



Community businesses co-locating in places of worship, creating mutual benefits and having a positive impact in the local area.

Currently only around 1 in 10 groups that contact Plunkett Foundation for support to set up a community business will ever reach trading status. One of the main reasons behind this is lack of available or suitable premises from where to trade.

At the same time, many places of worship such as churches, are seeing reduced congregations and increasing costs and are actively seeking ways to increase footfall and create an income stream which contributes to the upkeep of these much loved, often historic buildings, ensuring their sustainability for the future.

Up and down the country, community businesses and places of worship are exploring 'co-location'; having a community owned business operating from within an active place of worship. There are already great examples of the model enabling both the community business and the place of worship to thrive. [Chalke Valley Stores](#) in Wiltshire has successfully run from within Broadchalke's United Reformed Church for ten years. In the Peak District [Grindleford Community Shop](#) runs from the old vestry of St Helen's Church whilst in Suffolk [Leiston Community Church Garden](#) has revitalised a small area of land belonging to their church and transformed it into a beautiful green space for the whole community to enjoy.

Recognising the potential co-location has for community businesses and places of worship in rural and urban areas, in 2020 Benefact Trust generously funded a programme of work enabling Plunkett to deliver packages of free advice and support to community groups and places of worship who are in the early stages of exploring whether co-location might be the solution to their needs. In addition to advice, we have also been able to offer grants of up to £5,000 to

help with feasibility and development work, including fees for professional services, Plunkett membership and model rules registration.

Benefact Trust's funding for Plunkett's work supporting with those exploring co-location finishes in December this 2023. With more advice and support to offer and more grants to award, we are encouraging anyone with an idea for a project like this to get in touch with our Community Business Team on 01993 630022 or email info@plunkett.co.uk. More information including case studies from across the UK and free resources can also be found [here](#) on the Plunkett website.