

Plunkett Foundation News

13th January 2012

Community shops prove resilient despite current downturn

New report into sector's 2011 performance from Plunkett Foundation

Community-owned shops are continuing to prove their resilience despite the economic downturn forcing many other businesses to close, states the new report from Plunkett Foundation.

Nineteen new shops opened in 2011, with the highest concentration being in the South East with 7, closely followed by the South West with 5.

The report, released today, is a summary of the support it provided to communities across the UK in 2011. It finds:

- There are now 271 community-owned shops in the UK
- 19 opened in 2011, 7 of which were in the South East
- Plunkett Foundation currently working with a further 149 communities to explore community ownership as a way of saving their village shop
- 114 shops have been helped to expand their local food offering, 62% of which reported significant increase in sale turnover
- Specialist advisers worked a total of 768 days supporting community-owned shops



Community-owned shops are those that are owned and run by the community itself. They are viable and sustainable models of business: their 96% survival rate compares extremely favourably with the average small business 5 year survival rate of 46.8% (Office for National Statistics) thanks to the widespread engagement and ability to respond to customer needs.

Of the 19 shops to open across the UK, Plunkett Foundation supported 17, and received 130 new enquiries in 2011. Plunkett committed around £650,000 of support to communities through a variety of programmes including Village CORE, a loan, grant and advice programme delivered in partnership with Co-operative and Community Finance and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and supported by Lankelly Chase.

To download a copy of the report visit:

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/newsandmedia/news-item.cfm/newsid/594>.

Pictured above is St Tudy Community Shop, one of the 19 to open last year.

PLUNKETT ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Plunkett Foundation on Facebook:

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

Plunkett Foundation on Twitter: @PeterCouchman, @Mike_Plunkett, @HarrietPlunkett, @Kat_Plunkett, @MrsM_Plunkett, @James_Plunkett.

New legislative change:

What it means for your co-operative

On Sunday 8 January a long awaited Legislative Reform Order comes into effect, which Co-operatives UK has been campaigning for since 2002. They have published a useful guide to this and what it might mean if your enterprise is a co-operative on their website.

The legislative change – which helps put co-operatives on an equal footing – will have an impact on co-operatives and mutuals registered as Industrial and Provident Societies, which includes many community-owned shops.



In brief, the legislative reform makes changes in three key areas: Age limits, Share Capital and Interim Accounts. For more information visit <http://www.uk.coop/blog/lindabanks/2012-01-06/new-legislative-change-what-it-means-your-co-operative>.

New chapter for community's book lovers

A community in Clevedon is celebrating after saving the town's last second-hand bookshop through community ownership.

Members of the Clevedon Society of Friends and community group Transition Clevedon joined forces with other residents to save the shop after the closure was announced. Working with Plunkett Foundation, the community has managed to save the shop using a co-operative legal structure.

The community launched a community share issue to raise £20,000 for the initiative. The shares went on sale in the autumn and so far more than 250 people have invested a minimum of £10 to become co-owners of the shop. Volunteers have been working around the clock to get the shop ready for the opening by painting, decorating and building bookshelves, and already have around 7,000 titles in stock, with plans to increase the total to 16,000 if the shop is a success. For more information on doing something similar in your community, contact the Village SOS advice line on 0845 434 9123.

Public want 'greener' farm support

A new survey has found that an overwhelming majority of people want more agricultural support directed at sustainable farming practices.

Some 84% of British adults believe farmers have a responsibility to look after the landscape and wildlife for future generations, says the poll. Carried out by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), it found that 17% of adults would accept a more industrialized farming sector, with 78% saying they wanted farmers to get more support to carry out environmentally sustainable farming practices. Publication of the survey results was timed to coincide with the launch of Monday 9th January of CPRE's vision for the future of farming. For a full write up and to download the report, visit <http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/09/01/2012/130866/Public-want-39greener39-farm-support.htm>.

The People's Supermarket launch 'Brick by Brick' campaign

The People's Supermarket has launched a campaign to raise £2.5m in match funding for its Brick by Brick campaign from the financial organizations that will be providing social investment funds developed by The Big Society Group.

To date, The People's Supermarket in London, supported to set up by Making Local Food Work, has created 19 full time jobs for locally long-term unemployed, who are helped by 1,200 members, serving more than 6,000 customers a week. For more information visit

<http://thepeoplessupermarket.org>.

Community Farm attempts to raise £27,000

The Community Farm <http://www.thecommunityfarm.co.uk> is trying some crowd-funding through the peoplefund.it website in an attempt to raise £27,000 to help build a shelter, compost loos and provide hot water for hand-washing and other facilities, to enable them to bring school groups to the farm and start them off on their discovery of sustainable food production.

If you are interested in their cause, find out more at:

<http://www.peoplefund.it/the-community-farm-chew-magna>.