Common Ground Suffolk

Community Share Offer

Invest in your community. Support food growing in Suffolk.

Growing food. Building community. Cultivating resilience.

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commongroundsuffolk.org | general@commongroundsuffolk.org

Important: Please read this document in full before applying to purchase shares. Withdrawable shares in a community benefit society are not the same as shares in a company. They cannot be traded and their value is not guaranteed. Please read Section 7 (Risks) before proceeding.

1. About Common Ground Suffolk

Common Ground Suffolk is a community benefit society registered in England and Wales under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Our registration number is 9800.

We exist to advance food security and climate resilience in Suffolk. We do this by connecting people who want to grow food with the practical support, skills, and infrastructure to do so. Our work includes:

- sending trained volunteers to help anyone in Suffolk who wants support with their growing space
- installing raised beds, water storage, and other growing infrastructure in private gardens and community settings
- running education and outreach to build food growing skills and confidence across the community

Our support is open to everyone in Suffolk. We place particular emphasis on helping those who would find it difficult to manage a growing space without assistance, including older residents and people with disabilities.

We are volunteer-led and governed by an elected board of directors. All surpluses are reinvested into the Society's activities. We have a full asset lock, meaning our assets can never be distributed to members for private benefit and are permanently dedicated to community benefit.

2. The Purpose of This Offer

This community share offer is separate from our founding membership offer. The founding membership offer allows individuals to take one share at £10 as the basis for membership. This offer is for individuals who wish to invest further in the Society's work by purchasing additional shares above the minimum membership share.

The funds raised through this offer will be used to support community food growing projects across Suffolk. This includes:

- purchasing and installing raised beds, planters, and growing infrastructure in the gardens and outdoor spaces of people across Suffolk
- buying tools, compost, seeds, and other growing materials for use by our volunteers and the households we support
- developing community growing spaces and ecological planting projects across Suffolk
- supporting the outreach and education activities that help more people in Suffolk grow their own food

This is not a speculative investment. Shares do not increase in value and no financial return is guaranteed. The purpose of this offer is to give individuals who believe in the Society's mission the opportunity to provide meaningful early support while becoming a member with a genuine stake in how the Society is run.

3. The Share Offer

Key facts	
Share price	£10 per share
Minimum investment	£10 (one share)
Maximum investment	£1,000 per member (100 shares) at this stage
Interest on shares	None at this time. The board may consider introducing interest in future.
Withdrawals	Shares may be withdrawn subject to board approval and the Society's rules. The board may restrict withdrawals if doing so is in the best interests of the Society.
Offer open to	Individuals aged 16 or over who live in or have a meaningful connection to Suffolk.
How to apply	Complete the Share Offer Application Form available on our website at commongroundsuffolk.org
Offer closes	This offer is open until further notice. The board reserves the right to close or amend the offer at any time.

The maximum investment of £1,000 per member reflects the Society's position as a newly registered organisation with no trading history. The board has set this limit to ensure that no single member's investment creates a disproportionate dependency or withdrawal risk for the Society. The board will review this limit as the Society grows and its financial position strengthens.

Every investor under this offer must also be a member of the Society. If you are not already a member, your first share will be issued as a founding membership share under the founding membership offer. Any shares beyond the first will be issued under this community share offer.

4. What We Will Do With the Funds

Funds raised through this offer will be held in the Society's bank account and used directly to support community food growing projects across Suffolk. The Society is now operational, with its insurance, governance, and administrative foundations in place. Share capital will be deployed on the practical work of the mission: getting raised beds into gardens, tools into hands, and growing knowledge into communities.

Funds will support growing infrastructure installations, tools and materials for volunteers, community growing sessions, and ecological planting projects. As the Society grows, share capital will also provide the financial buffer that enables us to apply for and deliver larger grant-funded projects.

The Society is actively applying for grant funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and other funders, which will supplement the work that share capital makes possible. Full details of planned activities are available on request from general@commongroundsuffolk.org.

5. Governance and Structure

Common Ground Suffolk is a community benefit society governed by its members. The Society's rules, which set out how it is governed, are available on the website and on request.

5.1 The board of directors

The Society is managed by a board of directors elected by the membership. The founding board consists of three directors. As the membership grows, additional directors will be elected at general meetings. Any member aged 16 or over is eligible to stand for election.

5.2 General meetings

The Society holds an Annual General Meeting each year at which members receive a report on the Society's activities and finances, elect directors, and vote on any resolutions put to the meeting. Every member has one vote regardless of the number of shares they hold.

5.3 Asset lock

Common Ground Suffolk has a full asset lock. All assets of the Society, including any reserves and property, are permanently dedicated to community benefit and cannot be distributed to members for private gain. If the Society were ever wound up, its assets would be transferred to another organisation with a similar community purpose, not returned to members.

5.4 Financial reporting

The Society prepares annual accounts which are made available to all members. As a registered society, the Society is also required to submit annual returns to the Financial Conduct Authority.

6. Your Rights as a Shareholder

As a shareholder and member of Common Ground Suffolk you have the following rights under the Society's rules and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

- One vote at general meetings regardless of the number of shares held.
- The right to stand for election to the board of directors if you are aged 16 or over.
- The right to receive the Society's annual report and accounts.
- The right to apply to withdraw your shares, subject to board approval and the Society's rules.
- The right to inspect certain Society documents as set out in the rules.

Membership may be terminated in accordance with the Society's rules. The rules set out the procedure for any such decision, which includes the right to be heard before a decision is made.

7. Risks

Please read this section carefully before applying to purchase shares.

7.1 Your shares are not guaranteed

Withdrawable shares in a community benefit society are not protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. If the Society were to fail and its assets were insufficient to repay members, you could lose some or all of the money you paid for your shares.

7.2 Withdrawal is not guaranteed

Although members have the right to apply to withdraw their shares, the board may restrict or suspend withdrawals if it considers this to be in the best interests of the Society. Withdrawal is therefore not available on demand in all circumstances.

7.3 No guaranteed financial return

Shares in this offer do not currently earn interest and do not increase in value. The board may consider introducing interest on shares in future, but this is not guaranteed and no commitment is made in this offer. If you are looking for a guaranteed financial return on your money, this is not the right investment for you.

7.4 This is a new organisation

Common Ground Suffolk is a newly registered society with no trading history. While the founding team is committed and the Society has strong governance foundations, there is an inherent risk in any new organisation. You should be aware of this before purchasing shares.

7.5 Regulatory status

Community benefit society share offers are exempt from regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority under the Financial Promotions Regulations. This means you do not have the right to complain to the Financial Ombudsman or access the Financial Services Compensation Scheme in relation to this offer. The Community Shares Standard Mark, which provides independent assurance of best practice in community share offers, may be sought in future once the Society is ready for a larger share raise.

8. How to Apply

To purchase shares in Common Ground Suffolk, please complete the Share Offer Application Form Linked on the website.

In the payment section of the form, please indicate how many shares you wish to purchase and the total amount you are paying. Payment should be made by bank transfer to:

Payment details	
Account name	Common Ground Suffolk
Sort code	08-92-99
Account number	67524587
Reference	Your full name

Your application will be considered by the board at its next meeting. You will receive written confirmation of your share allocation, including your member number and number of shares held, once your application has been approved and your payment received. The board reserves the right to decline an application without giving reasons, in accordance with the Society's rules.

Please do not send cash payments by post. Bank transfer is the preferred method of payment. If you have difficulty with bank transfer, please contact us at general@commongroundsuffolk.org to discuss alternatives.

9. Contact Us

Contact details	
Email	general@commongroundsuffolk.org
Website	commongroundsuffolk.org

Postal address	4 Field View, The Street, Nacton
FCA registration number	9800