

## **OUR VISION**

Resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities

## **OUR MISSION**

Inspire and empower rural communities to work together to find solutions to their needs through sustainable community enterprise

## **OUR VALUES**

We are inclusive, collaborative, innovative and accountable

# **Our strategy 2018–2022**

## **OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- Grow the sector.
  - Extending our relevance and reach.
  - Increasing social impact.
  - Creating an enabling environment.
- Improving Plunkett's own sustainability.

## **OUR AMBITIONS**

- Provide a high-quality service to assist rural communities to set up and run community businesses.
- Raise the profile of and champion rural community businesses.
- Establish an information and innovation hub to develop and share intelligence and expertise on the rural community business sector.
- Be a high-quality organisation through our people, our governance, our operations and our financial management.

## **OUR CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

- Growing the size, impact and UK-wide reach of the rural community business sector.
  - Working in partnership and collaboration.
  - Using our resources effectively and efficiently.

# Plunkett Foundation 2018-2022 Executive Summary

**Our strategy for supporting a growth in the development and impact of rural community business throughout the UK.**

## Introduction

2018 marks an exciting start to a new chapter in Plunkett's 99-year history. Our new five-year strategy is bold and ambitious in its plans to grow the profile of the community business model, as an effective means of meeting the needs and aspirations of rural communities, and to increase the number and impact of rural community businesses operating throughout the UK. The strategy also aims to strengthen Plunkett as the national body for rural community business, with the knowledge, relationships and support to match. Our five-year strategy will be supported by annual business planning, ensuring that we remain focused on delivering what we can realistically achieve and that our resources are channelled efficiently and most effectively. The strategy emphasises that our future ambitions are grounded in our historic values and build both on the needs we have identified and on our most recent work and achievements.

## Who we are

Our charitable objects, remit and role remain unchanged, but we have made clearer who we are, whom we help and how we do so. We have refined our vision and mission statements to clarify the change we are seeking to make i.e. resilient, thriving and inclusive rural communities and to reaffirm our belief that inspiring and empowering rural communities to set up and run community owned assets and services are an excellent means to achieve this.

We have widened the concept of 'community businesses' to reflect the broadening use of community ownership and we have extended our criteria for a community business, enabling us to support a wider range of community ownership solutions. Our overriding purpose is to support all forms of community business, in all parts of the UK, to help those seeking to make the most impact in improving people's quality of life.

## Our 5 strategic objectives

**The following five strategic objectives will guide our work over the next five years to enable us to achieve our mission.**

**1.**

**Growing the sector:** Helping more rural communities to succeed in opening community businesses and ensuring those already trading have the support they need to thrive.

**2.**

**Extending our relevance and reach:** Ensuring the community business model and the support available are relevant and accessible to communities in all parts of the UK.

**3.**

**Increasing social impact:** Helping prospective and existing community businesses to focus on the social impact they will have on all those living and working in their communities.

**4.**

**Creating an enabling environment:** Advocating rural community business throughout the UK and championing their cause to create a supportive policy, funding, and advisory landscape for them to operate within.

**5.**

**Improving Plunkett sustainability:** Ensuring the long-term survival of our service and that of the wider rural community business movement.

# Our 4 priority areas for implementing the strategy

**Four areas of work are essential to delivering our strategic objectives.**

## 1.

A practical **Support** service assisting rural communities to set up and run community businesses. Our newly-named Community Business Team aims to be the go-to place for rural communities seeking support for setting up or running all manner of community businesses; providing high quality support focused on achieving social impact; and to communities from all parts of the UK. Achieving these aims will mean a shift and refocussing of some of our activities and support.

Some examples include:

- Broadening our criteria to ensure we are inclusive of a more diverse range of enterprises and supportive of a wider range of community ownership solutions.
- Prioritising those with greatest needs and providing the tools and resources to help communities achieve a higher level of social impact.
- Regularly reviewing our offer to ensure its quality, its relevance throughout the UK, and its ability to convert even more start-up groups to trading.
- Working more closely with other providers, both local and national, who can complement and enhance our own support.
- Exploring a more entrepreneurial approach to delivery, such as charging for elements of service and reviewing how we best work with our adviser network.

## 2.

A range of **Engagement** activities to raise the profile and champion the issues of community business, led by our Engagement team, who have responsibility for undertaking communications and awareness raising activities, consultation and influencing policy, and developing good working relationships with a range of external stakeholders.

Some notable activities include:

- Maintaining a high-quality communications output and improving our ability to communicate proactively to new audiences.
- Improving our marketing and information resources to ensure they are more accessible and easy to share.
- Undertaking a programme of community events which give community businesses the networking opportunities they require.
- Increasing our own profile, and that of rural community businesses via key sector events as speakers, exhibitor or delegate.
- Hosting our own influencing events with key stakeholders such as report or project launches.
- Increasing our policy work in partnership with others and through increased consultation with members.
- Playing an increasingly national role through membership of partnerships and alliances with relevant sector-based organisations and government bodies.
- Considering the feasibility of convening national stakeholder meetings concerned with rural community businesses.
- Reviewing, and possibly restructuring our membership categories with an aim to increase the mutual benefits it provides.

### 3.

A longer-term aim to establish an **Information and Innovation Hub** which will gather and share intelligence and expertise on the rural community business sector and underpin our own activities. Whilst we shall continue to carry out our current intelligence gathering, such as the Better Business reports, the setting up of the Hub will depend upon securing the necessary resources.

Meanwhile, we are putting together a case for such a resource and the activities, which might include:

- An online evidence base of our own and other organisations' information, data and research.
- Published reports on the sector, building on the Better Business reports for shops and pubs.
- Collaboration with other organisations to undertake research, including new partners, such as universities and government departments.
- Improved access to resources and expertise for communities setting up and running community businesses.
- Regeneration of the Plunkett library to ensure this resource is accessible and the space better utilised.



### 4.

Our ambitions depend on having an effective and efficient organisation. We aim to **resource our work** through attracting high quality people, as trustees, staff and volunteers, through effective governance and efficient operations and financial management. Achieving our strategic objectives is dependent on having the right people and systems in place to enable us to be an excellent employer and to provide a first-class service. Securing sufficient resources over the strategy period and beyond and putting Plunkett on a more stable financial footing is a high priority.



Over the period of the strategy, we aim to:

- Review our 'back office functions' to ensure they meet the needs of the organisation, outsourcing functions where it makes sense and provides a good service.
- Strengthen the board, including carrying out a skills audit for trustees and seeking new appointments to fill gaps.
- Review our governance in relation to the revised Charity Commission Code of Practice.
- Be an exemplary employer and enable staff to fulfil their potential through training and support.
- Improve our financial sustainability through a range of measures, including improving the development of future project activity, growing new types of income to reduce our dependency on projects, exploring new forms of earned income that are within our control, and reviewing our costs.



# Our 3 cross-cutting themes

Essentially, our strategy is underpinned by three cross-cutting themes:

**1.**

**Growing the size, impact and UK-wide reach of the rural community business sector:**

We will judge all we do against whether it supports a growth in the size of rural community business sector; whether it leads to real impact in improving people's lives; and whether it is accessible or relevant to all parts of the UK.

**2.**

**Working in partnership and collaboration:**

We cannot achieve our ambitions alone. We are strongest when we work in partnership with other organisations and this is the case on communications, project delivery, policy and advocacy and all other areas of our work. Therefore, throughout the strategy period, we will actively seek new partnerships and alliances, as well as maintaining existing relationships.

**3.**

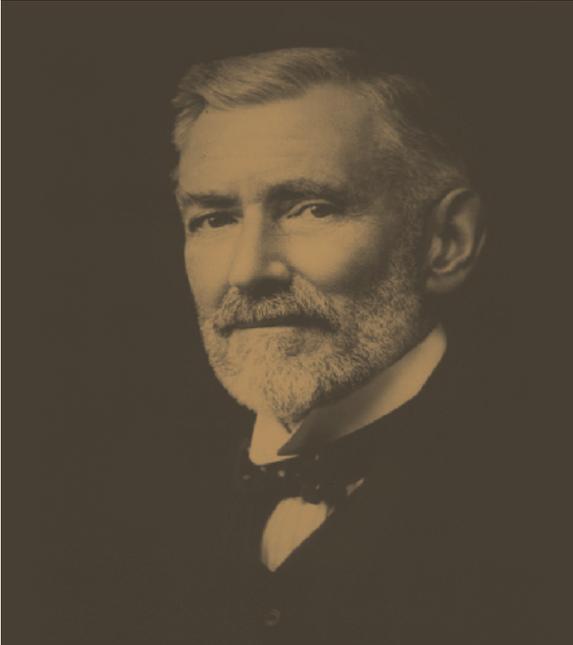
**Using our resources effectively and efficiently:**

We need to be realistic about what we can achieve within the resources available. We also need to put Plunkett on to a more sustainable financial footing in the longer term to enable us to undertake development work to meet new and changing needs as they arise. We will review our business model and financial planning to ensure we make best use of the financial and people resources available to us.



To view the full strategy please visit

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



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## About the Plunkett Foundation

The Plunkett Foundation helps rural communities UK-wide to tackle the issues they face, through promoting and supporting community business. Community businesses are enterprises that are owned and run democratically by members of the community and others, on behalf of the community. They come in many forms, including shops, pubs, woodlands and anything which lends itself to community ownership. In addition to developing and safeguarding valuable assets and services, community businesses address a range of issues including isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, work and training.

**If you share our values, ask us about becoming a member**

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