

Impact Report 2021



**Plunkett
Foundation**

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Introduction

The Plunkett Foundation is a UK charity, working to provide 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 such as shops, cafes, farms and woodlands are owned and run democratically by members of the community on behalf of the community.

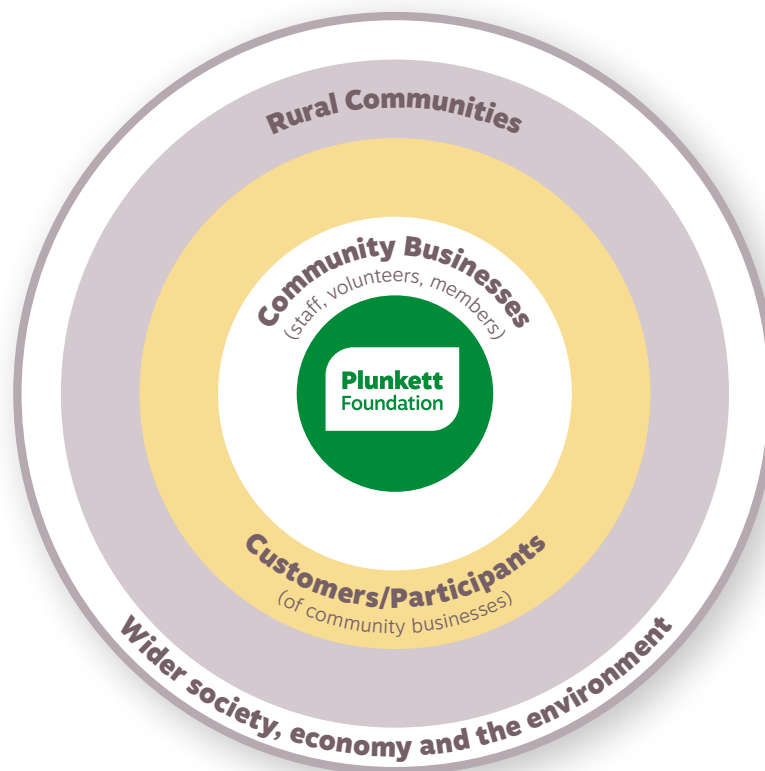
We provide practical advice to help communities establish and run successful community businesses, via a network of advisers. Plunkett works with a range of organisations across the UK to support both new and existing rural community businesses.

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 800 rural community businesses to set up in the UK, which have an exceptionally high 96% long-term survival rate.



Our Impact – The Ripple Effect

This report offers an insight into the impact of Plunkett's work in 2021 and demonstrates the 'ripple effect' of our support through the amazing work achieved by community businesses. By supporting community businesses, we are helping them to better serve local people, leading to social, economic and environmental benefits.



The 'ripple effect'

- Plunkett provides access to expert advice, support, and guidance to a community business (or a 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 committee members, 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, boost the local economy and care for the environment.



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Sector Growth in 2021

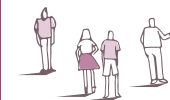
Plunkett's mission is to grow the number of community businesses across the UK, as well as to help them remain strong in the long-term. We help community businesses with a range of activities such as business planning, diversification, continuity planning, and future proofing of services.

- The community business sector grew 3% in 2021, with around 840 businesses trading across the UK by the end of the year.
- Despite the disruption of the pandemic, interest in starting a new community business has grown by 26% over the last two years.
- The number of community shops and pubs has grown over the last 20 years:
 - In 2001 there were just 67 community shops and 4 community pubs.
 - By 2021, there were 413 community shops and 147 community pubs.
- Community businesses have excellent survival rates. For shops the long term survival rate is 92.5% (12 out of every 13 survive); for pubs it is even higher at 99%. To put these numbers into context, for the average UK small and medium sized enterprise the 5 year survival rate is 44%.

COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

collectively employ about

**3,000 FTE
& 25,000**
STAFF
volunteers



An estimated

325,000

people will benefit
from the community
businesses that Plunkett
supported in 2021 including

18,000

VULNERABLE
PEOPLE



27 community businesses

supported by Plunkett
opened in 2021:

1 COMMUNITY
HUB **11** SHOPS **15** PUBS



To get set up, these
businesses raised around

£3.4m
from **6,300**
shareholders

To date, we estimate that at
least **£33m** has been raised
in community shares, by over
84,000 people

TYPES OF COMMUNITY BUSINESS

413 SHOPS

PUBS **147**

103 LAND
BASED
BUSINESSES

such as farms
and woodlands



172

OTHER FORMS
OF BUSINESS

such as community hubs,
bakeries, breweries and arts
and crafts

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Our frontline
STAFF TEAM
answered **529**
enquiries from:
327 GROUPS
looking to set up a new
community business
202 EXISTING
COMMUNITY
BUSINESSES
for advice such as improving
their service offer, recruiting
new members or volunteers, etc.



We delivered
344 DAYS
of adviser support to

215
COMMUNITIES

237 DAYS
with a specialist adviser to
help with business planning,
fundraising, community
engagement, etc.



ACTION
PLANNING 78
DAYS

19 DAYS OF
MENTORING

of business
healthchecks **10**
DAYS



We also awarded 46 individual grants, loans, and bursaries, totalling over £700,000.

- 100% of community businesses we supported in 2021 were able to address the issues they faced when they came to us for support.
- 100% of groups supported would recommend Plunkett to another organisation.

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Focus on Impact: More than a Pub



The More Than A Pub (MTAP) programme, run by the Plunkett Foundation with funding from Power to Change and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), came to an end in 2021. Delivered in partnership with social lenders Cooperative and Community Finance and Key Fund, with the support of a steering group which included The British Beer and Pub Association, CAMRA, Pub is the Hub, Locality, Cooperative and Mutual Solutions and The Bevy Community Pub, the programme has fundamentally changed the landscape for community-owned pubs.

The community pubs supported by the MTAP programme are 'more than a pub' – they provide lunch clubs for older or isolated people, hot meals for schools, meeting places for charities, clubs and celebrations, and they help their neighbourhoods and local economy to thrive. MTAP delivered resources, guidance, training and support to 313 community groups in England on their journey of community ownership. Operating over 5 years, across two phases (2016-2018 and 2018-2021), it directly led to the creation of 60 new community-owned pubs, which more than doubled the number of community pubs UK-wide. The programme has helped to develop a substantial pipeline of interested groups looking at community-ownership of their pub (including Scotland and Wales).

“The 'More Than A Pub' team at Plunkett Foundation offered the Black Cap Community excellent advice, guidance and financial support at a crucial time. The wealth of knowledge and experience has helped us put all the right tools and plans in place to maintain the long running #WeAreTheBlackCap campaign in its fight to save the iconic LGBTQ+ pub and performance venue in Camden, London; and launch its community take-over income generation plans.”

The Black Cap Foundation - May 2021

When supported by Plunkett through an adviser or a bursary, the chances of community pub groups successfully reaching trading status increased from 1 in 10 to 1 in 3. For groups that received funding through a loan and grant package, 100% went on to start trading as a community pub.

**Baseline
success rate
for all pub
enquiries**

1 in 10

Estimate based on 472 enquiries and 45 openings between 2019-2021.

**Advisor
support**

1 in 3

122 new groups supported, of which 37 are now trading, 41 remain in development.

**£2.5k bursary
(£5k for
deprived
areas)**

1 in 3

57 new groups received bursaries, of which 16 are now trading and 22 remain in development.

**£50k grant
+
£50k loan**

100%

19 new groups received loan/grant of which 15 are now trading and 4 actively working towards opening.

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Training & Peer Support



In 2021, Plunkett hosted 100 events for people setting up or involved with community businesses:

- 6 workshops
- 9 focus groups
- 74 webinars
- 2 virtual study visits
- 4 training courses
- 5 network meetings

743 individuals benefitted from our events, of which a third attended more than one event. 93% of attendees rated the quality of the event they attended as good or very good.

Webinars covered a broad range of topics, including ethics and sustainability; committee responsibilities; loan finance; submitting successful grant applications and diversifying services.



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We also hosted our first ever Greener Community Business Virtual Summit on Earth Day 2021, where representatives from community businesses could learn about:

- Installing electric vehicle charging points
- Reducing the carbon footprint of their business
- Setting up a refill scheme and reduce single-use packaging
- Starting a community fridge and reducing food waste

There are 2,550 members of our Community Pubs, Community Shops and Woodlands Social Enterprise Networks, where they can share and respond to questions from other community businesses.

“I have found Plunkett's regional networks for community pubs really valuable. I've heard a lot about other businesses in the North East and Yorkshire. It's been really helpful, particularly during COVID, to hear what others are doing. I've seen pictures of all the outdoor spaces that people have developed and it's given us inspiration.”

David Catterall, Ryton Cross Community Pub

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The Anglers Rest in Bamford, Derbyshire was first supported by Plunkett in 2016, through an adviser and a study visit to an existing community pub. They also received a grant through MTAP in 2020 to set up an essentials shop, with a focus on local sourcing. Now, they are a successful community hub consisting of a pub, shop, café and post office with significant social and economic impact. In 2021, they reported that 80% of their members have said that they have got to know more people since the pub became community-owned, and 75% said they feel more part of the community. The pub's expenditure on wages and local suppliers results in approximately £200,000 p.a. going into Hope Valley's local economy. The Anglers Rest now hosts its own study visits, inspiring others setting up a community pub.



South Cowal Lido Community Shop in Scotland approached Plunkett for support in 2021 when they were in the process of taking over from the previous owner. The committee gained the confidence they needed to modernise the tills, stocktaking and bookkeeping systems, and took on a new accountant through Plunkett's one of recommended supplier for members, Cadwallender. By updating these systems the committee hope to ensure that the shop and post office, which provide an essential service and paid employment in a very remote coastal area, remain viable in the long term.

Lorna Ahlquist, the Chair: *"The shop is and has been profitable and a great community asset. It has a lot more potential which we feel confident in developing. In the future we expect it to generate profits that can go back into the community."*

Mud Pie CIC, based in South Gloucestershire and Bristol, runs outdoor Forest School sessions and after school clubs. 65% of the children supported have additional needs, and 1 in 3 have a disability. In 2021, when their business was going through a period of growth, they approached Plunkett for advice on their legal structure. After accessing resources through a Plunkett advisor, funded by the Powering Up programme, they decided to expand the business but remain a CIC, launching a community fund to provide subsidised sessions for families on low incomes.

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The Coed Talyan Land Trust (CTLT) is a Community Benefit Society that promotes agroecology, food sovereignty and provides land workers with access to land, training and resources. Their base is a 70 acre woodland on the western edges of the Brecon Beacons National Park. They are creating a low impact development for sustainable co-housing and have cultivated a fungal forest nature reserve, a 'Refungium'. In 2021 they began offering their first courses in mushroom cultivation and carpentry for women.



Plunkett provided CTLT with specialist support in its early stages on governance, planning a share offer and financial model, using funding from the Dulverton Trust and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

James Scrivens, Society Secretary: *"It has been invaluable. Financial modelling is not our area of expertise - we understand mushrooms and woodlands. Making sense of the numbers in an interactive way is essential... Having a critical friend outside of the community business to challenge details in the business plan saved a huge amount of time and that external push was a great help."*

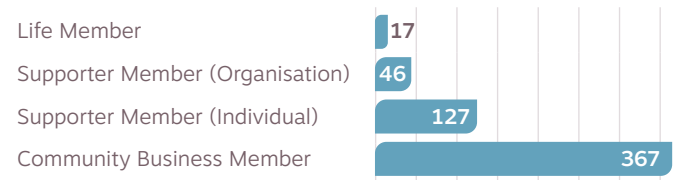
Membership

Membership is the cornerstone of our work at the Plunkett Foundation. The strength of our network of community business members, partners and supporters cannot be underestimated – without our members, we would not be able to represent the interests of rural communities and champion community ownership across the UK with the media, funders, policy makers, and other stakeholders.

- Plunkett's membership rose to 557 members, growing by 18% in 2021.
- 49 new groups set up as Community Benefit Societies using our 'Model Rules' service for members.
- In 2021 we formed a new **Community Business Membership Panel**, made up of 12 individuals involved in a diverse range of community businesses across the UK. The panel helps to inform our work and improve our services, develop relevant training, and strengthen our advocacy.
- In the winter of 2021, Plunkett made representation to wholesalers following consultation with our community shops members, to negotiate a fairer deal to ensure they were not disproportionately impacted by national supply issues.



Total Plunkett Foundation Members: 557



Plunkett Foundation Community Business Members



Insight: Westbury Community Shop and Café were experiencing difficulties improving their turnover. However, thanks to innovation led by an energetic staff team, combined with practical support and advice provided through a membership business healthcheck, the shop was able to improve its turnover. The improvement of their turnover in 2021 means that the business will be able to remain sustainable in the long term, offering a place for residents to meet, stocking local products and continuing to provide a valuable service.

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- In 2021 with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation we co-created a film to celebrate the work of **Siop Griffiths**, Penygroes, Wales, one of the community shops that we're incredibly proud to have supported through our advice, training and technical expertise. Siop Griffiths works to provide skills and a future for young people in rural Wales. The film is also recognition of the long-term support Plunkett has received from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation as a partner and a funder.
- Community Shares Scotland, in partnership with Cooperative Development Scotland and Plunkett Foundation released a film, '**Community Business: Making It Easy**', to offer a simple guide to community ownership.



- Our annual **Better Business reports for Community Shops and Pubs** highlighted the resilience of the community ownership model, even during the worst months of the pandemic in 2020. Community shops saw an increase in demand, and community pubs continue to diversify their services to be 'more than a pub'. The reports provided evidence for our advocacy work and have supported the research of other organisations, such as Power to Change and the Association for Convenience stores.
- In November we recognised the achievements of the UK's most inspiring community businesses through the **Rural Community Business Awards**. The seven winners were selected from 21 finalists, representing a wide range of businesses from across the UK. They were presented with their awards by Dame Prue Leith DBE who hosted the special ceremony, headline sponsored by Hastoe Housing Association.



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Raising Awareness - Media Highlights



Plunkett plays an important role in connecting local and national journalists with the inspirational stories of the efforts of community businesses to overcome challenges and create better places to live.

- A fundraising campaign run by **The Mirror**, arranged with Plunkett, raised around £45,000 to help save **the Trawden Arms** in Lancashire. Thanks to the campaign and the generosity of Mirror readers across the country, the community were able to buy the pub and open their doors in November 2021. It is now a thriving hub for the community, hosting social events and offering space for local artists to run creative workshops.
- In June 2021 **Kirkoswald Community Shop** appeared on **BBC Breakfast**. Our Chair, Stephen Nicol, was also interviewed on the programme. The small rural community in Cumbria had just seven weeks to raise £200,000 to save the 100-year-old shop when it came up for sale in 2020. Following national media coverage donations came in from across the country and as far afield as Australia and Texas. The shop started trading under community ownership in July 2021 and has over 600 members.



- An article in **The Sun** showcased the heroic efforts of **Bladon** residents to save their pub, **the White House**, which was famous for being the local of the young Winston Churchill. £300,000 was raised by 450 people and local carpenters, electricians and tilers volunteered their time to refurbish the pub for its re-opening.
- Plunkett has been supporting the community of Knoydart, Scotland, to take ownership of their only pub, **the Old Forge**. As the most remote mainland pub in the UK – only accessible by 18 miles on foot, or a 7 mile sea crossing – the pub received national media attention from the **BBC**, boosting the buyout campaign.
- A number of community businesses, and the benefits they bring to rural neighbourhoods, were showcased in the **Sunday Times**, as part of their feature on 'Best Villages in the UK'.

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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.



Community Ownership Fund

- The UK Community Ownership Fund has long been advocated for by Plunkett and our partners. We were engaged by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the early-stage design and rollout of the fund, and were pleased to see six Plunkett members awarded funding in the first round, alongside 15 other community ownership projects. We remain engaged to provide feedback on the Fund's delivery to make sure it is accessible to those who need it most.

Levelling Up

- Plunkett was involved in the development phase of the Levelling Up White Paper, representing the rural voice in the Communities Partnership Board and providing the positive impact of community businesses on rural local economies (as we made clear in our representation to the APPG for Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse, and in our submission to Labour's Rural Policy Review). We continue to emphasise the importance of rural proofing government funding, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

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Community Rights

- Plunkett continues to campaign for a UK-wide Community Right to Buy, as already exists in Scotland. Although a Community Right to Bid exists in England, with no first refusal on assets communities often find themselves outbid.
- Plunkett is working with Welsh stakeholders to advocate for the implementation of community rights legislation, including a Right to Buy.
- In 2021 we took over the Keep It in the Community (KIITC) platform, an online register of Assets of Community Value in England. Following a data refresh in 2022, we will use the data from KIITC to assess the effectiveness of the current ACV legislation to submit as evidence to upcoming government consultation as announced in the Levelling Up White Paper.

Local Food

- In 2021 we launched our Community Food Strategy, outlining our vision for realising the potential for new and existing community businesses, such as farms, markets, shops, fisheries and bakeries, can reduce food inequality and create a fairer, more sustainable food system.
- We submitted responses to consultations by the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland and Scotland on national food policy frameworks, suggesting ways of integrating community business into all aspects of the food system, from production to distribution.



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A community business doesn't just support a community, it's also a lifeline for individuals – a place to volunteer; to be a part of something that encompasses community spirit. It is a place that brings people together, where everyone is included. In 2021, our work has been supported by fundraising by community businesses and members of the public looking to give something back to Plunkett, to enable us to support more groups in future.

Community business fundraising

Several community businesses, that have benefited from Plunkett's support in the past, have supported our work by hosting their own fundraising events.

- The White House in Bladon community pub held a quiz and raffle in aid of Plunkett and also took part in the Blenheim 7k Fun Run, raising over £200.
- Bledington Community Shop and Longborough Village Shop hosted cake sales at the National Trust property, Chastleton House and together raised nearly £1,300.



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- On the 14th to 16th May, 200 Plunkett supporters donned their walking boots and collectively walked more than 1,000 miles as part of Walk for Plunkett, raising over £8,500 for our support services for community businesses. Paul Jennings from the Fox at Loxley community pub took his walking challenge one step further by dressing as a fox for his walk. Paul's incredible efforts saw him raise over £1,500. Walk for Plunkett will return in 2022 from 6th to 8th May and we look forward to welcoming more people to the next Walk for Plunkett challenge.



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Individual Fundraising

Supporters of community business have been setting themselves sponsored challenges to raise money for Plunkett's vital work.

- Taking on the iconic London Marathon on Sunday 3rd October, Plunkett's Head of Engagement, Harriet English raised £1,641 for Plunkett. After months of dedication to training, Harriet went on to complete the course in an amazing 4:24.06.



- Eight year old Lucy set herself the challenge of reading 26 books in 26 weeks and in doing so raising money for three charities including the Plunkett Foundation. Lucy successfully completed her challenge and very kindly raised £70 for Plunkett.



- Seven year old cake lover, Esme decided to host a cake sale for Plunkett in July. With her parents help, Esme baked over 15 cakes and raised over £220.



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Plunkett's Rural Vision sets our five key areas of opportunity for community business to improve rural lives:

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, click the image below.



As we face rising costs of living, a worsening climate crisis, and continue to recover from the pandemic and a war in Europe, Plunkett will continue to advocate for and provide support to community businesses that improve wellbeing, provide equitable access to food and employment, and build a fairer and more sustainable economy. If you share our vision and want to support us, there are many ways to support our work:

Become a supporter member

Fundraise for us

Make a donation

With your help, we can continue to help rural communities create businesses that are innovative, inclusive and impactful.

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



THE DULVERTON TRUST



We are also grateful to have received sponsorship from the following organisations: Hastoe Housing, Abri, Suma, Retail Mutual, Creventa, Triodos, Allied Westminster, Ancora Law, Coop, Key Fund, Cooperative Community Finance (CCF), David Wilson Homes, Your Co-op, MJD Hughes, MO Architecture, Anthony Collins, and Adnams.



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