due to finish in March 2025 when the funding ends. As these projects enter their final phase, the overall story is one of success. Individuals have been helped into work, people have been able to progress in their careers, local communities and physical assets have been improved, and businesses have been supported in numerous ways.

One of these projects is Digital Shropshire. Digital Shropshire is an initiative run in Shropshire by The School of Coding & AI, the UK's largest coding and computer science educator, which has a base in Shrewsbury.

Manny Athwal, founder of School of Coding & AI, said:

"Lots of people struggle with technology these days. We now live in a world where digital skills are essential for all aspects of daily life and our project has helped people of all ages.

"Many of our learners are anxious when they come to us but by the time they complete our courses, they report a marked increase in their confidence and have skills and knowledge that they can use both personally and in their working lives. Many are excited and motivated to explore what else is available to them.

"To date we have helped 155 individuals in Digital Skills, and a further 136 people in Communication and Life Skills which improves a person's employability.

"We've taught everything from the absolute basics of how to use a smartphone or write an email, to an introduction to coding, or AI (artificial intelligence)."

Aston University's Agri-tech Growth & Resources for Innovation project aims to help Shropshire's food and drink processing, and Agri-tech businesses – major sectors for the Shropshire economy.

The project is currently working with 30 businesses with a further 15 lined up to benefit soon.

Paul Gretton, Senior Project Manager at Aston University, said:

"The funding has given us the opportunity to work on some diverse and fascinating challenges for a range of Shropshire companies.

"For one company we are analysing their blends of spices from all over the world. Spices have many health benefits and by identifying the exact composition of these blends we can advise them on the best way to market the product.

"For another company we are helping to develop humane rodent traps using 'camera recognition', and for others we are offering advice on replacing single-use plastic packaging now that new and upcoming legislation will outlaw and restrict the use of them.

"This funding has made so many initiatives possible. We urge companies to get in touch before March if they think we can help."

The Montgomery Canal Restoration also received funding and is having a positive impact on both the local economy, and the local community.



Section of the Montgomery Canal made waterproof again by volunteers at Crickheath.

John Dodwell, Chair of the Montgomery Canal Partnership, said:

“This funding is not just helping to restore a wonderful part of our heritage – which is over 200 years old – but it will also impact positively on economic regeneration and tourism.

“The funding has allowed us to improve the towpath and the canal channel itself, plus the

biodiversity of the area will also benefit greatly because of this work.

“It’s also generated interest and involvement from the local community. Almost all the improvements are being carried out by skilled and general volunteers, and because of the project, we have gained 12 new regular volunteers and attracted 44 people to our corporate volunteering days.”

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:

“As administrators of the fund it is reassuring to receive this feedback from the projects and hear about the positive and practical impacts the funding is having.

“This was our aim, and is a key part of our Shropshire Plan. From young people in deprived areas to older residents, communities, and businesses, we wanted the projects to address identified needs in the county and we’ve worked tirelessly with a range of partners to achieve this.

“It is proving to be such a great success that we hope that similar funding will be made available to us beyond 2025.”

Photos: copyright of Shropshire Union Canal Society

News: The UKSPF Small Business Grant Scheme re-opens for Applications

3rd September 2024

The UKSPF Small Business Grant Scheme will open again for applications on **Monday 9th September**.

This grant scheme offers grants of between £2,000 and £10,000 to purchase new equipment or make improvements to business premises.

One of the previous grant recipients is Beth Heath of Quarry Kitchen & Shropshire Ice Cream Ltd. The grant helped her to diversify into a new market,

“We had taken over the Quarry Café and wanted to transform it into a vibrant space that celebrated local food and drink. We’ve used the grant to renovate the café by recladding and replacing the walls. The result is a bright, clean, and attractive eating area that has achieved a 5-star food hygiene rating. We’ve also been able to employ a number of local people. None of this would have been possible without the grant.”



Since March the team have received 218 EOIs with 39 projects from across Shropshire going forward to full application. To date £250,000 has been awarded to help small businesses grow and expand.

Gary Spence, Shropshire Council’s external funding and technical lead officer in the business growth and investment team said,

“This grant continues to be popular. On each of the previous occasions we have invited applications we’ve been forced to close the process within a week because of the overwhelming response.

We ask businesses to note this date and complete their Expressions of Interest (EOI) right away to avoid disappointment. We’d also like to remind potential applicants to check the criteria both in terms of their eligibility, and what can – and cannot – be funded before applying.”

Businesses from one to 49 employees can apply for a grant if their business is physically located in the Shropshire Council local authority area.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the grant will help them create new employment opportunities, or develop new products, processes, or services within their business. They will also be expected to match-fund the amount of grant applied for by at least 50% of the total investment.

As in previous rounds all applicants will need to complete the initial online Expression of Interest (EOI) form. This will be assessed, and successful projects will then be invited to submit a full and more detailed application.

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said:

“It’s gratifying to see the positive results of this grant. Its popularity proves that this is exactly the sort of support that our small businesses are seeking.

The funding we have been able to access on their behalf is truly helping us to deliver on our promise to create a healthy economy in Shropshire.”

Details about how to apply and the EOI form can be found at: [UKSPF Expression of interest form guidance | Shropshire Council](#)

Anyone with any questions or queries about applying should email ukspfgrants@shropshire.gov.uk. Unfortunately, queries cannot be dealt with over the telephone.

News: Shropshire Businesses Urged to Apply for Funding before Scheme Ends

19th November 2024

The UKSPF Small Business Grant Scheme is still open and would like to encourage more businesses to apply before the scheme ends.

Grants of between £2,000 and £10,000 are available to purchase new equipment or make improvements to business premises.

The grant was made possible because of the £15m worth of funding awarded to Shropshire Council for a range of projects through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. This funding round will end in March 2025.

Gary Spence, Shropshire Council's external funding and technical lead officer in the Business Growth and Investment team, said:

"The recent budget announced that there would be a continuation of the funding for another year, but we are not sure how much this will be or what it will fund. Consequently, we urge businesses to take advantage of the current pot by applying as soon as possible.

We would like as many applications before the Christmas break as possible to allow time for the awards to be made before March 2025."

Prospective applicants need to complete an online Expression of Interest (EOI) form and demonstrate how the grant will help create new employment opportunities, or develop new products, processes, or services within their business.

These EOIs are assessed, and any projects successfully passing this initial stage are invited to submit a full application.

Nick Davis, founder of award-winning Hobsons Brewery Ltd in South Shropshire, is a recent recipient of one of the grants and used it to purchase a training brew plant (pictured). This is a small-scale system that can be used to learn about a process or technology before it's used on a larger scale.

"Buying this equipment has enabled us to launch a series of training courses for publicans, home brewers and beer enthusiasts. We've offered courses before but having the training brew plant has introduced a practical 'hands-on' element to what our delegates can take away from the training. The courses are very popular, so now we are thinking about how we can develop these further.

We've created one additional job, and it's also had a tremendously positive impact on our inhouse R&D because our own brewers can use the equipment to experiment with different techniques and ingredients."

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said



‘This grant can help businesses realise development opportunities, generate jobs and create opportunities for growth. Applicants are urged to check the eligibility criteria but over 46 businesses across the county have already taking advantage of this funding and we urge anyone thinking about applying to do so as soon as possible.’

Details about how to apply and the EOI form can be found at: [UKSPF Expression of interest form guidance | Shropshire Council](#)

Anyone with any questions or queries about applying should email ukspfgrants@shropshire.gov.uk. Unfortunately, queries cannot be dealt with over the telephone.

News: UKSPF Investment Delivers Major Boost in Shropshire

28th May 2025

Shropshire Council has announced the significant impact the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has had on the county.

In the past 3 years, over £12million has been invested in projects that have transformed lives, revitalised communities, and supported local businesses.

Since 2022, various initiatives and projects funded by the UKSPF programme and administered by Shropshire Council have provided targeted support in three key areas: Supporting Local Business, Community & Place, and People & Skills.

Supporting Local Business Growth

£5 million has been invested in supporting Shropshire’s business community. From start-ups to established enterprises, over 1,400 businesses have received tailored support, including grants, innovation vouchers, and advice on energy efficiency, marketing, and leadership.

The programme has helped create 204 new jobs, supported 90 new business start-ups, and saved over 6,600 tonnes of CO₂ through sustainability initiatives.

Business Boost 360 was one of the business support initiatives funded through UKSPF. Signing up for this Shropshire Growth Hub programme meant that Rachael of Rachael Brown Equine Chiropractor was able to launch 2 new services, streamline her business operations and access further funding.

Rachael says,

“Signing up for Business Boost and working with the team at the Shropshire Growth Hub has had a real positive impact on my business.”

Revitalising Shropshire’s Communities and Places

The Community and Place priority received £3.5 million in capital and revenue funding, with an additional £1.7 million from the Rural Fund. Together, these investments have supported 28 projects across the county.

The funding has supported town centre improvements, restoration of heritage and cultural assets, and the creation of new green spaces and cycle routes. Community cinemas, arts events, and infrastructure support for grassroots organisations have also benefitted, boosting local engagement and volunteering.

Key achievements have included the support of 731 local events and activities, the creation of 610 volunteer opportunities, the improvement of 950,410 square metres of green/blue space, and the upgrade of 18 footpaths and cycleways.

The Montgomery Canal Restoration was one of the recipients of UKSPF funding and reported a positive impact on both the local economy, and the local community.

John Dodwell, Chair of the Montgomery Canal Partnership, said:

“The funding has allowed us to improve the towpath and the canal channel itself, plus the biodiversity of the area will also benefit greatly because of the work we’ve been able to do.

“This funding has not just helped to restore a wonderful part of our heritage – which is over 200 years old – but will also impact positively on economic regeneration and tourism in the area.”

Empowering People and Skills Development

With £1.6 million allocated to the People and Skills strand, Shropshire has delivered five major projects focused on employability, digital inclusion, and workforce development. 98% of this funding has been utilised in life transforming projects.

Programmes have supported those individuals considered to be the furthest from the labour market by helping them to gain qualifications and the confidence to re-enter employment.

Community-based learning initiatives have tackled digital exclusion, while partnerships with local employers have been strengthened and ensured that training aligns with the needs of Shropshire’s changing economy.

Cameron Atwal, Assistant Project Manager at the School of Coding & AI says,

“Thanks to UKSPF funding, we’ve equipped people across Shropshire with essential digital skills that change lives. From gaining confidence in using technology to applying new tools at work, the impact has been incredible. These courses unlock potential, create opportunities, and keep our communities ahead in the digital world. At School of Coding & AI, we’re proud to bridge the digital divide across the county.”

Creating A Foundation for the Future

UK Shared Prosperity Funding has laid the groundwork for long-term prosperity in Shropshire. With strong outcomes already achieved, Shropshire Council is committed to building on this momentum and ensuring continued investment in people, places, and enterprise.

Cllr Rob Wilson, Shropshire Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Economic Growth said,

“The award of this funding for these specific priorities has enabled us to invest in the future of the county despite the financial challenges the Council has faced.

“It’s been about giving people the tools they need to succeed, future-proof our economy, and revitalise our communities to build a more inclusive, connected, and resilient Shropshire for the future.”

News: Funding helps people across Shropshire into new jobs and careers

6th June 2025

The funding allocated under the People & Skills priority of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has made a real and lasting impact on individuals in Shropshire.

An allocation of £1.6m awarded in 2022 aimed to improve employability, upskill the workforce, enhance digital skills and increase opportunities for individuals. The current programme of funding ended in March 2025 and was utilised to fund 5 projects that have successfully delivered its objectives.

A primary goal was to offer employment support through advice and guidance, and skills development for those furthest from the labour market, as well as support career advancement for those already employed.

Working with Key Stakeholders

The programme was delivered in collaboration with a number of key partners:

- The Shrewsbury Town Football Club Foundation involved participants in sport-based initiatives to help them build confidence and develop essential employability skills.
- Enable, a service provided by Shropshire Council, assisted individuals who encounter barriers to employment.
- The School of Coding & AI provided both foundational and advanced digital skills training.
- The Shropshire Skills Hub, operated by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, offered in-work training and qualification support.

As a result of the initiatives offered by these partners, a total of 691 socially excluded individuals accessed vital support services, 589 people improved their basic skills and 575 received employment support. This enabled them to find employment or put them in a better position to find work.

Additionally, 280 people were supported to participate in education, and 486 reported increased employability thanks to improved interpersonal skills which resulted in greater confidence, more successful job interviews, and sustained employment outcomes

354 individuals gained a qualification, and 409 economically active people engaged in mainstream skills education and training which has enabled them to progress in the workplace.

A Real & Lasting Impact

Amy Farley, UKSPF Technical Officer within the Economy Skills and Funding team at Shropshire Council with responsibility for administering the funding for this priority, said,

“While focussing on the needs of individuals we were careful to ensure that the training aligned with the needs of local employers.

“We are proud of what we’ve achieved in partnership with our providers. Over the past three years, we’ve worked together as a team to deliver real value and to enhance the lives of the people of Shropshire whilst adding value to Shropshire as a county.”

Stephen Clegg was one of many people who received support from Enable through the funding,

“I wasn’t very confident in finding work and have suffered a lot of knockbacks. Enable helped with my CV, and I knew they would support me with job applications if I got stuck. It’s just given me more confidence in seeking employment.”

Cllr Rob Wilson, Shropshire Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Economic Growth said,

“This funding was deployed with the goal of reaching those who needed it most, and the results speak for themselves. Everyone involved should be proud of the positive impact made across the county.

“An extension to the funding has also meant that majority of these projects can continue for another year.”

News: UKSPF Investment Breathes New Life into Shropshire’s Communities

3rd July 2025

Communities across Shropshire are seeing the benefits of major investment that has brought new life to town centres, revitalised cultural landmarks, and strengthened grassroots organisations.

Through the UKSPF Community and Place Priority initiative, Shropshire Council has invested £3.4 million between 2022 and 2025. This funding has supported 28 diverse projects that have made a visible and lasting difference in both town and rural areas.

The initiative, supported by £1.8 million for building and improvement projects (capital funding) and £1.7 million for everyday running costs (revenue funding), was designed to support a wide range of community priorities. These included improvements to public spaces, restoration of heritage sites, support for local arts and culture, and the development of infrastructure for grassroots organisations.

An additional £1.7 million in Rural Funds was also allocated, with 91% of that funding already invested in building projects.

Beth McGowan from Shrewsbury Colleges Group, and organiser of Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival explores the streets of Shrewsbury.

Town centres have been enhanced with new bike access schemes and building improvements designed to boost footfall and local pride. These improvements have enhanced the look and feel of town centres, increased visitors and supported local businesses.

In Shrewsbury a range of projects have been launched to support the Shrewsbury Moves strategy, a 10-year vision to transform movement and public space across the town.

The funding facilitated the development of an eBike subscription service, eCargo bikes for businesses, and a new river shuttle service, all designed to enable residents and businesses to use active modes of transport more often.

Seb Slater of the Shrewsbury BID said,

“The funding has helped us hugely in making active travel more accessible and appealing for everyone in Shrewsbury. In its first few months over 14,000km have already been cycled using



the Shrewsbury Moves ebike scheme and is a very encouraging start to realising our 10-year vision to make Shrewsbury one of the most inclusive, accessible, and economically thriving towns in the UK.”

Grassroots organisations have benefited from vital infrastructure support, enabling them to expand their services and reach more people. From community kitchens to voluntary sector groups, these organisations are now better equipped to support those in need and foster stronger community ties.

Hands Together Ludlow, a local charity, has used the funding to hire a full-time community and project coordinator to manage and support over 100 volunteers.

Susie O’Hagan, Chief Operating Officer, Hands Together Ludlow said,

“Thanks to UKSPF funding, we’ve not only strengthened our volunteer base with better training and support, but the addition of this vital resource has freed us up to do so much more. We’ve also been able to bring together a powerful network of community organisations across Ludlow and improved our outreach and marketing. This investment has helped us reach more people, deliver more services, and lay the foundation for a more connected and resilient town.”



The restored Cambrian Station Building in Oswestry

Cultural and heritage assets across the county have also received a new lease on life. Several historic buildings have been restored such as Ellesmere Yard, the Cambrian Station Building (left) in Oswestry, and St Johns Church, Doddington. This work is preserving Shropshire’s rich history while creating new spaces for events and gatherings. These efforts have improved local perceptions and increased visitor numbers,

reinforcing the county’s cultural identity.

The programme has also placed a strong emphasis on creativity and inclusion, supporting over 700 community-led arts and cultural events, including community cinemas and activities aimed at engaging hard-to-reach groups.

This support has meant that more than 600 new volunteer opportunities have been created, and community engagement has been increased through projects like Flicks in the Sticks (Arts Alive), Civic Crowdfund and the Cultural Compact Grants.

Nature and wellbeing have also been central to the programme’s success. Over 950,000 square metres of green and blue space have been improved, and nearly 11,000 kilometres of cycleways and footpaths have been enhanced or newly created. These improvements have made it easier for residents to enjoy the outdoors, promoting healthier lifestyles and greater environmental awareness.

Rob Wilson, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for Transport & Economic Growth said,

“This programme has delivered so many real, tangible benefits to our communities, there are almost too many to mention. But it’s about more than just numbers— it’s been about providing support,

making improvements and having a positive and lasting impact on the lives of Shropshire residents. From the feedback we've received, it's been a true success story. I want to thank all of our partners who have delivered the projects using UKSPF funding."

News: UKSPF-Funded Initiatives Earn National Recognition

28th July 2025

UKSPF funding supported two Shrewsbury projects that recently led to the town receiving two nominations for a national award.

Shrewsbury was shortlisted twice in this year's prestigious Visa Let's Celebrate Towns Awards. Two projects: 'Work in Shrewsbury' and 'Shrewsbury Moves' were entered by Shrewsbury's Business Improvement District (BID) and Shropshire Council on behalf of the Big Town Plan Partnership (BTPP), in 2 categories and made the shortlist in both.

'Work in Shrewsbury' received nearly £450,000 of UKSPF funding. This enabled a variety of support to be offered to businesses in Shrewsbury including training, business growth grants and expert masterclasses in Shrewsbury.



E-bikes supplied by the Shrewsbury Moves project

UKSPF Funding for the 'Shrewsbury Moves' project, received over £300,000 of capital funding. Among other initiatives, it supported the development of an eBike subscription service, eCargo bikes for businesses, and a new river shuttle service, all designed to enable residents and businesses to use active modes of transport more often.

Matt Potts, Service Manager for Economy, Funding and Skills at Shropshire Council and a Board Director of Shrewsbury BID, said,

"It is extremely satisfying to see the success of these projects and have them recognised at national level. Without UKSPF, funding initiatives like this in

the county would simply not be possible.

"The Economy, Funding and Skills team at the Council is dedicated to securing funding and collaborating with partners like the Shrewsbury BID and the BTPP to support innovative projects that generate substantial and sustainable economic benefits. "

Seb Slater, Executive Director of Shrewsbury BID, said:

"We have an ambitious ten-year strategy for Shrewsbury, and UKSPF funding has proved essential in both implementing and advancing our vision for the town."

Councillor Rob Wilson, Shrewsbury Town Council leader and representative on the Big Town Plan Partnership Board, said,

“These projects in Shrewsbury have been recognised nationally but UKSPF funding has benefitted numerous towns, organisations, businesses and individuals across the county.

“Accessing funding like this and proactively seeking to work collaboratively with key organisations means that we can still achieve positive change despite the current financial challenges.”

News: Phase 2 of UKSPF Shropshire Skills Hub launched to boost careers across Shropshire

20th August 2025

News about one of our UKSPF-funded projects:

Following the success of Phase 1 of the project, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has launched Phase 2 of the UKSPF Shropshire Skills Hub, a dynamic initiative aimed at supporting individuals across the county to take the next step in their career journey.

The project is being delivered by Shropshire Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Inspired Mindset and SBC Training, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Continuing as delivery partners, Shropshire training experts Inspired Mindset and SBC Training ensure that learning is practical, professional, and local, however qualifications from any provider can be utilised.

This next phase is still exclusively for individuals who live in the Shropshire Council Local Authority area. Whether employed, self-employed or actively looking for work, eligible individuals can apply for one grant of up to £1,500 to fund or part fund a vocational qualification, certificate or licence achieved before 30 November 2025. The purpose of the funding is to support individuals gain specific skills and knowledge to support upwards career progression or a change of career.

Amanda Gosling, UKSPF Project Manager, explains

“Phase 1 of the UKSPF Shropshire Skills Hub was received exceptionally well, resulting in us exceeding our target of supporting 400 individuals. The project financially supported 411 Shropshire Council residents in achieving a vocational qualification and now aim to support another 160 through Phase 2.

This really is a fantastic opportunity for eligible individuals to gain a vocational qualification that provides them with specific skills and knowledge to progress in their career or change profession. Qualifications funded through Phase 1 of the project included PRINCE2® Project Management, ILM Level 3 and Level 5 in Leadership and Management, Level 3 BPEC Award in Solar Photovoltaic Installation, a Medical Terminology certificate, and a huge range of other topics”.

One of the many success stories from the Upskilling Project is Jasmine, who completed a Level 2 Certificate in Team Leading in September 2024. At the time, Jasmine was not yet in a leadership role but the course gave her the skills and confidence to step up when a new opportunity arose within her organisation.

Jasmine explained,

“Throughout the course I learned lots of valuable skills about leading a team, such as different leadership styles, conflict management and time management.

“A few months after completing the course, I applied for a promotion and used the terminology and knowledge I’d gained to help me through the interview process. I got the role and seven months later, I was promoted again to Lead Practitioner. The course gave me the confidence, skills and vocabulary to grow professionally, and I still refer back to the resources regularly. I’m now working towards a Level 5 NVQ in Health and Social Care and Leadership. I would highly recommend this course to anyone just starting out in a leadership role.”

From welding skills, CAD, Education and training, and an Introduction to Robotics course, through to Burnout Coaching, Leadership, Sales Success, Account Management, and AI for Professionals qualifications, there’s something for everyone in this next phase. Amanda adds, “with the project coming to an end in November it’s vital that anyone interested gets in touch to apply as soon as possible.”

To find out more about what is on offer and to confirm if you’re eligible, contact:

a.gosling@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

News: New Video Shows How UKSPF Funding Has Transformed Lives Across Shropshire

27th August 2025

A newly released video highlights the transformative impact of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) across Shropshire since 2022. It showcases how strategic investment in people and skills has helped hundreds of residents overcome barriers and move closer to employment.

Replacing previous ERDF funding, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was designed to build pride in place and increase life chances. With three core investment priorities — Supporting Local Business, Community and Place, and People and Skills — the video focuses on the latter, capturing the stories, partnerships, and outcomes that have shaped the programme’s success.

Over 65 programmes have been funded across all 3 priorities by UK Shared Prosperity funding. Of the 5 programmes supported under the People and Skills priority, all were tailored to meet local employer needs and support individuals in gaining confidence, skills, and access to work.

Among the initiatives featured are:

- **Brightstar Boxing**, in collaboration with Energize, Shrewsbury Town in the Community, Shropshire Cricket Board, and Embrace PE, used physical activity and classroom learning to build workplace confidence, promote wellbeing, and develop basic skills.
- The **Skills Hub**, run by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, offered a wide range of courses and qualifications to help people upskill or change careers.
- The **School of Coding** addressed an identified digital skills gap, financial literacy, and introduced learners to AI.
- **Multiply**, led by Shrewsbury College, supported individuals lacking confidence in numeracy, attracting participants from diverse age groups and backgrounds.
- **Enable**, a Shropshire-based supported employment service, helped over **410 people** since 2023 to find and maintain meaningful employment through job coaching, interview preparation, and employer engagement.

The video also features heartfelt interviews with beneficiaries, one of whom described their experience as “one of the most beneficial things I have done.”

Amy Farley, UKSPF Technical Officer for People and Skills at Shropshire Council, praised the collaborative effort saying that the funding has “delivered something for Shropshire people to enhance their life.”

Cllr Rob Wilson, Shropshire Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Economic Growth said,

“This video showcases the genuine difference the People and Skills allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has made throughout Shropshire. It truly demonstrates how partnership, community spirit, and focused investment can come together to drive lasting positive change.”

[Watch the video](#)

News: Grants available to fund a vocational qualification to further your career.

3rd November 2025

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce is running a government-funded project offering grant funding of up to £1,500 per person for people looking to progress their careers.

It is open to anyone living in the Shropshire Council local authority area and in employment – and candidates do not need to be a member of the Chamber.

Applicants can apply for a grant to fund or part fund a course with any provider, with many fully funded places also available through our two local delivery partners, from leadership excellence and digital marketing to medical terminology and computer aided design (CAD).

Funding for the grant is provided through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which seeks to address local skills gaps and improve people’s job prospects.

Shropshire Chamber chief executive Ruth Ross said the scheme is open to anyone aged 16 or over, in employment, and aiming for a qualification, certificate, or licence to support the next phase of their career.

“This project aims to support people to obtain professional knowledge, technical skills, and/or work experience relevant to a particular career and occupation. By addressing local skills needs we hope to create high skill, high wage job opportunities for Shropshire people.

“It helps to boost the Shropshire economy, supports companies to retain talent, equips the workforce with new skills, and supports career progression by retraining and upskilling local people.”

Inspired Mindset based in Whitchurch, and SBC Training in Shrewsbury are offering fully funded places on certain courses including the NQual endorsed certificates in Leadership Excellence, Digital Marketing, and Gel Polish & BIAB Application with Marketing and Business Skills.

There are also fully funded places available on a Computer Aided Design course and understanding medical terminology.

Full details can be found at [UKSPF Shropshire Skills Hub](#)

For more information and to explore dates, check eligibility and register, contact UKSPF@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

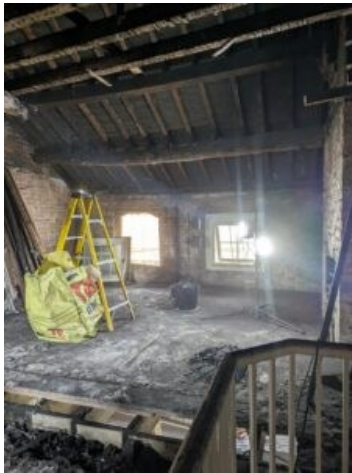
News: Property Improvement Grant helps bring long vacant Oswestry building back into use

23rd April 2026

The long-vacant property in Oswestry

A long-vacant property in Oswestry town centre is being brought back into commercial use thanks to support from Invest in Shropshire through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Property Improvement Grant.

The grant has supported essential structural repairs at 3 Willow Street, a commercial property that had remained vacant and on the market for a considerable time before being purchased in February 2025. When the new owners acquired the building, it was uninhabitable, with electrics and plumbing removed and extensive structural issues revealed once internal plaster was stripped back.



Cracking and movement throughout the building raised serious concerns, requiring a structural engineer to produce a detailed stabilisation plan. Without early intervention, the issues risked escalating into major structural failure, significantly increasing repair costs and threatening the future viability of the building.

Funding awarded through the Property Improvement Grant helped ensure urgent works could be carried out at an early stage. These included the installation of seven steel beams to stabilise the structure, replacement of rotten roof components, and repairs to the front elevation and roof. Together, the works have secured the building and prevented further movement.

Jodie Lamont, the grant recipient, said:

“When we first took on the building, the scale of the structural issues was a real concern. The grant funding has been crucial in making the property safe and preventing further deterioration. It has stopped costs spiralling and has allowed us to move forward with confidence. We hope to pursue further development funding options to complete the remainder of the refurbishment.

Cllr Rob Wilson, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet Member for Transport and Economic Growth, said:

“The purpose of this grant is to restore empty buildings so they become safe, usable commercial spaces again. Initiatives like these are precisely what the Property Improvement Grant aims to encourage, alongside the broader benefits such as boosting the local economy and revitalising our market towns and High Streets.”

The Property Improvement Grant programme offered grants of between £2,000 and £10,000, covering up to 50 per cent of eligible improvement costs. It formed part of a wider package of UKSPF investment supporting town centre regeneration and economic growth across Shropshire and was made possible through external funding provided by government.



(Photos by kind permission of Jodie Lamont)

News: UKSPF Grant Enables 24/7 Prescription Collection at Lunts Pharmacy in Ludlow

15th June 2026

A new 24/7 medication collection point will be launched this week in Ludlow, improving access to healthcare services for residents while demonstrating how targeted funding can help drive innovation in Shropshire.

The new facility, installed by Lunts Pharmacy, allows patients to securely collect their prescriptions at any time of the day or night.

It was made possible through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund’s Small Equipment Grant scheme for businesses, which has helped numerous businesses across Shropshire to innovate and grow. The grant enabled MSN Pharmacy Group to invest in the specialist equipment needed to introduce the new service.

The collection point is expected to benefit a wide range of residents, including those working irregular hours, people with caring responsibilities, and individuals living in rural areas where accessing services during standard opening times can be challenging.

This installation marks the first of its kind for MSN Pharmacy Group and is believed to be among the first 24/7 prescription collection points introduced within a community pharmacy setting in Shropshire.



Ravi Nagra, Founder and Co-CEO of MSN Pharmacy Group, said:

“We are continually looking for ways to improve access to healthcare services for our patients. The introduction of this 24/7 collection point gives patients greater flexibility and convenience, allowing them to collect their medication when it suits them rather than being restricted by traditional opening hours. We are extremely grateful for the support provided through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Shropshire Council, which helped make this project possible.”



The Ludlow installation is being delivered as a pilot, with the potential for a wider rollout across the pharmacy group's network if successful.

Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and Cabinet Member for Transformation and Economic Growth, said:

"This is an excellent example of how targeted investment through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has supported local businesses to innovate while delivering tangible benefits for our communities.

"By helping businesses like Lunts Pharmacy adopt new technology, we are not only strengthening local services but also improving accessibility for residents, particularly in our rural areas. It reflects our commitment to supporting economic growth that makes a real difference to people's everyday lives."

Innovating Access to Community Healthcare in Ludlow

MSN Pharmacy Group



MSN Pharmacy Group is Shropshire's largest independent community pharmacy provider, operating 18 branches across the Midlands, including 14 within the county. Serving both urban and rural communities, the group combines personalised, relationship-based care with the scale to invest in innovation that improves patient access to services.

At its Ludlow branch, the business identified a growing challenge. Many patients, particularly those in rural areas, with work commitments or caring responsibilities, struggle to collect prescriptions during standard opening hours. This has contributed to missed collections, medication non-adherence and increasing competition from online pharmacies offering more flexible access.

To address this, MSM Pharmacy Group secured £10,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in June 2026, alongside £20,000 of its own investment. The funding enabled the installation of a RoboWall automated prescription collection system, introducing secure, round-the-clock access to medication for patients at the Ludlow site.



The RoboWall system provides 150 secure collection compartments within a compact unit installed facing an exterior wall, allowing prescriptions to be collected 24 hours a day using a secure PIN verification process. Integrated with the pharmacy's existing workflow, the system enables patients to receive notifications when prescriptions are ready, while freeing up staff time to focus on clinical services and direct patient care.

As a first-of-its-kind installation for MSN Pharmacy Group, the project was delivered as a pilot, with learning from the Ludlow site informing potential rollout across its wider Shropshire network. Delivery required careful coordination, including international manufacture and shipping from the Netherlands, but proactive planning ensured installation and integration were completed smoothly.

The impact has been immediate. Patients can now collect prescriptions at times that suit them, including evenings and weekends, reducing barriers to access and improving convenience across a largely rural catchment. Early feedback from both patients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong interest generated from the point of launch.

Importantly, the project supports wider health outcomes by improving medication adherence and reducing wasted prescriptions, while strengthening the role of community pharmacy on the high street. It also demonstrates how targeted investment can help independent providers compete with digital alternatives without losing the personal service that defines them.

Without UKSPF support, MSN Pharmacy Group would have been unable to pilot this level of innovation at pace. The funding has enabled the business to modernise access to healthcare, improve patient experience and establish a scalable model for wider rollout across Shropshire.

Looking ahead, the MSN Pharmacy Group will evaluate the Ludlow pilot, tracking patient uptake, out-of-hours usage and reductions in uncollected prescriptions. Subject to positive results, the RoboWall technology could be introduced across additional sites, significantly expanding access to convenient, community-based healthcare services across the county.