



**Plunkett  
Foundation**

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

# Impact Report 2022



# About Plunkett

Plunkett Foundation is a UK-wide charity with a vision for resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities. To achieve this, we support people in rural areas to set up and run a wide range of businesses that are genuinely owned by local communities, whereby members have equal and democratic control. Our support is delivered through a core staff team and network of 50 business advisers across the UK.

Today, we represent over 700 'community businesses' throughout the UK, from shops and pubs through to woodlands, farms and fisheries. In practical terms, Plunkett raises awareness of the community business model UK-wide and provides business support and training to help these businesses start-up and go on to thrive. As a membership organisation, we also seek to represent the interests of rural community businesses through research, policy and public affairs.

## What is a community business?

Any type of business that trades for community benefit and which is democratically owned and controlled by the local community.

To find out more about what we do, go to our website or get in touch:

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

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# Why Plunkett's work matters



It is so inspiring to mark 2022 as another year of growth and resilience of community businesses. This Impact Report recognises the achievement of the 736 that have faced incredibly difficult times, but continue to trade for the benefit of their local community.

While we all celebrate the positive impact of the community business sector in 2022, it is important to remember that they are not immune to the current crisis. During the pandemic, most community businesses weathered the storm exceptionally well, and against the odds maintained a 96% survival rate. However, increasing costs due to rising energy prices and inflation, combined with slowing trade due to falling incomes, means that businesses throughout the UK are now yet again facing enormous financial pressures. As a result, Plunkett estimate that as many as one in every five community businesses is at risk of reduced service or even closure.

Every community business trading at this time is testament to not only the model, but also the thousands of people behind them driving them forward each and every day. Community businesses have a proven track record of responding quickly and effectively in a time of crisis.

This is why Saga and our members were proud to support Plunkett's service in 2022. This funding covered the costs of an in-house community business adviser and the main helpline, allowing Plunkett's helplines to handle more enquiries and provide more advice about starting, adapting and growing inclusive, innovative, and impactful businesses.

Given that there continue to be tough times ahead, we encourage community business leaders to make the most of the valuable advice and support available through Plunkett, whether that is utilising the training hub, or applying for one to one specialist advice to adapt business plans to manage the current economic challenges. We also of course encourage each and every community business in the process of setting up to seek Plunkett's help every step of the way. You are not alone and are in very good company. Here at Saga, we know Plunkett will continue to support new and existing businesses to navigate challenges, while advocating for better support for the sector.

## Euan Sutherland

Chief Executive Officer, Saga



# What we do

Our dedicated staff team answer enquiries every day from people across the UK who are exploring the idea of setting up a community business, as well as from existing businesses who need additional support.



- In 2022 we received **412 enquiries** from a range of businesses seeking support across the UK, including **198 enquiries from communities looking to set up new community businesses.**
- **In 2022, we delivered 323 days of one-to-one support** by matching community groups with an expert advisor. This included:
  - 69 days of business and financial planning
  - 53 days on setting up legal structures and good governance
  - 46 days action planning, to turn a community business idea into reality
  - 23 days on finding investment through community shares



Generous funding from Saga enabled us to further our impact by resourcing an in-house adviser and our helpline. We thank Saga for their support which directly translated into helping more communities in 2022.

## Other ways we supported community businesses in 2022:

- Over **2,700 people have joined our online peer networks** for community shops, pubs and woodlands
- We delivered **63 training and peer-networking events in 2022, reaching 1300 people**, and covering topics such as diversity and inclusion and reducing energy costs.
- We also awarded £95,000 in grants to 23 communities through funded projects
- **368 community businesses benefit from Plunkett Foundation Membership**, which offers them benefits such as discounted suppliers and an annual healthcheck for their business

## How did we do?

- **97% of groups found Plunkett support easy to access**
- **93% were able to address their challenges with our help**

## Sector Growth in 2022

**23** new community businesses opened in 2022:



14 pubs



4 shops



1 bookshop



1 community garden



3 multi-purpose hubs

The sector grew by 3% last year

**Community shares:**  
**£3.5m** raised by 4,600 people to help new businesses open in 2022

To date, **170,000** people have invested **£48m** to help community businesses to get started. Each of them now has an equal say in how the business is run, no matter how much they invested.

In the last 10 years the sector has almost **DOUBLED** with over 300 new businesses since 2012

There are now

**736**

community businesses trading across the UK:

413 shops 160 pubs

59 land-based businesses such as farms and woodlands



104 other types of businesses, such as transport, energy and bakeries



The long-term survival rate of community businesses is

**OPEN**

**96%**

with very few ceasing to trade once open



# Our Strategy, Vision and Impact

In 2022, we launched our new 5 year strategy, with an ambition to grow the community business sector by 20% in 2026.

Our Vision is for resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities throughout the UK.

In our experience, rural communities have demonstrated resilience most strongly when they work together to take control of assets and services they value and need. With extraordinary long survival rates, we have seen first-hand how these highly inclusive and participatory community businesses stimulate community activity and generate deep and long lasting social, economic and environmental impact.

Our Mission is to work with community owned businesses to create innovative, impactful and inclusive spaces.

Driven by local people and their needs, community businesses have long gone beyond their primary trading purpose to create a powerful "ripple" of positive social, economic, and environmental impacts.

We want to help community businesses to recognise and measure the impacts they already have, and provide the encouragement and practical support to achieve the following seven target areas:

1. Provide a **wider range of services** and amenities that communities value and need
2. **Stimulate the local economy** through localised supply chains
3. Boost opportunities for **employment, training and volunteering**
4. Benefit **people who are most disadvantaged and excluded** in today's society
5. Offset climate change through delivery of **environmentally sustainable initiatives**
6. Harness **digital technologies** to enhance business performance
7. Promote **equality, diversity and inclusion** by creating safe and welcoming spaces for all

We are committed to reporting against all 7 areas of impact. In this year's report, we have featured examples of how community businesses that we supported in 2022 have been creating impact in each of these areas.

# Our Strategy, Vision and Impact

## 1. Provide a wider range of services and amenities that communities value and need

North Wales' T'yn Llan reopened in 2022, as "More than a Pub / Mwy na Thafarn" with assistance from Plunkett's Community Business team. The only pub in the village had been closed since 2017 when locals raised funds from more than a thousand shareholders to purchase it. T'yn Llan offers a variety of activities for people of all ages including a book club, quiz nights, Welsh and French discussion groups, a base for the Walking Club, a young people's film project, coffee mornings, gardening and Keep Fit as well as affordable meals for seniors. Everyone agrees that it has "truly brought the village closer together."

## 2. Stimulate the local economy through localised supply chains

Plunkett encourages businesses to use local suppliers as part of their operation, to actively support the local economy. Using local producers, businesses and tradespeople are some simple ways to do this. The Village Green in Marsden is a wonderful representation of what is achievable. Over 100 individuals came together to bring this greengrocer's in Yorkshire into community-ownership, to stop it from going out of business. During the pandemic it had become popular with customers who wanted to buy locally sourced food that had fewer food miles and no plastic packaging and gave essential access to fresh food through veg boxes. The shop stocks 68 lines and sources from a range of local producers: cheeses from Hilltop Cheese, bread from Roger's village bakery, honey from the Buzz Project, produce grown by refugees from Growing Communities and samosas from Dabbawala Meals.



Plunkett research completed in 2022 found that:

**76%** of community pubs offer a meeting space

**34%** have a community garden

**35%** host fitness classes, health services and wellbeing events

**54%** of community shops run or host a post office

**38%** have a café

**50%** take collections for local food banks

**100%** of community shops source locally

With an average of **28** suppliers per shop

**400+** community shops have created around **11,000** routes to market for other small businesses



# Our Strategy, Vision and Impact

## 3. Boost opportunities for **employment, training and volunteering**

Plunkett research completed in 2022 found that:



**Community businesses employ 4,000 people & have 21,000 volunteers**

Community businesses have the power to generate job and training opportunities to help a wide range of individuals, including those who are marginalised and are unable to find employment through traditional means. Through our membership services, we provide access to HR providers, and our advisers can assist businesses to become exemplary employers. 17-year-old Joe is employed by the Locks Inn in Norfolk, an excellent example of a business we worked with last year to create a truly valuable role.

Joe was one of the runners up at the Plunkett's Rural Community Business Awards 2022. He was born with Fragile X syndrome, a hereditary X chromosome abnormality that causes a variety of challenges such as learning, social, language, and behavioural issues. He is a selective mute who never speaks in class or in front of others. The support he received after starting paid work at the pub has enabled him to take on a variety of responsibilities, including managing the garden, serving food, clearing tables, and washing dishes. Even in a busy workplace, Joe's confidence has gradually increased thanks to the encouraging environment.

Joe's mum said:

**“Not only has the pub helped Joe in so many ways, it's also shown the public and the beautiful community, that even if our genetic makeup is totally different, we can all play a part in the rich tapestry of life, if we are given a chance.”**



## 4. Benefit **people who are most disadvantaged and excluded in today's society**



**An estimated 1.1m benefit from community businesses**

During times of constant change, being able to share ideas and knowledge via Plunkett's online peer networks has been invaluable to community businesses. After serving as frontline organisations providing support during the pandemic, community businesses have again turned to helping their communities during the cost of living crisis. Here are just a couple of examples of how local businesses helped residents in 2022:

- Yr Heliwr, a community pub in North Wales, offers a Cegin Teulu (Family Kitchen), where adults and children can enjoy a delicious home-cooked meal for whatever they can afford. All proceeds are donated to a local food bank.
- Broughton Shop in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, has created a confidential welfare fund to help customers who struggle to buy their monthly food.



# Our Strategy, Vision and Impact

## 5. Offset climate change through delivery of **environmentally sustainable initiatives**

Plunkett research in 2022 found that:

**1 in 5** **community shops**  
**operate a refill scheme**  
**to reduce single-use**  
**plastic packaging**

**79% of** **community businesses**  
**would like to make**  
**their premises more**  
**energy efficient**

The fact that locally-owned community businesses and services reduce the need for travel means they have a positive environmental impact. Many have also responded to the surge in energy prices by adopting greener operating methods, reducing energy usage, and/or increasing their reliance on renewable energy sources. In order to promote their impact and innovation, Plunkett generates significant high-profile media coverage for community businesses across the UK. Trawden Shop is one example.

In January 2022, Channel 4's "Steph's Packed Lunch" featured the community shop as part of a segment highlighting the many community-owned businesses in the Lancashire community. Since 2018, the shop's refill station has been an integral part of the services it provides in conjunction with the local library. The store has a variety of eco-friendly goods, locally sourced meat, cheese, bread, and cakes, glass bottles of milk, and is committed to reducing its use of plastic packaging.

## 6. Harness **digital technologies** to enhance business performance

Community businesses play an important role in prompting digital literacy by providing access to essential technology and offering opportunities for skills development. Plunkett's training webinars in 2022 featured content highlighting the advantages for community business to use digital technology and how it increases social wellbeing and employability.

One example is The Bank, Chopwell, a multipurpose community centre housed in a former bank branch that is situated in one of the poorest areas of England (IMD 2019). They started a ground-breaking 2-year STEM skills development programme with children aged 7 to 11 last year. In April 2022, three weeks after The Bank launched as a community café and co-working space, they launched a coding club called "Code & Create". The fortnightly sessions were a huge success, bringing in experience from well-known digital makers, artists, and technicians from around the world as well as an artist in residence who held a variety of workshops. The 22 students gained confidence and learned a variety of new skills.



# Our Strategy, Vision and Impact

## 7. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion by creating safe and welcoming spaces for all

The open and democratic structure of the Community Benefit Society, a legal form commonly adopted by community owned businesses means that local people have a say in how community businesses are run. From the outset of the business, they aim to be as inclusive as possible – actively encouraging a wide and participatory membership to drive their ambitions forward. Plunkett offers a set of model rules for Community Benefit Societies, but also works with a range of community businesses helping them to become inclusive spaces through their operation.

A great example of a group we supported in 2022 to be "inclusive" is the 19th century Church of Christ Kensington Liverpool, a Grade II listed structure, located in an area diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, and income. It fell into disrepair like many inner-city churches, until the Christian Gold Ministry stepped to save it in 2018. In addition to serving as a place of worship, it has developed into a vibrant community centre with classes, dancing and music events, social gatherings, holiday clubs, youth groups, and a weekly food bank. Plunkett supported the group in 2022, thanks to our Benefact Trust funded work. We helped them to develop a business plan and get funding for renovations to improve the building's community usage.

Another example is Islip Village Shop, who celebrated winning Plunkett's Rural Community Business "Inclusivity" Award in 2022. The shop is run by volunteers from a population of just 650 people. As well as providing a range of local food and products, the store supports the local food bank by being a social hub and selling tickets for events and community activities. All of these things are intrinsic to the shop's mission and what it means for the village. Their greatest accomplishment last year was providing 11 Ukrainian families, currently living in Islip, with a monthly credit amount which they used to purchase everything at discounted prices in the shop.



# Acknowledging our Funders and Supporters

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



The Innholders Charitable Foundation

We are also grateful to have received support and sponsorship from the following organisations: PF Foundation, Doris Field Charitable Trust, Bartlett Taylor Trust, Abri, Daylesford, Suma, Allied Westminster, Edge Urban Design, Anthony Collins, Power to Change, Co-op, Blenheim Palace, Breckon and Breckon and Adnams.





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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 (England and Wales).

# If you share our vision for a vibrant rural economy with community businesses at its heart, why not join Plunkett as a member?

[www.plunkett.co.uk/become-a-member](http://www.plunkett.co.uk/become-a-member)

**Other ways you can support our vision:**

Fundraise for us [plunkett.co.uk/fundraise/](http://plunkett.co.uk/fundraise/)

Make a donation [plunkett.co.uk/donate/](http://plunkett.co.uk/donate/)

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

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