



Supporting rural community-owned businesses

RECRUITMENT PACK

Head of External Affairs
January 2025



Introductory message from the Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of External Affairs.

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:	Head of External Affairs
Location:	Office based position in Woodstock, Oxfordshire
Reporting to:	Deputy Chief Executive
Line Reports:	Membership Manager x2 and Communications Manager
Salary Range:	£40,000 - £61,800
Contract:	Full Time Permanent

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.

We help community businesses to:

- 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 99% 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

<p>Job Purpose</p> <p>This role will represent our growing membership, made up of community-owned businesses, partner organisations and supporters who back the community ownership movement.</p> <p>The role holder will advocate for a supportive policy, legislative and funding environment in which the community-owned business sector can flourish. They will also be responsible for building effective communications campaigns to recognise and celebrate how community-owned businesses make rural communities more resilient, thriving and inclusive places for everyone.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Principal Accountabilities</p> <p>Represent Plunkett and advocate for the community business model at strategic policy focused meetings and events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and engage with relevant stakeholders in the political sphere that will support us to achieve our political and policy asks • Attend a wide range of sector relevant policy events and network meetings to amplify the rural community business voice • Place rural community businesses on the agenda of the current political landscape • Influence and shape support for rural community businesses at local, regional and national political level • Provide relevant briefings to the Executive Team and other team members as required

Principal Accountabilities (cont)

Lead on the production of our research and report publications:

- Review Plunkett's current research and report output and reach
- Capture and communicate Plunkett's impact against our strategic objectives
- Oversee and co-ordinate Plunkett member responses to relevant political and legislative consultations
- Oversee the production of our Impact Report and Better Business Reports – our two flagship publications celebrating the impact of Plunkett and the community business sector
- Design, research and draft other relevant research publications as required
- Coordinate the delivery of associated events and campaigns to promote our research and raise our profile to target audiences
- Collaborate across the organisation and produce other reports and publications as necessary – e.g. promoting the impact of community-ownership within place-making and new communities.

Champion our members current needs, and create a recognised national movement of rural community businesses:

- With direct input from our members, shape and lead on our political and policy asks
- Build a recognised rural community business movement that places Plunkett as the leading support provider with a bespoke membership service
- Embed our external affairs work in our organisational communications strategy

Design and lead delivery of Plunkett's Membership Services:

- Design and shape membership's strategic objectives and oversee delivery of our membership ambitions
- Continue to build a comprehensive supplier directory to help our community business members thrive
- Ensure our membership service is responding to the needs of our community business network and enables community businesses to deepen their social impact
- Monitor membership's financial performance against budget and implement mitigation measures as required
- Be responsible for the membership team consisting of two Membership Managers (direct line management), as well as a Membership Officer and Impact Officer
- Monitor membership satisfaction and seek to continually improve our membership offer

Design, and lead Plunkett's Communication activities:

- Design and shape Plunkett's communication strategy and oversee its effective delivery
- Ensure all of Plunkett's communication channels reflect our identity, brand and core messaging
- Ensure Plunkett's communication activities reflect on Plunkett's strategic objectives and content is tailored appropriately across our different platforms

- Design and oversee the delivery of core organisational communication campaigns alongside Plunkett’s Communications Manager and Marketing and Communications Officer
- Monitor and track the impact and reach of our communications activities
- Monitor communication’s financial performance against budget and implement mitigation measures as required
- Be a confident Plunkett spokesperson including participating in media interviews, events and meetings
- Work closely with the partnerships teams as well as the community business team to provide meaningful and effective communications support as required
- Overall management of our Communications Manager and our Marketing and Communications Officer

Be an active member of Plunkett’s Senior Leadership Team

- Lead and represent Plunkett’s External Affairs activities at a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) level
- Contribute to organisational strategic discussions and meetings
- Oversee and report on the External Affairs’ business plan activities and its associated KPIs and budget – providing regular monitoring reports at both SLT and Board level
- Maintain Plunkett’s reputation and apolitical stance within our external affairs activities
- Managing both Membership Managers and the Communications Manager
- Identify new business opportunities and lead on development and submissions as required.

Person Specification

- **Ambitious:** you push yourself and those around you to raise your game and go above and beyond. You’re determined and always strive to deliver great work.
- **Knowledge:** you’ll have good working knowledge of both national and local government, as well as policy and legislation development within the UK.
- **Creative:** you enjoy problem solving and coming up with new ways of looking at a challenge. You’re a great storyteller using your creativity to land messages with impact.
- **Influencer:** you have exemplary influencing skills at all levels with the ability to maintain and extend stakeholder relationships
- **Collaborative:** you thrive on being part of a team forging great relationships inside and outside of the organisation. You’re open, helpful, considerate and hands-on.
- **Positive:** you’re driven and your energy and enthusiasm for the work you do are infectious. You’re persevering and resilient, seeing problems and setbacks as a normal part of everyday life.
- **Accurate:** you are a passionate, articulate and compelling communicator. Your attention to detail is razor sharp. You take pride in your work and aim for the highest levels of professionalism in all you do.
- **Organised:** you’re a great organiser, both of yourself and others where appropriate. You enjoy the rigour of the planning process and can re-prioritise where required.
- **Proactive:** you’re not afraid to take the initiative, in fact you relish it, you’re action oriented. You’ll arrive champing at the bit to take the lead and get stuck in.

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

Closing date for applications: 9am on Monday 24 February 2025

Interview date: Interviews will be held during the week commencing 3 March 2025 at Plunkett UK's offices in Woodstock, Oxfordshire or via video conference.

Our commitment to Equity, Diversity and 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 Benefits Programme

An online platform offering employee benefits including a Wellbeing Centre as well as discounts and purchasing benefits with well-known brand names.

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). *See appendix A.*

Should you wish to vary your hours, pattern or place of work on a permanent basis you have a statutory right to request a change to your contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly provided you have been employed with Plunkett for one day at the date the application is made.

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; Sarah Benn 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 break out 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.

Appendix A

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS (FWH)

Purpose

Plunkett recognises the benefit of providing a flexible working environment for employees where this is appropriate and reasonably practicable. FWH allows colleagues greater flexibility to manage their time during their working day to promote a good work-life balance and deliver a high standard of work. The intention of FWH is to have a less rigid approach to hours of work to allow staff, and their line managers, to agree informally what start and finish times work best for them and Plunkett.

FWH should be used in the spirit it is intended and should not encourage clock watching of colleagues. We expect trust between employees and Plunkett and a sensible element of give and take, conducive to the smooth running of the business.

Details

The standard employment contract states the working hours are 9 am till 17.00 pm. With effect Tuesday 2 October 2024 the FWH will be 8am till 18.00 pm.

Do I need to use FWH?

No – if your current hours give you sufficient flexibility you don't need to use FWH. However, if you require further flexibility to your current hours please speak to your line manager.

Do I have to work the same flexible hours each day?

No – you can mix and match your days. The proviso is that your line manager is advised in advance by email/msg (no later than 10am on the day) to ensure Plunkett meets it's duty of care in ensuring your safety.

How many hours do I need to work each day?

Your contracted daily hours remain the same e.g if your daily contracted hours are 8 per day (inc. lunch break) then you are still required to work 8 hours but you now have the flexibility to adjust your work pattern within the hours of 8am till 18.00pm.

Can I use FWH if I have agreement to work from home?

Yes.

Can I skip my lunch break?

Plunkett is obliged by law (The Working Time Regulations 1998), to ensure that you have a rest break during your work day of at least a 20-minute break if you are expected to work more than 6 hours during the day. Therefore, your working pattern should be managed in line with that requirement. Updated 2 October24

Can I take a longer lunch break than my normal contracted break when using FWH?

Yes.

Is my Contract of Employment affected by FWH?

No. This is an ad hoc arrangement and there will be no permanent change to your contractual terms and conditions.

Get in touch



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www.plunkett.co.uk

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