

Plunkett Foundation News

20th January 2012

First ever review of rural social enterprise in England published

Report highlights key role in maintaining and developing rural services and assets

Social enterprises are increasingly being developed by rural communities to take control of the issues affecting them, states a new report from Plunkett Foundation commissioned by Defra.

The Review of Rural Social Enterprise in England is the first systematic review of the many various forms of community led social enterprise across rural England and the impact they have on rural communities.

Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of Plunkett Foundation, said: "The Review of Rural Social Enterprise in England has found that, despite the challenges facing rural areas, communities are responding through a range of community led social enterprises."



Couchman continued: "Rural social enterprises come in many forms – a community setting up a community-owned shop, community food enterprises, community land trusts for affordable housing, development trusts, community broadband enterprises and community transport enterprises are just some examples. By looking across all the different types of rural social enterprise for the first time this research has provided a greater understanding of how rural social enterprises operate and the impact they have on their communities."

The report was commissioned by the Rural Communities Policy Unit within Defra and was supported by the Office for Civil Society within the Cabinet Office. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.plunkett.co.uk/newsandmedia/news-item.cfm/newsid/595>.

Pictured above is The Villager, a community transport project which sees its buses carrying 200 passengers from 66 villages in the Cotswolds every week.

Last chance for North Norfolk communities to set up shop

Time is running out on a project that sees £110,000 available specifically for communities in North Norfolk to help set up and run their own community shops.

The project is currently only open to North Norfolk to give communities there a chance to buck the trend of rural decline by establishing shops that are owned and run by the communities themselves. If all the money is not allocated by the end of January, the project then widens out to the rest of the county, where it is expected that more communities will come forward.

The project sees Plunkett Foundation joining forces with Victory Housing Trust and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation to deliver £110,000 in grants, loans and specialist advice specifically for North Norfolk communities. Interested communities should contact the Plunkett Foundation on 01993 810730 or email james.alcock@plunkett.co.uk.

Community-owned shop named Welsh Champion in 'Rural Oscars'

Cwm Trannon's vital role in community recognized in Countryside Alliance Awards

A community-owned shop has been named Welsh Champion in the first of the regional winners to be announced in the prestigious Countryside Alliance Awards.

Cwm Trannon, or the Trefeglwys Community Co-operative project, was crowned Best Village Shop and Post Office in Wales in the Awards, which celebrate rural enterprises, produce, heritage and communities across the whole of the UK.



The Trefeglwys Community Co-operative project was created in 2008 following the closure of the shop and post office and potential closure of the village petrol station. The community, home to around 1,000 people comprised of the villages and hamlets of Trefeglwys, Llawr y Glyn and Staylitte, took matters into their own hands and saved not only the village shop, but the Post Office, café, petrol station and garage by owning and running it themselves.

After being honoured at a Welsh Assembly reception on 11th January, Cwm Trannon will now go on to compete in the Finals, the winners of which will be announced in March.

This year, 11 community-owned shops have been named regional finalists, the winners of which will be announced later this month. Last year, five community-owned shops made it to the Finals, with Yarpole community shop being crowned overall champion.

Co-operatives UK welcomes Co-operatives Bill

The announcement of the Co-operatives Bill has been welcomed by Co-operatives UK, the national trade body for Co-operatives. The announcement of the Bill, made by the Prime Minister David Cameron, means that the 17 separate pieces of legislation governing the sector, much of which dates back to 1965 and has been developed piecemeal, may now be consolidated into one Act.

Ed Mayo, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK, said: "The new act is intended to make it as easy and natural to form a co-operative as any other form of business. We are delighted to see the Coalition taking action to put co-operative businesses on an equal footing and create a diverse economy."

"Co-operatives, as well as being widely recognised for their ethical business practices, are a vital part of the British economy, employing more than 235,000 people, turning over more than £33 billion each year and generating a significant amount of wealth for the country."

Co-operative businesses are already outperforming the UK economy and have grown by 20% since the start of the credit crunch. The consolidation of the legislation will create a more equal playing field for them by creating clarity and reducing running costs.

Observer Ethical Awards 2012

The Observer has announced the categories for this year's Observer Ethical Awards. The full list is available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jan/14/observer-ethical-awards-2012-categories?intcmp=239> but includes categories such as 'Retailer', 'Unsung local hero' and 'Business Initiative.' Plunkett Foundation would urge all its beneficiaries to consider entering the awards, which would provide high profile exposure for your initiative.

Future of Food on Radio 4

This Sunday's Food Programme on BBC Radio 4 will focus on innovative ideas for a more sustainable future for food. It features Plunkett Foundation's Jennifer Smith, Head of Programme Management for Making Local Food Work, alongside new community food initiatives. You can read more about the programme and listen again at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019rd9c>.

Dates for the diary

Village SOS National Conference

Monday 27th February, Birmingham

<http://www.villagesos.org.uk>

Soil Association Annual Conference

Friday 2nd March, London

<http://www.soilassociation.org>.

Making Local Food Our Future

Tuesday 20th March, Mermaid Conference Centre, London.

<http://makinglocalfoodourfuture.eventbrite.co.uk/>.

Local People, Local Food: A one day conference

Tuesday 24th April, Aston University, Birmingham.

Contact Eileen Keenan on info@plunkett.co.uk or call 01993 810730.

Women's Food and Farming Union National Conference

Thursday 12th April – Friday 13th April

Contact Rosemary Berry berry.coombelands@btinternet.com or call 01884 32320.

National Retail Consumer Conference – Co-operatives UK

Friday 24th – Sunday 26th February

<http://www.uk.coop/nrcc>

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Plunkett Foundation on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Plunkett-Foundation/146827248663874?ref=ts>

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