

# RIPPLE EFFECT

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE RURAL  
COMMUNITY BUSINESS SECTOR AND  
THE PLUNKETT FOUNDATION



Demonstrating the impact of the Plunkett Foundation  
and the Rural Community Business Sector



It's what we do



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

# Introduction



At the Co-op, we're proud of our roots in the Rochdale Pioneers who set out to do business differently as long ago as 1844. Since then, the co-operative business model has been proven as an enormously powerful vehicle for communities to organise themselves for the benefit of one another, time and again.

The unprecedented events that have unfolded throughout the COVID-19 crisis have exposed deep inequalities within the fabric of society for all to see. **Here at the Co-op, we recognise that community wellbeing is about more than our individual health and wellbeing.** It's about our collective wellbeing. That's why - in the face of extremely challenging circumstances - the outpouring of community spirit in response to the crisis has been a glimmer of hope. It's also why we're proud to have partnered with the Plunkett Foundation in producing this report.

We have of course been taking urgent steps to play our part in the response to the crisis. From the way our colleagues across our 2,600 food stores have been working tirelessly to secure the supply of food and other essential supplies, to the compassion our colleagues throughout our Funeralcare business have been showing to families in their hour of greatest need. And it's not just our colleagues that have stepped up. Our support has ranged from our donation of £1.5m of food to FoodShare to distribute via community groups across the country, to the £4.5m donated to 4,500 community groups in 1,500 communities through our Local Community Fund to support them in adapting their work at the beginning of the crisis and with the creation of a Co-op Members' Coronavirus Fund.

**Everything we do, and every aspect of how we do it, is shaped by the values and principles of co-operation.**

Holding high the wellbeing of the communities we serve through this crisis has been a natural response, because it's deeply embedded within our DNA.

It's clear that after 100 years of enabling and equipping community businesses, the Plunkett Foundation **is continuing to cause an enormous ripple effect** throughout rural communities across the country. It's fantastic to see.

This research is incredibly timely. Initially commissioned well before the COVID-19 crisis, and updated in light of the pandemic, it evidences the Plunkett Foundation's rich heritage and track record in supporting almost 700 community businesses.

**It demonstrates that the Plunkett Foundation enables community businesses to connect to rural communities, resulting in greater levels of creation, affection, protection and subsistence. And it's clear that the power of co-operation to bring people together lives on, including in these tumultuous times.**

The inspiring work, for example, of The New Inn, in Norton Lindsey, and the Brent Knoll Emergency Community Shop, supported so effectively by Plunkett Foundation even as they too adjusted and adapted to the crisis, is testament to the impact that community businesses have that goes far beyond an economic impact.

When people are equipped with the skills and the spaces required to run effective community businesses as diverse as woodlands and transport, farms and farmers markets, and, of course, shops and pubs, amazing things happen. Not only are essential services and access to critical products preserved, but - for example - isolation and loneliness are reduced.

As our collective consideration turns to how we rebuild the economy, there is much to be learnt from how the **support and methodology of the Plunkett Foundation is allowing new co-operative businesses to become places where communities can and do connect with one another and thrive.**



**Paul Gerrard**  
Campaigns and Public Affairs Director, Co-op  
June 2020





Every day in community businesses across the country, people have been adapting and diversifying to meet the new needs of their communities since the outbreak of Covid-19. They have been doing this in ways that only businesses so rooted in their community and so aware of local needs can.

**The adaptability and resilience of these enterprises has never been more evident than during the coronavirus crisis, and their impact has never been more important.**

That impact may be obvious on the surface. If it is a shop, a pub or bakery, they are providing accessible and much needed products and services and addressing an urgent need in the community they serve. But scratch the surface of these businesses and you will discover deeper and varied ways in which they are changing the lives of many people. Rural communities are diverse communities, and as such face diverse challenges, from rural isolation and loneliness, to lack of employment opportunities, absence of amenities and financial insecurity.

**It is no exaggeration to say that community businesses can and do save lives.** There are examples of people at risk of depression, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts who have been helped by the regular social interaction of volunteering at their local community shop. There are also examples of new transport services, staff jobs, training, IT classes and innumerable other innovations that have a huge impact on the lives and wellbeing of those who use them.

What we have seen in the months since coronavirus dominated our lives is the agility of community businesses to further adapt and continue to understand and support the diverse needs of the people they serve – delivering prescriptions, setting up wellbeing helplines and supporting foodbanks. Community businesses are uniquely placed to understand the diverse needs of their community, and offer these diverse solutions.

And that is what this impact statement is all about: **discovering the impact of community businesses and demonstrating the difference that the community business sector, supported by the Plunkett Foundation for the past 100 years, continues to make through the crisis of Covid-19 and beyond.**

This impact statement shows Plunkett's commitment to rural communities, not only to be a trusted friend, but to inspire and monitor long-term change.

We have looked at that impact in terms of:

- affection (community cohesion and inclusivity)
- creation (local participation)
- protection (support and services)
- subsistence (jobs and training opportunities)

**Here you can read examples of how a diverse range of businesses and essential services do indeed change lives for the better – and discover some of the challenges they face.**

A community business can make meaningful and sustainable changes to a community and it is the human stories that will best bring the evidence of this impact to life. Because the human story matters above all else and, in the future, that's exactly what we want to be able to tell. Across the year we will strive to gather snapshots of the impact community businesses are having – through the voices of the people that are making them happen.

We hope that through increased conversations with those experiencing the reality of a community business – and by listening and recording their experiences systematically – we will be able to give an even more detailed and useful impact statement on a regular basis in the future. **Annually, we will return to the front line of community businesses across the UK to listen, learn, measure and take stock of the differences they are making.**

As we continue to adjust to a world that must exist with Covid-19, it is essential that Plunkett keeps focused on the needs and ambitions of rural communities. This report will, I hope, prove an essential and detailed illustration of how we are supporting people to connect as they provide assets and services that keep rural communities such vibrant places in which to live and work.



**James Alcock**  
Chief Executive, The Plunkett Foundation  
June 2020



# COVID-19 and the Rural Community Sector

The Plunkett Foundation is a national charity, working across the UK to provide access to advice and expertise for the benefit of community businesses. Plunkett's service is responsible for having supported almost 700 rural community businesses to thrive in the UK, with a 96% long-term survival rate. This Impact Statement sets out in detail the 'significant' impact that Plunkett delivers in ordinary times – but these times are of course far from ordinary. Since early March 2020, Plunkett operations have been transformed, just as the network of rural community businesses have been transforming to the rapidly shifting needs of the communities they serve.

Community businesses are thriving in rural areas across the UK, despite the unique challenges that they face (that range across governance and management to reliance on volunteers and sourcing viable funding streams). These challenges have been particularly magnified during the COVID-19 crisis, with unprecedented challenges and opportunities facing each and every community business.

Recognising the role that these often volunteer-led businesses are playing, early in the crisis the Co-op provided funding in order to enable the Plunkett Foundation to provide free, bespoke, expert advice to these community businesses as they reacted to the quickly evolving circumstances.

The support provided by Plunkett has focused on getting one-to-one support to groups and businesses that have needed it the most from Plunkett's national network of specialist community businesses advisers. All forms of community business – including woodlands, farms, bakeries, pubs and shops – have been able to get support on a range of issues including developing short-to-medium term cash flow forecast, reviewing business plans, applying for funding, upholding good practice governance, utilising community shares and accessing government support. It has also been important to continue nurturing those developing groups that were working towards opening their business prior to COVID-19.

Our interim assessment of the impact of this support, in line with the social impact framework developed and set out in this report from page 8, is as follows.

## **Affection (community cohesion and inclusion)**

It is clear that community businesses have proactively stepped up to make sure that their activities are inclusive and meeting the needs of all residents at this time. The changes in the way services are being provided, as well as the additional offerings developed in response to COVID-19, have been to meet local needs. The new remote ordering and online delivery has widened access to services, with vulnerable residents who are self-isolating being widely supported by locally-led networks that are often connecting with the community businesses that Plunkett is working with. For example, Cletwr Community Shop are now offering an "order by 1pm and we'll process your order the same day" operation for all their vulnerable customers. This entirely volunteer-led offer means that people continue to access the services they require in a timely manner.

## **Creation (local participation)**

Communities have had to find new ways to connect since lockdown started. Online video meetings, social media and messaging services such as WhatsApp have all been utilised by community businesses to engage and keep in touch with their local area. There has been a proliferation of online pub quizzes, and other virtual social events being facilitated by community businesses across the country. For example, Clewer community pub The Swan have run a number of online social activities during lockdown. Their pub quiz demonstrates how they have sought to remain an inclusive community business, and also how they continue to progress their social purpose – even when they are not currently trading. By partnering with other local charities, they have found a simple and effective way to garner support which has wider community benefit.

### Protection (support and services)

Businesses have urgently adapted to protect the services they already provide, and to introduce other vital services required by the community. Community shops and pubs have linked up with local prescription collection services, which has reduced the need for people to travel to access the service elsewhere. Similarly, those pubs that are offering a 'meals on wheels' type of service have given vulnerable residents access to meals when other local support services may be operating on reduced hours or ceased operations. For example, The Pheasant in Neenton, Shropshire, closed on 20th March and began offering a takeaway and local delivery service for food the following day. During the lock down, among a variety of deliveries, the pub has been offering its 'Essentials Boxes' of basic foods. The delivery service has been a lifeline for local people who have been shielding or self isolating.

### Subsistence (jobs and training opportunities)

The vast majority of community businesses have created new volunteering opportunities and, in some cases have created paid employment opportunities, to support their efforts during the COVID-19 crisis. This has not been

without challenge in relation to training these individuals whilst respecting and upholding social distancing guidance. Nonetheless, many community businesses have recruited new people to their operation during this crisis, which has helped them to continue to operate while many of their long-standing volunteers have needed to self-isolate. The long-term ambition must now be to sustain their interest in continuing to support the presence of a local community business in future.

The resilience of community businesses has never been in any doubt, and the flexibility and adaptability of services shown throughout the COVID-19 crisis has only amplified the social impact that they deliver each and every day. The Plunkett Foundation has played a critical role in supporting and equipping community businesses in the context of many opportunities and challenges in recent months. It's clear that community-owned businesses have a critical role to play in the local economy and the local community's wellbeing. That's why it's vital that as the government increases its focus on rebuilding the economy, it does not overlook their potential.



# Residents open 'emergency community shop' amid crisis

Against all the odds, residents of the rural Somerset village of Brent Knoll opened their own 'emergency community shop' in just ten days amid the grip of the coronavirus crisis – providing vital access to products and services and boosting morale and community spirit during the lockdown.

The village's long established shop closed on 1st March – and as residents began planning a community shop, they could not know that they were within a few weeks a global pandemic and a national lockdown. As that news broke they faced the most challenging of times, but decided what the community needed more than ever was their shop back. They showed innovation, determination and resilience as they pushed ahead with their plans to open the shop. But all the normal rules of putting together a community business had to go out of the window; Brent Knoll would need their shop open in a matter of days.

Residents held an urgent public consultation survey which showed overwhelming support for a community shop – and many offered their expertise to help make it happen. The next step should have been a public meeting, but the lockdown scuppered such a thing. So with the support of a Plunkett adviser, the newly formed volunteer force put together and implemented an action plan.

"We used this crisis as an opportunity to keep the project alive", said David Sturgess, a member of the small informal Steering Group for the project in Brent Knoll.

"We decided, with the help of the owner of the closed shop, to open an 'Emergency Shop' in her premises. It took us just ten days to get that shop stocked and open, thanks to a massive wave of help from volunteers and the support of our villagers," he added.

The first day saw queues of villagers waiting to enter the shop, enjoying the opportunity for a chat with neighbours – albeit from six feet away.

"Thanks to a team of ardent volunteers, we've learned fast about providing newspapers, buying in key products, and running a shop with all the social-distancing rules", said David.

But what started as a campaign to bring back their local shop grew into something much more. As with so many community businesses across the UK, Brent Knoll's shop has since become the thriving centre of village life, not just providing much needed supplies, but a working as a social lifeline to countless people. Many elderly customers have thanked the shop for being there for them, as they cannot drive to supermarkets and the village has no bus services. Meanwhile, local suppliers of strawberries, eggs, bread and honey have benefited from a new local outlet at a time when trading was tough.

And as part of the shop's efforts to boost local morale, they hosted events including the Brent Knoll Isolation Bake-Off, during which villagers used the Emergency Shop to stock up on flour, strawberries, sugar and other supplies to make cakes, breads, biscuits and jams which they brought to a special outdoor gazebo for display and sale. The proceeds raised £200 towards the community shop fund.

Reflecting on the being the UK's first 'emergency community shop' to open during a national lockdown, David said: "If it wasn't for Covid-19 we would not have been able to do this. It was the crisis that triggered not just the need but the opportunity. The lockdown also meant that there were more volunteers available to make it possible.

"This is just the first step. We see our 'Emergency Shop' as a bridge towards our longer term aim of working with Plunkett to deliver a sustainable community shop, and restore our hopes of reviving our Post Office."



# The New Inn, Norton Lindsey - supporting those 'most in need'

When Covid-19 hit and the subsequent national lockdown was introduced, the committee and manager of the New Inn community pub in Norton Lindsey, South Warwickshire, decided the best way they could support their community was to diversify to meet its new and diverse needs. The pub soon established takeaway food and a delivery services - but what was key to the pub's activities was supporting those who were most disadvantaged by the lockdown. This included people who were left out of work, experiencing financial difficulties or self-isolating - whether due to long-term health conditions, age or disability. A small shop in the bar of the pub was the solution - stocking provisions from tinned food to cleaning products and baby milk - and offering doorstep deliveries for those who needed them.

Aware that members of the local community may be experiencing financial difficulties due to reduced working hours and delays in accessing government support, the main drive behind the shop element was to create access to vital supplies at cost, not profit.

Phil London, a member of the pub's management committee, said: "If they want something and we haven't got it, our manager will get it for them and deliver it. Some people in the village have been in complete isolation, so the provision of a delivery service has been absolutely vital for them."

The idea of providing not just food and drink to the local community, but also identifying those most in need and making sure they were able to get all they needed was made early on in the crisis. It was also decided that these new services must be affordable for all.

Phil continued: "It has cost us money to do it - but as a community business it is a complete no-brainer. It is absolutely the right thing to do. We don't normally run a shop, so we looked at what we could get and what people wanted."

Through the services they provide, the community pub has also been helping to protect people from the dangers of isolation - an issue which existed in rural communities long before Covid-19, but has been exacerbated by the lockdown.

Phil added: "Particularly in the early days of Covid-19 many residents were self-isolating. There have so far been no cases in the village and we hope that, through what the pub has been doing, we have contributed to that. We also hope that we have helped people's mental wellbeing."

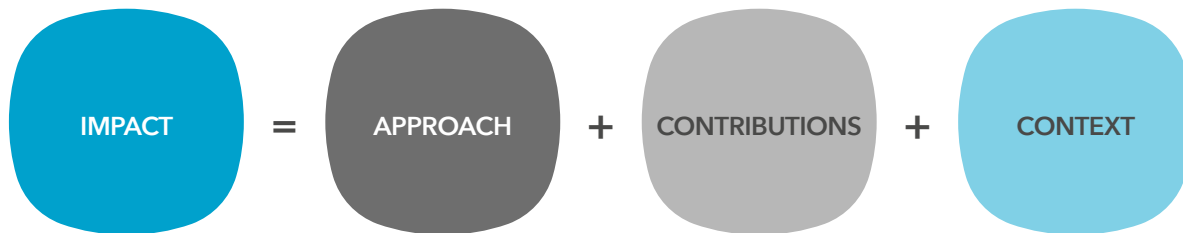
The lockdown has not just meant that some people in Norton Lindsey have not been able to get to the shops, but it has also meant many people have been isolated from their normal social interaction almost completely - and this has affected young and old. As of 2018 there were 326 residents in the village - 19% under the age of 18 and 34% over 60.

For a number of young people who work on local farms the pub is the only place where they regularly meet others - so the loss of the physical pub has been felt keenly. Meanwhile other regular customers are in their 80s and 90s, and trips to the pub were a key part of their lives. The New Inn has been working hard to ensure those in the community who miss it the most are still being supported with deliveries of hot food across a three to four mile radius to elderly people, and the takeaway service available for others.

"They have only had to ring up and say what they want and we will get it to them," added Phil. "The delivery service is really here to help these people out."



# Summary – Overall Impact Statement



**The Plunkett Foundation addresses multiple needs of rural communities by advocating for and supporting the start up and running of Community Businesses, using a synergistic, empowering and enabling, end to end approach. This is implemented through multiple programmes and activities across the UK.**

Community businesses are key to thriving, innovative and vibrant rural communities. They help to address multiple critical needs and are far more likely to start up and meet the needs of rural communities with the support of the Plunkett Foundation. As such, the Plunkett Foundation and community businesses work together to deliver impact for rural communities. This impact statement sets out the overall impact of this collective working and highlights the contribution and approach of the Plunkett Foundation as a catalyst for positive change in rural communities.

This statement is the first part of a significant commitment to measuring and sharing the impact of the Plunkett Foundation and the community businesses it supports. It provides a first look into the development of a comprehensive impact framework and is a precursor to a much more substantial social impact report later in the Foundation’s strategic period.

Community businesses make a critical difference to their communities by addressing priority needs. The Plunkett Foundation has been a major catalyst to the achievement of this, through the provision of expert support and practical resources as and when the community businesses have needed it. The timing and availability of expertise has enabled community businesses to progress and grow effectively, and do so knowing that there is a supportive partner beside them. The Plunkett Foundation also monitors and supports community businesses that are showing signs of strain or struggling to realise a profit, steering them away from potential closure and helping them to prosper. There are examples of long term change within transformed communities, sustained over many years, which would benefit from further exploration in future impact measurement and reporting.

<b>Overall Impact Assessment =</b> Significant with examples of transformational.	
<b>TRANSFORMATIONAL</b>	Communities/environments have been completely transformed; proven long term sustained change.
<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>	The total impact has made a marked difference to the community/environment; multiple needs are being addressed.
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	One or more needs have begun to be addressed; some connections between work and impact.
<b>MINIMAL</b>	The total impact to those in need is small despite a decent contribution being provided.
<b>NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED</b>	The need/s of a community/environment have not been met.





The research carried out in preparing this impact statement included analysis of a wide range of data including: community business telephone interviews, sector statistics, case studies, the Plunkett Foundation Better Business Reports data and analysis, partner reports, blogs, social media, event feedback, and Plunkett monitoring and evaluation data. As this is a statement to set the benchmark for future annual impact reporting, the focus of review was the past year, 2018-2019. However for longitudinal evidence, longer periods of data, as relevant, were reviewed.

The analysis concentrated on four key areas of impact in communities, with the overall findings in these areas set out below, grouped by **affection, protection, creation** and **subsistence**.

### **Overall Impact: Affection - Family, friends, community interaction and cohesion**

Substantial increases in engagement of the community, for the community. Clear evidence of improved interaction and significant reduction in isolation, particularly in elderly members of the community. Multiple examples of increased positivity and engagement in community life, often following periods of considerable low morale and disengagement. There were many examples of transformative action in communities. Overall there was a wealth of evidence to support the following impact areas: increased community engagement and participation, increased community support (for the community), increased support and care for the community, significant increases in the community coming together and positively interacting.

Insight: “[The community shop is] getting people together to chat and enjoy a coffee; [individuals are] meeting more people by going to the shop. We get members and volunteers to get involved with the shop. We have a strong community, which needs to keep working together.”

**East Morton Community Shop**  
Opened April 2019, this small community shop serves the community of East Morton in Yorkshire. Estimate population 1,169 (2011 census).

### **Overall Impact: Creation - Local opportunities and participation (over time)**

Multiple examples of sustained change through resilient and motivated community members, often a core group of the community, ensuring the continuation of community businesses when the going gets tough. Evidence of

communities growing social capital and value through supported events, activities and additional community businesses. Overall there was good evidence of sustained activities and impact in rural communities. There needs to be regular monitoring of data across a period of time to fully capture the extent of the impact.

Insight: “In 2016 it was announced the library and Sure Start building was to close. In July 2018 Trawden Forest CIO took over the building and in November opened a community shop, library and community hub. All of which is entirely manned by volunteers doing two-hour shifts.”

**Trawden Forest Community Shop and Hub**  
Opened in November 2018, this community hub serves the community of Trawden Forest in Lancashire. Estimated population 2,765 (2011 census)

### **Overall Impact: Protection - Community support, adequate support services**

Almost all communities with community businesses supported by Plunkett Foundation had increased provision of necessary products and services. This included health, care, utilities, housing, postal services and cash facilities, food, water, and household supplies. Many examples of specific support for young people, parents, families and the elderly, including products and services, events, mentoring, and networks.

Most community businesses sourced food and drinks from local suppliers, supporting local sustainability. Community businesses were incredibly responsive to community needs, whether they were a consumer or producer, opening up channels for ideas and action to support individuals and local businesses.

Insight: “The foodbank basket in the shop enables customers to get that warm feeling by buying an extra item or two to donate to the local foodbank. Last year we collected approaching half a ton of food for the Mid-Norfolk Foodbank. The local school, in the next village, no longer wanted to stock their school uniform, so Ryburgh Village Shop took over. Half the children at the school come from our village, but the other half don't and their parents now have to come to our shop to get the uniform. We deliberately don't make much on the uniforms but we benefit from the extra customers making additional purchases.”

**Ryburgh Village Shop**  
Opened in May 2008, this community shop serves the Great Ryburgh community in Norfolk. Estimated population 694 (2011 census)

### Overall Impact: Subsistence - Employment and preparation for employment

Community businesses provide some opportunities for employment, most employ at least one staff member from their local communities. There are many good examples of opportunities for preparation for employment, where previously there was very limited or no opportunities within the community. This includes volunteering in the business, mentoring, training transferable skills and building confidence in the workplace, working with others, and/or engaging with the public. Overall, community businesses have significantly increased opportunities for employment and preparedness for work in their rural communities.

Insight: "The members are now supporting and engaged in Jubilee Farm in a variety of ways ranging from volunteering during regular 'volunteers days', to opportunities to internships... Jubilee Farm was able to offer seasonal and a year-long internships in July 2019 and recruited two seasonal interns and one year-long intern who is currently working with staff, volunteers and other stakeholder across each of these areas, but with a primary focus on the market garden."

#### Jubilee Farm

Officially founded in 2017, this is a Christian and co-operative creation care organisation working for the benefit of both a geographical community of all backgrounds and beliefs, the town of Larne and the surrounding area of East and South Antrim, and a community of interest, the churches of Ireland.

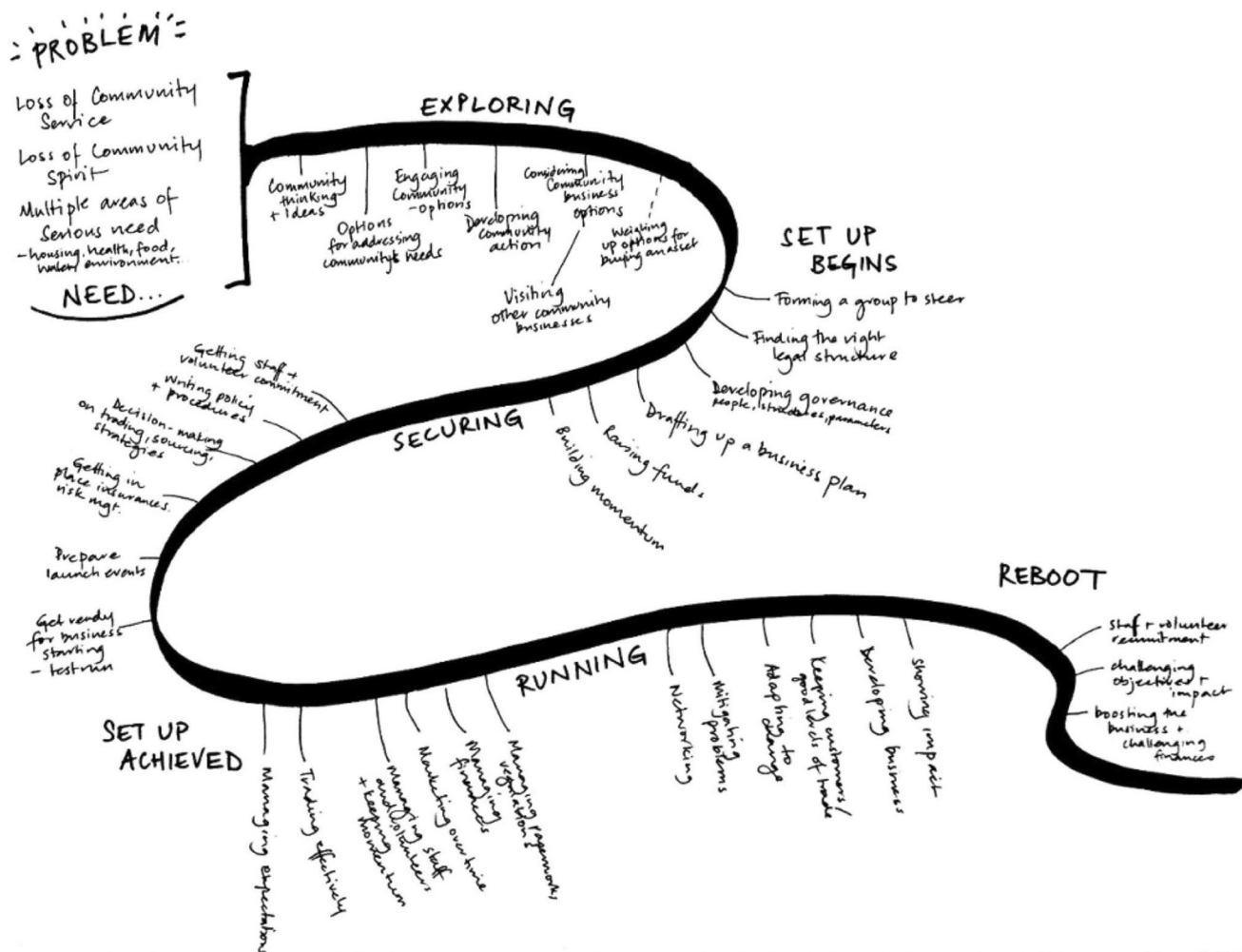
# Summary of Overall Impact Breakdown by Approach, Contribution and Context

<b>Overall Approach =</b> Comprehensive.
<b>COMPREHENSIVE</b> Very well founded principles and values, fully integrated into all aspects of the organisation, excellent evidence of practice.
<b>SOLID</b> Principles and values have substance, are integrated into all policies and procedures, with some evidence of effective practice.
<b>SATISFACTORY</b> Clear principles and values, integrated into most policies and procedures, some evidence of practice.
<b>MINIMAL</b> Basic values and principles set out, little evidence of application or practice.
<b>LACKING</b> No defined and/or practised values or principles underpinning work.

The Plunkett Foundation has a comprehensive approach that supports community businesses through their entire life journey. This enables a very supportive framework for community businesses and ensures an impact can be made at each stage of the business development and dramatically increases the likelihood of a sustained long-term change. They have an enabling and empowering approach that sets the foundations for building strong ripple effects and for a depth of meaning and impact. Overall, it is a very thorough, considered approach, which can be seen across all aspects of work.



Figure 1.1: The Plunkett Foundation Approach – supporting community businesses through their journey and business life cycle



<b>Overall Contribution =</b> Very high.
<b>CRITICAL</b> Value is so significant that needs cannot be addressed without their contribution.
<b>VERY HIGH</b> Value is so significant to the overall impact it would be difficult to replicate or replace.
<b>HIGH</b> Significant value to need/s, a key contributor to the overall impact.
<b>MEDIUM</b> Has good value but requires other significant contributions to be effective.
<b>LOW</b> Small/insignificant value to needs being addressed, would not be greatly missed if no longer provided.

The depth and range of the contributions made by the Plunkett Foundation to enable community businesses to have impact is clear. Their approach provides immense value throughout the community business journey and it was apparent that the expertise offered by the Plunkett Foundation would be very difficult to replicate. The depth of experience and the capability of their staff and advisors, and obvious understanding of rural community needs and a very strong heritage, place them as a key contributor to rural communities across the UK.

Partners happily refer them as the ‘go-to’ organisation for rural community businesses. Community businesses themselves often refer others to Plunkett Foundation and happily support their role. However, perhaps more notable is that community businesses frequently, without prompting, state how Plunkett Foundation’s contribution has enabled the overall impact they have made. Most interviews and feedback from community businesses identify the Plunkett Foundation as critical to their success and/or a key part of their start-up and/or ongoing operations.

The contribution made by the Plunkett Foundation in the four impact areas are reviewed as follows:

**Affection - Family, friends, community interaction and cohesion**

There was a large amount of support provided by the Plunkett Foundation for community interaction and cohesion, including advisor support, engagement strategies, tools and resources and interactive networks enabling direct and peer support by the Plunkett Foundation.

**Creation - Local opportunities and participation (over time)**

The Plunkett Foundation provide one-to-one support, workshops and events with specialist expertise to encourage local opportunities and participation, in a responsive (e.g. to specific requests) and planned (e.g. through an annual events calendar) for community businesses. They also provide considerable mentoring of community leaders and resource peer support, such as community business visits and relevant networks.

**Protection - Community support, adequate support services**

Support from the Plunkett Foundation was found for a wide range of operational considerations for provision of products and services, including how to best go about sourcing locally, providing ethical/organic/ecologically friendly products and services. The Plunkett Foundation has also negotiated a suite of offers and discounts from partners to enable ethical and/or cost effective supply chains, and has advocated for more support and resources to help enable sustainable options for community businesses.

**Subsistence: Employment and preparation for employment**

The Plunkett Foundation has proactively supported community businesses with employment, volunteer and work experience planning and implementation. This has included one-to-one expert advice and practical tools and resources for how to structure the operations of a community business for effective staff and volunteer management in the short to long term.

<b>Overall Context =</b> Challenging and Dynamic.
<b>CRITICAL/MAJOR CHANGE</b> Physical and/or social situation has changed dramatically, raising many new needs or increasing the needs to a critical level, e.g. a major disaster.
<b>CHALLENGING AND DYNAMIC</b> Physical and/or social needs are changing quickly or are increasing at an unprecedented pace; constant adaptation and innovative responses required.
<b>CHANGEABLE</b> The social and/or physical situation is starting to change significantly requiring new monitoring, responses, and adaptations.
<b>MINIMAL CHANGE</b> Some changes to physical and/or social situation that require a response/adaptation.
<b>LARGELY STATIC</b> Few changes to physical and social situation; largely consistent needs and influences.

The ongoing negotiations surrounding the UK's future relationship with the European Union have formed just part of what has been an unstable environment for society across the UK: politically, socially, economically and environmentally. This has sat alongside an increase in social needs and a continued decrease in funding for social products and services.

Physical environments have also experienced a period of flux, with climate experts finding dramatic increases in extreme weather conditions, including flooding, heat waves and other unexpected events within a one year period.

All of these largely unpredicted and quickly changing situations have created uncertainty and organisations have had to respond and adapt accordingly.

The Plunkett Foundation has closely monitored social, economic and political environments and initiated work to help address barriers to needs being met and their offer is appropriate for the long-term prosperity of rural communities. They have also proactively voiced changes and needs for rural communities, including being a key part of the Rural Coalition, a collective of rural organisations working together to consider and respond to needs of rural areas and who champion the need to 'rural proof' national policy decisions.

# Common Traits of Community Businesses making a big impact in rural communities

The correlation between the common traits of community businesses and success strongly indicate that the Plunkett Foundation model of support for community businesses is relevant and key to these organisations having a positive impact in rural communities. The key traits of the community businesses analysed are set out in Figure 2 below:



# Key Impact Statistics: Rural Community Businesses October 2019

## Community Businesses

Businesses owned and controlled by a large number of people from within the community for community benefit.

A total of **595** community businesses supported by the Plunkett Foundation have been set up in the UK

The majority are shops or pubs that embrace multiple uses and activities, with **137** community businesses for **woodlands, transport, breweries, farming, hubs, farmers' markets.**

Many community businesses are **winning awards** for their contribution to communities, and in some instances going well beyond, with some growing exponentially, securing regional, national and international contracts for their products and services e.g. Glenwyvis Distillery, Scotland.

## Community Shops

A shop owned and controlled by a large number of people from within the community for community benefit.

**363** community shops now trading in the UK

Community shops have an average £153,500 p.a. turnover, representing over **£50 million** in total for the sector. The long term survival rate of community shops is **94%** in contrast to all businesses where the percentage is 43%.

Averaging at around 20 volunteers per shop, the sector has a workforce of over **7,000** volunteers. The majority of community shops have between **100-300** members/shareholders.

## Community Pubs

A pub owned and controlled by a large number of people from within the community for community benefit.

**95** community pubs are now trading across the UK

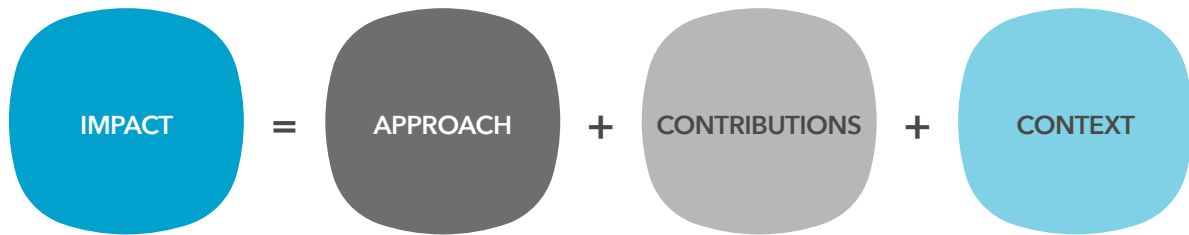
With no closures reported to date there is currently a 100% success rate for community pub businesses. Interest is consistently increasing with **148** new enquiries to Plunkett Foundation from communities exploring community pub ownership in the last year. The total raised by the 11 pubs opened in the past year was £3.25million. **Over half of all capital** required for the start-ups was sourced from community shares.





Appendix: Impact Statement  
Methodology & Supporting Evidence

# Methodology



## IMPACT

**The Needs of People and the Environment are Being Met**

To determine what impact an organisation has made it is necessary to ask: What are the needs and have they been met?

## APPROACH

**Founding, Underlying and Driving Values & Principles** (e.g. survival, exploitation, profit, care, protection, meaning) **and their application** (e.g. strategies, ethical frameworks, rules & consequences, policies)

To determine what the approach is for an organisation it is necessary to ask:

What are the values and principles and can they be seen in practice?

## CONTRIBUTION

**What People** (individuals, communities, organisations) **+ Nature** (e.g. ecosystems, climate, other animals) **provide**

To determine what contribution an organisation has made it is necessary to ask: Who are the key contributors and how significant is their action?

## CONTEXT

**Physical** (e.g. time, setting, resources) **+ Social** (e.g. norms, culture, understanding, communication) **Situation**

To determine the context for an organisation's impact it is necessary to ask: What is the context and how changeable is it?





# Overall Impact Analysis & Data Insights

## Overall Impact = The Needs of People/Environments are Being Met

Core question: What are the needs and have they been met?

### The Needs of Rural Communities

In every community it is likely that some areas of need are better addressed than others. However, where a need is either not addressed at all, or where action is very limited/ineffective, this is a problem. This is especially true for subsistence needs, where the survival of people or an environment are at risk.

The following are the main needs that the Plunkett Foundation and community businesses are addressing for people in rural communities across the UK, relating primarily to **people** and to the **environment**.

<b>PEOPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Subsistence - Work/Employment</b> Opportunities to work (volunteer and paid) to have a purpose and income - online or in person</li><li>• <b>Subsistence - Housing</b> Affordable, quality housing available to those who live and work in the local area.</li><li>• <b>Subsistence - Money for/access to food</b> Enough income to be able to grow or buy quality food; access to quality food</li><li>• <b>Subsistence - Fuel poverty</b> Affordable energy to heat houses</li><li>• <b>Understanding - Learning opportunities</b> Opportunities to learn and communicate effectively without leaving the area - online or in person</li><li>• <b>Understanding - Community leadership</b> Having elders/leaders who can guide others in the community, motivate for action, having expertise and experience to guide effectively</li><li>• <b>Understanding - Rural issues</b> Wider understanding of the make-up of rural communities, their importance to society, the barriers faced, the demise without positive action</li><li>• <b>Participation - Rural voice/village rights and responsibilities</b> Opportunities to be involved in the community, to express rights and responsibilities</li><li>• <b>Protection - Community support, adequate support services</b> Basic service provision to ensure survival, uphold rights, care for vulnerable people, care for all</li><li>• <b>Creation - Local opportunities</b> Having the know-how and opportunities to create and run projects, to invent, to create work opportunities</li><li>• <b>Leisure - Community hubs and events</b> Opportunities for people to engage with each other, make connections</li><li>• <b>Identity - Rural identity/Rural community values</b> Preservation of rural community values, re-establishing identity, communicating and valuing customs, traditions</li><li>• <b>Affection - Family, Friends, Community interaction/ cohesion</b> Opportunities to share time and care with those around you</li><li>• <b>Affection - Connection with Nature</b> Access and opportunities to engage in nature, the environments, around communities</li></ul>
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<sup>2</sup> Based on the Max Neef Fundamental Human Needs framework: Max Neef, M. (1991). Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections. New York, USA: Apex Press.

**ENVIRONMENT**

- **Subsistence - water**  
Having water in its purest form, accessible, unpolluted
- **Stability - infrastructure for self supporting environments**  
Enable strong and self supporting environments; stop activity that the environment cannot handle, is not set up for, is artificial/disrupts key ecosystems
- **Subsistence - soil**  
Having soil that is nutrient rich, sustained, unpolluted
- **Prosperity - environmental projects**  
Enable projects that sustain and nurture the earth and the environment
- **Subsistence - ecosystems**  
Having ecosystems that feed into wider functional biospheres
- **Understanding - rural environments**  
Access to knowledge on traditional/ecosystem based agriculture, importance of nurturing rural environments for saving the planet
- **Balance - rural ecosystems**  
Having rural ecosystems that balance agriculture, wildlife and villages/towns, people/other animals/flora
- **Balance - commercial agriculture**  
Managing commercial agriculture to ensure it respects wider rural and larger scale ecosystems, and ensures environmental needs are met
- **Understanding - learning about and through rural environments**  
Access to learning in rural environments, enabling opportunities for people to engage directly with nature, agriculture, rural communities
- **Understanding - role of wildlife**  
Access to learning about ecosystems, biospheres, importance of wildlife to all life on earth
- **Protection - wild spaces**  
Preservation, protection and nurturing of wild spaces
- **Creativity - rural planning and implementation**  
Enabling planning of rural communities, and its implementation, to sustain positive environments, ensuring balance and other areas of environmental need
- **Protection - waste management and pollution**  
Management of natural polluting substances, from people, animals, plants; banning of toxic, non-biodegradable substances from production and use
- **Creativity - spaces that sustain community environments**  
Create spaces in rural communities that enable and contribute to the sustainability of the planet, and address key areas of environmental need



### Why is it important to address rural community needs?

Proportionately, there are fewer people in rural areas compared to urban areas and therefore it could be argued that there is less demand for services, thus less resources required to address identified needs. However, community needs must be put into the context of the contribution to the whole of the UK and beyond. Rural communities play a very important role to wider societal functioning, environmental sustainability and innovation. They are often a lower priority for key service providers, and can go unheard in regional and national strategy development and policy implementation. In the future, the importance of rural communities will become even more apparent, as local resources and innovative community practice are sought out to manage needs increasing across the UK and internationally.

#### So why are rural communities so important?

- Rural communities play a critical role in the guardianship, nurturing and protection of critical environments
- Rural communities often hold the key to sustainable, balanced, thriving communities
- Rural communities can be at the front line in stopping exploitation e.g. protection of environments
- Rural areas often hold the key for more meaningful lives for individuals, families, connected communities
- Rural areas and their communities can provide the physical and emotional connect needed for humans to engage with what is meaningful and truly important for their own and the planet's prosperity

### What impact has been made?

This impact statement provides an introduction into the full impact of the Plunkett Foundation and the community businesses they support. Each area of need has multiple measures and each of these measures has in turn a wide range of evidence types. These have been collected by the Plunkett Foundation through a number of methods, some as part of their ongoing monitoring and evaluation, others as part of research into areas of need and impact, and some specifically collected for this impact statement.

#### Impact Indicators and Findings

Each of the following areas of need were selected to give insight into the wider impact that community businesses are having on rural communities:

- Community engagement, interaction and cohesion
- Creating local opportunities and participation over time
- Provision of critical products and services
- Employment and preparation for work

**Area of Need 1:** Affection – Family, friends, community interaction and cohesion

**Intended Impact:** Community businesses bring people together and encourage support and care

**Intended Impact:** With Plunkett Foundation support, community businesses can adopt effective strategies to engage the community and implement a range of products and services for encouraging interaction, support and care

1 Community engagement, interaction and cohesion  
Community businesses are key to new and renewed engagement in rural communities. The vast majority of community businesses have evidence of considerable impact in this area. For this impact statement we looked particularly at how people engaged at three stages of a community business's development: the idea stage, start-up stage, and running stage. The wide range of examples and wealth of data emphatically showed the significance of community businesses to overall cohesion and wellbeing in the community. It is of note that there was evidence of a reduction in isolation, including many examples for elderly people, young parents and people with disabilities.

Indicators of community engagement, interaction and cohesion included:

- Strong initial driving of an idea
- The actions of start-up movers and shakers
- The response to the invitation to buy shares in the community business
- Attendance at community assemblies and meetings for the community business

- Participation in specific community business activities
- Regularity of participation
- Positivity of engagement
- Significance to the members of the community getting involved
- Activities that clearly showed support and care for communities
- Changes in community engagement and participation that occurred
  - for all
  - for vulnerable people
  - for isolated and/or marginalised people

The evidence of community businesses making a significant impact on people who were isolated was particularly strong. Whole communities have gone from never seeing each other or speaking to each other to having regular interaction, which has then progressed into the development of supportive relationships.

There were numerous examples of people actively encouraging and engaging with people who were isolated, particularly elderly people who hadn't been going outside of their homes and people with mobility issues. For many the loss of services in their village had meant that there was no space to meet and nowhere to comfortably chat, particularly when the weather was cold. Opportunities have also been created offering people who are isolated the chance to become involved and interact with others, building confidence and friendships.

The Plunkett Foundation provides an incredibly wide variety of activities for community businesses over the year across the UK. Some explore core themes that the majority of community businesses will require knowledge of and practical support with, while others are driven by feedback and requests from community businesses. Support was provided through staff, advisors, events and Plunkett Foundation networks.

The Plunkett Foundation has a number of feedback loops to ensure they are providing the most appropriate and relevant support, including insight from evaluation reports, reviews of community business progress, front line interactions with staff, Facebook group discussions, evaluations from events, visits to community businesses, social media interactions, partner insight and opportunities. There is a real commitment to provide what is most useful for an effective community business and in a format that is most helpful for those leading it.

The impact of this support provided by the Plunkett Foundation was, in many cases, critical to the success of the community business. For most of those involved with the start up and running of a community business, it was their first time doing so, and for many their first involvement in any business start-up. This, coupled with a high level of expertise across staff and advisors, has meant that the Plunkett Foundation support has had a transformative impact for many community businesses.



## 1.1 Data Insight : Communities engage and participate in the community business.

### Engagement

Key Better Business report statistics:

Averaging at **20 volunteers per shop**, community businesses have a workforce of **over 7,000** volunteers. The total share capital raised from their communities by newly opening shops in 2018 was **£541,000**.

Community Business Example:

**Video - Talking Shop (PF 0.45-0.55), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies**

Community Business Quotes:

'...our real achievement is observing villagers having purposeful interactions in the Pub and to reconsider what we did not know we had all lost'. Community Business

'Tractors are frequently seen parked outside the shop and daily conversations in the shop are often about farming issues. Customers come to shop from many surrounding villages, villages that in past years would have had their own village shop.' Community Business

'Volunteers stay because they enjoy it. There's lots of chats with customers and a companionable atmosphere.'

**Peopleton Pantry**

### Participation

Community Business Example:

**Video - Talking Shop (PF 1.20-1.27), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies**

'The shop is in a unique position as a focal point in the village where most people come every day. We get people together, so important in isolated rural communities.'

**Community Business**

'When a Community comes together resolved to maintain a shop it has the added bonus of being able to harness people's life experiences, expertise and enthusiasm.'

**Community Business**

'[The community shop is] getting people together to chat and enjoy a coffee; [individuals are] meeting more people by going to the shop. We get members and volunteers to get involved with the shop.

We have a strong community, which needs to keep working together.'

**East Morton Community Shop**

'The pub project has successfully pulled the village together. At set-up, villagers were involved in the restoration of the pub and worked together really well.'

**Exelby Green Dragon**

Community Business Example:

**Video - Wild Rumpus (PF 2.00-2.40), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies**

Community Business Quotes:

'When we started the community shop [8 years ago], we had little idea of the effect it would have in engaging the whole community. We are a true community hub, not so much about what the shop sells but more about how we involve people in it.'

**Community Business**

'The refurbishment project has really brought the community together with locals supplying free materials and free skills to do the work and we have kept costs down. We anticipate opening in December 2019 after a six year campaign!'

**Community Business**

'[Community Leader] quickly decided that the best option was to try and raise money through a shareholder system, and an emergency meeting was organised at the village hall. We arrived at the village hall to find it was filling up fast, by the time we opened the meeting the hall was full and people had to resort to standing outside and peering through the windows! I think we were all pretty overwhelmed by the amount of people who attended.'

**Community Business**

### Activities that encourage support and care

Community Business Quotes:

'There's always someone to chat to in the shop, you're never just a customer. People know it's a safe place, they can watch their children play and know someone will be here to listen if they need it.'

**Westbury Community Shop and Cafe**

'We help other village organisations by selling raffle tickets and promoting local activities.

We have notice boards inside and outside for organisations to use. We run fun children's competitions, an Easter Bunny Hunt and finding Elves on Shelves at Christmas.

We are a delivery point for letters to Father Christmas, a personal reply is given to everyone.'

**Community Business**

<sup>3</sup> Quotes are from a variety of sources including one-to-one interviews, case studies, event feedback, forum discussions. Some are attributed while others are not depending on the protection status/source permissions.

'[Two years ago] we sought to build on our success as customers did not have anywhere to stay and chat in what might be their only social interaction of the day. We provided a proper social hub in the form of an extension including a coffee shop, a book and DVD exchange and free Wi-Fi.'

#### **Community Business**

'Having a community enterprise makes people work closer and help each other.'

#### **Bretforton Community Shop**

### **1.2 Data Insight: There is good interaction in the community and there are reduced cases of people who are isolated**

Community Business Example:

#### **Video - Talking Shop (PF 1.09-1.19), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies**

Community Business Quotes:

'Opportunities are offered to people with learning disabilities who often find themselves isolated in rural communities.'

#### **Community Business**

'The benefits for health and wellbeing are that volunteering opportunities allow people to get to know their neighbours in the village. The table in the shop allows [opportunities] for coffee and chat particularly for the less mobile and young mums, with no pressure to spend money.'

#### **Lower Broadheath Community Shop**

'Benefits on health and wellbeing include alleviating loneliness by offering volunteering opportunities as well a packed Wednesday coffee morning, mostly attended by the elderly. Supporters of the shop love it. A definite community hub.'

#### **Peopleton Pantry**

'The nearest town is over 5 miles away and, for many elderly residents living in the countryside, we are their only point of contact. The shop is a social hub for so many, it is the character and personality of the village.'

#### **Community Business**

'Great success for the community to have a shop, especially in the winter - it gets people out of the house for a chat.'

#### **Seaview Village Stores**

'The wider benefits for the community are creating a feeling of belonging. The shop is the equivalent of the PTA or the Church for sectors of the community.'

#### **Lower Broadheath Community Shop**

'[The community shop] helps with lonely isolated villagers, the elderly and the young parents. It helps people make friends. We have a lunch club run by the shop with about 60 people attending.'

#### **Bretforton Community Shop**

'Having a café helps people to get out of the house to meet more people. It is a meeting point for the village. The library helps people to have time to read in peace.'

#### **Hallbankgate Hub**

### **1.3 Data Insight: Guidance has been provided by Plunkett on engaging the community and running activities**

#### **Plunkett Foundation Advisor Support**

Community Business Quotes:

'We quickly set up a committee of experienced professionals and in the early days the committee received invaluable help from the Plunkett Foundation.'

#### **Community Business**

'Working with our adviser on our community share offer saved us a lot of hard work and gave us confidence. It's great to be able to access knowledge and know we can pick up the phone for advice.'

'The online Community Shop forum is also an invaluable source of uncompetitive information for us to answer questions and share information.'

#### **Candover Valley Store**



## Events

### Community Business Networking Event

Location: Somerset

Date: 10 September 2019

### Workshop Topics

Fundraising and financial planning

Community engagement and consultation

Getting the most out of staff and volunteers

Promoting health and well being

Boosting the local economy

Creating dementia-friendly spaces

Overcoming community issues and tensions

How to continually adapt your business

What does the future hold for postal services?

### Have your say opportunity:

How can Plunkett inspire more community business?

### Panel discussion:

What makes a good community business?

Community Business Quotes:

### Networking Event

'Many thanks to the Plunkett team for organising another great networking event.

Our manager said that it was the best one of its kind that he had ever been to and I enjoyed meeting lots of people and sharing info.'

'This was an absolutely excellent day... lots of interesting people, and good topics and discussions. Worth every penny of our Plunkett Subscription.'

### Workshop Feedback - what was most useful?

'Meeting people from different community businesses and hearing their stories'

'Getting to meet a wide range of community businesses and share stories and ideas'

'The ability to mix with others and share experience'

'Discussions and ideas from other Store managers'

**Area of Need 2:** Creation - Local opportunities and participation (over time)

**Intended Impact:** Community businesses enable people to engage and participate in their communities for the long-term

**Intended Impact:** Plunkett Foundation empowered community businesses from pre-start-up (early intervention) for the long-term and/ or closure or expansion (empower = knowledge and support to lead)

## 2 Creating local opportunities and participation over time

The Plunkett Foundation has an abundance of stories and case studies describing the journeys of community businesses which they have supported. These stories and case studies show not only the depth of impact being made with communities but also the longevity provided by the community business model. A Plunkett Foundation-supported community business is not a fly-by-night project, or short-lived trendy idea; they stay around through the determination and resilience of people in the community. The trading success rates are remarkable, particularly in the context in which they are operating.

The evidence also indicated significant leverage of opportunities to participation in the communities, with many community businesses going far beyond usual business operations. Fetes, children's activities, wi-fi support, endorsement and support for other ventures in the village are just a few of the cited activities that community businesses have introduced.

In many cases community businesses have clearly put the life back into villages, bringing hope and enthusiasm for what the community can and does offer to all its residents.

However, the successful running of community businesses was never described as easy. Community businesses have to work hard to motivate their staff and volunteers and to keep their community engaged in their business.

The Plunkett Foundation provides a wide variety of support for community business management and operations. This support can be very specific to the areas of interest for community businesses, such as opportunities for woodland community businesses to find out about ways to diversify their business or develop/bring in expertise to strengthen their offer.

They also actively support other community businesses to share their experiences, including organising visits to other businesses relevant to their stage of operations or their product/service delivery. For example, an expanding community shop visiting another community shop who has already grown and expanded premises, products or services.

Plunkett Foundation staff and advisors can also be brought in at key stages in the community business life cycle to provide much needed guidance and support. The Plunkett Foundation flags indicators of areas where a business may need help and then actively engages with that business to offer support.

### 2.1 Data Insight: Community businesses trade for medium to long term (2-100+ years)

Better Business report statistics:

All community pubs are still trading

The **long-term survival rate** of community shops is **94%** in contrast to the average UK business survival rate = 43.2%

The **total share capital** raised from their communities by newly opening shops in 2018 was **£541,000**

Community shops have an **average £153,500 p.a. turnover**, representing over **£50 million in total** for the sector

### 2.2 Data Insight: There is a thriving community spirit in the community, of which the community business is central to or a significant catalyst for.

Community Business Quotes:

'People of all ages and backgrounds mix and work together often making friends with people with whom they would not normally socialise, building a stronger community.' Community Business

'A host of local skilled workers have donated time and materials to the project, including people who are not shareholders but who want us to succeed. Even our electricians have capped their charges and are currently working for free. Another local carpenter started out on full pay, went to half pay and is now a full-time volunteer earning nothing.

People just want this project to succeed, and there is a real buzz around the place, and a lot of loving work is going into it.

Cakes arrive most days for the workers, donated by our neighbours.' Community Business

'We have built a strong network which has progressed beyond the shop - the community is stronger in other areas and different people are coming forward to help build a sports hub and a village hall for the future.'

Community Business

'We have people moving into the village because of our pub.'

### 'The Case is Altered' Pub Bentley

Member of a Community Quote:

'It's always a pleasure to come into the store. Shopping has never been so enjoyable and to be able to use the Post Office locally and the opportunity to have coffee with friends and neighbours just adds to the whole experience.'

### Candover Valley Community Store

### 2.3 Data Insight: Community businesses carry out activities to keep people motivated and engaged

Community Business Quotes:

'You have to be flexible in your offering and get to know the local people and what they want. We need to find out what the new residents will want in the shop.'

### Tackley Village Shop

'We get continuous feedback from our community, in person, via our feedback forms in the shop, emails to the shop and Management Committee accounts, our regular volunteer meetings, staff meetings and once a year from our AGM.

We also review local 'spotted' type [social media] accounts as we do get mentioned in dispatches. We respond quickly to all feedback we get.'

### Findon Village Store

'Social activities keep volunteers interested. We give Christmas cards and presents [and] we hold a Christmas party and summer BBQs to show our appreciation for volunteers.

We offered a discount to volunteers but it flopped as the volunteers didn't want to take money away from the shop.'

### Grampond Village Store

'Kate told us that the shop is doing lots to attract volunteers, but like many other community shops, they are finding this a challenge. The 3 rings rota system they use, Kate says, is brilliant and the training sheets and handbooks all help to give volunteers confidence. The management committee get on well and like many, are hands-on in the shop to keep it going.'

### Islip Village Shop, PCF Blog



‘Encouraging volunteers and paid employees to be a part of a community-run business injecting their own creative ideas to help strengthen the sustainability of the community enterprise. The Community Association holds regular monthly meetings to iron out any foreseeable issues that may affect staffing, rotas, stock issues and financial reporting etc. Our customer feedback is important and public perceptions of our performance monitored on public sites such as Trip Advisor.’  
Community Business

#### **2.4 Data Insight: There are strong leaders in the community who champion community business and there is succession planning for future leaders**

Community Business Quotes:

‘[The community leader] has gone on to deal with every aspect of the business from funding, insurance, property negotiation and planning, stock fixtures and fittings, banking and telecoms to the highly successful launch of the community share offer in March 2019 – oversubscribed thanks to his prospectus and organisation of village meetings – and the recruitment of staff and volunteers.’  
Community Business

‘There are other small businesses, who may need support in the future and we would like to extend our model to help keep such [businesses] in the Village and serving its needs. We also expect to be financially strong enough to support other village projects that depend on donations and other fundraising to survive.’

##### **Findon Village Store**

‘Westbury Community Shop and Cafe have a good number of dedicated people on their management committee, but are aware of succession planning and their task to find individuals who’d be willing to take on these roles in the future. We discussed the feeling that you need to have knowledge about these kinds of community businesses, a confidence that you could be part of committee and a supportive network who can help bolster the safety net.’

##### **Westbury Community Shop and Cafe**

‘We have good attendance at the AGM, and in terms of succession planning the group have an open door if people show an interest, ready for the next AGM.’

##### **Exelby Green Dragon**

#### **2.5 Data Insight: Multiple community businesses and spin-off activities have started up in the community**

Community Business Quotes:

‘In the cafe we were shown plans for a Roman mosaic that’s been unearthed by the new build. A fundraising effort is taking place to raise funds for a shelter to showcase the mosaic and a display case so that locals can see the archaeological finds and children can handle artefacts. Villagers are being trained in archaeology as part of the project and it’s an exciting new development for the community.’

##### **Tackley Village Shop**

‘[The success of our] pub has meant that the shop has been able to get up and running.’

##### **The Case is Altered Pub, Bentley**

‘In a recent community fundraising weekend we underwrote the event and enabled it to go ahead, we also supported the annual firework display by paying for their insurance.’

We also hold our own fundraising events; two raffles a year, one to help with running the defibrillator which we pay for and maintain, and one to give money to local groups.’ Community Business

‘We have a monthly police surgery in the shop – the officer requested to use the shop as a host.’

##### **Lower Broadheath Shop**

‘We have close contact with the School. The former Head was interested in healthy eating and developed a framework for school meals.’

The Pub subsidises the school meals and the head chef of the pub oversees the school meal production and manages the school cooks and meets with the head teacher.’

##### **The King Arms, Sholdham**

#### **2.6 Guidance the Plunkett Foundation has provided on sustaining operations and specific issues relating to operational areas, and to enable checks and balances**

Community Shop Quotes:

‘It is too easy to get absorbed with the day-to-day running of the shop...the time spent with our Plunkett adviser allowed us to stand back and consider more strategic issues for the future which was very helpful.’

##### **Islip Village Shop, PCF Blog**

‘Plunkett set us up well to start the journey and has been involved in 5 out of our 6 years running.’

#### **Candover Valley Store**

‘Our group needs support to be more business minded so we have linked up to Plunkett for support [including] a health check and an action plan.’

#### **Talking Shop**

### **‘Making Local Woods Work’ Programme**

#### **Woodland Hubs as Drivers for the Local Woodland Economy**

5th December 2018

Hosts: Dorset AONB and Monkton Wyld

Focus: Developing a woodland hubs network

#### **Tourism in Community Woods Seminar**

17th January 2019

Hosts: CWA and Glengarry Community Woodlands

Focus: Ecotourism in woodlands

#### **Coppice Open Day**

26th January 2019

Hosts: Wyre Community Land Trust

Focus: Coppice skills and adding value through green wood crafts

**Area of Need 3:** Protection – Community support, adequate support services + Subsistence – Provision of food, water, utilities

**Intended Impact:** Community Businesses provide critical products and services for the community

**Intended Impact:** With Plunkett Foundation support, there are effective strategies and opportunities for cost effective sourcing of products and services for community businesses

### **3 Provision of critical products and services**

The provision of critical products and services is a key part of the community business offer. The majority of start-ups had been driven by a need in the community to mitigate a loss of products and services in the community. This is particularly the case in the stories of community shops, where they exist to ensure the community has access

to core products and services. These are dependent on the makeup of the community but most often included products such as milk, bread, vegetables, fruit, newspapers/information booklets, with services such as home delivery, order requests, wi-fi access, post, and cash return. The responsive nature of community shops means that there is a wide range of products and services provided.

There was a general commitment to supporting local producers and ecologically sound products. Most communities cited examples of locally sourced products that they stocked and some noted that they would stock items that other stores would not, helping the local producer to get a distribution channel. Sourcing ecologically sound products, such as organic vegetables, were also commonly mentioned, however, the extent of these in the shops was hard to determine. This, and locally sourced food is an area that could be explored in more detail in the future.

There were indicators of good resource management, with a range of examples including management of volunteers and staff, management of the building or space in which the community business resided, financial management, and stock management. The full extent and full value of this to the community requires more data analysis. Overall, there are indicators of responsible management of people, spaces and money, and support available from the Plunkett Foundation to help when any of these required attention by the community business.

#### **3.1 Data Insight: Community businesses provide essential food and household supplies, utilities and services**

Community business quotes:

‘Our local surgery collects prescriptions and delivers medication thus saving the need for a 7-mile drive into town. Coming to the shop to collect medication provides a reason for people to leave their homes and meet others.’  
Community Business

‘The products stocked in the shop including the local produce and environmentally friendly range are a real bonus to support local growers and reduce food miles, and our travel to a larger town, as is the Post Office.’

#### **Candover Valley Community Store**

‘We have a Needs and Wants board in the cafe where people can ask for help, e.g. with a lift into town or to

hospital for an appointment. If anyone has a service to offer or is going shopping and could give someone a lift, their details can be put up.’ Community Business

‘We have customers who added to their shopping and they paid monthly.

We also take orders for people who can’t come to the shop because of medical issues. The shop will deliver the shopping to their house.’

#### **Ewelme Community Shop**

‘We ran a bread ordering service and that was the starting point for our delivery services.’

#### **Lower Broadheath Shop**

‘Others have offered to deliver shopping to people who are housebound, [which is] especially important in the winter.’ Community Business

‘We hold keys for vulnerable people and deliver shopping to those who cannot get out. We also hold contact details for their next of kin, especially if their family lives elsewhere, so they can be notified quickly should the need arise.’

#### **St Tudy Community Shop**

‘The Store offers a warm welcome with a wide range of stock to suit all budgets, and many locally produced products – honey, cakes, apple juice, jams and chutneys, glassware.

The Post Office is a great asset which also offers a wide range of banking facilities too and has negated the need to drive... 10 miles to the nearest bank or post office.’

#### **Candover Valley Community Store**

### **3.2 Data Insight: Community businesses place emphasis on local sourcing/resources, providing essential products and services**

Community Business Quote:

‘Like other shops we had visited, local produce from the ‘pick your own’ and other local suppliers takes pride of place and is a popular feature in the shop alongside everyday essentials.’

#### **Islip Village Shop**

‘Stocked with a wide selection of locally produced goods that can support local businesses whether start-up or established.’ Community Business

‘We try whenever possible to source products locally –

currently we locally source beer, wine, bread, milk, cakes, green groceries, garden produce, crafts, greeting cards etc.

We also employed a village builder and a local supplier to install and build the shop.’

#### **Beckbury Community Shop**

‘Many local clubs and organisations are booking seasonal celebrations in the Chequers. Local tradesmen and craftsmen have offered support in supplying fixtures and fittings. Now we are members of the Deal Hop Farm, we have contributed by harvesting our first hops to be brewed locally. We have been gifted an orchard of apples to brew a local cider for sale in the Pub. For active older people there has been a flurry of support in the garden and window boxes, repairing signs, woodwork and crafting features for the pub. All to assist refurbishment and ensure a good ‘kerb appeal’.’

#### **Chequers Inn Ash Society**

### **3.3 Data Insight: Community businesses provide significant value to their communities (provision + cost + context/alternatives)**

Member of Community Quotes:

‘As a local resident in the valley, I am really appreciating the new store for its convenience and its welcoming atmosphere. There always seems to be someone there I know and the staff are very helpful and friendly. I’ve been very impressed with the wide range of goods being sold - useful foods for a lunch box or evening meal, treats and gifts. I am especially interested in the eco-friendly products being sold and the fact that they are trying to help us all do ‘our bit’ to help by recycling crisp packets, buying local goods and they are soon to be providing refills for cleaning products.

From a business perspective, the store is a marvellous platform for promoting locally produced goods. Being a local coffee roastery, we have been able to sell our retail coffee from the shop and are very pleased that Candover Valley Community Store have chosen to serve our coffee in their coffee machine too! We have really appreciated the partnership that we have developed with the Candover Valley Community Store team.

Being a company that sells coffee online, the post office facilities are a godsend to have on our doorstep and save us countless trips to Alresford to post parcels. The opening hours make our business life so much easier both with

using the post office but we are also able to pick up milk for the roastery on our way to work rather than making a special journey to the supermarket!

A great addition to the community!

**Candover Valley resident**

### **3.4 Data Insight: Community businesses implement effective and responsible resource/income management strategies and practices**

Community Business Quote:

'To bolster income, events outside of normal trading are undertaken such as Curry Nights, Pop-Up Cinema, Concerts and a Bi-Annual Open Gardens Day in the Village. £20 a year membership of the Itteringham Community Association and a 100 Club also act as a source of income. The occasional provision of outside catering services by the Shop for business groups who meet in the Village Hall is yet another diversification undertaken to assist income.'

'We have no expansion plans – our café is now running at close to capacity (record was 210 meals in one day, plus coffee and cakes. Queues out of the door.)

We won't grow into a new building as the present one is only 2 years old.

Any ideas for new features/services will have to come from our supporters and members, and then we can see what we can do about them.

In general we're working to make sure the business is sustainable in the long term.

We've been profitable since year 1 (now in year 7) but we are looking at building reserves, developing contingency plans, etc.'

**Cletwr Community Shop and Cafeteria**

'Engaging enough volunteers can be challenging and time consuming for the volunteer co-ordinator but, in the 15 months since we opened, we have never had to close due to shortage of volunteers.

Management do more shifts on the whole than most – but not exclusively, there are some volunteers who are not in management who contribute enormous amounts of time, no one is allowed to do more than 10 hours per week though.'

**Beckbury Community Shop**

'What's clear is it's really the people at the centre and behind the scenes that are critical to the survival of the shop and café. The ability to pay for salaried staff, the relationship the manager has with volunteers and staff, and the dedication from the committee is really at the heart of

this community business.'

**Westbury Community Shop and Café**

### **3.5 Data Insight: Guidance has been provided by the Plunkett Foundation on the provision of products and services, local sourcing and resource management**

Community Business Quote:

'As a Community Shop, set up in 2014 with the help of Plunkett, we have been trading successfully for over 5 years but now have the chance to purchase the property we currently lease from the landlord. For us to make sure we started and kept going in the right direction we looked for help. That came, again, in the form of Plunkett. Their staff helped with our necessary Change of Model Rules both checking our paperwork and liaising with the FCA. We were introduced to other Community Shops who had been through the same journey, subsequently meeting with two of these.

Through Plunkett we were allocated a Business Advisor who came to our shop, helped by reviewing what we provided, how we did it and our systems and then went through where we were on purchasing the property. This gave us confidence that we were doing the right things but the advisor also gave us new ideas and fresh avenues to progress. It was an extremely productive and useful day, which was only possible because Plunkett had taken time to understand our needs and chosen an advisor whose skill set matched our requirements.

Our view is that whilst we might think we are doing all right, an objective sanity check by the right people is invaluable. Exactly what Plunkett provided for us.

We now have a number of communication channels open to us, which we know will be helpful over the next stages of our journey.'

**Wilstone Village Shop**

'As we moved out of the shop into the stock room, Kate told us about how the support from a Plunkett adviser had helped them with a different perspective about their needs for the future. Their adviser, David, suggested recruiting a stock keeper for ordering and topping up products which could be complemented by the new EPOS system set up by one of the management committee members. The new EPOS system has already made re-ordering a lot simpler and means now this can even be done remotely.'

**Islip Village Shop**

## Plunkett Foundation Community Business Membership benefits

Invitations to attend the Plunkett Foundation AGM  
A free Health Check from one of our specialist team  
Discounted event tickets  
Help to register as a Community Benefit Society  
using Plunkett Foundation Model Rules  
Free guidance on updating your Model Rules

### Offers and/or discounts from:

#### Loan Providers

Ecology Building Society  
Triodos Bank,  
Charity Bank  
Co-operative and Community Finance

#### Energy

Co-operative Group Energy  
Procurement and Management Bureau Service

#### Accountancy

David Cadwallader and Co Limited

#### Insurance

NFRN Mutual  
Telephone and Broadband  
The Co-operative Business Telecoms

## Volunteer Management

Three Rings Online Volunteer Rota System

## Newspaper Sub Retailing

NFRN

## Wholesale

Suma Wholefoods,  
Cotswold Fayre,  
Wine Box Company  
Spaul and Sons

## Plus!

A directory of suppliers of shop fixtures, fittings and  
refrigeration



**Area of Need 4:** Subsistence – work/employment and preparation for employment

**Intended Impact:** Community businesses employ and/or give work experience opportunities for rural communities

**Intended Impact:** With Plunkett Foundation support, community businesses have the resources, expertise and know-how for providing employment, volunteering and work experience

#### 4 Employment and Preparation for Work

The majority of community businesses reviewed employ at least one person and are supported by a large contingent of volunteers. Although the number of people employed is not large, it is significant that the vast majority of those employed and providing volunteering time are local residents. The impact is significant because in most instances the community business provides an opportunity for employment and skill development where before there were either very limited or no opportunities at all.

Considerable work experience is offered by the community businesses supported by Plunkett Foundation. Work experience within community businesses provides opportunities for a wide range of people, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or isolated. The majority of community shops offer work experience for young people, who otherwise would not have access or support to do so. It was also found that for many older volunteers, the intent may not be to seek employment but rather to learn new skills and be of value to their local community. The impact of opportunities to gain work experience and/or to gain new skills is significant in this regard. It is not simply reduced to 'enabling readiness for employment', it also develops co-operative skills and in addition it improves health and wellbeing, such as creating a sense of self-worth by being of value, increasing confidence, providing motivation to get out and about in the community and working with others.

There were many community businesses who actively helped people to prepare for employment. The way that this is carried out is dependent on the community business and the people being supported. Examples of support provided include: formal training, interview preparation, provision of interview clothes, and longer-term support for individuals through supervisory meetings and due care for staff and volunteers.

The Plunkett Foundation has provided a wide range of support for employment and volunteering, including workshops, webinars, one-to-one advisor support, peer support visits, and their Facebook Networks. The support for managing volunteers is also significant to overall community engagement and individual wellbeing.

##### 4.1 Data Insight: People are employed by Community Businesses

Better Business report Statistic:

There are approximately 160 full-time and 860 part-time staff employed within the community shop sector

Example Community Shop:

'One full-time shop manager, one part-time assistant manager, two part-time Post Office Counter staff, 2 young people on weekend shifts, 35 volunteers who work shifts for the shop, one for the Post Office Counter. Open 78 hours per week and need staffing for 84 hours per week.'

##### Findon Village Store

Community Business Example:

##### Dunbar Community Bakery (PF 0.58 - 1.17), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies

'Local employment is 15-20 people (some are part-time). [The community pub] is a way of employing local young people [otherwise hindered by transport and/or low pay issues].'

##### The King Arms

##### 4.2 Data Insight: People are receiving quality work experience and/or gaining new skills/confidence

Community Business Example:

##### Video - Talking Shop (PF 1.46-2.03), Plunkett Foundation Website Case Studies

Community Business Quotes:

'We provide structured training twice a year to include the required alcohol training as the shop operates an off-licence. This also includes retraining as appropriate in any policies, including safe guarding, GDPR, customer services, shop procedures, till and card machine use.'

##### Beckbury Community Shop

'[We provide training including] first aid courses, food hygiene training, fire safety and much more.'

##### East Morton Community Shop

'Because the shop is manned by volunteers, local people are able to contribute in any way they can and feel useful, so important for health and wellbeing.

They do not just work behind the till. A job is found for anyone who wants one; one elderly man comes in to help the manager... others help file invoices, dust the shelves and stock them, cash up, help in the café clearing tables and serving customers.' Community Business  
'We have 3 Duke of Edinburgh Award students who help with the stock and working at the till.

Weekend staff are all paid, young people age 15 years deliver the newspapers.

Those who are 18 work at the shop helping with some tasks - for most of them it is their first work, and we offer work experience, always two people at one a time.'

BB Report Interviews

#### **Ewelme Village Stores**

#### **4.3 Data Insight: People are getting prepared for work/ jobs within the community or elsewhere**

Community Business Quotes:

'[A woman started to volunteer]. Sometimes she found the experience overwhelming and had to go home. As her confidence grew she volunteered to help in the [new shop project] and took on the role of community liaison officer overseeing the café. She has now got to the stage where she feels able to take paid employment outside the village.'

#### **Community Business**

'Working with mental health services we offer a route back into employment.'

#### **Talking Shop**

'Several young volunteers have gone on to use the skills and experience gained in the shop to find employment elsewhere.'

#### **Community Business**

#### **4.4 Data Insight: Support has been provided by the Plunkett Foundation for employment and preparing for work**

Community Business Quote:

'Support from Plunkett brought a bank of resources we could call on and helped us with choosing a structure, setting up the community shop, and recruitment of both paid staff and volunteers.'

#### **Candover Valley Community Store**

#### **Plunkett Foundation Webinars: Volunteer Management**

Find people who can donate time and expertise to your community pub

Held:

2-3pm

Wednesday 8th May 2019

Delivered by:

Garry Hunter (Fitzrovia Noir CIC and The Tommy Flowers pub)

#### **Shareholder Management and Engagement**

Getting people involved and interested in your community business project

Held:

11am-12pm

Tuesday 21st May 2019

Delivered by:

Plunkett Adviser Gabriel Brodetsky (The Abingdon Arms, Beckley)



# Approach Analysis

**Approach = Founding, Underlying and Driving Values & Principles**  
(e.g. survival, exploitation, profit, care, protection, meaning) and their application  
(e.g. strategies, ethical frameworks, rules & consequences, policies)

**Core question: What are the values and principles and can they be seen in practice?**

The approach by the Plunkett Foundation is comprehensive, supporting community businesses and rural communities in a range of ways. These approaches can be best summarised in the following ways:

- **Synergistic Approach to Addressing Need** i.e. addressing one need whilst simultaneously addressing multiple other needs, culminating in a greater impact than the sum of individual needs being addressed in isolation. For example, enabling the opening of a community shop to provide essential food, water and utilities, which simultaneously encourages community participation, increases community spirit and morale, and provides opportunities for employment<sup>4</sup>.
- **Empowering and enabling an effective methodology** i.e. supporting community businesses to set up, run and be sustainable in the long-term.
- **End to End Intervention** i.e. supporting from an early intervention stage through to long-term delivery and/or closure

## Empowering and Enabling

There are many ways in which an organisation can work with and in communities. Some can be instructive or authoritarian (e.g. 'this is what you must do'), others informative (e.g. 'this is what you could do'), and others responsive (e.g. 'we will do as you require'). Some are a combination. What is key is what works with a community, taking into consideration a myriad of factors, e.g. its history, the elders/leaders in place or not in place, understanding of the issues, expertise and experience present in the community, approaches/action tried before, levels of corruption. The Plunkett Foundation approach is to support rural community businesses in the most effective way, helping communities address multiple needs and doing so in an empowering and enabling way, making sure that expertise and resources contribute to the community's long-term sustainability and wellbeing.

The Plunkett Foundation has adopted and championed

the term 'Community Business', aligning with the Power to Change definition:

'Community businesses are enterprises that are owned and run democratically by members of the community, on behalf of the community. They come in many forms, including shops, pubs, woodlands and anything that lends itself to community ownership.'

A community business can take a number of legal structures including Community Benefit Societies, Co-operatives, Community Interest Companies or a Company limited by guarantee. However no matter what the structure, it must be run by the community for the community. It is not a business just driven by a social objective, neither is it a 'business in the community for the community', where although there may be community benefit, the business is driven by a profit for individuals. The distinctions are very important as the impact that is most likely to result is considerably different.

## Historical Context

The Plunkett Foundation has a long and strong history of pursuing impact in rural communities. From its formation by Horace Plunkett 100 years ago, the driving force was the survival and ability of rural communities to thrive. Horace was a driver of the co-operative movement following his initial success setting up a community-owned village store in 1878, in rural Ireland, which was owned and controlled by the estate workers and tenant farmers.

Towards the end of Horace's life, he became concerned about the scale of mergers and acquisitions within his own co-operative movement, and the extent to which they were genuinely providing benefits to those they were set up to serve. He suggested that to be successful, co-operatives needed to remain owned and controlled by the communities in which they were set up to benefit. With that mission in mind, Horace founded the 'Sir Horace Plunkett Foundation' in 1919, later to be renamed 'Plunkett Foundation', but to which he referred as his 'Foundation for Rural Life'.

<sup>4</sup> Synergistic approach to addressing needs is set out in the Max Neef Fundamental Human Needs framework: Max Neef, M. (1991). Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections. New York, USA: Apex Press.



This entrepreneurial spirit and determination to support rural communities has been the backbone of the Foundation in the following 100 years. It is not just its history, but a way of thinking, determination and drive that is immediately evident once you engage with the organisation.

### **End to End Intervention**

The Plunkett Foundation approach to immediate action is very responsive. It raises its profile within rural communities and networks to ensure people know it is there and then responds when people contact it. The approach to immediate action is driven by the needs of the community. Depending on where they are and what they require, the Foundation provides a cohesive response. This is largely influenced by the first point of call, which requires the front of house to be very knowledgeable and to respond quickly and effectively to ensure an individual navigates through the organisation's support portfolio, without feeling like they are navigating. Following the assessment, the Foundation promptly responds with information and resources most relevant and, where needed, an Adviser is organised to meet and assess their needs further.

The immediate response to enquiries from people in communities of multiple needs is closely followed by a package of support. This support package is tailored to the needs of that community. Unlike most organisations providing support, the Plunkett Foundation does not leave it to the person to navigate what is available and see if they are eligible. Instead, using its knowledge, the Foundation ascertains the best package of support for the community in question. This means that the organisation can effectively provide a mix of support across multiple programmes and funds. This integrated approach to community need is a very effective way to increase effectiveness and uptake of support.

It is easy to think that once a community business is up and running, it will then operate similarly to any other business and, as such, the support required would be available from the large number of business support organisations across the country. However, this is not the case. A community business has unique issues to deal with and as it is owned, run and in support of communities, there is a complex array of interventions required in any one year. This is perhaps best seen in the Plunkett Foundation Networks, where many of the challenges faced by community businesses are shared.

To ensure long term, relevant support across the life cycle of a community business, the Foundation has identified key milestones and triggers for which it provides support. This includes carrying out 'Health Checks' that review where the community business is currently and to identify any areas of concern. It also reviews monitoring data and identifies any anomalies or areas to follow-up. It has also activated networks which not only provide specialised peer support but also provide a feedback loop into the support provided by the Foundation directly.



# Contributions Analysis

**Contributions = What People (individuals, communities, organisations) + Nature (e.g. ecosystems, climate, other animals) provide**

**Core question: Who are the key contributors and how significant are their actions?**

## Evidence of Contribution to Overall Impact

Data and analysis of all the relevant activities that contribute to the priority areas of impact provide the evidence of the contribution made by the Plunkett Foundation. All these activities directly or indirectly enable community interaction and cohesion, long-term community engagement and participation, provision of critical products and services for the community, and employment and preparation for employment/work.

**What contribution has the Plunkett Foundation made?  
How valuable was it to Community Businesses and Rural Communities?**

Types of activities delivered by the Plunkett Foundation, and typical examples:

Raising awareness & understanding	Community Support	Sharing of expertise	Providing community resources - directly & indirectly
<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increasing understanding of priority rural needs by key decision-makers.</li><li>Raising awareness of the impact of community businesses.</li><li>Increasing awareness of available Plunkett support</li></ul>	<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Providing one-to-one advice on engaging with communities.</li><li>Being supportive of communities setting up community businesses.</li><li>Providing mentoring of community business leaders</li></ul>	<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Providing an expert helpline.</li><li>Providing an Advisory Network with specialist expertise.</li><li>Providing specialist knowledge in policy decision-making.</li><li>Providing case studies of exemplary practice</li></ul>	<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Securing and providing grants for developing a community business.</li><li>Providing guides, templates, example rules and standards, enabling supplier discounts/offers, linking to funding opportunities</li></ul>

There is a very wide range of activities carried out by the Plunkett Foundation, who are very responsive to the needs of community businesses. The support they provide builds the capacity of community business leaders to independently develop appropriate strategies and implement best practice for long term success, as opposed to remaining reliant on the Plunkett Foundation for tactical support. This means that the contribution from the Plunkett Foundation has long lasting value, delivering a ripple effect as community business leaders gain expertise and experience that they can, in turn, share with others.

### List of Plunkett Foundation Activities

- Plunkett Foundation Programmes for specific needs:
  - By type of community business (e.g. shops, pubs, woodlands)
  - By stage of community business (e.g. early engagement to start up to running the business)
  - By issues affecting to community business (e.g. raising rural communities' voice or reducing rural loneliness)
- Funding/grants: for a wide range of community business needs, the Plunkett Foundation offers a package of finance, expertise and resources (e.g. templates, training and connections with other support organisations). It also provide advice and guidance on securing other grants/ funds based on the situation, location, and needs of the community/community business.
- Plunkett Foundation Advisory Service through the deployment of experts across the UK including one-to-one and remote support in the following areas:
  - o Planning
  - o Employment
  - o Engagement and communication
  - o Commerce
  - o Policies and procedures
  - o Community business and related Law
  - o Funding
  - o Business models
  - o Media preparation and delivery
- Community Business Peer Support:
  - o Arranging community business visits
  - o Peer connect - informal and formal
- Partner/member offers: a wide range of partners provide Plunkett Foundation members negotiated offers for community businesses.
- The Plunkett Foundation Network organises a wide range of events across the country and through a range of media to increase accessibility including webinars, workshops, network meetings and celebratory events.
- The Plunkett Foundation Network also has an online presence, with Facebook groups and newsletters for Shops, Pubs and Woodlands.
- Community and community business mentoring of community leaders driving the start-up of community businesses, running operations and/or leading on community business governance.

- Practical Resources for community business implementation, including employment and operational guides and templates.
- Plunkett Foundation Awards and Showcase: formal recognition of community businesses having significant impact in their rural communities, supported by media coverage, profile raising and individual recognition of leaders of community businesses
- Plunkett Foundation social media presence: a wide range of media and social media coverage to promote the work of community businesses, raise the profile of what a community business is and how it can benefit communities, and the collective work with other partners, for example the Prince's Countryside Fund.

These activities are cross-cutting in terms of programmes and projects depending on the relevance and need for delivery. The contributions made by the Plunkett Foundation in the priority areas for measurement are summarised below:

#### **Affection - Family, friends, community interaction and cohesion**

The Plunkett Foundation provides advisor support from an early stage to help engage and build momentum for action in the community. Engagement strategies, tools and resources are provided for easy adoption by community leaders and businesses, in many instances for people who have never carried out this work before. Interactive networks provide a wide range of advice and experience for engaging communities and bringing people together.

#### **Creation - Local opportunities and participation (over time)**

The Plunkett Foundation provides workshops and events with specialist expertise for developing and implementing activities that motivate and encourage engagement for the long-term, which are both pre-planned (annual programme) and responsive to the requests from community businesses. There is considerable mentoring of community leaders, formal and informal, from first ideas for community action and throughout the life cycle of a community business.

The Plunkett Foundation actively puts in place resources and peer support for community leaders and businesses, through funded visits and ongoing support networks.

### **Protection - Community support, adequate support services**

There is considerable advisor support throughout the set-up phase of the community business, including developing a business plan for cost effective and sustainable operations. There are a wide variety of shared experiences through Plunkett Foundation networks, across all operational considerations for provision of products and services. Also, there is considerable advice on how to best go about sourcing locally, providing ethical/organic/ecologically friendly products and services.

The Plunkett Foundation has negotiated a suite of offers and discounts from partners to enable ethical and/or cost effective supply chains. It also advocates for community business support, incentives and resource assistance to help enable sustainable options for community businesses.

### **Subsistence: Employment and preparation for employment**

There is advisor support at an early stage in development of the community business to ensure a practical and workable business plan, including strategies for employment and volunteering. There are strong networks, particularly through the Plunkett Foundation Facebook groups and network events, with expert advice and practical examples of how to structure the operations of a community business.

## Context Analysis

Context = Physical (e.g. time, setting, resources) + Social (e.g. norms, culture, understanding, communication) Situation

**Core question: What is the context and how changeable is it?**

**Context = Rural Communities across the UK, Community Businesses, Small Businesses, Third Sector, UK Society**

#### **Context: Social, Economic, Environmental**

The ongoing negotiations surrounding the UK's future relationship with the European Union have formed just part of what has been an unstable environment for society across the UK: politically, socially, economically and environmentally. This has sat alongside an increase in social needs and a continued decrease in funding for social products and services.

Physical environments have also experienced a period of flux, with climate experts finding dramatic increases in extreme weather conditions, including flooding, heat waves and other unexpected events within a one year period.

All of these largely unpredicted and quickly changing situations have created uncertainty and organisations have had to respond and adapt accordingly.

The Plunkett Foundation has closely monitored social, economic and political environments and initiated work to help address barriers to needs being met and its offer is appropriate for the long-term prosperity of rural communities. Where possible it has positioned itself strategically and carried out activities to influence and improve circumstances for rural communities. More work in this area needs to be carried out, particularly as the consequences of the current context become more acute.

#### **Context: Social, Economic, Environmental**

'The Road Ahead 2019 is published at a time of national political instability, with a number of decisions that will have constitutional implications due to take place. While many of us are holding our breath to see what happens next, leaders will not want to squander the space this offers. The urgency of facing up to systemic challenges has intensified over the past year amid proliferating signs of uncertainty, instability and fragility.'

‘Charities must prepare for continued high demand for their services in the face of a “gloomy economic outlook”.’  
‘Social isolation and loneliness are often associated with older people. According to Age UK’s loneliness campaign, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. However, a recent analysis of the Community Life Survey by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)<sup>46</sup> shows that those aged 16 to 24 years report feeling lonely more often than those in older age groups. Those most at risk of loneliness as identified by ONS were widowed older homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions; unmarried, middle-agers with long-term health conditions and younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area.’

### **The Road Ahead, NCVO**

January 2019

An estimated 14.3 million people are in poverty in the UK 8.3 million are working-age adults, 4.6 million are children, and 1.3 million are of pension age. Just under half (49%) of those in poverty are in “persistent poverty” (people who would also have fallen below the poverty line in at least two of the last three years).

Working-age people in poverty are increasingly likely to be in working families.

Poverty rates fell in the years after 2010, as the UK recovered from the financial crisis, but are now showing clear signs of rising again

### **Full Fact, Sept 2019**

50% of London’s wealth is owned by the top 10%. The bottom 50% own only 5% of London’s wealth. 58% of Londoners in poverty live in a working family. This equates to 1.3 million people - a 50% increase over the last decade.

**London’s Poverty Profile**, [www.trustforlondon.org.uk](http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk)

Third sector organisations are facing increased financial pressures heightened as demand for services maintains its sharp incline and reductions in government funding continue, according to new research.

### **Financial pressures intensify as demand rises for third sector**

Ulster Economix, 21 January 2019

The proportion of people giving money to charity has seen a steady decline. Trust in charities has decreased significantly since 2016.

**2019 UK Giving Report**, Charities Aid Foundation

Our publicly owned buildings and spaces under threat. England’s vital publicly owned buildings and spaces are being sold off on a massive scale for private use and short-term profit. These buildings and spaces are ours, owned by councils on behalf of citizens. In many cases these places have been at the heart of our communities for decades or even centuries, and in some cases were originally paid for by us through public subscription. They are our libraries, youth centres, allotments and public swimming pools. These are the everyday places where extraordinary things happen, where local people come together, access vital services and support each other. Once sold off to private developers and short-term speculators they are lost to us.

**Great British Sell Off**, Locality

June 2018

### **Data Insight: Economic Analysis**

We show that the Brexit vote has led to a 12% increase in the number of new investments made by UK firms in EU27 countries. The increase in UK investment in the EU27 is entirely driven by the services sector. Although it is not possible to be certain about the reasons behind firms’ investment decisions, our results are consistent with the idea that UK firms are offshoring production to the EU27 because they expect Brexit to increase barriers to trade and migration, making the

UK a less attractive place to do business.

By contrast, investment in the opposite direction from the EU27 into the UK has declined by 11%.

Finally, we find no evidence of a 'Global Britain' effect. UK firms have not increased their investment in OECD countries outside the EU27.

### **Voting with their money: Brexit and outward investment by UK firms**

Holger Breinlich, Elsa Leromain, Dennis Novy, Thomas Sampson, 12 February 2019

The consensus view of the economic studies of Brexit is that it will damage both the UK and the EU and that the damage will be far worse for the UK than for the rest of the EU (EU-27).

What is clear is that the terms of the final agreement will be crucial to assess its economic damage. In this sense, the British referendum should have been preceded by a discussion of what economic UK-EU relationship would be adopted in the case of Brexit. Some politicians probably thought that the vote would not lead to Brexit, but it did, and now there is no good Brexit.

WORKING PAPER19-5 Brexit: Everyone Loses, but Britain Loses the Most

María C. Latorre, Zoryana Olekseyuk, Hidemichi Yonezawa, and Sherman Robinson March 2019

### **Data Insight: Environmental Analysis**

In England and Wales:

Almost 4 million hectares of soil are at risk of compaction, over 2 million hectares of soil are at risk of erosion, intensive agriculture has caused arable soils to lose about 40 to 60% of their organic carbon, and soil degradation was calculated in 2010 to cost £1.2 billion every year

Compaction and the loss of organic carbon are serious threats to soil health. They affect agricultural production and our resilience to climate change. UK soils currently store about 10 billion tonnes of carbon. This is roughly equal to 80 years of annual UK greenhouse gas emissions.

Wasting food and growing crops for bioenergy are putting additional pressure on soils.

Spreading of some materials to land is poorly controlled and can give rise to contamination. Some 300,000 hectares are contaminated in the UK.

Microplastics are widespread in soil with unknown consequences.

### **Summary of the state of the environment: soil**

Environment Agency

Updated 3 June 2019

It is widely accepted that the UK's biodiversity had been massively depleted by centuries of habitat loss, management changes, development and persecution before State of Nature's 1970 baseline.

Our statistics demonstrate that the abundance and distribution of the UK's species has, on average, declined since 1970. Many measures suggest this decline has continued in the most recent decade. There has been no let-up in the net loss of nature in the UK.

The UK Government's own assessment indicates that, although progress has been made, the UK will not meet most of the global 2020 targets it committed to through the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The pressures that have caused the loss of biodiversity over recent decades continue to have a negative effect. The State of Nature 2019 report highlights agricultural management, climate change, hydrological change, urbanisation, pollution, woodland management and invasive non-native species as among the most significant of pressures acting upon terrestrial and freshwater wildlife. At sea, climate change and fishing are having the most significant impact upon marine biodiversity.

Of the 8,431 species that have been assessed using the IUCN Regional Red List criteria, and for which sufficient data were available, 1,188 (15%) are currently threatened with extinction from Great Britain and 2% are already extinct.

#### **State of Nature - UK**

The State of Nature Partnership, 2019

## Further Reading on Rural Needs

#### **The RSA and the Commission for Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Reports**

<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/food-farming-countryside-commission-our-common-ground> and <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/fork-in-the-road>

#### **Rural Coalition Statement**

<http://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/rural-coalition-statement-2017-low-res.pdf>

#### **The Plunkett Foundation Strategy**

<https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Plunkett-Strategy-2018-2022-Final-2.pdf>

#### **The State of Rural Services Report 2018**

<https://ruralengland.org/state-of-rural-services-report-2018/>

#### **Tony Juniper, What has nature ever done for us?**

<https://www.tonyjuniper.com/content/what-has-nature-ever-done-us>

#### **The Prince's Countryside Fund Research**

<https://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/research/research>

#### **The Food Farming and the Countryside Commission Videos**

<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2019/04/ffcc-film>

#### **Locality Report**

<https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Great-British-Sell-Off-FINAL.pdf>

#### **Rural Services Network Reports**

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/page/publications>

#### **Natural England Publications**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

#### **DEFRA Rural statistics**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/760065/06\\_Statistical\\_Digest\\_of\\_Rural\\_England\\_2018\\_November\\_edition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760065/06_Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2018_November_edition.pdf)

## Acknowledgements

This Impact Statement was authored in the Autumn of 2019 by Rose Challies, with support from staff at the Plunkett Foundation, and funded by The Co-op. Our thanks go in particular to all the representatives of the community businesses featured throughout the report. In addition to this initial Impact Statement, the Plunkett Foundation will be using the framework and data sources set out above in order to be able to better record, monitor and report on the significant impact that the Community Rural Business Sector is having across the country.

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## Co-operative Group Limited

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Registered office: 1 Angel Square, Manchester M60 0AG  
Registered number: 525R

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Registered charity and company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales no 213235.  
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