

From your Borough Councillors

Rural England Prosperity Fund (part of levelling up)

Test Valley Borough Council has been awarded £500,000 to support its rural communities and businesses. £3,000 - £20,000 will be available to support new/improved COMMUNITY facilities/local art and heritage/rural green space and/or essential COMMUNITY services. £5,000 - £25,000 capital grants will be available for new and existing rural businesses to develop new products/services/equipment of wider benefit to the local economy (including farms)

See testvalley.gov.uk/Community REPF or testvalley.gov.uk/Business REPF for information on grants.

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund is being distributed between April 2023 and March 2024 by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through County and Unitary Councils.

The objective of the Fund is to provide support to vulnerable households to help with significantly rising living costs and is intended to cover a wide range of households, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.

£1.3 million of this Fund has been set aside for Community Grants to deliver local projects or activities that support residents most in need. Applications for funding from the FINAL round of the Community Grant are now open: see [Household Support Fund - Community Grants](#). The deadline for applications is 26th January 2024.

Funding can be granted for eligible activities and support including:

- Energy and water: Support with energy and water bills.
- Food: including vouchers and free school meals.
- Essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.) in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford energy, food and water.

Wider essentials not linked to energy and water. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs.

- Advice services: to commission and support advice services on budgeting, finances*, maximising income as well as accessing other help with food or fuel.

Please note that if your application includes financial advice services, that any financial advice services will need to be provided by a qualified and regulated individual or online by a regulated organisation, in accordance with the FCA requirements. You will need to be able to demonstrate a level of compliance with FCA regulations and be willing to provide evidence of this. For details of required regulation please see Advice and guidance (maps.org.uk)*

Funding must be spent by 31 March 2024.

We strongly advise that you read our Application Guidance [Household Support Fund - Community Grants](#) before you make any Application. Please apply using the [Online Application Form](#)

If you would like any help or advice regarding filling out an application form or with a project idea, please : connect4communities@hants.gov.uk.

Incuhive - Free Business Support Service

This has now been launched. It is open to community - run shops as well as small business shops, so please make contact to ask for help.

Test Valley Borough Council has partnered with the Hampshire-based business IncuHive to provide this impartial service to businesses within the Test Valley.

Whether you have a new business idea to explore, or are looking for ways to increase turnover, grow your existing business or just do things more efficiently, IncuHive is available to support you. Their in-house team of advisors will work directly with you to identify what would most help. This could include:

- Free advice and mentoring
- Access to funding and grants
- Finance, bookkeeping, tax advice
- Finding new clients through marketing, web, social media
- Business planning and/or pivoting
- Cash flow
- Starting-up a new business

Their package of personalised support includes a bespoke interactive business 'health check', to give you a clear and honest overview of your business as it is today. As well as highlighting strengths, this will identify the areas which need to be addressed to help you achieve maximum success in the future.



You can find out more at

<https://incuhive.co.uk/acceleration-investment/test-valley-business-support> or contact our partner, Andy Pringle, directly to access the support Tel 07817 065694 or andy.pringle@incuhive.co.uk

Owner or business must be located within Test Valley Borough. Your contact details will be shared with Test Valley Borough Council.

If you haven't already done so, please sign up for the TVBC newsletter at Business Newsletter Test Valley Borough Council to hear about other sources of support and advice.

Start-Ups

Local guide 'Start & Grow Your Business in Test Valley' is a new downloadable guide designed to help new and existing businesses in the area. As well as covering important business topics, it contains details of relevant local contacts and links to a number of useful free resources.

Please contact us if you would like a free copy, Free Support for Test Valley Businesses. Whether you have a new business idea that you would like to explore, or are looking for ways to increase your turnover, grow your existing business or just do things more efficiently, we would love to help.

Thanks to funding from Test Valley Borough Council, this is completely free of charge. Contact Andy Pringle on 07817 065694 or by e-mail: andy.pringle@incuhive.co.uk

We can provide advice and guidance on any key business topic including: access to funding and grants, finding new clients, marketing, web, social media, business planning and/or pivoting cashflow.

The 'Business Health Check' package will include initial and ongoing 1:1 support. <https://www.new-business.co.uk>

Youth Democracy Event 2024

Romsey Town Council are keen to engage younger members of our community in local politics and governance. During March we are holding a Youth Democracy event, inviting local school children to discover more about the various roles and responsibilities of local government. Councillors will be on hand to answer questions,

and pupils will learn about how Test Valley Borough Council's electoral register team prepare and manage local elections. Romsey Town Council will be organising the event in association with Hampshire Youth Parliament.

For more information, please email cllrcbirkett@romseytc.org.uk
Tell us your views, take our quick Youth and local Democracy survey
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TEXXCO/>
For more about Hampshire Youth Parliament www.hampshireyp.com.

Unity

Unity is a non-profit incorporated UK charity part-funded by Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, working with local organisations to support vulnerable members of the Test Valley Community.

What do we do

Our role is to support those in the community across Test Valley who may be facing hardship, through the provision of information, signposting, social prescribing, home support and a range of other community-based services designed to help make lives easier and improve health and wellbeing.



Travelling Pantry

Our amazing Travelling Pantry needs volunteers to help us to keep supporting the people of Test Valley.

The Pantry has become a lifeline for many people in the rural areas of the community who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Many of our rural villages' residents have no reliable and cost-effective way to access the shops, food banks and pantries... so we take it to them.

No one should have to choose between paying a bill or eating a meal but that is the reality for a lot of people. With the help of our partners, food donations, our growing schemes and food waste prevention channels, we are able to provide good quality food

to those who need it the most. The Travelling Pantry has been such a great success that we now want to expand the service out to other areas as well as develop our offering in the areas we already cover. However, we cannot do this without more volunteers.

Could you spare up to 4 hours on a Wednesday or Friday to help us deliver this vital service? The role would include some manual handling and gives you a chance to make friends and engage with our Pantry shoppers! All training will be provided, as well as parking at our office by the Andover bus station for the duration of your shift. All we would need from you is a can-do attitude, a desire to make a difference and a willingness to have a bit of a chat because, for some of our service users, we are the only people they see all week!

Want to know more? Email our Pantry Co-ordinator Tracy on: tracy.thomas@unityonline.org.uk or call us on: 0330 4004 116 or visit our offices at the Andover bus station.

Want to help but can't do a Wednesday or Friday? We are hoping to expand the service ASAP so will need people for other days soon. Even if you can't commit to the full time but want to help, please get in contact. There's a lot to do to keep the Pantry running.

Click the link below to learn more about The Travelling Pantry and see what we do . 📌
<https://unityonline.org.uk/travelling-pantry/>

Volunteering

Why not start something new in 2024 and make a difference to your community, gain new skills, improve your health and wellbeing, and by doing so make new friends? We have many amazing charities and volunteer organisations in and around Test Valley which rely on their volunteers to help the community.

There are volunteering opportunities such as helping to lead healthy walks, help organise and contribute at music and cultural festivals, exploring and researching local history, and helping to care for our local community together with charities and organisations in the Test Valley

. Sign up for volunteering on the Unity Online website
<https://unityonline.org.uk/volunteering>

Come to a Drop-in session on grant applications. These take place every third Thursday of the month. Book an appointment via email info@unity.org.uk or phone 0330 4004 166



Funding Drop In Sessions

Do you need help with your grant application?

We understand that applying for a grant can be overwhelming, and we are here to help!

During a session we can:

- Check that you meet the grant criteria.
- Identify any gaps in what you tell them, so that you tell an engaging story.
- Confirm that the need for your project is supported by evidence.
- Confirm that you show that you have the ability to meet those needs.
- Ensure that you spell out the differences that the project will make.
- Clearly define who the beneficiaries are.
- Advise on how beneficiaries can be included in the bid itself.
- Help connect you to potential partners or co-applicants where appropriate.
- Ensure that your budget adds up and is at the right level for the project.
- Review if the application will be successful.

We hold virtual “surgeries” to support groups looking for an independent review of their grant application. These take place at **10am** on the **third Thursday of every month, starting 21st September 2023**

Groups will be able to meet with a member of our team for advice and feedback as well as help finding other sources of potential funding.

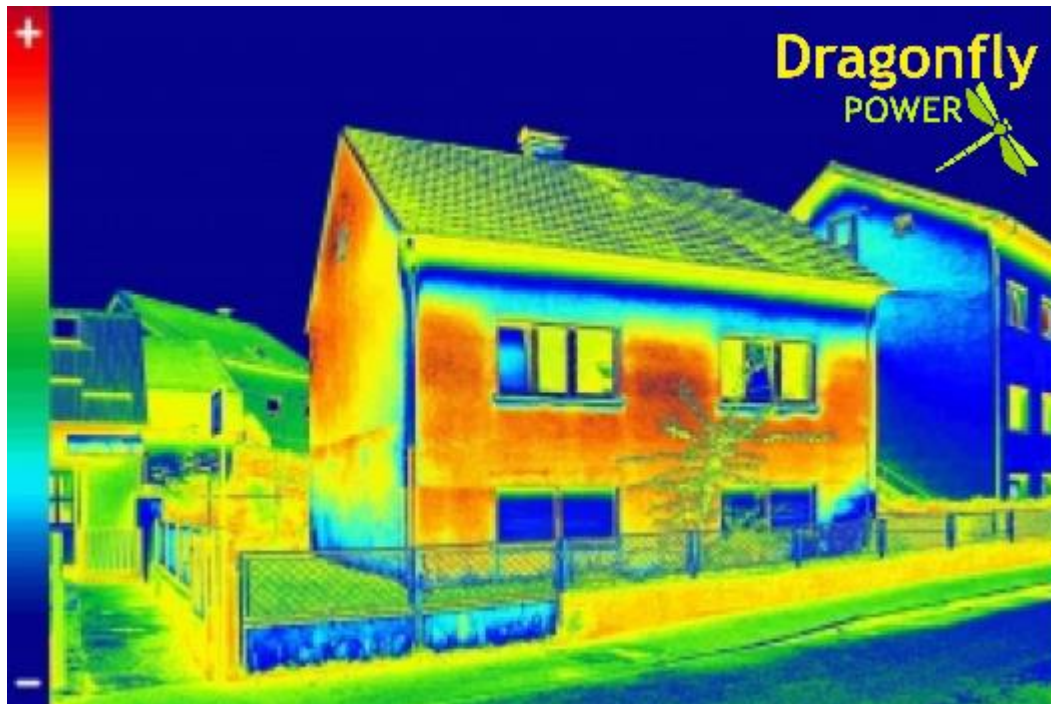
Please book an appointment via email
info@unityonline.org.uk
or phone
0330 4004 166

Leaky Homes

Dragonfly Power is excited to announce that it will be holding a "**Leaky Homes**" roadshow that will visit communities and parishes around Test Valley in 2024!



Funded by
UK Government



During these visits, households and community buildings within participating communities will have the opportunity to sign up to receive a **free thermal imaging survey** of their properties and receive an associated energy efficiency report. This will be undertaken by a fully trained Dragonfly Power volunteer.

Thermal imaging surveys are a useful tool for showing areas of heat loss and help identify any insulation and draught proofing needs.

We would like to partner with Parish Councils, community centres and keen individuals to help promote and champion the leaky homes roadshow to households in their area between January to March 2024. Here's how you can get involved:

1. Register your interest for receiving a Leaky Homes Roadshow visit to your community by emailing enquiries@dragonflypower.org.uk.
2. We will get in contact with you to agree a suitable date for a visit. Ideally we would like to use the village hall or community centre as a hub for the evening where

households can drop in to find out more about energy savings in their homes. We can discuss options for this when we contact you.

3. We will provide you with further information about the process and also materials and information to promote the visit to households in your area including details of how households can book a thermal imaging survey.
4. We will visit your community on the set date and hopefully start to help households in your area take action on their energy use!

In addition, we will also be holding a free **Energy Awareness training** session on **Saturday 20th January** at 10am at **King's Somborne Village Hall** . This session will be run by **Dale Hoyland**, a specialist in retrofit and thermal imaging. It is designed for anyone interested in finding out more about energy efficiency and will provide an outline of thermal imaging surveys. Representatives from **The Environment Centre** will also be present to advise on grants and support available to households in Test Valley.

Please see the link below for information about the Village Hall Week in March.
[Village Halls Week 2024: Go green! - ACRE.](#)

A Defibrillator Near You

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hours)
Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hours)
Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours)
Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)
Up Somborne Rookley Farm (24 hours) (see below)
King's Somborne Village Hall
King's Somborne - The Crown Inn

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered but for anyone who would like prior understanding of how to use one, see <https://www.aeddonate.org.uk/events/>

In the event of an emergency, after dialling 999 to report the incident, the phone operative should give the access code for the cabinet, to the person/first aider using the device.



Warm Hub Film Matinees Continue in 2024

The Warm Hub matinee film screenings at King’s Somborne Village hall continue until the end of March. No tickets are needed and there will be free tea, coffee and biscuits available from 1:45. All films start at 2:15.

- Monday 12th February: Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3 (12A)
- Monday 4th March : Book Club The Next Chapter (12A)
- Monday 25th March : Summerland (12A)

The Warm Hub is funded by the Test Valley Borough Councillor Community Grant and the Parish council

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

If there are any issues in this copy that you would like to discuss, or any items of news that you would like to be considered in a future copy please contact any of the Borough councillors.

Contact



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