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The role of community businesses in supporting rural town centres and village hubs

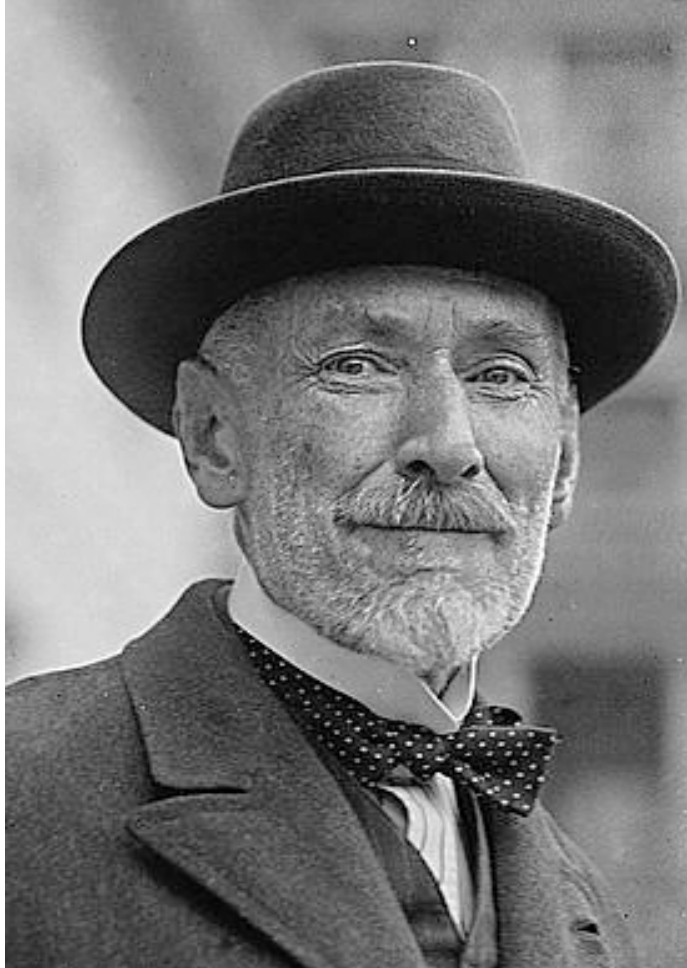
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Who are the Plunkett Foundation?



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Established in 1919 by Horace Plunkett, we're a charity that supports communities across the UK to tackle the issues they face through setting up community-owned businesses.

We provide practical advice, support and training to help communities establish and run successful community-owned businesses with long-term survival rates.

- 17 members of staff, based in Woodstock Oxfordshire
- 50 self-employed Plunkett Advisers & Mentors, based across the UK
- Nearly 500 members

Community business definition



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Any type of business that trades for **community benefit** and which is **democratically owned and controlled by the local community.**

Plunkett represents



Over **800** trading businesses

A pipeline of a further **500** groups working towards community-ownership of a local asset

We receive approx. **350** new enquiries per year



413 community shops



147 community pubs



103 land based businesses
including community farms and woodlands



172 other community businesses
including bakeries, bookshops and breweries

The network we support...



- Collectively employ approx. 3,000 FTE staff and have 25,000 volunteers
- Have raised millions of pounds in community shares
- Are remarkably resilient – Shops, 92% long term success rate / Pubs, 99% success rate



Why am I here?



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Whether in town centres or rural villages, community businesses can:

- Provide a **wide range of services and amenities** that communities value and need
- Stimulate the **local economy** through localised supply chains
- Boost opportunities for **employment, training and volunteering**
- Benefit **people who are most disadvantaged and excluded** in today's society
- Offset **climate change** through delivery of environmentally sustainable initiatives
- **Harness digital technologies** to enhance business performance
- **Promote equality, diversity and inclusion** by creating safe and welcoming spaces for all.

Barriers to progress



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- Just 1 in 10 groups succeed
- Community capacity
- Access to advice and support
- Delays in setting up bank accounts
- Available funding / flexible finance
- The planning system – Insufficient protections for local assets
- Lack of premises from which to trade from
- The cost of purchasing a local asset

Keep it in the Community



- In 2021 there were 705 Assets of Community Value (ACV) nominations across England, down from 774 in 2020.
- The number of listed assets in England has declined from 3032 in 2020, to 2702 in 2021.
- Public Houses make up 41% of all currently listed assets. This is considerably higher than the nearest category, Green and open spaces, on 15%.
- 263 interim moratoriums were triggered over the last 5 years, with 194 of those triggering the full moratorium period.

A Community Right to Buy

We believe that where local residents have identified an asset of value to their community, such as a shop, pub, sports facility or green space for example, they should have a ***right of first refusal*** to purchase the asset, if it becomes available for sale.

The asset should be available to the community at a fair price that has been set by an independent valuation.

A Community Right to Buy should be available UK-wide.

Current crises facing the sector...



- Energy crisis
- Cost of Living crisis
- Ongoing issues with wholesale supply
- Depleted financial reserves
- Fatigued volunteers and staff
- Reduced footfall
- Potentially up to 20% of the sector are “at risk”



Potential to evolve the model



- Proactive rather than reactive projects
- Parish and town council involvement
- Increase in shared ownership
- Employee ownership models
- Micro offerings / Pop-ups
- Alternative assets to trade from and the role of the high street?

Supporting Community Ownership



- **Community Ownership Fund**
- **Social investment** including community share offers
- **Mutal aid and peer support**
- **Connections with local and combined authorities**
- **Partnership approach**



Working together



Consider becoming a Plunkett member.

Stay in touch:

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