

# Recruitment Pack: Community Business Officer (Trading)

MAY 2026



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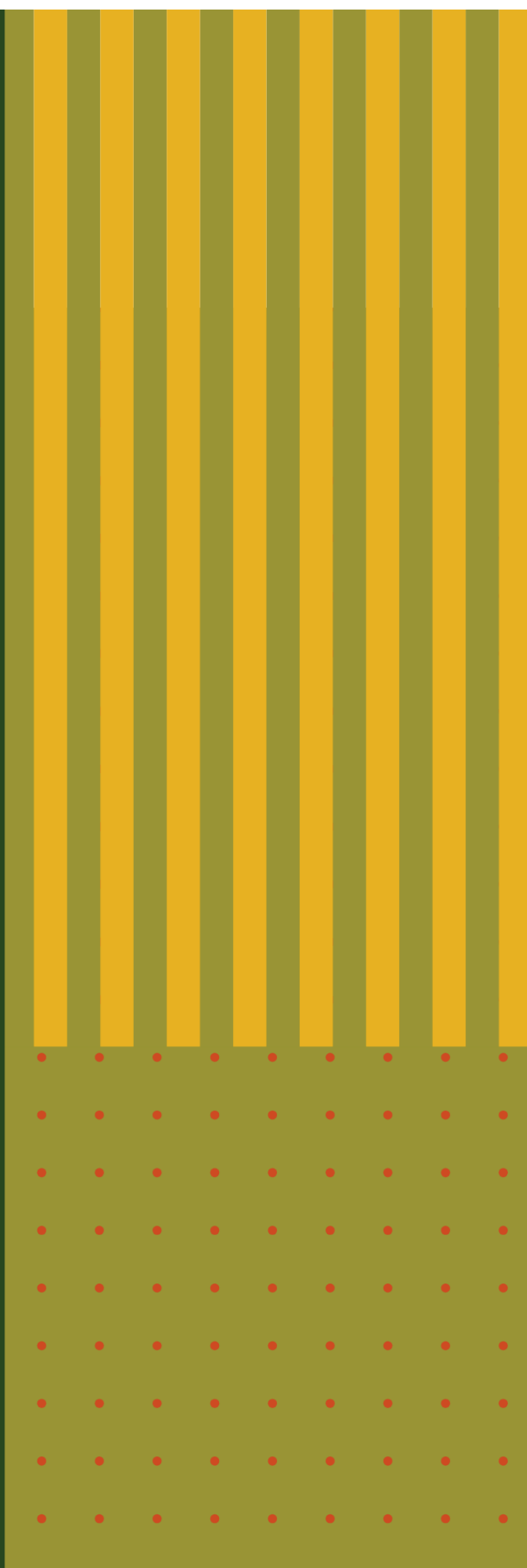
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# Introductory message from the Chief Executive

## **Thank you for your interest in the role of Community Business Officer (Trading).**

We are delighted to provide you with an application pack and it is hoped that the information provided will be of interest and help you with your application process.

Plunkett UK is an established charity dating back to 1919, but our focus is firmly on the present and ensuring our work remains relevant to the communities we seek to represent. Our five-year strategy (2022-2026) outlines our ambition to grow the community business sector in terms of size, geographic reach and impact. This is because of the potential the community business model has in transforming the lives of people living in rural communities and the positive contributions they can make to the local economy and to the environment.

Plunkett has always been an organisation that adapts and evolves to ensure its relevance to society and is making the most difference to people, place and planet. I joined the organisation in 2007 and was appointed CEO in 2017. I can honestly say, I have never known Plunkett's support be in such demand as it is today, and this reassures me that we are on the right path.

I am particularly proud to be leading Plunkett through its next chapter and diversifying our income streams through corporate partnerships and earned income via membership and consultancy. We have recently launched our vision and action plan for making the countryside a more welcoming and inclusive place for a diverse society to live, work and visit. We actively push for change, through our policy and advocacy work with government departments, ministers, think tanks and local authorities across the UK – representing our members and enabling a more supportive environment for community businesses to set up and thrive.





With these exciting plans ahead of us, we are looking for new staff to join us who are passionate about what we do and are equally excited about the journey ahead of us. It doesn't matter what your role is at Plunkett, we are a team who work and support one another to achieve our goals. Everyone has a voice at Plunkett, and if successful, you will be encouraged to use yours and influence our internal culture as well as our future growth and external impact.

As CEO, I believe in working hard, and set a culture of high quality leadership with ambitious but obtainable targets. It is also my role to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to learn, develop and thrive. But I also strive to create an environment which is fun and rewarding to be part of.

Finally, thank you once again for your interest in Plunkett UK and the position available. I hope that this introductory letter has given you a clear sense of our culture and ethos as well as a feel of what we are looking for. If you decide to apply, we do appreciate how long it takes to apply for jobs and you can be sure we will take time and care in reading your CV and supporting statement.

We look forward to hearing from you and exploring your future with us through our selection process.

Yours faithfully,

**James Alcock**  
**Chief Executive**



## Information about the role

Job Title:	Community Business Officer (Trading)
Location:	Office based, Woodstock, Oxfordshire
Reporting to:	Relationships Team Leader
Responsible for:	n/a
Salary Range:	£27,976 - £36,328
Contract:	Full-time and permanent

## About Plunkett UK

Plunkett UK, the operational name for Plunkett Foundation, is a national charity supporting people in rural areas to set up and run successful businesses in community ownership. We do this to achieve our UK-wide vision for resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities.

### What is a community business?

Community-owned businesses are owned and controlled by community members, who each have an equal and democratic say in how the business is run. They can be any type of business ranging from village shops, pubs and cafes, through to woodlands, fisheries and farms.

### Why do we believe that community businesses are a 'Better form of Business'?

Plunkett UK has promoted the community ownership model for over 100 years because of its track record for delivering better businesses for people, communities, the economy, and the environment.

Plunkett is committed to creating innovative, impactful and inclusive spaces. We achieve this by helping community businesses in our five priority areas of impact:

- Provide a wide range of services and amenities that communities value and need – enabling people to live independently, particularly in areas of market failure
- Stimulate the rural economy through localised supply chains
- Create access to employment and training and volunteering opportunities- often supporting people who are excluded from the labour market
- Tackle climate change through environmentally responsible behaviours
- Promote equity, diversity and inclusion by creating safe and welcoming spaces for all

Once trading, community-owned businesses rarely fail, having a five-year survival rate of 97.5% and over twenty-year survival rate of 94%.

### How we work:

Plunkett operates as one team. This means that every member of staff is expected to support Plunkett as a whole, and as and when required, this means helping others to meet important targets or complete organisation-wide initiatives. As such, there will be times when you are asked to work on tasks outside of your job description – but it also means that the whole of Plunkett is there to support you when required.

We strive to live up to our values, and be committed, inspiring, inclusive and collaborative in the way that we work – both internally and externally – and we welcome applications from like-minded individuals. As a member of the Plunkett team, you will demonstrate a knowledge, understanding and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and its application in all that we do.

## Job description

### Job Purpose

The Community Business Officer (Trading) supports established and trading community businesses to strengthen their operations, improve sustainability, and maximise social impact. This is a proactive role, working closely with groups to identify challenges, coordinate adviser support, and help businesses develop resilience, excellent governance, and long-term plans. Although this role has a primary focus on trading community businesses, the postholder must also be able to oversee the adviser allocations process for all groups and provide cross-cover for the Community Business Officer (Early Stages) to ensure continuity of service across the team.

You will be expected to carry out any other duties that may reasonably be required in line with your main duties. All Plunkett staff members are expected to adhere to Plunkett's policies and processes.

### Principal Responsibilities

#### 1. Proactive support for trading community businesses

- Deliver ad hoc support to trading community businesses via Plunkett's phone helpline and enquiries inbox, drawing on our internal advisers when specialist guidance is required.
- Support trading community businesses to access Plunkett's business support service by overseeing the allocation process for trading community businesses.
- Proactively reach out to community businesses to understand their challenges, opportunities, and support needs. This will include phone calls, emails, surveys and in-person visits.
- Seek feedback from community businesses to ensure allocated support has had a positive impact and support the group to access more support if needed.
- Raise awareness of, and encourage implementation of, initiatives such as the Future of Rural Retail report with trading community businesses.
- Build relationships with Plunkett's adviser network, and in collaboration with colleagues, ensure that insights on trading community businesses are shared with the network and the wider Plunkett staff team.
- Contribute to the development of new tools, templates, and guidance for trading businesses.
- Promote Plunkett's programme of training and webinars to trading community businesses.

2. **Promote Plunkett membership to trading community businesses**
  - Raise the visibility and profile of Plunkett membership with trading community businesses, with the aim of retaining existing members, recruiting new members and ensuring that feedback from trading community businesses influences the membership package.
  - Working alongside the Relationships Team Leader, support the delivery of a programme of engagement events, including building an understanding of existing opportunities available to our groups. Attendance at some events will be required, including facilitating and presenting.
3. **Ensure high quality and accurate data input on Plunkett's CRM (Salesforce)**
  - Hold responsibility for ensuring accurate, timely and meaningful data on all trading community businesses by proactively contacting groups, validating information, and updating relevant data fields directly in Salesforce.
  - Maintain a strong sense of ownership over data integrity by regularly reviewing, cleansing and testing data to ensure it is reliable, complete and ready for reporting and analysis.
  - Work collaboratively with the Salesforce Administrator to ensure data is GDPR compliant, structured effectively for organisational insight, and contributes high quality datasets for funder reports, the Annual Report, and Plunkett publications.
4. **Provide support for the helpline and handle enquiries whenever required.**
  - Provide support at busy times, and cover for absence, for the Community Business Officer (Early Stages), including answering the advice line, dealing with early-stage enquiries and overseeing and running the process of allocating support when required.
5. **Provide cover for Relationships and Events Officer and handle enquiries whenever required.**
  - Provide support at busy times, and cover for absence, for the Relationships and Events Officer.

## Person Specification

- **Relationship focused:** you enjoy working with people and are confident building positive, professional relationships. You're approachable, responsive, and comfortable supporting a wide range of contacts, including community businesses, community groups, voluntary organisations, and small businesses. You work collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation, sharing information and contributing to a joined-up approach.
- **Customer centred:** you have experience working with the public and take pride in providing a helpful, friendly service. You listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and aim to ensure a positive experience for everyone you support.
- **Empathetic and patient:** you take time to understand the situations and needs of the people you work with, responding with care and without rushing. You remain calm and supportive even when conversations are difficult or complex, and you're able to read a situation and adjust your approach accordingly.
- **Proactive and confident:** you take initiative, approach tasks positively, and are comfortable acting independently within your role. You're confident engaging with others, raising issues when needed, and following things through to completion. You use your own judgement to determine when it is appropriate to escalate matters to your manager.
- **Communicative:** you're a confident and clear communicator, comfortable managing multiple interactions by phone, email, video call and in person. You adapt your tone and approach to suit different people and situations. You are confident presenting to groups and facilitating discussions or workshops.
- **Community minded:** you bring an interest in community business and an understanding of community business models and the challenges facing rural communities. You're curious about how locally rooted enterprises operate and create impact.
- **Tech comfortable:** you have a good working knowledge of Microsoft Office and are confident using everyday digital tools to stay organised. Experience of using CRM systems — particularly Salesforce — is an advantage, and you're comfortable keeping accurate records and information up to date.
- **Problem solving:** you're practical and solution focused, able to think issues through, handle queries calmly, and find effective responses when challenges arise. You are able to understand complex information and translate it into clear, accessible advice for a range of audiences.
- **Organised and adaptable:** you are able to prioritise your workload effectively, managing competing demands on your time without losing focus or quality. You remain calm and productive when juggling multiple tasks or shifting priorities.

## To apply for the role

**Please submit an up-to-date CV and covering letter**, including a supporting statement of no more than 2 sides of A4 outlining your suitability for the role according to the job description.

**Please send your application to:** [hr@plunkett.co.uk](mailto:hr@plunkett.co.uk)

**Closing date for applications:** 5pm on Friday 3 July 2026

**Interview date:** Held at our offices in Woodstock, w/c 13 July 2026

**Use of AI:** It's 2026, and most of us use AI to help with writing in some way. We get it – and to be transparent, AI helped us put this pack together too! But when it comes to your cover letter, we want to get a sense of you: *what motivates you, what you care about, and why this role speaks to you.*

AI can be great for sparking ideas, but it can also smooth out personality and replace it with generic phrases. So, feel free to use it as a tool – but don't let it take over. We'd much rather read something genuine and personal than something perfectly polished but anonymous. A cover letter with your real voice is far more valuable to us than one that sounds like it was written by a bot.

## Our commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Our approach to EDI goes beyond ‘protected characteristics’ to thinking more broadly about inclusion. Every individual will think and feel differently and we believe that these differences should be embraced, and individual needs taken into account. Additionally, the makeup of the rural communities we work with leads to their own particular diversity and exclusion challenges and opportunities compared to urban areas. Our commitment to EDI, both internally and externally, has been tailored to Plunkett and the communities we serve.

## Plunkett benefits

### Pension

Plunkett UK operates a workplace pension scheme. Plunkett currently contributes 6% of your gross basic salary to the scheme.

In addition, a salary sacrifice scheme is available which gives you the option to exchange part of your salary for pension contributions. This is an ‘opt in’ scheme which means you will not be automatically enrolled into this scheme.

### Life Insurance

Plunkett operates a non-contributory life insurance scheme. In the event of the death of an employee, the insured sum (currently 3 times salary) will be payable to the named beneficiary(ies). This scheme is arranged with MetLife for the benefit of permanent full-time and part-time employees between the ages of 18 and 65 only.

### Living Wage

We believe in rewarding staff fairly for the jobs that they do, and fostering a positive working environment, and we believe that our salaries and terms and conditions reflect this. We are a Living Wage-accredited employer, meaning all our staff and contractors are paid at least the Living Wage.

### Annual Leave

The average UK holiday entitlement including public holidays is 33.5 days.

Plunkett’s holiday entitlement is **35 days**. All Full Time Plunkett employees are eligible for 27 days’ paid holiday in addition to the 8 statutory bank holidays (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday and Summer Bank Holiday). Part Time Employees’ holiday entitlement is calculated on a pro rata basis

### Long Service Leave

Plunkett provides long service leave as follows:

- An additional two days awarded following five years’ service
- A further two days after ten years’ service
- A final two days after fifteen years’ service i.e. maximum 33 days paid holiday excluding statutory holidays and calculated pro rata to the hours you work.

### Birthday Bonus

In addition to holiday entitlement, we offer an additional day’s leave on or around staff birthdays. This is a discretionary benefit which is reviewed annually.

### **Volunteering Days**

We offer staff the opportunity to volunteer for up to 14 hours per annum within their working time. This may be used in their own community, at a community business or by serving on a board of trustees for a charity of their interest.

### **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

An EAP is a confidential service offering support and guidance on a wide range of personal or professional issues that may affect your health and wellbeing. This is a discretionary benefit.

### **Flexibility in working**

We offer ad-hoc flexibility on request to enable staff to accommodate personal events and appointments and commitments as required. To arrange this please speak to your line manager. With effect 2 October 2024 this includes flexibility to manage your contracted working hours between the hours of 8 am till 18.00 pm (Monday to Friday).

### **Training**

Plunkett believes that well trained employees are key to business success and is committed to developing its staff. Training needs will be discussed with your manager during annual performance reviews, but you are encouraged to discuss training with your manager if / when the need arises. A generous annual training budget is developed based on individual, department and organisational needs.

### **Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)**

Plunkett considers your wellbeing and mental health to be very important. We have invested in colleague training; Mary Boullin is our current MHFA.

### **Christmas Party**


Plunkett organise and fund an annual 'staff only' event provided during working hours.

### **Office environment**

We provide a pleasant and modern working environment. This includes a well-equipped kitchen which provides tea/coffee and milk free of charge; a breakout area for lunch and breaks; and a garden area which is maintained by staff volunteers. The office is also based a short walk from services in Woodstock and surrounded by public footpaths offering local walks in the open countryside and Blenheim Palace parkland.

### **Parking/Transport**

Woodstock is served by good public transport links and the office has some on-site parking.



The Quadrangle, Banbury Road, Woodstock,  
Oxfordshire, OX20 1LH

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[info@plunkett.co.uk](mailto:info@plunkett.co.uk)

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

Plunkett Foundation is a registered charity, numbers CC 313743 (England and Wales) and SC 045932 (Scotland). It is a company limited by guarantee, registered number 00213235.

 **Plunkett UK**  
Rural Community Business