



Plunkett UK

Supporting rural community-owned businesses

RECRUITMENT PACK FOR TRUSTEES

June 2024





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Welcome Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Plunkett UK. I hope that you will find this recruitment pack about our organisation and our future plans helpful, so that you can reach an informed decision as to whether you might be the right person to join us.

You might not think of yourself as someone who could become Trustee. Or you might think that since you've never been a Trustee you don't have the skills or experience to join our Board. Please don't let that stop you from applying. We'll provide the training and mentoring you'll need if you are a first-time Trustee. What's important is that you bring your own distinctive voice to the Board and that you're willing to challenge and learn. **To learn more about becoming a Trustee [click here](#).**

We are now seeking to appoint up to two new Trustees over the summer as part of agreed succession plans in order to strengthen the Board.

We are particularly interested in applications from people with a good understanding of the wider social economy ecosystem in Scotland in which Plunkett and our network of community businesses are part of. We are also seeking applications from across the UK from people bringing insight of the fundraising landscape for charities either in the context of traditional Trust and Foundation fundraising, or with an understanding of corporate partnerships and consultancy opportunities.

We are also looking to ensure the Board reflects the interests of our members and has a diverse range of characteristics, views and experiences. But our key focus is to attract new Trustees who **share our ambition and enthusiasm** for thriving rural communities, who are committed to helping Plunkett to **deliver its ambitions**, and who can **support us in developing new ways** of meeting the needs of rural communities through community businesses. We welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds including those who have had lived experience of being marginalised in the countryside.





Plunkett UK is a unique organisation and is the only national body with a sole purpose of supporting rural community businesses throughout the UK. We have a great deal of experience over our 100 years of supporting rural communities to address the various issues, challenges and opportunities they face in setting up and running community businesses.

We are a relatively small organisation, but we have a national role, impact and reputation, with an infrastructure that delivers a UK-wide reach. Our work supports a range of community businesses at various stages in their life cycle. We work in partnership with several major funders, government bodies from a national to local level and the rural voluntary and community sectors.

We launched our current five year strategy in September 2022. The challenge now, is of course, to achieve the ambitious objectives against an uncertain environment for public policy, the economy and continued pressures on rural communities. The new strategy has a particular focus on: extending the community business model more widely in rural areas; deepening the impact of community businesses; and really developing the sense of a movement across community businesses.

The last few years have seen good progress in implementing our previous strategy.

This includes consolidating Plunkett's sound financial position, providing a strong base to work from as we, as other charities, face uncertainties around the future funding environment. Our policy advocacy and lobbying work on behalf of community business has gained significant traction as has our national media profile, securing a growing position of influence. Our community business service rose to the challenge of Covid-19 and continues to do so in the face of the current cost of living crisis with the increased need for support and guidance for new as well as existing community businesses.

The interest in the community business model continues to grow. During 2023 the number of rural community owned businesses grew to nearly 800; including 419 community shops and 176 community pubs.

I hope on reading this recruitment pack that you will be inspired by our valuable work. Either I or James Alcock, our CEO, would be very happy to have an informal discussion about your application if you would find that helpful.

With best wishes,

Stephen Nicol, Chair of Plunkett UK





About Plunkett UK



We are 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.

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.

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 92%.

Plunkett is the only organisation dedicated to supporting rural community-owned businesses UK-wide and currently represents over 750 trading community-owned businesses and a further 300 in the process of setting up. At a practical level, our dedicated and expert team:

- **Raise awareness** of the community business model through proactive press, media and campaigns
- **Provide practical support** to help new community businesses set up and existing ones to thrive via specialist business advice, training, webinars and toolkits.
- **Create a supportive environment** for community businesses to operate, via membership, networking, research and advocating with government, think tanks and funders.

We operate an accessible and inclusive service for community-owned businesses which is free of charge. No eligible communities are ever turned away. We achieve this by working collaboratively with a wide range of partners from across the community, charity and corporate sectors who share our values.



Our Five-Year Strategy



Our current five-year strategy runs until 2026. We've started in a strong position to deliver against our vision and mission, with a team of skilled staff and trustees, a solid team structure, and strong relationships with multiple partners and stakeholders.

A copy of our current strategy is available [here](#).

Our strategy, together with the supporting business plans and Key Performance Indicators, provide us with a clear focus and objectives for the period 2022-2026:



Grow the rural sector: We've helped to establish over 750 trading community-owned businesses and a further 300 in the process of setting up. By the end of 2026 we plan to grow the sector by +20%, helping existing businesses to thrive while also supporting new ones to open.



Extend our reach: We'll increase awareness of the community business model across the UK, as well as the support we offer them. We'll also target rural areas where community businesses are most underrepresented, such as Scotland, Northeast England and the Midlands.



Make a greater impact: Through our support, we'll help community businesses to deliver better social, economic and environmental benefits for their communities and identify opportunities for greater impact.



Listen, support and represent: We provide a supportive environment for community businesses to thrive. We undertake policy, research, communications and campaigns and are committed to listening and representing community businesses.



Secure Plunkett UK's financial stability: We'll continue to diversify our income sources, with a goal of reaching break-even across the five-year strategy period. This will ensure we're in a position to continue helping the wider rural community business movement to grow and thrive. All financial surpluses will be reinvested in our mission.

Underpinning the strategy, is a commitment to work with others, and play a greater leadership role in societal issues such as climate change, mental health, and approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion.



Governance and Finance



Plunkett UK is the operating name of Plunkett Foundation a charity registered in England and Wales and in Scotland and is registered as a company limited by guarantee.

The Board meets formally up to five times a year, one of which takes place over two days. The AGM takes place in addition to the formal board meetings, and is normally held in July or September. We currently operate two subcommittees – ‘Audit and Risk’ and ‘Governance and Nominations’ – and occasionally create time limited working groups. Typically, formal board meetings take place either in London or Oxfordshire and meetings of the subcommittees and working groups meet virtually.

Plunkett has an average annual turnover in the region of £1.2m. Our current strategy has successfully initiated a diversification of our income streams to include community fundraising, corporate partnerships, and development of earned income through training, membership and consultancy. This reduces our dependency of grants and project income, but we still intend for grants and projects to represent an important element of our income generation throughout the next strategy period.

Plunkett has reserves of approximately £1.003m and is in a healthy financial position.



Role description

Statutory duties

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation, developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing documents, legal and regulatory requirements. The Board has adopted the current Charity Commission Code of Governance and this guides its activities.

The Board has a number of legal and regulatory responsibilities. Briefly, these include:

- Ensuring the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Complying with the charity's governing document and the law
- Acting in the charity's best interests
- Managing the charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring the charity is accountable to its stakeholders, including the Charity Commission, Plunkett members, funders and other beneficiaries.

As a Trustee

You would be expected to:

- Support and espouse the Plunkett ethos and values.
- Be committed to the well-being of the organisation and its stakeholders.
- Promote the organisation externally, where possible and as appropriate.
- Abide by the Governance Code and all relevant legislation and regulations.
- Understand and undertake the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- Be able and willing to devote the necessary time and effort, including attending board meetings, AGM, etc.
- Work as part of a team in a constructive, collective and collaborative manner.
- Bring your skills/attributes to bear in support of the Chair and other Trustees, senior management and the organisation.
- Exercise independent judgement.
- Support senior management at strategic and overarching level.
- Be willing to be open and challenge other Trustees and (senior) management in a constructive way.
- Be willing to be challenged.
- Be open to others' ideas.
- Display conduct that is fitting to the role and shows respect to others.
- Meet agreed performance standards. Trustees would be expected to step down if they consistently failed to meet those standards.
- Attend board meetings. Missing more than three meetings without good reason in any one year will lead to automatic dismissal.
- Report any actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- Demonstrate the seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.



Role description

Why become a Trustee?

Becoming a Trustee gives you the opportunity to:

- Work closely with a passionate team of people
- Learn new skills in a leadership role
- Challenge yourself, by applying your existing skills in a new environment
- Gain valuable experience such as setting a strategic vision, influencing and negotiation, and managing risk. If you already have significant experience in these areas, it can be stimulating to use it in a different and potentially challenging context
- Develop new networks
- Play a fundamental role in the strategic development of the organisation

How you will be supported in the role

A full induction process will be conducted upon your appointment, including one to one meetings with fellow Trustees, the Chair, and the senior management team. Training will be provided as necessary. We are open to applications from people without previous board experience and support would be provided to first time Trustees including; training on charity governance, coaching, mentoring and buddying up with more experienced Trustees.

Person Specification

We expect all Trustees to have the following attributes:

- Ambition and enthusiasm for thriving rural communities
- Genuine passion and belief in the work of Plunkett
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Ability to think strategically
- Good, independent judgement
- Ability to think creatively
- Willingness to speak their mind
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Lived experiences consistent with Plunkett's vision, mission and values.

Following a review of our current skills mix and expertise, we are particularly interested in applications from people with a good understanding of the wider social economy ecosystem in Scotland in which Plunkett and our network of community businesses are part of. We are also seeking applications from across the UK from people bringing insight of the fundraising landscape for charities either in the context of traditional Trust and Foundation fundraising, or with an understanding of corporate partnerships and consultancy opportunities.

Plunkett adopts a positive approach to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. We have identified that there is room for improvement in our Board EDI structure and welcome applications that will help us reach our inclusion ambitions.

The role is unremunerated. We realise that being a Trustee can incur financial expenses, such as travel and accommodation, and we are committed to ensuring that these costs are not a barrier to your application or carrying out the Trustee role.



Application Process

How to apply

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of Plunkett, please send a copy of your CV, together with a short letter of interest (one side A4) outlining:

- Why you fulfil the person specification of Plunkett UK
- The nature of your experience in the community business or wider community sector
- The nature of or experience and understanding of the needs, issues and opportunities of rural communities
- What you think your major contributions to Plunkett would be
- A declaration that you are not disqualified from becoming a Trustee
- A list of any Directorships or Trusteeships that you currently hold.
- Full contact details (name, job title, organisation, phone and email) for two referees. Please note we will not take up references without your prior permission.

Please apply by email to Plunkett's Head of Compliance and Internal Operations kathryn.morrison@plunkett.co.uk with the title "Trustee Application – Confidential" in the email header.

Your application will be acknowledged and treated with strictest confidence. Plunkett recognises that your privacy is important, and we take our responsibility for the safety of personal data seriously. Should you require a copy of our privacy policy please contact Kathryn Morrison.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to discuss their application with the Chair of the Trustees, nominated Trustee Panel and the Chief Executive.

Recruitment timetable

- Deadline for applications: 9am Monday 1 July 2024
- Interviews will take place during w/c 22 July
- Notification of successful applications by Thursday 1 August
- Subject to their availability there is the potential for successful applicants to attend, as a guest, a Board meeting on Wednesday 11 September 2024
- Successful applicants would remain as co-opted trustees until the next AGM
- Subject to the agreement of the Board, successful applicants would be put forward for formal election at the AGM in 2025

Queries

If you wish to arrange an informal discussion with Stephen Nicol, Chair or James Alcock, Chief Executive, about this role; or if you have any queries please contact kathryn.morrison@plunkett.co.uk



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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.

