



Community Ownership: How to Get Started

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WHAT IT IS

A range of mechanisms through which communities can democratically own and control an asset, service, enterprise or project. ✓

Based on sustainable trading, not another form of charity. Community ownership is more successful when there is mutual gain rather than a beneficiary relationship. ✓

A way for a community to explore new ideas and solutions to meet identified specific needs, desires, or demands. ✓

An approach that harnesses the existing skills, talents and resources within a community to produce something that is greater than the sum of their parts. ✓

Part of a national movement of people taking control of local assets and deciding their own futures. ✓

WHAT IT ISN'T

A way to finance a 'pet' project that isn't genuinely going to be community owned. ✗

A way of delivering public services on the cheap. Ownership by the community shouldn't undermine wages, terms, and conditions. ✗

A quick fix. Community ownership is a long term sustainability strategy and requires long term commitment. ✗

A replacement form of income for a failing service or business - community investment addresses capital finance not income deficit. ✗

Always the right option. Sometimes worker, customer or producer ownership might be more appropriate but still provide community benefit. ✗

DOs

Recruit a group of pioneers and champions to drive the idea. One person can't do it alone. ✓

Be clear which community you seek to serve. Communities of interest are within communities of geography. ✓

Plan for community engagement at the start. Make ownership matter from the outset by involving people at the design stage. ✓

Encourage regular democratic participation and accountability, not just through formal governance mechanisms. Participation thrives when members have informal ways to get together. ✓

Expect some hard work. If it's worth having it will usually involve significant effort. ✓

DON'Ts

Ignore the warning signs if there isn't evidence of sufficient demand. You'll be more successful if you are led by users rather than by services or products. ✗

Unnecessarily raise expectations - stick to what is achievable. Don't run before you can walk! ✗

Try to please everyone! Embrace difference and how different motivations can still support the same cause. ✗

Give up when the going gets tough. It's just a sign that you probably need to ask for support and widen involvement. ✗

Rush the process. It is very rare that you can do something quickly, cheaply and to a good standard! ✗

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CHEAT SHEET