



CIVIL FOOD RESILIENCE CASE STUDY 1: SHROPSHIRE

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The Shropshire Good Food Partnership (CIC) has re-centred its focus on Civil Food Resilience as the scaffolding for its work areas. It places an emphasis on proactive, collaborative community engagement with CFR via capacity building, and a strategic approach to crisis planning, allowing for a confident deliberate response, rather than a reactive one. SGFP is also taking a bioregional food systems approach in partnership with SFP members Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, and Powys and will address CFR through a recently confirmed Climate Lottery Award for four years.

Approach

The Shropshire Good Food Partnership is taking a wide-ranging approach to Civil Food Resilience. This includes:

- Raising public and political awareness of the fragility of the food system and the urgent need for proactive planning via capacity building and a strategic approach to crisis response.
- Mapping and baselining the food system in Shropshire, with work in three pilot Councils supported through the Lottery Climate Action Fund
- Supporting urban and rural communities to conduct community food assessments which include mapping local assets, gaps and support on local food resilience strategy development in collaboration with communities and Town and Parish Councils
- Working to engage with the West Mercia LRF and Shropshire Resilience Team in Shropshire Council to emphasise the need for food resilience and security to be included in the local risk register and response plans
- Initiating a collaborative process with SGFP members to build a parallel structure to the LRF to focus on building food resilience while in non-emergency states, and specific plans for acute crises, using the Pandemic experience as a guide

- Building a network of organisations working in sectors that overlap food systems (climate, nature and biodiversity, land management, energy etc) to build a systems lens and unified voice for resilience communications and coordination
- Building communication around resilience to the public via toolkits, the Right to Grow, skill building and community engagement
- Emphasising relocalisation, and promoting smaller-scale, more resilient farming systems, including working with farms as training hubs

Exemplar pilot project

Telford and Wrekin Feeding Resilience (Phase One): Dawley, Stirchley & Brookside (2025 - 2026). Funded by CHIP and Wrekin Housing.

The pilot strengthens community food resilience by enabling residents to grow, cook, and share healthy food, while also building collaboration among existing community food organisations. It demonstrates how food can be used to tackle health inequalities, social isolation, and environmental challenges.

Benefits for Residents

- Increased access to fresh and affordable food.
- Improved confidence in cooking and growing food.
- Stronger social connections and reduced isolation.
- Greater awareness of low-cost food resources (pantries, surplus, allotments).

Benefits for Community Organisations

- Stronger collaboration and volunteer base.
- Better use of land and food resources (e.g., Brookside beds revitalised, surplus food redistributed).
- Clearer pathways for expanding activities and scaling the model.

Benefits for the Wider Community

- Reduced food waste and carbon footprint
- More resilient local food culture enabled through increased fairness, health, and sustainability.

Challenges

Civil Food Resilience building is significant and involves research, mapping, engagement and coordination across numerous organisations and sectors. Engaging with this work at a structural level requires funding and communicating its urgency to the public and council leaders in appropriate and productive ways is central.

Currently, this work is taking place without the support or engagement with our local LRF (West Mercia). Shropshire's Resilience Officers do not recognise 'food' as being within their remit, and Shropshire Council has a lack of capacity due to financial allocations. Therefore SGFP is building communications and a framework (research, capacity building, strategic response plans) in order to develop a network of Town and Parish Councils and SGFP network of members to engage with CFR work.

Adult social care consumes most of Shropshire Council's budget, and links must be made to how food can alleviate pressures across this and other portfolios, such as highways, waste, climate and sustainability, health and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Opportunities

Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin Councils, have indicated an understanding of the value of CFR planning and a County-level food strategy that includes resilience, and the need to break down silos in relation to food planning and provision. As Shropshire Council is in an untenable financial position, it has stated the importance of collaborating with Civil Society organisations and communities for service delivery. Shropshire's MPs have indicated their support for CFR work, including from the perspective of Defence and Security, as well as poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of food and working with distribution networks.

Through working with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC), SGFP is reaching the wider network of Town and Parish Councils to highlight the need for CFR planning and offering guidance in this area. Several Town and Parish Councils have approached SGFP with interest in developing Local Food Resilience Strategies and these will join a "Community Labs" pilot project in 2026. Community Food Conversations, feedback from allotment societies and community groups as well as the general public indicate a growing awareness and worry about food costs, access and availability. Communities are seeking support and advice from SGFP and are eager to see leadership from their councils.