

National Lottery consultation May 2022 -Final response from Sustainable Food Places (after running past members)

What type of organisation do you represent?

Sustainable Food Places is a partnership programme led by the Soil Association, Food Matters and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

What locations do you primarily operate in?

National

The following questions ask you to think about the longer term needs and opportunities facing your communities, and how the Fund might support your community in the future. It's very tricky to make predictions about the future, but we want you to think about the challenges and opportunities that require longer term action or bigger change, or what you think is on the horizon that could really affect your community.

All questions are optional – WORD LIMIT 100 WORDS FOR EACH

1. What do you think a community needs to prosper and thrive? A prosperous and thriving community will mean different things to different people – so please answer using your own interpretation.

For a community to thrive and prosper it must be fed by a healthy, resilient, sustainable food system. Access to a healthy and sustainable diet is crucial not just for health but for wellbeing – food poverty is a key driver of poor physical and mental health. Food is also key to bringing communities together and tackling loneliness. Community organisations greatly benefit from access to funding to help them innovate and sustain their work. The National Lottery Communities Fund played a key role during the pandemic supporting food initiatives when supermarket shelves were empty, people stranded in their homes without access, and millions of people unable to afford the food they needed to survive, let alone thrive.

2. What are the main opportunities available to your community over the longer term that you may need help to take advantage of?

Covid recovery, a cost-of-living crisis, and climate and nature emergencies all open up new opportunities to reorganise our food system, so it better serves people, planet and communities.

These opportunities include supporting food partnerships to build and unite their communities around food according to the intimate knowledge of their community's needs; building community wealth through food, putting people back in charge of their local food systems and economies; bridging the gap between sustainably produced

food and low-income families, so sustainable, healthy food is accessible and affordable to everyone, including those accessing emergency food provision; and increasing access to locally grown food including community growing spaces.

3. What are the main challenges facing your community over the longer term that you may need help with?

The strain of responding to demand for emergency food in the cost of living crisis is falling on the shoulders of over stretched charities and community volunteers and leading to food aid becoming institutionalised in the UK. This cannot go on. Instead, communities must be supported through sustained funding streams, knowledge, resources and peer learning, to pivot their approach to focus on building food resilience.

We are also in the midst of climate & nature crises (food is 30% of each of our carbon footprints; and farming is nationally and globally the biggest contributor to biodiversity loss). Communities need help to join the dots and make food part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

4. In what ways, if at all, has the National Lottery Community Fund supported your community that you would like to see continue in the future?

We are grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for support for Sustainable Food Places, which is one of the fastest-growing good food movements today. Our Network brings together pioneering food partnerships from towns, cities, boroughs, districts and counties across the UK that are driving innovation and best practice on all aspects of healthy and sustainable food.

You have also supported many of the organisations which are key players in food partnerships – whether providing emergency food, empowering alternatives such as pantries, or tackling climate and nature crises. We'd like to see this continue – supporting people to live not just exist; and using the power of food as a lens for addressing so many of our most pressing issues.

5. What could The National Lottery Community Fund do differently in the future to support your community to respond to the opportunities and challenges you face?

We would like to see a central food strand in your funding. This would allow cross cutting work in food (across health, poverty, climate and biodiversity) including food partnerships able to access your funding.

We welcome and share the NLCF's commitment to ensuring funding is 'meaningfully informed by lived, learned and practiced experience'. However to secure funding, a fully formed programme idea is often required, but for these plans to be meaningfully informed by lived experience, capacity and funding is required first. We would

therefore like the NLCF to provide seed funding for programmes to allow meaningful consultation and participation from the beginning.