

# weekly news

Plunkett's weekly news update on:

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**Improving rural livelihoods**  
through co-operative and social enterprise

## Plunkett Foundation News

3rd June 2011

### Do you have what it takes to organise events for rural communities?

The Plunkett Foundation has recently won a large contract to provide a new national advice line and a series of awareness raising events to inspire people in rural villages – helping them make even more of a difference in their communities. These will be advertised across the UK, and a national television programme is due to be aired during the summer that focuses on a range of rural community enterprise pilot projects.

With all this exciting activity going on, there's never been a better time to join us. And if you have the skills and experience to take on one of the following roles, you could do just that. We are looking to recruit:

**Events Team Manager £28 - £30k**  
**2 x Junior Events Officer £21 - £23k**

Our UK Events Team will be responsible for running 24 awareness raising events across the country in Autumn 2011 and Spring 2012 – as well as a national conference in Winter 2011/2012. This will involve everything from branding and marketing the overall direction of the events, to liaising with regional event administration staff.

To take on either of these roles you'll need to have experience of working with third sector organisations, social enterprises, and/or community groups. You'll also need previous experience of assisting in the organisation of events, excellent organisational skills and plenty of drive and enthusiasm.

Full job descriptions can be found on our website at <http://www.plunkett.co.uk/aboutus/opportunities.cfm>.

To apply please email letter of application and your CV to [kathryn.morrison@plunkett.co.uk](mailto:kathryn.morrison@plunkett.co.uk) or visit [www.jobsatplunkett.co.uk](http://www.jobsatplunkett.co.uk) to find out more. The closing date for applications is Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011, and interviews will be held in the week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

## Co-operative archivist awarded Plunkett Fellowship

A former journalist who dedicated 10 years of her life to clarifying the influence of one of Ireland's leading political figures has been awarded a prestigious Fellowship by the Plunkett Foundation.

Kate Targett, who was awarded the Fellowship at the Foundation's AGM and Annual Seminar in Westminster on 8 June, dedicated a decade of her working life to transcribing, annotating and indexing the fifty-one handwritten diaries of Sir Horace Plunkett, the rural pioneer who influenced the social and political landscape of Ireland, England and America.



*Pictured at the AGM, Chief Executive Peter Couchman, Kate Targett and Chair Peter Cleasby.*

Speaking at the event, Kate said: "A Fellowship recognising my contribution to the Plunkett Foundation's heritage is an unexpected honour, and I am deeply grateful. It is a real pleasure to know that Sir Horace's message, which remains refreshingly relevant in today's context, will now be more accessible to those engaged in co-operative and social enterprises."

Kate, who began her career as a journalist in the USA, joined the Plunkett Foundation in 1992 as International Development Officer before becoming Information Services Manager. During her time there she undertook a major project of heritage conservation, preservation and electronic classification for the Foundation's historic collection of co-operative books, journals, manuscripts and correspondence – one of Sir Horace's enduring legacies to rural communities. As a result of her work, she was invited to transcribe, annotate and index the fifty-one volumes of Sir Horace Plunkett's handwritten diaries. Covering the years 1881 to 1932, these documents clarify and amplify Plunkett's colourful biography, as well as his unique role in the social, political and co-operative landscape of Ireland, England and America.

Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation, said: "Kate's work on Sir Horace's diaries has not only clarified his unique influence, but has amplified his impact, ensuring his legacy is passed on to today's co-operators. We would like to thank her for her enormous contribution and welcome her as Plunkett Foundation Fellow."

The Plunkett Foundation Fellowship is awarded to an individual for an outstanding contribution to the work of the Plunkett Foundation in supporting rural people through co-operative enterprise to take control of the issues affecting them. The Plunkett Foundation was founded in 1919 by Sir Horace Plunkett, the great pioneer of co-operative enterprise in rural Ireland.

## Co-operatives and Social Enterprise News

### Supporters' Direct public statement regarding funding

The Plunkett Foundation has expressed its support for fellow co-operative organisation Supporters' Direct which has been plunged into a funding crisis. (<http://s.coop/1wm7>).



Plunkett Foundation Chief Executive Peter Couchman said: "Supporters' Direct has made a massive contribution to the promotion of community ownership through its work to bring sports teams under genuine fan ownership. We are proud to have worked alongside them in recent years to encourage community-based co-operatives. Under Dave Boyle's leadership, they have become one of the most inspirational co-operative organisations that we know. We wish the Board and staff of Supporters' Direct every success in tackling their current challenges."

### Community-owned shop in the running for top award – vote now!

A community-owned shop in Petworth has been shortlisted in the Contribution to the Community category of the Nectar Business Small Business Awards 2011. Lodsworth Larder has been selected as one of the five finalists in this category, thanks to the vital role it plays in its local community. The winner of this category will be chosen by public vote, which takes place between 6<sup>th</sup> June and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

Lodsworth Larder was set-up in 2009 after the community got together and decided they wanted a village shop – having not had one for 20 years. It was designed as an eco-friendly building, constructed from locally sourced, sustainable trees. The shop also generates much of its electricity needs from Photo-voltaic panels on the roof. The shop sells a range of local produce and has saved the community over 127,000 miles of car travel to the nearest towns for general groceries. It has been supported by the Plunkett Foundation and the Making Local Food Work programme.



Martin Lester, the chairman of Lodsworth Larder, is hoping the local community, customers and the wider sector will support the shop in its quest to win this category by voting at [www.nectar-business.com/SBA2011](http://www.nectar-business.com/SBA2011) between 6th June and 10th July. As well as this prestigious title, the winner will take home £2,000 and 50,000 Nectar points.

### Locality's Community Shares Policy Seminar

Thursday 7 July 2011, London SE1 9NH

Book your place now for the Community Shares Policy Seminar on Thursday 7 July in London. This free event will bring together the findings from the action research project into community shares led by Locality, Co-operatives UK and the SROI UK Network – find out more at <http://locality.org.uk/events/community-shares-seminar/>.

## 'Poppin' to the village shop – 10 years down the line

### Long Marston's Poppin Village Stores celebrates its 10th birthday in style

Poppin Village Stores is set to celebrate its 10th birthday in style on Saturday 23rd July by throwing a party for the whole village. The celebrations will be kick-started two days earlier, on Thursday 21st July, with a formal ceremony, at which MP Nadhim Zahawi will attend.

Saturday's celebrations will honour the entire village and the support it has given its shop during the decade, with wine and cheese tasting, a BBQ using food stocked by the shop, cakes and local produce and activities for children taking place throughout the day.

Annie Johnston, Secretary of the Long Marston Shop Association Committee, said: "Thanks to the endeavours of all our volunteers who have given freely of their time over the last decade, we continue to flourish in a small community where working together has real significance.

"We are open seven days a week, operate on a rota system of unpaid volunteers, and provide most of the essentials for everyday living. The 'Big Society' hadn't even been thought of ten years ago but today one can see how the combined efforts of groups of individuals can rise to almost any challenge. It is not difficult to appreciate that, where there is a need, any community can organise, develop and provide a service just one of which has proven to be a vital cohesive element in one small corner of Warwickshire."

Attending the event will be Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation, the national body for supporting community-owned shops and other rural services, which has supported Poppin Village Stores since its birth in 2001. Says Peter: "The shop at Long Marston was one of 14 community-owned shops to have opened in 2001, and joins the now 259 across the UK. We are delighted to see the continued success of Poppin Village Stores and hope that it continues other communities to take control of the issues affecting them through community ownership."

## Viable mutuals could be suppressed by Whitehall

The government's drive to encourage public sector staff to set up employee-owned mutuals to deliver services needs stronger support from across Whitehall, an influential group of MPs has warned.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Employee Ownership said that viable, planned mutuals would be at risk of being suppressed by senior officials unless more was done explain how the model could drive positive change. The findings of the committee were outlined in a report published this week.

The group, which is chaired by Tory MP Jesse Norman, also said more should be done to convince public sector trade unions that the creation of mutuals did not represent a sell-off of public assets. The report said more work should be done on creating safeguards to prevent mutuals from being disbanded and then sold off to the private sector.

Norman said: 'Evidence from our inquiry suggests that more is needed to connect would-be mutuals with experts who have genuine experience in an advisory role, and to ensure that the expertise is affordable for organisations which may well be initially financially vulnerable and under pressure to perform.'

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## Farming and Food News

### E.coli warnings over bean sprout seeds

German authorities have extended their latest E.coli warning from grown bean sprouts to bean sprout seeds, after new evidence suggested that the seeds themselves could be contaminated with E.coli.

The federal institute for risk assessment (BfR) has advised consumers to avoid eating all raw bean sprouts – including those grown from seeds at home.

It said that although the E.coli strain responsible for the current deadly outbreak had not yet been found in home-grown bean sprouts, local authorities in the state of Lower-Saxony believed home-grown sprouts were responsible for a family falling ill with E.coli.

“If the seeds themselves are already contaminated with germs, then even proper kitchen hygiene won’t protect against EHEC (E.coli),” said BfR president Professor Dr Andreas Hensel. “As a precaution, the BfR therefore recommends that consumers also refrain from eating raw home-grown sprouts.”

To date, at least 35 people have died following the E.coli outbreak in Germany.

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### Open Farm Sunday a resounding success



Open Farm Sunday has been dubbed a "resounding success", with an estimated 400-plus farms opening their gates to the public on 12 June.

The LEAF-organised event saw members of the general public across the country get an insight into agriculture - many braving the rain in the process.

The final visitor count is still being done, but the hope is that last year's total of 184,000 will be topped. Farmers Weekly is holding a photograph competition on its website

(<http://www.fwi.co.uk/Home/>) for those who took part in the day.

© Farmers Weekly

### Government to unveil food buying policy

The government will soon be unveiling an official buying protocol to ensure it is sourcing food produced to the same welfare standards as British farms. As well as supporting the European Commission’s drive to introduce mandatory country of origin labeling, the government would not undercut British welfare standards if purchasing imported produce, said farming minister Jim Paice.

“We have a set of draft government buying standards that I hope will be announced soon; these will make sure all food we buy is produced to the equivalent of British standards.”

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## Food and Farming Academy launched

Sparsholt College has launched the Central Southern Food and Farming Academy to boost continued learning in agriculture and the development of new skills.

Collectively, with leading employers from this sector, the College is looking to provide career opportunities for 15 and 16 year olds - who are interested in the agricultural food industry - with the focus of continuous professional development during a four-year programme.

The new initiative includes knowledge development followed by a period of apprenticeship to acquire further skills and qualifications.

The companies involved in the academy will provide apprenticeships on a 'shared-basis', enabling students to move between businesses to diversify their portfolio of skills and experience. Each of the businesses have also committed to providing ongoing employment and career development through training and other forms of CPD (Continuous Personal Development) in return for enthusiasm, commitment and effort from the selected apprentices within the academy.

The college is taking applications for places within the academy either from those who are in year 11 at school or for those who already hold qualifications or experience to start the specialist apprenticeship programme aged 18 or above.

For further information go to [www.sparsholt.ac.uk](http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk) or telephone 01962 776 441.

## Helen Browning's speech to the WI on factory farming

Soil Association Director Helen Browning addressed the Women's Institute AGM on 8 June as they debated the motion: 'This meeting abhors the practice of factory farming particularly large animals such as pigs and cows, and urges HM government to ensure planning permission is not granted for such projects.' The transcription of her speech in full can be found on the Soil Association's website, at

<http://www.soilassociation.org/News/NewsItem/tabid/91/ArticleID/2174/Default.aspx>.



## Rural Development News

### Rural crime is postcode lottery, investigation reveals

A Farmers Guardian special investigation has revealed the disparity in rural crime figures across the UK.

Figures from around the UK have revealed a spike in the level of on-farm crime with red diesel and machinery thefts seeing a particular surge in the six months from October 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011.

But while some areas have seen an increase in rural crime, other police forces appeared to be winning the battle against rural criminals.

Statistics obtained by FG under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act reveal many forces including Thames Valley, Cumbria, Lancashire and some parts of Wales and Scotland are battling a significant increase in thefts.

In most cases, forces have noticed a hike in thefts of fuel, especially diesel, with some areas such as Suffolk and North Wales seeing a 100 per cent increase.

FG sent requests to all the police forces in the UK and asked them to provide information on thefts of livestock, tractors, all terrain vehicles (ATVs), other farm equipment, machinery and fuel.

The statistics from the 45 police forces which answered the request showed almost every force UK-wide had seen some form of increase during the period October 1 to March 31 2009/2010 and October 1 to March 31 2010/2011.

© Farmers Guardian

## Guide highlights community assets

A new guide details ways of using an asset-based approach to community development.

Called Appreciating Assets, the document has been published by the Carnegie UK Trust and the International Association for Community Development (IACD). It comes as the government places an increasing emphasis on the role of local practitioners to make the most of the assets in their communities.

The guide seeks to help develop a practical framework for asset-based approaches, and help users reflect on the policy environment. Carnegie chief executive Martyn Evans said: "It is possible to produce remarkable results through the hard work of local people."

It was important to build on community strengths rather than dwelling on weaknesses or the absence of abundant resources. "Assets are not just the things you can put a price on, they are also about people, skills and opportunities. The report provides a valuable contribution to the debate, raising issues the public and third sectors are now having to consider."

The document explores what is meant by "assets" and how to appreciate them – both physical and human – drawing on experiences from across the globe.

It is the outcome of a nine-month enquiry process, initiated at an international event in London in 2009. The investigation focused on the applicability, challenges and potential of using asset-based approaches in a UK/Irish context.

In the report, experienced practitioners share their own lessons about building more vibrant, sustainable communities – even through tough times. ICAD president Ingrid Burkett said: "This report aims to incite discussion and dialogue in practice, policy and academic circles."

The report was also timely given the conversations about the future of UK community development. It can be downloaded from <http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/Community/Guide-highlights-community-assets.html>.

© Rural Services Network

## International News

### Sign up to the ICA UN Year of the Co-operative newsletter!

The UN Year of the Co-operative is fast approaching, and co-operatives and support organisations around the world prepare to celebrate it in style. With so much going on, it can be hard to keep track of who is celebrating what. The International Co-operative Alliance has produced a newsletter to help people do just that, filled with information, events and ideas of how to celebrate the year and help to raise the profile of co-operatives across the globe.

View the latest newsletter and sign up at <http://civimail.ica.coop/static/newsletter/may2011.html>.

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

To follow the Plunkett Foundation on Twitter visit <http://twitter.com/PeterCouchman> or

[http://twitter.com/Mike\\_Plunkett](http://twitter.com/Mike_Plunkett), <http://twitter.com/HarrietPlunkett> or [http://twitter.com/Kat\\_Plunkett](http://twitter.com/Kat_Plunkett)