

PRESS RELEASE
10 September 2010

**CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT STEPS IN TO PROVIDE SUPPORT
TO THE 82 COMMUNITIES LEFT STRANDED BY PUBS
SUPPORT PROGRAMME CUT**

Representatives from a range of co-operative organisations have agreed to step in to provide support to the communities left stranded by the government pub saving programme being cut to open co-operative pubs. This was the outcome of a “Co-operative Pubs Summit” held in the wake of the Government decision to axe its community-owned pubs support programme.

The main concern of the organisations attending the summit, held at the Old Crown, Heskett Newmarket, the first co-operative pub in England, was the needs of the 82 communities which had approached the scheme for help but have now been left stranded. There are currently only four legally registered co-operatively owned pubs open in the UK and the aim of this support is to meet the demand from communities to help them to save pubs from closing through this approach.

Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation, which had created the original support scheme said: “We are pleased to say that the outcome of the Co-operative Pubs Summit is that the Co-operative Movement will be developing a package of support to help the 82 communities that have asked for help with saving their local. We all felt a strong moral duty to help these communities that the Government has turned its back on. The support will not be at the same level as it would have been, but those choosing go down the co-operative pub route will receive support from highly experienced co-operative developers.”

Peter Couchman continues: “Communities should have the right to try to save their pub through co-operative models. This approach has been extremely successful in saving village shops and football clubs and we hope this is the first step in creating a long term support service that meets the demands of the increasing number of communities looking to save their local.”

All 82 communities who have enquired about support will be contacted with details of the support that is available to them. Support will be available to those communities that choose to pursue the co-operative pubs model. Communities looking for general advice on how to save their local pub from closure will be supported by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Co-operative-ownership may not be appropriate for all and some may wish to pursue alternative models such as pub diversification and where applicable these communities will be signposted to other support available such as through Pub is the Hub.

For press and media enquiries, please contact Katherine Darling on 01993 810730 and Katherine.darling@plunkett.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The **Co-operative Pubs Summit** was held on 6th September at The Old Crown co-operative pub in Hesket Newmarket, Cumbria. Representatives from the following organisations attended the co-operative pubs summit.

CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale)
Co-operative and Community Finance
Co-operative and Mutual Solutions
Co-operative Development Network
Co-operative Group
Co-operativesUK
Plunkett Foundation
Supporters Direct
The Old Crown Co-operative Pub

The Co-operative Pubs Summit was called in response to the August announcement that the Department for Communities and Local Government had cut the **Community-Owned Pubs Support Programme**. The Community-Owned Pubs Support programme was a three year £3.3m support programme which would have helped fifty communities across England to set up and run community-owned pubs.

The Community-Owned Pub Support Programme was announced in March by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of a **12 point package** to help prevent pubs from closure.

The **Plunkett Foundation** (www.plunkett.co.uk) helps rural communities through co-operative and community-ownership to take control of the issues affecting them. It supports the network of 246 community-owned shops across the UK and manages a specialist support scheme which provides funding and advice to communities looking to set up and run a community-owned shop. The success of this scheme, which in 2009 opened 39 new community-owned shops therefore saving around 10% of village shop closures, was used as the basis for the development of the Community-Owned Pubs Support Programme.