



RURAL COMMUNITY BUSINESS AWARDS 2025

Nomination Guide & FAQs



About the Awards

The Rural Community Business Awards are an annual celebration of the incredible achievements of rurally based community-owned businesses across the UK and the dedicated individuals involved with them.

The awards are open to all Plunkett community business members who meet the eligibility criteria. If you're not a member, please join on our [website](#).

Use this Nomination Guide to choose the award categories that you'd like to enter, and follow our top tips to make your entry stand out!

If you have any questions that aren't answered in the FAQs section, you require information in another format, or need help in order to submit your nomination, please don't hesitate to contact sarah.benn@plunkett.co.uk or call 01993 630022.

And if you're unsure whether to enter, just go for it!

Deadline for entries: 5pm on Friday 25 April

Good luck with your nomination!

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Award categories

The 2025 *Rural Community Business Awards* is comprised of nine award categories. Seven of these recognise the achievements of community-owned businesses, while the remaining two celebrate the dedication and outstanding efforts of individuals who are integral to their success.

Community business award categories

- **Connecting the Community Award** - recognises community businesses that are going the extra mile to create safe and welcoming spaces for everyone
- **Investing in Local People Award** - celebrates community businesses that are striving to invest in local people through the creation of employment, training and volunteering opportunities
- **Going Green Award** - celebrates community businesses who are going further to make their business and community 'green' through the introduction of environmentally friendly initiatives
- **Keeping it Local Award** - recognises how community businesses support their local economy through the provision of and utilising local supply and services
- **The 'More Than' Award** - celebrates community businesses that provide a wide range of services and amenities which communities value and need
- **One to Watch Award** - celebrates the community groups that are not yet open and trading but are on the way to creating something incredibly special

Award categories continued

Individual award categories

- **Community Contribution Award** - recognising the outstanding efforts of the individuals who are going above and beyond for their community business. Perhaps through the business, they're going the extra mile for vulnerable residents or they're a constant source of support in keeping the business going? Or maybe they're making a difference by creating initiatives to bring the community together?
- **Young Person Award** - acknowledging the young people aged 15 to 25 who are helping to make a difference in their community-owned business. Is their enthusiasm infectious? Do they always step up in times of need or strive to share their skills in order to enhance the business?

Special award

- **The Nina Foskett Award for Team Spirit** - this special award is in memory of our wonderful friend and colleague Nina Foskett, who passed away suddenly in December.

Nina was a shining example of teamwork and encouragement, always ready to lend a hand and support others. The award will be given to a community group that embodies the same spirit of camaraderie and collaboration that Nina was known for.

Please refer to the [eligibility criteria](#) before entering.

Eligibility criteria

Plunkett's Rural Community Business Awards are open to community business members who meet the following criteria:

Community business awards (except 'One to Watch' Award - see below)

Plunkett defines a community business as being locally rooted, trading for the benefit of the local area, and as being accountable to the community and having broad community impact. Any groups who feel they adhere to these foundations are welcome to apply for a Community Business award. In addition, the business must be:

- A member of Plunkett UK
- Open and trading
- Situated in a rural location
- Based in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

One to Watch Award

This award is open to community groups who are on their journey towards being an open and trading community-owned business. To qualify, groups must be:

- A member of Plunkett UK
- Registered as a legal entity working towards being an open and trading business
- Situated in a rural location
- Based in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

Community Contribution Award

Individuals put forward for the Community Contribution Award must be:

- Involved as a volunteer or employee in a rural community business (defined as above) and which is a member of Plunkett UK

Young Person Award

Individuals being put forward for the Young Person Award must be:

- Involved as a volunteer or employee in a rural community business (defined as above) and which is a member of Plunkett UK
- Be aged between 15 and 25 years old

Eligibility criteria continued

The Nina Foskett Award for Team Spirit

This award is open to all community groups that are:

- A member of Plunkett UK
- Situated in a rural location
- Based in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland



Top tips for success

To support your entry into this year's *Rural Community Business Awards*, we've put together some top tips that will help make your nomination stand out in front of our panel of judges.

▶▶▶▶ **INCLUDE VISUALS**

Photos and videos are a great way of bringing your story to life, so remember to include as many visuals as you can with your nomination.

▶▶▶▶ **EVIDENCE**

Include some case study examples that evidence your project or services. Personal stories and testimonials are always a strong way to demonstrate evidence. Quantify your achievements where possible.

▶▶▶▶ **IMPACT**

Make sure you showcase the impact of your efforts - what difference have those efforts had on the community?

▶▶▶▶ **ENTHUSIASM**

We know your community is committed and enthusiastic - get this passion across in your nomination! Write as if we don't know you.

▶▶▶▶ **CLEAR AND CONCISE**

Make your points clearly and concisely so that there's no confusion as to the amazing work you're doing. Use bullet lists. Avoid jargon.

▶▶▶▶ **REVIEW**

Before you click submit, go back and check you've included all the information you can to best tell your story.

If you'd like to talk through any element of your nomination, please contact us on 01993 630022 or email sarah.benn@plunkett.co.uk



FAQs

We're not a member of Plunkett. Can we take part?

Nominated organisations must be community business members of Plunkett UK and individuals must be involved with a member business.

If you'd like to join or want to upgrade, please contact membership@plunkett.co.uk.

Can we enter if we've been a previous winner of a Rural Community Business Award?

Yes.

Can I enter more than one category?

Yes, please do. You are welcome to enter your community business for as many categories as you wish.

Can more than one nomination be submitted for a nominee?

Yes, although we do encourage you to consider pulling together your nominations to tell your story in even more detail. Entries received for the same nominee will be considered together.

Is there a prize for each of the winners?

Finalists will receive a certificate and winners will receive a plaque. These will be presented at the award ceremony on Thursday 3 July. All finalists will feature in a major communications campaign.

Do I have to pay to enter?

No, entry into the Rural Community Business Awards is free of charge.

How do I make my nomination?

You can submit your nomination on the Plunkett website at www.plunkett.co.uk/rural-community-business-awards.

When do entries close?

You will need to submit your nominations by **5pm on Friday 25 April**.

FAQs continued

How will winners and finalists be selected?

A panel of judges, made up of representatives from award sponsors, will come together on 15 May to go through the nominations and consider their winners and finalists.

For the **Community Business awards**, the judges will identify one winner and two finalists for each category. Entries into the Community Business Award categories will be judged on their ability to demonstrate:

- **Impact** – what direct impact has the community business’s efforts had or continue to have, on the local community and wider society?
- **Inclusivity** – how inclusive has the work been? Have efforts made the project or service accessible to everyone?
- **Innovation** – is this an inspired new venture? Is it something creative and innovative that the judges won’t have seen before?

Our panel of judges will also select three finalists from the nominations received in the **Individual award categories**. The judges will base their decision on the individual efforts shown in the nomination. In particular, they’ll consider what the individuals have done and for how long they’ve been doing it, as well as looking at the overall impact those efforts have made to the community business and the local community. The three finalists from these two award categories will go to a public vote to decide the overall winner.

The Nina Foskett Award for Team Spirit will be judged by the Plunkett staff team. They will choose one winner and two finalists. Nominations to this award category should demonstrate how groups motivate and encourage one another, celebrate successes and provide support in challenging times. We’d like entries to convey kindness, fun, friendships and good humour.

When will the shortlisted finalists be announced?

The finalists from all nine award categories will be announced at **10am on Tuesday 3 June 2025**.

FAQs continued

When will public voting open and close for the Individual award categories (Community Contribution Award and Young Person Award)?

The public voting round for these two award categories will open at **10am on Tuesday 3 June** and will close at **5pm on Thursday 12 June 2025**.

When will we find out if our nomination has been successful?

Following the judging session on 15th May, we'll contact each nomination by email **by Thursday 22 May** to let them know the outcome of their entry.

When will the Rural Community Business Awards take place?

They'll be taking place on **Thursday 3 July** at The Royal Society of Chemistry in London. The Awards Ceremony will be from **5pm-6.15pm**, and the event will be from **3pm-7pm**, with opportunities for structured networking sessions preceding the ceremony, and celebratory drinks afterwards. The event is funded by our generous sponsors. More details will follow nearer the time.

Who will be invited to attend the award ceremony?

All winners and finalists will be invited to attend the award ceremony on Thursday 3 July. Community business finalists will be invited to bring two representatives and each individual finalist is welcome to bring one guest along with them. Finalists will join Plunkett staff, supporters, sponsors and partners for the ceremony.

What is expected of the finalists in order to be a part of the Rural Community Business Awards?

We would love all our finalists to join us at the award ceremony in London, so please do keep **Thursday 3 July** free just in case!

Each finalist is expected to create a short video that will be shown during the ceremony, alongside other category finalists.

We also ask that finalists engage their members, customers and communities in the campaign, sharing content across their website, social media and newsletters.

Dates for your diary

Action	Date
Nomination round opens	Thursday 13 March
Nomination round closes	Friday 25 April, 5pm
Online judging session	Thursday 15 May
Finalists notified	by Thursday 22 May
Finalists announced	Tuesday 3 June, 10am
Voting round opens	Tuesday 3 June, 10am
Voting round closes	Thursday 12 June, 5pm
Rural Community Business Awards ceremony	Thursday 3 July

Have a question that is not answered here?

Please contact sarah.benn@plunkett.co.uk or call 01993 630022 for more information about the 2025 Rural Community Business Awards.



[CLICK HERE TO
NOMINATE YOUR COMMUNITY BUSINESS](#)



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