

# Community Grants for Sustainability scheme: Summary Report

## *September 2023*

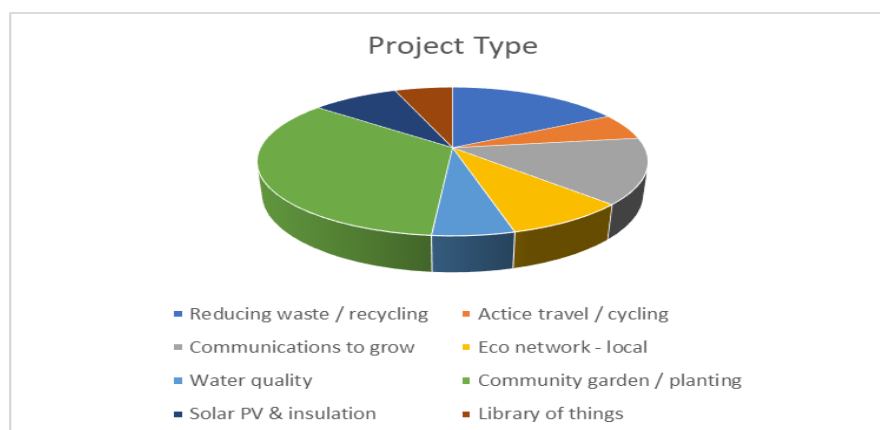
### Introduction

Surrey Climate Commission has been working with Surrey County Council (SCC) Greener Futures team to develop and lead community engagement activities that promote and encourage environmental behaviours. In March 2023, SCC funded Surrey Climate Commission's new 'Community Grants for Sustainability' grant scheme.

The aim of the scheme was to provide small grants (£100 to £2000 per project), enabling local Surrey community organisations and groups to take action for sustainability and climate change, in line with the priorities of [Surrey's Greener Futures Strategy](#).

### Overview

- The grant scheme was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> March, with all winning projects notified by 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- We received 54 applications totalling £61,481. Of these, 35 projects were approved by the Assessment Panel, receiving grants of £200 - £1900, and totalling £27,000.
- The average grant provided was £771.
- By the end of July, 24 projects (70%) had completed the activity they had requested funding for, and 11 projects had been awarded extensions to the end of September. Note that most of the projects will continue to operate in the longer term, with help from local volunteers.
- The community projects covered a range of different focus areas including:
  - community gardening and re-wilding projects,
  - setting up repair cafes and equipment sharing schemes (library of things),
  - installing insulation and PV panels,
  - growing local sustainability networks through communications and events,
  - waste reduction projects, and
  - cycling / active travel projects.



## Highlights from some of the projects

**WEAct Repair Cafes:** [Woking Repair Cafe – Welcome to Woking Environment Action!](#) The grant went towards equipment and promotion of the new repair café, plus a small amount of funding went towards WEAct's Incredible Edible and Woking Hedgehog projects. The repair café launched in summer and to date they have held 3 repair café events with 137 visitors, and 80 items fixed. The repair cafes will continue to run once a month at different locations around Woking.

**George Abbott School waste reduction:** the school and PTA are keen to raise awareness around reducing and recycling outdoor waste from packed lunches and snacks, particularly focussing on the Year 7 playground. The grant went towards purchasing 5 recycling bins for the playground. This was supported by Year 8 students going into Yr 7 classrooms to talk to students about what to recycle and which bins items should go into. George Abbott school is proactive in a range of sustainability projects.

**Lower Sunbury Residents' Association (LOSRA):** This project focuses on testing the water quality of the Thames where it flows through Lower Sunbury. A small grant funded the cost of the water testing kits, with the testing carried out by local volunteers. To date LOSRA have carried out water quality testing each month since May. LOSRA plan to continue monitoring the water quality as the Thames is such an important local resource in Lower Sunbury.

**Frimley Green and Mytchett Scout Group PV project:** The installation of 16 solar panels with battery back-up and connection to the National Grid was completed on Monday 24th April. The Scout Lodge is regularly used by many visitors each week, and the panels are in full view and already drawing positive comments. The grant contributed circa 5% towards the total project cost, the bulk of which was covered by a range of grants and fund-raising. 'Over the future, our Scouts will be keeping up to date in their meeting activities with how the system is functioning and how it benefits ourselves and the world at large,' reported the Group Scout Leader.

**Wildlife Aid – reptile hibernacula:** This project helped to build three hibernacula to provide safe spaces for amphibians and reptiles to over-winter. The grant helped to purchase 6 cubic metres of walling and rockery stone for new habitat creation at the [Wildlife Aid Centre](#) in Leatherhead. Several groups of volunteers have worked on the habitats, getting them ready for colonisation in autumn.

**Haslemere Active Travel:** A grant was awarded to Haslemere Active Travel (HAT) to support their work with local schools and build their communications via a website - [Active Travel Group | Haslemere | Environment \(thisishaslemere.co.uk\)](#). HAT helped St Bartholomew's junior school by contributing to the cost of joining the Living Streets 'Walk once a week (WOW)' school campaign. See a local article in the [Haslemere Herald](#).

## Conclusion

'The grant programme has been very effective to date, supporting a wide range of committed local organisations and community groups. It has enabled them to gear up their activity locally and has given rise to a number of great case studies,' said Richard Essex, Chair of Surrey Climate Commission.