



Support Your Community

Starting a community business is a proven way to revitalise your village and boost rural pride.

From running shops and pubs to libraries and swimming pools, generating your own renewable energy or setting up a broadband service, the ways to get involved and help your community are only limited by your imagination.

Get Involved

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Have an idea? We can help...

Give Village SOS a call

Whether you're looking for inspiration, already have a brilliant idea, or an existing business you want to grow, the Village SOS [Advice Line](#) can help.

The Advice Line is here to help you get started – and keep going – as you work on your community business. Our in-house experts can answer almost any question – or direct you to someone who can.

Give us a call on 0845 434 9123, email advice@villagesos.org.uk or [Ask Village SOS](#)

Good ideas

Good community business ideas can come from just about anywhere – but here is the perfect place to get inspired.



Read about the different types of community businesses, how others have made a success of local enterprise, and how you can refine your idea to make sure it will be a success for your village. Here, you can find out:

- [What is a community business?](#)
- [What are the most common types of community business?](#)
- [What makes a good idea?](#)

You can also read:

- [Village SOS case studies](#) and
- [inspirational examples](#)

Or watch Sarah Beeny's [simple steps to a successful enterprise](#)

If you can't find what you're looking for, call the Village SOS Advice Line on 0845 434 9123 or submit a question to [Ask Village SOS](#).

Get started

Do you have a great idea for a community business but you're unsure how to bring it to life?



This section will guide you through the crucial first steps, including:

- contacting the [Village SOS Advice Line](#)
- [consulting](#) with your community
- how to [communicate](#) to win support
- setting up a [steering group](#)
- recruiting and retaining [volunteers](#)
- why you should use [local skills](#).

Before you start on your own journey, hear from some of the 10 Village SOS project leaders – and several stars from the BBC One series – talk about their experiences, how they overcame challenges, and how they got involved and made a difference to the community:

Business Essentials

You've [developed your idea](#), won your [community's support](#) and now you're ready to put your plans into practice.



There are many important issues to consider but it can be tough to find all the relevant information in one place. Look no further. This section will guide you through the basics and answer your questions – or point you in the direction of someone who can, like [Sarah Beeny](#)

- How do I write a coherent [business plan](#)?
- Where can I find [professional advice](#)?
- Which [legal](#) structure is best for our enterprise?
- Is there [funding](#) available?
- How do I find [staff](#)?
- Do I need [premises](#) or [planning permission](#)?
- What about [health and safety](#)?
- How can we [promote our enterprise](#)?
- How should we manage [supplier relationships](#)?

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Grow your enterprise

Now that your community business is up and running, you can put your efforts into strengthening your success and delivering even more benefits to your community.



This section is all about giving you the knowledge, contacts and resources you need for your community business to survive and thrive.

While running any business can often be tough, the good news is that the most common challenges can be overcome with a bit of forward planning, including:

- being clear on what you want to achieve
- committing to training and the development of leadership skills
- working out ways to give back to the community
- deciding on a model for growth
- understanding how to influence policy to promote and sustain your enterprise.

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Toolbox



Your toolbox

We've developed a range of Village SOS-branded tools, templates and giveaways to help you promote your community enterprise and rally local support.

There's a series of [posters](#), each themed to suit your type of enterprise; a [newsletter template](#) to keep your community up-to-date on the latest news; and a sample [questionnaire](#) to gauge local support and refine your ideas, a [business plan](#) template and [website graphics](#) for your website or social media channels.

We also have a range of additional [documents and resources](#) that will help you plan and implement your business.

The BBC toolkit

And the [BBC has a range of resources](#) in its toolkit that will be on their website while the series is on the air.