



**Plunkett  
Foundation**

[www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk)

# 2020 Impact Report



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# Introduction

The Plunkett Foundation is a national charity, working across the UK to provide access to advice and expertise for the benefit of community businesses.

We have been helping rural communities for over 100 years to tackle the issues they face, such as isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, work and training, through promoting and supporting community business.

The businesses we work with are owned and run democratically by members of the community on behalf of the community, such as shops, cafes, farms and woodlands.

We provide practical advice to help communities establish and run successful community businesses, via a network of self-employed advisers. Plunkett works with a range of organisations across the UK to support both new and existing rural community businesses.

As well as our support services, we actively engage with rural policy to ensure communities are aware of the community business model and its potential social impact, and crucially, so that they can operate in a nationally supportive environment. Plunkett has supported nearly 700 rural community businesses to set up in the UK, who have an exceptionally high 96% long term survival rate.



# Plunkett's Impact in 2020 – the Ripple Effect

This report offers an insight into the impact of Plunkett's work in 2020 and demonstrates the “ripple effect” of our support through the amazing work achieved by the community businesses we support.

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis rural communities constantly demonstrated incredible strength and resourcefulness to provide vital services and support to local people, and especially to those who are vulnerable. Community businesses have been at the forefront of this response, and we are proud to have played our part in the positive impact brought about by their work in 2020.



The “ripple effect” of Plunkett's impact works as follows:

- Plunkett provides access to expert advice, support, information, guidance or intelligence to a community business (or developing group) related to their specific needs
- This support enables community businesses to consider and implement appropriate activities to benefit their community business
- Changes are implemented by staff and volunteers
- New opportunities for local involvement in the community business are created via volunteering, employment or training
- New opportunities for local investment in the community business are created via open share offers, or new membership initiatives
- New services are provided to existing customers
- New customers are attracted to use the new services provided
- The services provided enhance the lives of the whole community.

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# Advice & Support

## In 2020

- Plunkett received 53% more enquiries from groups looking for information, advice and support than in 2019
- We provided 448 allocations of support consisting of time with an adviser, access to training, mentoring support or small bursary funding, more than double the help we provided in 2019
- 308 groups benefited from advice and support provided by Plunkett staff, or one of our experienced advisers, that's 104% more organisations supported than in 2019
- An estimated 500,000 people could benefit from the groups that approached Plunkett for support in 2020
- Among these people approximately 25,000 vulnerable or isolated residents could directly benefit from the groups' activities in the future.

**Insight:** Following contact with a Plunkett adviser Siop Gymunedol, Capel Dewi reported how they had benefitted from increased trade during the pandemic. As a business they reduced their hours, but through supplying new goods from local producers and staying open in some form they enjoyed an increase in trade in 2020.

**£500,000**  
in Community Shares  
**raised**  
to create  
**local shops**

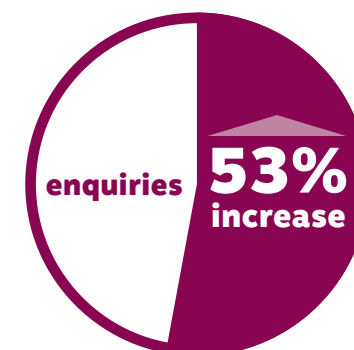


**12** community  
shops  
opened

**308**  
groups  
received advice and support

**500,000**  
people helped  
by our  
SUPPORT

**13** community  
pubs  
opened



**£4m**  
raised  
in Community Shares  
to save local pubs

**25,000**  
vulnerable  
people  
helped by our support

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## Access to Finance

Recognising the need for businesses to access additional financial support in response to the Covid-19 crisis, Plunkett worked on a number of initiatives with partners to achieve this:

- Continued to offer development bursary funding and access to a £100k loan and grant package for community pubs, as part of the Power to Change funded More than a Pub programme
- Covid-19 response small grants for community pubs, for business diversification activities (re-deployed budget from within the More than a Pub programme)
- Supported the development of Power to Change's £5m Trading Income Support Scheme
- Ran a small grants programme for community businesses in the East of England, with the support of Hopkins Homes



**Insight:** The community of Jaywick Sands, Essex, were passionate about saving their only pub - The Never Say Die - when there were plans for it to be developed. Support from the More than a Pub programme enabled them to open as a community pub in 2020. They run a food and clothes bank for this area of high deprivation and work closely with local charities to provide referrals to social care.



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# Training & Peer Support



- With the launch of our new Training Hub, we ran 37 webinars with over 900 attendees between March and December 2020
- These covered a range of topics, such as: developing an action plan, volunteering safely, running an online AGM, recruiting and training volunteers, and good governance
- Our established Community Shops and Community Pubs networks have continued to thrive with over 1,700 supporters, providing vital knowledge and advice for new and adapting groups
- Following the March lockdown, we set up fortnightly 'Chance to Chat' Zoom calls for community shops and pubs
- We organised virtual study visits as part of the More than a Pub programme, to introduce new groups to thriving ones

## Feedback from participants:

*“I loved the dementia training via Plunkett and plan to train as a dementia champion for the pub. We were given a lot of support, so we're trying to do the same for other groups now.”*

The Swan pub, Gressenhall, Norfolk

*“There is a real sense of everyone supporting one another and the encouragement to share ideas through, for example, the Facebook Community Pub group has been great.”*

Webinar participant



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# Membership

Plunkett continues to offer outstanding services to its membership base. Our efforts have seen an overall increase in Plunkett members:

- 14% increase in number of members during 2020 (402 at end 2019, now 460 at the end of 2020)
- We welcomed 113 new or returning members in 2020, a 36% increase compared to 2019
- Our membership network was made up of 68% community business members and 32% supporter members.



Plunkett also represented the interests of members by:

- Working with Power to Change to deliver more than £415,000 in Covid-19 emergency funding to eligible members in Summer 2020
- Campaigning to raise awareness of supply chain issues facing rural community shops during lockdown with central government, national wholesalers, MPs and other stakeholders such as the Federation of Wholesale Distributors and Association of Convenience Stores
- Establishing preferential rates on products and services from 30 different suppliers that are tailored to the needs of community businesses



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## Raising Awareness

- Our annual flagship Better Business reports for Community Shops and Pubs highlighted the success of the community ownership model, and how vital community businesses were in supporting their local residents during the pandemic; they act as invaluable sources of information on the sector
- As part of our virtual Rural Community Business Fete, we launched new “**Lockdown Stories**” film case studies, celebrating the achievements of community businesses in 2020
- We collaborated with the National Association of Local Councils to produce the **Good Councillor's Guide to Community Business**, showcasing success stories where councils and community groups worked together
- Plunkett placed community business at the centre of our **Vision for a Rural Recovery Post-COVID-19**
- With the support of the Co-op Group, we released reports demonstrating the resilience, adaptability and socio-economic impact of community business in ‘**The State of Rural Community Business**’ and ‘**The Ripple Effect: The Social Impact of Rural Community Businesses and the Plunkett Foundation**’

### Media Highlights:

- The Telegraph featured stories about **The White Horse**, Stonesfield and **the New Inn**, Halse. Community ownership has increasingly received attention as a way to save rural pubs
- The Brent Knoll Community Shop, set up to replace the closed village shop shortly after lockdown was introduced, was featured on BBC Radio 4's The World Tonight
- The community bid to save the White House pub, Bladon, was featured on **BBC News** and internationally on **Sky News**
- Community ownership received special attention on the BBC Two programme, Saving Britain's Pubs, hosted by Tom Kerridge. Addressing the committee of the Black Bull, Gartmore, Tom Kerridge said community-owned pubs are: “beacons of light” - “you as a model are something that many communities can be looking at for how to save their pubs.”



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# Advocacy

**Insight:** *New Galloway Community Shop, like many businesses during the pandemic, had to alter their service to meet local needs. Through a Plunkett adviser, they shared how they had secured a contract with their local council to deliver food parcels to vulnerable residents. They also experienced issues in relation to suppliers, which Plunkett used in their representations to DEFRA.*

In 2020 we recruited new staff to expand our research and advocacy work. We champion the rural voice and community businesses in four key ways:

- Influencing national policy
- Strengthening collaboration with partners on policy and advocacy
- Underpinning our work with good quality research
- Making clear Plunkett's stance in representing rural community business.



## Promoting community ownership

- Plunkett submitted to Danny Kruger's consultation, resulting in "Levelling Up Our Communities", in which Kruger recommended converting the Right to Bid to a Right to Buy, and bringing forward and increasing the Community Ownership Fund.
- Our continued representations to Government departments and consultations bore fruit in the 2020 Spending Review, in which community asset ownership was referenced as a way to "Level Up" communities. We hope to take advantage of this increasing awareness at a national level of the benefits of community businesses to drive a sustainable economic recovery.

## Fighting for food security

- In response to supply-related challenges experienced by many of the rural shops we work with, Plunkett made direct representation to DEFRA as part of their wider review on food supply.

## Calling for better support for pubs

- We worked with partners from across the pub sector to represent the interests of the community pubs we work with. We have made direct representations to Government in relation to the support available to pubs, the challenges caused by the ongoing restrictions placed on the sector, and the rules around offsite sales for takeaway drinks.

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# Our Vision: a stronger, more resilient future for rural communities

In our Rural Vision film premiered at our 2020 virtual Rural Community Business Fete, James Alcock, Chief Executive of Plunkett Foundation, set out five central opportunities for community business in 2021:

1. Leading the way in the re-localisation of supply chains, including supply of local food
2. Unleashing the potential to boost employment and training opportunities
3. Enhancing business performance and customer retention through digital technologies



4. Refreshing and diversifying the volunteer network
5. Harnessing positive environmental impact through community business

To watch the Rural Vision film please use the link below:  
<https://plunkett.co.uk/rural-vision-film-is-our-rallying-call-for-action/>

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# Acknowledging our Funders and Supporters

Plunkett provides the majority of our direct support to new and flourishing community businesses thanks to funding from:



THE DULVERTON TRUST







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