



TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



SUPPORTING LOCAL EVENTS

A key asset for towns resulting in increased footfall, dwell and spend as well as a sense of community pride

EVENTS FUNDED

Examples of events supported include a wide range of cultural and community-focused activities, such as:

- Arts festivals
- Street parades
- Celebrations of the town's folklore, heritage, and history
- Family activities during school holidays
- Theatre, dance, comedy, and music performances

These events aim to enrich the cultural life of the town, enhance community engagement, and attract visitors to the area.

WHY EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT

Events play a crucial role in supporting the vitality of a town centre by attracting visitors, fostering community engagement, and boosting local businesses. They provide an opportunity for towns to showcase their unique culture, heritage and assets, while also creating spaces for social interaction and community pride.

The importance of events has been highlighted by the overwhelming success of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Arts, Culture, and Events Grant Scheme. This initiative resulted in the full allocation of the UKSPF grant, with East Suffolk Council (ESC) stepping in to further top up the funding to support additional projects.

The Town Development Programme grant pot has also played a key role, awarding funds to support weekly town markets including the purchasing of equipment, promotional assets and outside external reviews, alongside larger grants to assist the two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) with their event programmes.

The uptake of these grants has been extraordinary, clearly demonstrating that events are an effective means of supporting the local business community. They also contribute significantly to community pride, town revitalisation, and broader placemaking goals. While challenges related to collaboration and futureproofing remain, events continue to be seen as a vital asset for towns —offering significant benefits to both residents and visitors.

EVENTS SUPPORTED: 39

FUNDING AWARDED: £209, 693





CULTURE IS CASE STUDIES KEY FOR TOWNS

Events can create unique experiences, celebrate our culture and boost our town centres. Here are two case studies

BLACK SHUCK FESTIVAL

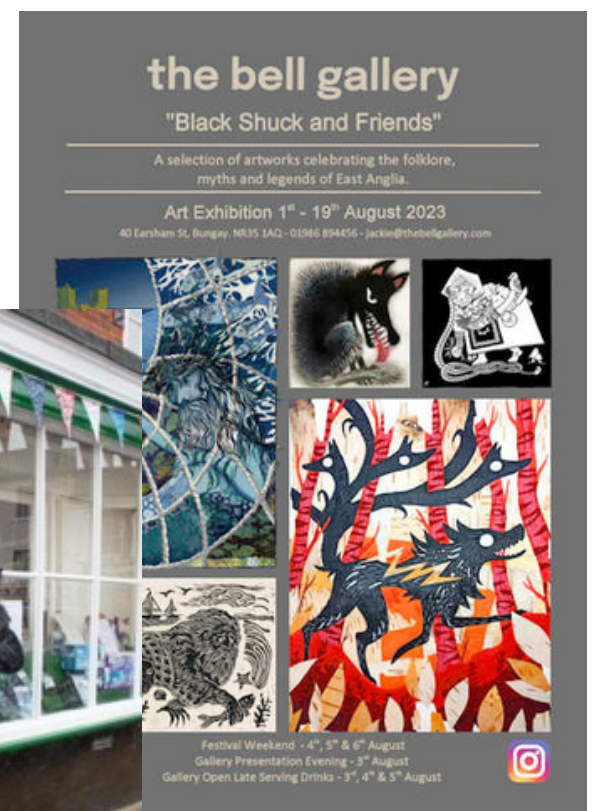
Bungay's Black Shuck Festival is now an annual event getting bigger and better each year. The festival, which celebrates folk lore around a big Black Dog that terrorised the neighbourhood in 1577, was piloted in 2022 following an ESC sponsored webinar with First Light Director Wayne Hemmingway MBE.

In 2023, the Festival looked to the UKSPF Events, Art and Culture Grant and successfully applied to East Suffolk Council for two grants towards the programme.

In 2025 support is around outreach and involving more people, children, artists and musicians in the popular event that takes over the town for a weekend in August.

The festival enjoys widespread local and national media coverage, and positive reviews, thereby raising general awareness of the legend and the town of Bungay.

For more information visit [Black Shuck Festival](#)



BUNGAY FOLK FESTIVAL

The inaugural Bungay Folk Festival took place in September 2024. Grant funding enabled organiser Peter Sewell to curate a festival which impacted on the whole town. Events were held across multiple venues and created a constant flow of people moving between different workshops and performances.

He said: "The visitors were spending money in the cafes, shops and the street market as they contemplated the next venue they would visit. Shop owners have spoken to the committee about how impactful the event was, and some have made a small donation to the festival retrospectively because of their uplift."

Footfall statistics suggest more than 1,500 new visitors to the town over the weekend, while car park data shows people arriving by car stayed for longer periods.

BFF 2025 takes place on the weekend of September 5-7 and promises an even better line up including music, dance, workshops and a youth stage.

For more information visit [Bungay Folk Festival](#)





TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



CASE STUDIES

TOWN CENTRE MARKETS

Bringing markets back to our communities to help support town centres, residents and visitors

WHY SUPPORT MARKETS?

Weekly and specialist markets are often cited as key drivers for footfall and interest in town and village centres, with local traders and residents supportive of the added incentive to head out on market day.

Evidence suggests that 'bricks and mortar' shops, cafes and eateries all do well on market days, thanks to the influx of people.

The Towns Team involvement in revitalising and supporting markets has included awarding funding for a full-scale review and support package from market experts Suffolk Market Events for Halesworth and Beccles. Awarding UKSPF to Felixstowe BID enabled them to purchase a set of branded gazebos to offer to local producers and organisations for events.

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

The Town Development Fund has also helped purchase gazebos to provide additional trading opportunities for small businesses in Wickham Market, Bungay and Halesworth.

The gazebos are then available for other events run by the Town Councils or community groups, offering shelter and an opportunity to hold more outdoor events and activities.

IN ADDITION

People organising and running markets across the district have been invited to attend free training sessions in First Aid and Traffic Management, funded by the Towns Team, meaning they can set up and run their event safely and with confidence.

CASE STUDIES: HALESWORTH AND WICKHAM MARKET

Halesworth Town Council contracted Suffolk Market Events (SME) to regenerate the town's Wednesday market. To date this has involved the development and delivery of a marketing, advertising, and promotion strategy and the introduction of a new direct debit payment system for traders' pitch fees.

The Wednesday market regularly attracts around 10 stalls and staff are working hard to source new businesses, as well as thinking of events and ideas to promote the market further. The new footfall in the market has also had a positive impact on the Thororoughfare, with Wednesday continuously being the busiest day in Town. Further funding for five gazebos has given the town council the option of offering new or smaller traders the opportunity to trade at the market.

Wickham Market Parish Council's quarterly market on the Hill attracts up to 40 stalls and includes food and entertainment. The Parish Council reported a full tally for the Spring Market and the Christmas Market, and anticipate around 35 for Summer and 30 for Harvest events. A spokesman said: "The gazebos, funded by ESC, are a great asset as some stall holders wouldn't come along if they couldn't hire one. The A Frames definitely help on the entrances to the village to promote the events."

Local Café 46 said the 29th March – the date of the Spring Market – was their busiest day ever and were more than happy that there was a visiting coffee van among the stalls as it meant people visiting the café wanted food and drink, which meant the average spend was higher and the queue shorter.