

HARNESSING the power of your community

plunkett
foundation

The Plunkett Foundation

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20 October 2011
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What does Plunkett Foundation do?



Plunkett was established in 1919 to support rural communities through community ownership

Plunkett supports all forms of rural social enterprise, including community shops

Plunkett also helps deliver the LOOK FOR LOCAL FOOD project, financed by the Big Lottery (via Making Local Food Work) – which has been rolled out nationally to commercial and community shops

Know your community



- Likely 20% in rural SE communities are 65+
- Retirees – form a volunteer base
- Less of the 15-29s in the villages – housing issues
- Young families – time-poor, need quick meal solutions
- Areas of deprivation – and extreme wealth
- Workers/builders
- Weekenders/ tourism
- Loyal customer base – these form the majority of sales
- Don't cater for the lowest common denominator

What do they want?



- A good village shop/PO/services
- Good range/variety of products
- Essential everyday products/ fair prices
- Top-end produce as well
- Local produce (shout about it)
- Something different (fight the supermarket deliveries!)
- Local identity (consider own-branding)
- Community hub

Interaction with community



- Customer service - with a smile
- Customer accounts and loyalty cards
- Local news, local gossip
- The local school - children learn to shop at the village shop, not at supermarket
- Teenagers – always need volunteering opportunities for their D of E awards
- Local organisations –are they on board?
- Village events, Xmas fairs, summer fairs
- Create your own events

Keep them interested!



- Ring the seasonal changes – make the store visibly different
- Marketing plan (find an event for every month)
- Importance of high days and holidays – as a way of connecting with your customers
- Regular promotions in store
- Keep stock changing
- Keep it cheerful
- Community shops: use volunteer skills for window-dressing, marketing etc
- Commercial shops: allocate time

Networking with your community



- Newsletters/email (collect addresses – try a prize draw)
- Own website/parish website – keep it up to date
- Keep a tidy up-to-date noticeboard (preferably not the shop window/door!)
- Social media – are you using it? *Facebook example:*

[Hambleton Village Shop and Post Office](#)

why bother to make a cake when you can get gorgeous homemade ones at the shop?

Like · · [Share](#) · [Thursday at 20:57](#)

[2 people](#) like this.

- Village organisations – ticket sales & fliers
- Consider a customer satisfaction survey

Networking as buyers



For knowledge & support:

- Other local shops/nearby villages
- Other community shops – county-wide and nationally through www.plunkett.uk.net – use its forum, advice sheets and events
- Events like this one, organised by HCC

For improving stock and increasing variety:

- Local producers – ask for POS and tastings
- Food fairs; farmers markets; Hampshire Fare

A powerful relationship

- **Your village is behind you! They want you to succeed!!**

The community wants the village shop as much as the shop wants the community

- Do they shop with you out of **desperation** or for pleasure?
- Do they feel involved with you?
- Do you show you are involved with them?

*MAKE IT A GOOD EXPERIENCE
AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY SPIRIT*

Postscript: The Localism Bill

Two parts to the Localism Bill:

- Local government reform (local referendums, elected mayors, etc)
- Community empowerment

Community empowerment - three new community rights

- Community right to buy (buildings/assets)
- Community right to challenge (public services)
- Community right to build (affordable housing and community assets)

The community right to buy is seen as being a key plan to save shops, pubs, library building (NOT the service itself), community centres and youth centres. It relates to public assets as well as private assets. Plunkett has played an active consultation role as part of the development of the plans with particular reference to community owned shops and pubs.

Community Right to Buy (Localism Bill)



How Community RTB would work in practice:

- A community group could nominate an '**asset of community value**' to be registered with the local authority
- If the asset owner comes to sell, this triggers an interim 'window of opportunity'/moratorium period of **6 weeks** for communities to express an interest to bid
- If they do not bid, the asset owner can sell on the open market.
- If they express an interest to bid they may have a further full window of opportunity (up to a total of **3 or 6 months**) where the asset owner cannot sell on the open market but they can sell to the community within the period.

Timescale – not imminent

Localism Bill should receive Royal Assent in April/October 2012. To put the new community right to buy powers into practice will take a further 6 months

Contact...



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