

**Minutes of the Plunkett Foundation's Annual General Meeting  
Held by Zoom on 6 September 2023 at 10.30  
Chaired by Stephen Nicol, Plunkett Foundation Chair of Trustees**

**Attendees:**

David	Alcock	Anthony Collins
James	Alcock	Individual Supporter Member
Helen	Aldis	Individual Supporter Member
Ian	Aubrey	Bromyard Community Shop
Hannah	Barrett	Individual Supporter Member
Sheila	Bates	The Village Green Community Benefit Society Ltd.
Alex	Begg	Individual Supporter Member
Sarah	Benn	Individual Supporter Member
Sue	Boer	Individual Supporter Member
Lewis	Bowman	Individual Supporter Member
Richard	Brown	The Bartons Community Benefit Society Ltd
Diane	Cameron	Individual Supporter Member
Margaret	Clark	Individual Supporter Member
Christopher	Coe	Individual Supporter Member
Mary	Coles	Roadwater Village Community Shop
Martin	Collett	English Rural HA
Celia	Collett	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Community Shop
Tim	Coomer	Co-op & Community Foundation (ICOF)
Chris	Cowcher	Individual Supporter Member
John	Dagnall	Ashwater Village Shop Association Limited
Georgina	Edwards	Plunkett Foundation
Ashley	Ellis	Clear Brew Ltd
Harriet	English	Individual Supporter Member
Graeme	Ferrero	Bledington Community Shop Ltd
Quintin	Fox	Gay Lea Foods Co-operative
Wendy	Gilpin	Shocklach Community Pub Limited
Malcolm	Harrison	Pub is The Pub
Ann	Hindley	Individual Supporter Member
Alison	Jeffers	Individual Supporter Member
Gary	Kemp	Zero Waste Refill Hub
Peter	Lane	Bromyard Community Shop
Rob	Langley-Swain	Purpose and Action Ltd
Jon	Lee	Ecology Building Society
Alan	Line	Monks Eleigh Community Shop
Alison	Macklin	Individual Supporter Member
Martin	Meteyard	Individual Supporter Member
Susie	Middleton	Individual Supporter Member
Andy	Milne	North Molton Community Shop Limited
Kathryn	Morrison	Individual Supporter Member
Leslie	Morss	Individual Supporter Member

Hannah	Nadim	The Fox and Goose (Hebden Bridge) Limited
Stephen	Nicol	Individual Supporter Member
George	Ogier	Individual Supporter Member
Laura	Olver	Individual Supporter Member
Dip	Patel	Midcounties Coop
Zanna	Patchett	Individual Supporter Member
Kate	Phillips	Higham CBS
Gary	Pready	Critchley's
Richard	Quallington	Action with Communities in Rural England
Meirion	Roberts	Menter y Glan / Glan yr Afon (Pennal)
Julian	Ross	Individual Supporter Member
Nigel	Sagar	Fox and Goose (Hebden Bridge) Limited
Alison	Scott-Bishop	Hambledon Village Shop
Gemma	Sills	Individual Supporter Member
Adrian	Smith	Individual Supporter Member
Charles	Smyth-Osbourne	Sulgrave Village Shop Association
Claire	Spendley	Individual Supporter Member
David	Sturgess	Brent Knoll Community Shop Limited
Chris	Tapsell	Flintham Community Shop
Kate	Targett	Individual Supporter Member
Paul	Thompson	Plunkett Foundation
Dawn	Williams	Individual Supporter Member
Dave	Wilson	Individual Supporter Member

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair shared technical points for the online meeting as follows:

- Audio and visual contributions are disabled: please raise comments and questions using the Zoom 'chat' function. We will answer as many as possible during the meeting;
- Formal resolutions: please could proposers and seconders for each resolution put themselves forward using the Zoom 'chat' function;
- Recording: the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of taking the minutes, after which the recording will be deleted;
- Voting: the Chair has called for a poll which will be held via SLIDO function (which will invite you to vote on screen) rather than a show of hands – this is allowed under Article 22 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The outcome of each poll will be a final and accurate result.

### 1. Apologies for absence

Ruth	McAreavey	Trustee and Member
Carol	Wilkinson	Skeeby Community Pub Society
Helen Seymour	Seymour	Individual Supporter Member
Adrian Ashton	Ashton	Individual Supporter Member
Diane Montague	Montague	Individual Supporter Member

Mike Billingham	Billingham	Voting by proxy
Deb Wilson	Wilson	Individual Supporter Member
Carol Wilkinson	Wilkinson	Skeeby Community Pub Society

## **2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14 September 2022 via Zoom**

The motion is that the minutes are approved, and they are a proper record of the meeting. The Chair asked if there were any matters of inaccuracy. It was noted that David Alcock had attended the meeting.

No amendments were received from the members and members were asked to approve the minutes.

Proposer: Martin Collett

Secunder: Nigel Sagar

Members poll outcome: Approved 80% /Abstained 20%

*The Chair confirmed that the minutes had been approved*

## **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

The Chair asked if there were any questions or matters arising. There were no matters arising.

## **4. Chair's Statement**

The Chair reflected on 2022 and noted that it was a year of major changes with the economy being seriously impacted by COVID, Ukraine, energy costs and the cost-of-living crisis. Community businesses were experiencing volunteer fatigue, reduced footfall, increased energy and staffing costs which were negatively impacting operating margins.

During this period of duress Plunkett had maintained its core support and he was delighted 23 new community businesses had opened during the year and had helped retain the long-term survival rate of 96%.

Utilising robust evidence to support our calls to action, the Information Hub team completed research which highlighted the breadth, diversity and impact of our sector. Our participation in campaigns to push for a UK-wide Community Right to Buy, influencing the use of Dormant Assets to support social action and calling for applicants to the UK Community Ownership Fund to have access to development advice and support were just a few of our notable activities during the year.

The Chair gave thanks for the support received from all members and our corporate partners, core grant funders and consultancy partners.

A refreshed strategy was launched in 2022 which the Trustees monitored at each Board meeting. 2023 marked the end of Julian Ross and Sue Boer's tenure as Trustees. The Chair gave his personal thanks for all their work and announced that both had been awarded life membership.

The Chair thanked recent trustees Adrian Smith, Zanna Patchett, Ruth McAreavey and Alex Begg; Alison Jeffers, co-optee, and all his fellow trustees for their work. Finally, he gave thanks for the extraordinary work of staff team ably led by James.

The Chair handed over to JA.

## 5. Chief Executive's Report

JA thanked SN for his review of achievements. JA explained that we have traditionally resourced our work through project funding; the largest scale currently being:

- National Lottery Community Fund
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Community Ownership Fund

All of whom had provided us with large amounts of funding which has enabled us to focus our time on diversifying our income streams. Benefact Trust, Scottish Government and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority had funded work in specific geographic areas and their support had been fantastic.

Our work with corporate partners included the Worshipful Company of Innkeepers who had supported Plunkett with useful grant funding for pubs. Midcounties Coop along with other co-operative societies had formed a coalition in support of our members. Bestway had provided sponsorship and Daylesford Organic had provided non-financial support with introductions and a training plan for community businesses was in development. We were providing consultancy services to Thakeham and North Barnes Farm Partnership to support the integration of community businesses into new developments.

Community fundraising included the Walk for Plunkett and the annual awards which brings in valuable income. Alex Begg, trustee, was participating in a Three Peaks challenge in September to raise funds for Plunkett and all were encouraged to sponsor him.

Our membership was building and there was a growing sense of creating a movement. We would be launching a new service for members thanks to the generous support of the National Lottery Community Fund and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The new service would aim to support community businesses to enhance their service and become more relevant, resilient and viable by:

1. Providing a wide range of services and amenities that communities value and need
2. Stimulating the local economy through localised supply chains
3. Creating access to employment, training and volunteering opportunities
4. Tackling climate change through the delivery of environmentally sustainable initiatives
5. Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion by creating safe and welcoming spaces for all.

The Plunkett website would be refreshed; the application for support process would be made easier and would become more accessible UK wide, including resources being translated into Welsh.

JA reiterated his thanks to all those who support Plunkett and handed back to the Chair. The Chair asked if there were any questions. In answer to a question; JA advised that the new service would work the same as present with email support and online access to application forms.

## 6. Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

The Chair formally affirmed the Trustees Report as stated in the Annual Report.

The Chair handed over to Gary Pready (GP) from Critchley's to comment on the Audit Report and invited GP to go through the accounts.

GP confirmed that a clean audit report had been issued. He referred to the Statement of Financial Activities (page 22) and highlighted an increase in total income of £1,052,262 for the current year against a previous income of £1,006,244 for the year ending 2021. Expenditure for the current year of £1,091,068 was consistent with £1,090,321 for the year ending 2021 which indicated cost control. The outcome was a small operational deficit for the year. The negative swing in net gains/losses from 2021 to 2022 reflected movement in the investments portfolio, which is subject to market changes, The balance sheet is a snapshot in time of the charity assets and liabilities. The net position of the charity as of 31 December 2023 was £1,502,558. GP then handed over to Lewis Bowman (LB), Head of Finance.

LB thanked GP and the wider team for an efficient and effective audit. He explained that several large projects had come to an end which had resulted in the 2022 budget showing an operational deficit of £152,000 due to the reduction in income. Thanks to the work of the Plunkett team and the board the operating deficit in 2022 had reduced to £39,346. Further steps had been taken for 2023 and a budgeted deficit of £30,000 was forecast.

Plunkett's investments had suffered because of global conditions in 2022. Plunkett reviews its investment arrangements every 3-5 years and to that end a working group had been formed of both senior management and board members to review the arrangements. While there had been a difficult period for Plunkett we remained in a healthy financial position with regards to reserves. LB handed back to the Chair. The Chair thanked GP and LB and asked if there were any questions.

In answer to a question; LB advised that Plunkett operated an overdraft facility which was utilised on occasion to support short term cashflow requirements.

Members were asked to approve the report and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022.

Proposer: Kath Morrison  
Secunder: Peter Lane

Members poll outcome: Approved 100%

*The Chair confirmed that the accounts had been approved*

## **7. Resolution and Appointment of the auditors**

Members were asked to approve the appointment of Critchley's as auditors.

Proposer: Stephen Nicol  
Secunder: Dawn Williams

Members poll outcome: Approved 97% Abstained 3%

*The Chair confirmed that Critchley's were appointed as auditors.*

In answer to questions LB advised the audit cost was £8250

## **8. Special resolution re the Memorandum and Articles of Association.**

The Chair advised that the revised constitution agreed subject to the consent of the Charity Commission at the AGM in September 2022 was not implemented as the Charity Commission did not agree with the wording. Consent has now been received from the Charity Commission

The Chair asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

The resolution to rescind the current Memorandum of Association and replace with the new Articles of Association was put to the members.

Proposer: Martin Collett

Secunder: John Dagnall

Members poll outcome: Approved 90%/Abstained 10%

The Chair confirmed that the resolution to replace the current Memorandum of Association with the new Articles of Association had been adopted.

### **9. Re-Election of Trustees**

The Chair advised that there are three trustees due to retire by rotation:

Point 35 of the Memorandum of Articles and Association states that: *One-third of the Trustees (or if their number is not a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third) shall retire from office annually at the Annual General Meeting, so that those who have been longest in office since their last appointment shall retire first.*

Julian Ross and Sue Boer were not standing for re-election as they had retired.

Stephen Nicol was obliged to retire and was standing for re-election. The resolution to re-elect Stephen Nicol was put to the members.

Proposer: Alex Begg

Secunder: John Dagnell

Members poll outcome: Approved 95%/Abstained 5%

*The Chair confirmed that Stephen Nicol had been re-elected*

### **10. Election of new Trustees**

One trustee was currently co-opted and was standing for election. The Chair invited Alison Jeffers to introduce herself.

Alison was the Chair of The Red Lion pub in Preston. It was first community owned pub in UK and the village was now looking to set up a community owned shop and café. She had seen first hand how community businesses are so important in rural communities.

The resolution to elect the co-opted trustee was put to the members:

Proposer: Peter Lane

Secunder: Kate Phillips

Members poll outcome: Approved 100%

*The Chair confirmed that Alison Jeffers had been elected to the Board of Trustees. He looked forward to working with her over the coming years.*

### **11. Resolution re Supporter Organisation Membership Fees**

It was proposed that the supporter organisation fee be increased to £200 plus VAT.

All other membership fees would remain unchanged for the present time. A comprehensive review of

membership fees would be undertaken ahead of the 2024 AGM.

SN asked if there were any questions. There were no questions and the resolution to increase the supporter organisation membership fees to £200 plus VAT was put to the members:

Proposer: Graham Ferrero

Secunder: Helen Aldis

Members poll outcome: Approved 92% 8%

*The Chair confirmed that the fee for supporter membership would be increased to £200 plus VAT.*

## **12. Any other business**

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and hoped to meet colleagues personally in 2023.

The Chair asked if there were any questions. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.40 am.