

**Minutes of Plunkett UK Annual General Meeting
Held by Zoom on 10 September 2025 at 10.30
Chaired by Stephen Nicol, Plunkett UK Chair of Trustees**

A full attendance list is appended to the minutes

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that it would be his last year as Chair.

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 15.1 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The outcome of each poll will be a final and accurate result.

1. Apologies for absence

Martin	Collett	Trustee
Zanna	Patchett	Trustee
Jeevan	Jones	Trustee
Helen	Aldis	Trustee
Ann	Hindley	Ealand Post Office
Justin	Jupp	Muker CBS
Kate	Targett	Individual Member
Denise	Winkworth	Individual Member
Robin	Staunton	The Kings Arms (Strete)
Geraldine	Hinds	The Ship Inn (Great Holland)
Corinna	Hartwig	Individual Member
Kate	Phillips	STOP/Higham CBS Ltd
Michelle	Hayes	Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 September 2024 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. No amendments were received from the members and members were asked to approve the minutes.

Proposer; Adrian Ashton

Seconded; Diane Cameron

Members poll outcome: Approved 89 % /Abstained 11%

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 Report

The Chair presented the report and reflected on the operating environment during 2024. Community businesses continued to face economic and political uncertainty, reduced disposable income among customers, and rising costs. While the election of a new Government in July 2024 had improved the policy environment for community businesses, operating conditions remained challenging.

Despite this, the Chair reported continued sector growth. During 2024, 30 new community businesses opened, and Plunkett remained on course to meet its sector growth targets for 2022–2026.

The Chair reported that Plunkett now represented over 800 trading community-owned businesses, primarily in rural areas, with a further 800 businesses in development. Membership had reached its highest level to date at approximately 700 members, including just under 500 community-owned businesses.

Sector Engagement and Development

The Chair reported on the second national conference and Rural Community Business Awards, held at Coin Street Centre, London, in October 2024, which provided an opportunity for sector learning, networking and celebration.

The Chair highlighted ongoing challenges in rural retail and confirmed that Plunkett had established a taskforce on the future of rural retail during 2024. The growth of Plunkett's placemaking work was also noted, with increasing involvement in supporting communities in new housing developments.

Governance

The Chair reported that **Martin Collett** and **Helen Aldis** were retiring from the Board at the end of their maximum six-year terms. The meeting recorded its thanks to both Trustees for their significant contribution.

Members were advised that **Helen Jackson, Gordon Hector and Toby Sandison** had been co-opted to the Board and were standing for election at the AGM.

The Chair further reported that the Trustees had unanimously appointed **Alison Jeffers** as the incoming Chair. Alison Jeffers had served three years as a Trustee and would succeed the current Chair.

Reflections and Acknowledgements

The Chair reflected on the previous five years, during which Plunkett and the sector had navigated significant challenges including the Covid-19 pandemic, rising energy costs and the cost-of-living crisis. During this period, Plunkett had strengthened its funding model, stakeholder relationships, governance, and national profile.

The Chair expressed thanks to the Chief Executive, staff team and Trustees for their commitment and professionalism, and to community business members across the UK for their continued dedication.

The Chair concluded the report and invited the Chief Executive to address the meeting.

5. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive presented his report and reflected on the significant challenges faced during 2024.

It was noted that fundraising continued to be difficult, with increasing pressure on grant funding and rising organisational costs. During 2024, Plunkett needed to raise £1.3m, beginning the year with £250k secured through multi-year contracts. The Chief Executive highlighted the impact of delayed or unsuccessful grant applications on financial performance.

In response to these pressures, the Chief Executive reiterated the importance of Plunkett's income diversification strategy, launched four years ago. This included fee-based services, corporate partnerships, and placemaking activities. While the organisation did not break even in

2024, these income streams continued to reduce the core funding gap and would be further developed in 2025 and beyond.

The Chief Executive also reported on staffing challenges during the year, with higher-than-usual staff turnover. The meeting recorded thanks to staff and Trustees for their resilience and support.

The Chief Executive noted with sadness the death of a colleague in December 2024 and confirmed that she remained in the organisation's thoughts.

Despite these challenges, the Chief Executive confirmed that demand for Plunkett's support continued to grow and that the organisation maintained strong delivery across advice, training, communications and policy activity.

During 2024:

- Communications reached over 15 million people.
- 302 community ownership groups were supported through advice and 44 training events.
- 287 new groups explored community ownership, bringing the total to 797.
- 73 new community societies were registered.
- 33 new community businesses began trading, bringing the total to 828.
- A five-year survival rate of 99% was maintained.

The Chief Executive reported that member impact remained significant. Community businesses safeguarded local services for approximately 2 million people, generated combined turnover of £166m, retained over half of income within local economies, engaged 25,000 volunteers, employed 3,500 staff, and continued to demonstrate strong social inclusion and climate-conscious practices.

Members were encouraged to refer to the full impact report on Plunkett's website.

The Chief Executive introduced the members of the newly established Senior Leadership Team. Each member provided a brief overview of their role and responsibilities, highlighting their contribution to the organisation's strategic objectives.

The Chief Executive concluded the report, thanked members for their continued support, and handed back to the Chair.

6. Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024

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

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

GP explained that Gravita had completed the audit, working closely with the finance team and undertaking a detailed review process.

GP confirmed that a **clean audit opinion** had been issued. He noted that income increased during 2024, although costs also rose, resulting in a small deficit for the year. He confirmed that the charity ended the year with **sufficient reserves and resources**. GP then returned the meeting to the Chair.

SN introduced Adrian Smith (AS), Vice Chair and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

AS addressed the meeting and thanked Gravita for conducting a thorough and professional audit. He reported on the Board's consideration of the Annual Report and Accounts and paid tribute to the Chair for his leadership through both positive and challenging periods. He emphasised the importance of achieving a clean audit opinion, which the Trustees regarded as a key measure of good governance.

AS drew attention to the small deficit for the year of £13k, noting that this was significantly lower than the originally forecast deficit of £66k. He confirmed that Trustees remained focused on eliminating the deficit while continuing to assess organisational performance through broader impact measures as well as financial outcomes.

He reported that the charity remained in a strong financial position, with healthy investments and positive year-on-year performance. Reserves were described as robust, including a substantial level of free reserves, which the Trustees considered an important indicator of financial resilience. He noted that the organisation had successfully eliminated its overdraft and ended the year with a positive bank balance.

Total reserves exceeded £1m, including approximately £900k in free reserves.
The meeting was informed that the Trustees intended to undertake a tender process for the organisation's investment manager during the coming year. AS concluded by confirming that he was pleased to present a positive financial report to the meeting.

The Chair thanked GP and AS; there were no questions.

Members were asked to approve the report and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024.

Proposer; Adrian Ashton
Seconded; Paul Thompson
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 Gravita as auditors.

Proposer; Chris Buckham
Seconded; Paul Thompson
Members poll outcome: Approved 100%
The Chair confirmed that Gravita were appointed as auditors.

8. Election of new Trustees

The Chair advised that there are two Trustees, Helen Aldis (*apologies*) and Martin Collett (*apologies*), who have completed their term of office and retired from their positions this year. He thanked Helen and Martin for their support and contributions to Plunkett.

The Chair advised that there were three Trustees currently co-opted onto the Board to be elected at the AGM. Namely Helen Jackson, Gordon Hector and Toby Sandison who introduced themselves.

The resolution to elect Helen Jackson was put to the members:

Proposer; Stephen Nicol
Seconded; Tim Collins
Members poll outcome: Approved 100%
The Chair confirmed that Helen Jackson had been elected to the Board of Trustees.

The resolution to elect Gordon Hector was put to the members:

Proposer; Tim Collins
Seconded; Chris Buckham
Members poll outcome: Approved 100 % Abstained
The Chair confirmed that Gordon Hector had been elected to the Board of Trustees

The resolution to elect Toby Sandison was put to the members:

Proposer; Stephen John Wood
Seconded; Nigel Sagar
Members poll outcome: Approved 97% Abstained 3%
The Chair confirmed that Toby Sandison had been elected to the Board of Trustees

9. Membership Fees

The Chair advised that the Board of Trustees had reviewed the current membership fees at their last meeting and had decided not to increase them.

10. Any other business

The Chair invited any questions from the meeting.

Sam Ross addressed the meeting to thank the staff team for their hard work during a challenging year. She also expressed thanks to the Chair and Trustees for their leadership and ongoing commitment to the organisation.

Alison Jeffers thanked the Chair for his strong leadership, and extended her thanks to all Trustees, past and present, as well as to Plunkett's members for their continued support.

The Chair confirmed that he would continue as a member of Plunkett and would remain actively engaged with the organisation's work.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 11. 29 am.

APPENDIX: A

Attendees

Nigel	Sagar	241 Co-operators Limited
Adrian	Ashton	Individual Member
Gary	Bell	Benenden's Community Shop
Martin	Richards	Bishops Caundle Community Store
Chris	Buckham	Bretforton Community Shop Limited
David	Miskin	Bretforton Community Shop Ltd
Celia	Collett	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Shop and Post Office
Milly	Bagot	ByRuby
Natalie	Hostome	ByRuby
Alan	Plom	Chiselborough Parish Council / Benefit Society
Corinna	Hartwig	Community Alliance Broxbourne and East Herts
Tim	Coomer	Co-op & Community Finance
Jules	Procter	Electric Dray Man
Gerry	McMahon	Fadmoor Community Pub Limited
Sam	Ross	Farmborough Shop & Café
David	Fitch	FOSCPO
Louise	Johnson	Glenuig Community Inn CBS
Alex	Begg	Gressenhall Community Enterprise Plunkett UK
Joanna	Swift	Haddenham Community Enterprise Limited
Philippa	Groves	Hesket Newmarket Community Shop

Kate	Phillips	Higham CBS Ltd
Alan	Whitaker	Iffley Community Shop Association Ltd
Mrs Dakin	Dakin	Ilmington Community Shop Limited
Gillian	Loneragan	Individual Member
Paul	Jennings	Individual Member
Ian	Dolan-Betney	MacGregor's Community Hub Limited
Chris	CRAGGS	McFarlane Telfer Ltd
Alan	Line	Monks Eleigh Community Shop
David	Whittle	Individual Member
Toby	Sandison	Individual Member
Nico	Borkmann	Individual Member
Ruth	McAreavey	Newcastle University
Margaret	Clark	Individual Member
Gary	Phillips	Normandy Community Shop and Cafe
Paul	Fielding	Paul Fielding
Alison	Jeffers	Individual Member
Diane	Cameron	Individual Member
Martin	Meteyard	Individual Member
Adrian	Smith	Individual Member
Andrew	Dubock	Individual Member
David	Lydiat	Individual Member
Dean	Stewart	Individual Member
Gemma	Sills	Individual Member
Gordon	Hector	Individual Member
Harriet	English	Individual Member
Helen	Jackson	Individual Member
James	Alcock	Individual Member
Laura	Olver	Individual Member
Michael	Wolverson	Individual Member
Stephen	Nicol	Individual Member
Malcolm	Harrison	Pub is The Hub
Frederick	Burke	Shareshill Village P.O and Store
James	Purrett	Spencer Hayes Group
Alison	Macklin	Individual Member
Paul	Thompson	Individual Member
David	Knight	The Co-op
Michelle	Hayes	The Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub Ltd
Nick	Greenall	Tibberton Community Shop Ltd (Salop)
Tor	Justad	Tor Justad Associates
Laura	Peel	Utility Aid
Stephen John	Wood	West Fife Community Trading Limited
Tim	Collins	West Fife Community Trading Limited
Paul	Andersen	WMVS
David	Knight	Wootton Community Stores

Kathryn	Morrison	Life Member
Maurice	Edgington	Your Store Limited