



Supporting a community-owned
business in Buntingford

Who are we?

Plunkett UK is a national charity with a vision for resilient, thriving and inclusive communities.

We achieve this by supporting people throughout the UK to set up and run a wide range of community-owned businesses such as shops and pubs, through to woodlands, farms and fisheries.

Our mission is to ensure these businesses create **innovative, impactful and inclusive spaces** benefiting everyone who lives and works there.



What are community businesses?

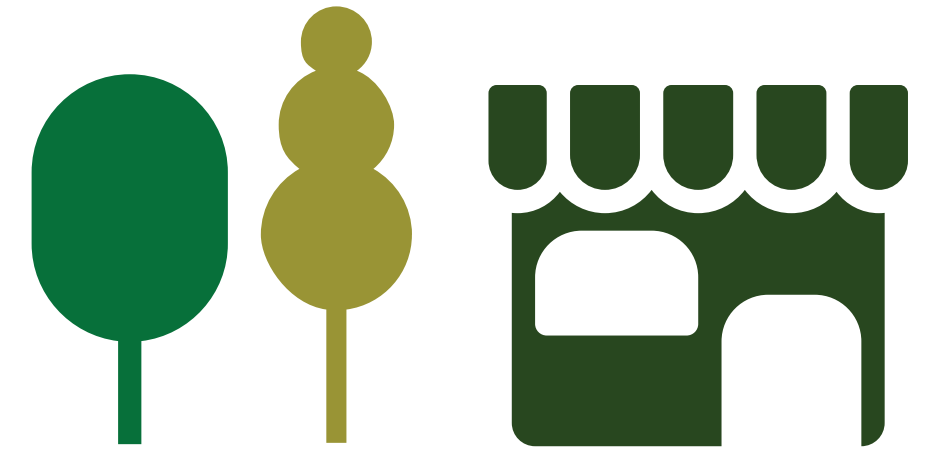
We support any type of business which is **owned and controlled by community members**, where membership is open to anyone at accessible prices, and all members have **equal and democratic say** in how the business is run.

Plunkett has supported over 850 community businesses to open and, with almost another 800 in our pipeline, and 30 opening each year, the sector is growing.

Our community-owned businesses include:



Our placemaking approach



Plunkett UK supports developers and housebuilders in creating community-owned businesses in new build developments.

We are now trusted by businesses such as [Barratt Redrow, Wates, Vistry and Lands Improvement](#) to work alongside their other consultants in **reimagining how retail and community infrastructure is delivered in new places.**

Community shops offer an alternative to the traditional retail model, and can be brought forward at a much earlier stage in the development process.

Additionally, Plunkett has created **a meanwhile proposition** which establishes a shop and café model operating out of a temporary unit, and can be rolled out on-site from the first house occupation. This not only provides early services to the pioneer residents, building developer trust, but also helps to forge a strong sense of place from the very outset.

Better Businesses



Providing much-needed services for communities



Bringing the community together, as **welcoming** and **inclusive** spaces for all



Boosting the **local economy** through independent supply chains



Reinvesting profits into **local causes**



Creating **opportunities** for employment, training and volunteering – especially for people excluded from labour market



‘More than...’

Plunkett describes community-owned businesses as ‘more than’ because they are wider than just running a standard, singular business. They become a hive of community and voluntary activity.



*Providing a place for
meetings, clubs & societies*



*Having a space for
coffee and cake*



*Setting up post
office facilities*



*Cooking hot food to
eat in or take away*



*Promoting live music
and arts events...*



and sport too.



*Looking out for vulnerable
residents in the community*



*Investing profits in
other local projects*

Getting involved

A community business can be hugely rewarding for everyone involved – and all people can play a part.



Key ingredients for a successful community-owned business:

THE COMMUNITY: Actively talking to, engaging and listening to all people in a community puts **their needs and vision** at the heart of a new community business.

A STRONG TEAM: Creating a community steering group with a wide set of skills and enthusiasm for the project **to represent the wider community** will make a successful community business for everyone to enjoy.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE: Plunkett can help set up a suitable community legal structure so that the business is **truly owned by the community** for wider community benefit and meets all legal, ethical and social requirements.

ASK FOR HELP: Plunkett can help every step of the way up **to opening and beyond**. We support community businesses for the long-term through training, business advice, networking and events.

The process

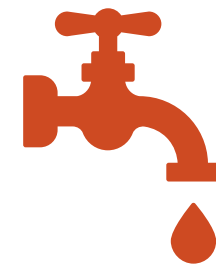


1 Planning agreed



3 First occupations

2 Housing
infrastructure built



4 Community
infrastructure built



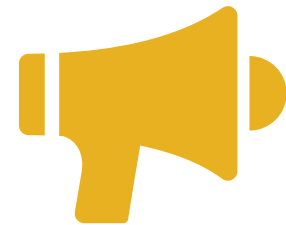
Plunkett's journey



1 Map the local area for existing community infrastructure



3 Once a need is established, work with the community to create a steering group



2 Engage local residents to build a community vision of what is wanted and needed in Buntingford



4 Plunkett advisers support the steering group to open a community-owned business

Aligned steps to take



1 Planning
& mapping



3 First occupations
& steering group

2 Housing built
& community
engagement



4 Community infrastructure
built - including community
business



Once approximately 300 houses are occupied, the local population, along with a relatively smaller number of customers from outside the area, will be sufficient to ensure profitable trade. This analysis is based on the assumption that no other retail food outlets or cafes/coffee shops are built in, or very close to, the development in this period.

What is expected from the housebuilder

In order to ensure a consistent process with both the local authority and the local community, Plunkett would establish an ongoing relationship with the chosen housebuilder at the point of the development site sale.

The housebuilder would need to enter into a financial partnership with Plunkett, which would fund the resource and time of the Plunkett advisers to support the community in the development of a community-owned business.

Additionally, the housebuilder would - either as a condition of the sale or through the S106 - commit to an agreed size, location, and fit-out of a permanent space for the community shop. This agreement would protect the community's interest in the long-term stewardship of the site.



Case study: Woodgate, West Sussex

Woodgate Community Shop in Pease Pottage, West Sussex is the first of its kind in a new-build development (of 619 homes) and offers a blueprint for future ventures. Plunkett worked with Thakeham Homes' external affairs and social value teams to create a community steering group to undertake the steps needed to open the shop, which sits within a wider community hub with a café and meeting room.

Opened in May 2024, the shop is run by staff and volunteers to serve residents and hospice visitors. Local committee members guide governance, and anyone can buy shares, become a member, and have a say. Profits are reinvested into the community. The shop meets local needs through tailored stock, supports social connection, and contributes to the local economy by working with local suppliers and creating jobs and work experience. Plunkett has provided practical support throughout and continues to offer guidance and peer learning through its network.



“Running our shop as a community business brings the community together and creates the shop we want as local residents. Alongside the hospice, café and meeting space, our shop is at the heart of the community and is also the driving force behind many community events. It is a welcoming space for all residents and visitors alike.”

Stuart Wain, Shop Committee Chair

Plunkett UK is proud to work with a range of placemaking partners to embed community ownership into new developments and to help put new-build services and infrastructure into the hands of the local community.

Plunkett would be excited to be invited by Hallam Land to be commissioned to work closely with the local residents to embed a community-owned business as part of the Buntingford development planning application.

Plunkett's support will help build a thriving and resilient community business that connects with both new and existing residents with long-term benefits.

Signed,

Harriet English

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Deputy CEO, Plunkett UK

Plunkett UK, The Quadrangle, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1LH | 01993 630022
info@plunkett.co.uk | www.plunkett.co.uk/placemaking

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