Community Businesses in Places of Worship Programme

"The Plunkett Foundation, working alongside Allchurches Trust, is providing specialist advice and funds to encourage churches to work closely with community groups wanting to set up community businesses in places of worship. We would be extremely grateful if you could share the below information, not only with churches in your Diocese, *but to ask that they in turn share this to community groups or individuals they know locally*, so that communities are aware that this funded support is available.

Through the Community Businesses in Places of Worship programme, Plunkett can offer community groups and churches step by step support with specialist business advisers, as well as grant funds to take forward a project of locating a community owned business within an active church building.

Some of the costs a grant could help with may include helping groups to consult local residents about a community business idea, funding a valuation/survey of a building or site as part of a project, or setting up a community group's legal structure to enable them to have members and the ability to trade.

Community-owned and run businesses are already operating in a number of churches across the country. Grindleford Community Shop, for example, operates from the old vestry of St Helens Church in the small rural Peak District of Grindleford. Like many rural villages, over the years Grindleford lost its grocery store and then its Post Office. The new shop now stocks a wide range of convenience goods and provides teas, coffee, cake and a friendly welcome too! Outwardly the church remained unchanged, the areas used for worship were unaffected but the vestry restored the heart of the village and although small it works hard to connect all members of the community.

To discover more about communities businesses in places of worship and to find out more about the funded support we can offer, please contact me, and take a quick look at our webpage here to see some inspiring examples and more detail."