THE ANTIDOTE

ISSUE 001 | THURSDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2026 | UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2026 | MANCHESTER

FREE

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CHANGES LIVES AND BUILDS A BRIGHTER BRITAIN



Britain's brightest social enterprises took centre stage in Manchester tonight, as the 2026 UK Social Enterprise Awards celebrated the organisations, ideas and people building a better economy.

From tackling inequality and climate change to creating good jobs, stronger communities and new opportunities, this year's winners show the breadth and impact of social enterprise across the UK.

FULL STORY INSIDE



BREADWINNERS CROWNED UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

Helping refugees and young people seeking asylum build brighter futures through employment, training and mentoring.

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FRAM FARMERS NAMED CO-OP OF THE YEAR

How farmer-owned co-operation is strengthening resilience and securing a better future for British farming.

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HAVE WE BECOME TOO MUCH LIKE THE SYSTEM WE'RE TRYING TO CHANGE?

We talk to Alex Evans about the values, assumptions and future of social enterprise.

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A NATION OF IMPACT

Discover this year's award winners making a difference across the UK.



PAGE 5

THE NIGHT BELONGED TO YOU

What a night, Manchester! Here's to the people, organisations and ideas that made the UK Social Enterprise Awards 2026 an evening to remember.

Well, Manchester, what a night.

For the first time in the history of the UK Social Enterprise Awards, we brought the celebrations outside London.

And what better place to do it than a city with such a proud history of co-operation, radical thinking and people coming together to make change happen?

Tonight, we celebrated an extraordinary group of social enterprises. Organisations creating opportunities, strengthening communities, tackling some of the biggest challenges we face and showing what's possible when people and purpose are at the heart of business.

We also know that behind every award, every achievement and every success story are people who have worked incredibly hard to get here. Working in social enterprise takes courage, conviction and a remarkable amount of determination. The work is demanding, the resources are stretched and the path forward is rarely straightforward. Which makes tonight's achievements all the more worthy of recognition.

And that's why we've created this special edition newspaper. It's our way of capturing the stories, the people and the spirit of tonight, and celebrating a movement that's changing lives and communities across the UK.

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Find out who took home this year's awards.

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The people who have helped shape the social enterprise movement.

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Take a look at the full shortlist for this year's awards.



THE JUDGES HAVE SPOKEN

Behind every award is a panel of people who have given their time, expertise and judgement to recognise the very best of social enterprise.

Baroness Glenys Thornton
Founding Chair of SEUK (Lead Judge)

Bethan Webber
Chief Executive, Cwmpas

Amanda Johnston
Interim Chief Executive, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland

Janice Nicol
Business and Enterprise Manager, Social Enterprise Scotland

Loretta Awuah
Strategic Business Support Manager, GLL

Claire Dove CBE DL
VCSE Crown Representative

Leila Alinaghian
Director of Postgraduate Programmes, UCL

Anwar Ali OBE
Co-founder and CEO, Upturn

Liam O'Neill
Sustainable Procurement Analyst, AXA

Lilian Miles
Professor of Sustainability and Social Enterprise, Westminster Business School

Rose Marley
Chief Executive, Co-operatives UK

Georgina Hemington
Head of Relationships for Charities and Community Organisations, Barclays

James Wright
Head of Policy, Co-operatives UK

Claire Dalton
Society Secretary, Co-operatives UK

Cemal Ezel OBE
CEO, Change Please

Hannah Bambridge
Senior Manager, Community Engagement, Corporate Affairs, PwC

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PAPER
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"A city that brings people together, finds solutions together and shows what's possible when we work together."

Peter Holbrook CBE

"Manchester felt like the perfect place to shine a light on the people and organisations making a fairer, stronger, more inclusive economy."

Rose Marley

Inside, you'll find this year's winners, highly commended organisations and new inductees to the Hall of Fame, alongside features, familiar faces, fresh perspectives and a few surprises.

We wanted to create something you could take home, share with others and come back to, a reminder of what we can achieve when we put people and purpose at the heart of business.

To our winners, finalists, judges, partners and everyone who makes this movement possible, thank you.

Tonight was yours.

Peter — **Peter Holbrook CBE**
Chief Executive, Social Enterprise UK

Rose — **Rose Marley**
Chief Executive, Co-operatives UK

SPOTTED IN THE WILD!

Take your newspaper out into the world!



From mountain tops to meeting rooms, we want to see where your newspaper makes an appearance. Take a photo with your copy somewhere interesting, unexpected or downright unusual and you could win a prize!

THREE STEPS TO ENTER

1. **TAKE IT**
Take your copy of the newspaper somewhere interesting.

2. **SNAP IT**
Take a photo of yourself with the newspaper in the wild.

3. **SHARE IT**
Post your photo on LinkedIn, tag **@SocialEnterpriseUK** and use **#SocEntAwards26**.

THE PRIZE

The most creative, unexpected or inspiring photo wins **£100 towards a special gift from our Christmas Gift Guide**, with a **£50 runner-up prize**. Entries close 11.59pm, 30th November 2026.

Full T&Cs: https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uk-social-enterprise-awards-competition-terms-and-conditions/

MEET THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

From bold ideas to lasting impact, here are the inspiring organisations and individuals recognised at the UK Social Enterprise Awards 2026.

01 UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR



WINNER:
Breadwinners, *London*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Flexible Childcare Services Scotland, *Dundee*

02 CO-OP OF THE YEAR



WINNER:
Fram Farmers Ltd, *Woodbridge, Suffolk*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
The Channel Islands Co-operative Society Ltd, *St Helier, Jersey*

03 'BUY SOCIAL' MARKET BUILDER AWARD



WINNER:
Willmott Dixon, *Hertfordshire*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Compass UK&I powered by Foodbuy, *Birmingham*

04 SOCIAL INVESTMENT DEAL OF THE YEAR



WINNERS:
The Brick & Social and Sustainable Capital (SASC), *Wigan*
& The Reader & Livv Investment (Part of Livv Housing Group), *Prescot*

05 PUBLIC SERVICES SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

WINNER:
Turning Point, *London*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Community Dental Services CIC, *Bedfordshire*

06 CONSUMER-FACING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

WINNER:
Unicorn Grocery, *Manchester*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
NEMI Teas, *London*

07 EDUCATION, TRAINING & JOBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

WINNER:
Connection Crew + Stitch, *London*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Platfform, *Swansea*

08 ONE TO WATCH AWARD

WINNER:
Jaskulla Mentoring, *Oxford*

09 PROVE IT: SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD



WINNER:
Migrateful, *London*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Breathe Arts Health Research, *London*

10 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUILDING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY & JUSTICE AWARD



WINNER:
Foundervine, *London*

11 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WOMEN'S CHAMPION OF THE YEAR



WINNER:
Areej AbuAli (Women in Tech SEO)
London

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie
(MyCWA, Cheshire Without Abuse) Cheshire

12 INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AWARD



WINNER:
WildHearts Office, *Glasgow*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Social Enterprise World Forum, *Glasgow*

13 ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR



WINNER:
Changeworks, *Edinburgh*

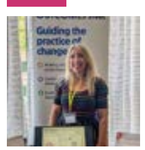
14 COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARD



WINNER:
Social Enterprise Kent,
Margate, Kent

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Brymbo Heritage Trust, *Brymbo, Wrexham*
& Baltic Creative CIC, *Liverpool*

15 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY OR INNOVATION OF THE YEAR



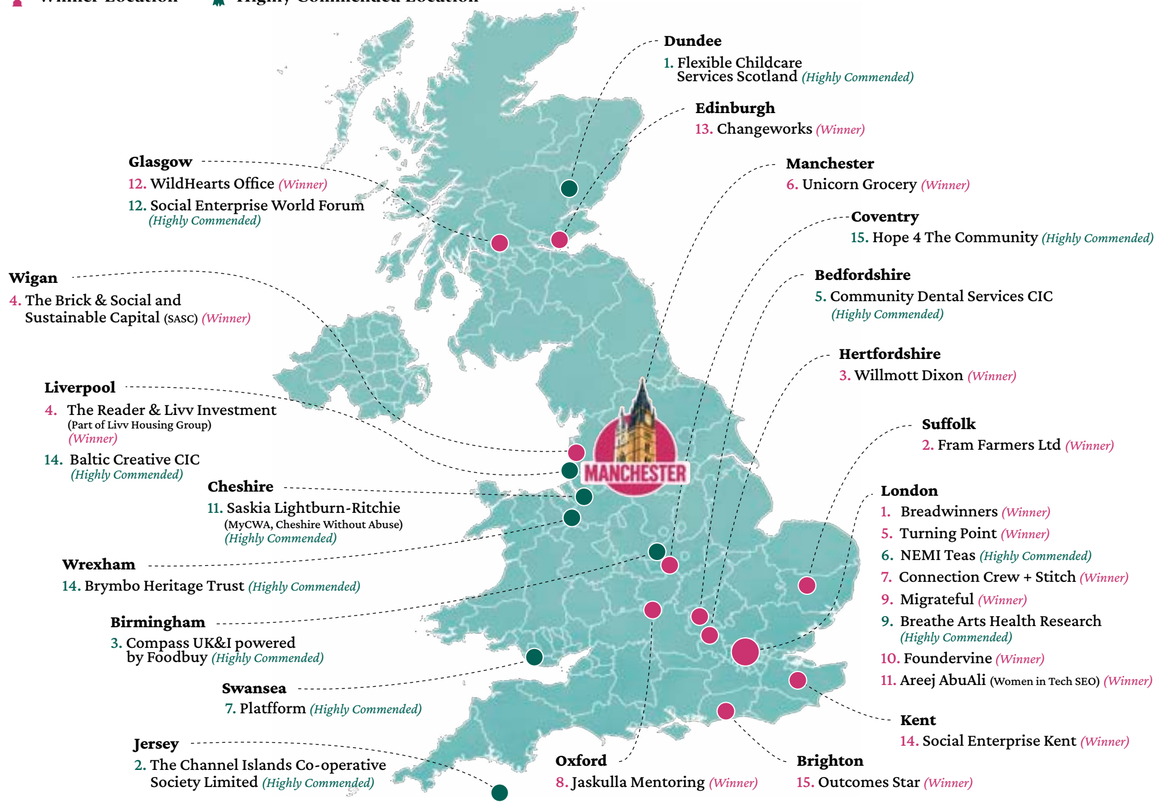
WINNER:
Outcomes Star. *Brighton*

HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Hope 4 The Community CIC, *Coventry*

A NATION OF IMPACT

From cities to coastal towns, this year's winners and highly commended organisations are making a difference right across the UK.

Winner Location Highly Commended Location



BEST BREAKFAST AND COFFEE SPOTS IN MANCHESTER

Still here tomorrow? Enjoy breakfast, coffee and your newspaper at these purpose-led cafés.



GROUND UP CAFE

Great coffee and fresh food with a social mission. This welcoming café creates training and employment opportunities for neurodivergent young people.

SIDNEY STREET



EIGHTH DAY CO-OP

A Manchester institution since 1970. This worker-owned café serves plant-based food, homemade cakes and speciality coffee with co-operation at its heart.

OXFORD ROAD



HINTERLAND

An alcohol-free, plant-based café and community hub bringing people together through good food, coffee, culture and conversation.

NORTHERN QUARTER

UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

BREADWINNERS

GIVING YOUNG REFUGEES A FRESH START

London-based Breadwinners is this year's UK Social Enterprise of the Year, recognised for its outstanding social impact, commercial success and commitment to creating brighter futures for young refugees and people seeking asylum.



Through its market stalls and wholesale partnerships across London and Brighton, Breadwinners sells organic bread to create employment and training opportunities for young refugees and people seeking asylum.

Since launching in 2016, the social enterprise has supported more than 1,000 young people, helping them gain their first UK work experience, develop new skills and progress into employment, education and volunteering.

The past year has been its most successful yet. Annual income reached £1.2 million for the first time, with trading income growing by 86% to £494,000. This growth has enabled Breadwinners to expand its programmes, paying £132,000 directly to young people in wages.

Alongside its employment programmes, the organisation is strengthening community connections and challenging negative perceptions of refugees through participatory research, mentoring and creative storytelling.

www.breadwinners.org.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Flexible Childcare Services Scotland



Dundee-based Flexible Childcare Services Scotland is removing barriers to work and learning through childcare that fits around families' lives. Across 15 services, parents can book childcare by the hour and use funded nursery hours flexibly, helping them access employment and training opportunities. In 2024/25, families gained £2.1 million in net financial benefit, demonstrating how accessible childcare can make a real difference to family finances.

www.fcss.org.uk

HOW BREADWINNERS MAKES AN IMPACT

YOUNG REFUGEES

Building confidence, wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

WORK & OPPORTUNITY

Creating first UK work experiences, paid roles and pathways into employment.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Bringing people together through markets, mentoring and shared experiences.

Three programmes support young refugees at different stages of their journey into employment.

The Risers programme provides newly arrived young people seeking asylum with work experience, training and mentoring. Those with the right to work can progress into paid market-stall roles through the Breadwinners programme, while Proofers offers further opportunities in online sales and wholesale operations.

Young people also help design the programmes, ensuring their experiences and ambitions inform the support they receive.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"Breadwinners inspired the judges with their compassion, tangible impact and innovative approach to supporting refugees and young people seeking asylum. By combining paid employment with training and mentoring, they are creating meaningful opportunities and pathways into work. An inspirational model that others can learn from."

A CLOSER LOOK



THE RISERS PROGRAMME

A two-month programme giving newly arrived young people seeking asylum their first UK work experience, with practical training and one-to-one mentoring.



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Two audiovisual exhibitions give young refugees a platform to share their stories, challenge negative perceptions of migration and make their voices heard.

CO-OP OF THE YEAR

FRAM FARMERS LTD

WORKING TOGETHER FOR STRONGER FARMS

The power of farmers working together takes centre stage as Fram Farmers wins this year's Co-op of the Year award. Based in Suffolk and owned by its members, the co-operative supports more than 1,400 farming businesses across Great Britain, helping them reduce costs, strengthen resilience and plan for the future.



Every member of Fram Farmers is also a shareholder, giving farmers a direct say in the decisions that affect their businesses. Established in 1980, the co-operative has spent more than four decades helping British farmers benefit from shared purchasing power, specialist expertise and practical business support.

From securing competitive prices on seed, fertiliser and fuel to marketing grain and managing administration, its services help members navigate the challenges of running a modern farming business.

Innovation has been a driving force behind its continued success. In recent years, Fram Farmers has helped establish new partnerships between farmer-owned co-operatives, invested in digital technology and launched its own farm animal veterinary practice to address a shortage of specialist livestock care.

Alongside its commercial activities, the co-operative is supporting more sustainable farming practices, investing in the next generation of agricultural professionals and strengthening the rural communities its members call home.

www.framfarmers.co.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Channel Islands Co-operative Society Limited

Following a three-year business turnaround, The Channel Islands Co-operative Society is delivering renewed value for its 128,000-plus member-owners across Jersey and Guernsey. In the year ending January 2026, £10.5 million was returned to members through savings, dividends and interest. Its impact extends into local communities, with £96,000 awarded to 88 community organisations in 2025 and almost 90,000 meals' worth of surplus food redistributed through its partnership with Olio.

www.channelislands.coop



HOW FRAM FARMERS LTD MAKES AN IMPACT

FARMER OWNERSHIP

Giving farming businesses a voice in the decisions that affect their future.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Reducing costs and strengthening the financial resilience of family farms.

SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Supporting environmentally responsible practices and the future of British agriculture.

Collective purchasing is at the heart of Fram Farmers' approach. By bringing together the buying power of more than 1,400 farming businesses, the co-operative helps members secure competitive prices for essential agricultural supplies and access independent technical advice.

Its grain marketing, risk management and business support services help farmers navigate changing markets, while partnerships with other co-operatives extend the benefits of working together.

Members also have opportunities to share knowledge on biodiversity, renewable energy, animal welfare and climate resilience, supporting the long-term sustainability of British farming.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"Farmers are the backbone of our society, and Fram Farmers demonstrates the vital role co-operatives can play in supporting the industry. In an exceptionally competitive category, their commitment to strengthening the farming community and championing co-operation made them a deserving winner."

A CLOSER LOOK



A NEW APPROACH TO FARM VETS

Launched in 2026, Fram Farmers' Farm Animal Veterinary Practice provides specialist livestock care, responding to a shortage of veterinary services and meeting a need identified by its members.



SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

The co-operative's Next Generation Forum brings young farmers together through networking, mentoring and professional development, helping prepare the future leaders of British agriculture.

‘BUY SOCIAL’ MARKET BUILDER AWARD

WILLMOTT DIXON

BUILDING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INTO THE SUPPLY CHAIN



Willmott Dixon’s £5.32 million spend with social businesses is only part of the story behind this year’s win.

The family-owned construction company is also helping more social enterprises access contracts, develop their capabilities and become established suppliers in an industry that can be difficult to enter.

Since 2020, Willmott Dixon has spent more than £22.7 million with social businesses, using its purchasing power to create opportunities for purpose-led organisations across the UK.

Its approach extends beyond awarding contracts. By identifying gaps in its supply chain and working directly with social enterprises, the company is helping smaller organisations overcome the barriers to competing for major construction projects.

Its National Social Enterprise Directory makes it easier for project teams to identify potential suppliers, while supplier development events and targeted mentoring help organisations understand procurement requirements and prepare for future opportunities.

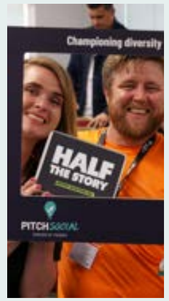
Through its Building Blocks programme, social enterprises can also access expert advice on funding, business development, communications and impact measurement, strengthening their ability to grow and secure new business.

Together, these initiatives are helping more social enterprises establish themselves in the construction industry, create local employment and contribute to stronger local economies.

www.willmottdixon.co.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Compass UK&I
POWERED BY FOODBUY



From tea and coffee to bottled water, Compass Group is bringing more social enterprise products into its food and hospitality operations across the UK. Through its procurement division, Foodbuy, the company provides dedicated supplier opportunities, mentoring and its Pitch Social event to help purpose-led businesses reach new customers. In 2025, spending with social enterprises grew by 67% to £6.4 million, helping suppliers expand their reach.

www.compass-group.co.uk

SOCIAL INVESTMENT DEAL OF THE YEAR

TWO WINNING DEALS

INVESTING IN HOMES AND HUMAN CONNECTION

This year’s Social Investment Deal of the Year award celebrates two winning partnerships, showing how purpose-driven finance can strengthen organisations, create opportunities and deliver lasting benefits for people and communities.

WINNER

THE BRICK & SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE CAPITAL (SASC)



A £1.93 million loan from Social and Sustainable Capital, alongside a £400,000 grant from Access, has enabled Wigan-based homelessness charity The Brick to purchase 40 housing units, including 15 flats it was at risk of losing.

Moving from leasing to ownership gives The Brick greater control over the quality and availability of accommodation, strengthening its ability to provide safe, stable homes and long-term support for people experiencing homelessness.

www.thebrick.org.uk
www.socialandsustainable.com

WINNER

THE READER & LIVV INVESTMENT
(PART OF LIVV HOUSING GROUP)



A £144,000 loan and £15,000 grant from Livv Investment’s Livv and Flourish Fund have helped Liverpool charity The Reader expand its activities at Calderstone Park’s Mansion House.

The investment has supported improvements to its bookshop, café and events facilities, alongside a new open-air cinema programme that attracted 4,925 visitors in its first year.

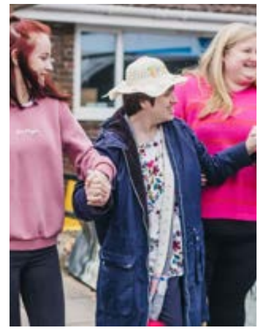
With 15 new jobs created and growing trading income, the partnership is helping The Reader sustain its free Shared Reading groups and reach more people through literature.

www.livvinvestment.com
www.thereader.org.uk

PUBLIC SERVICES SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

TURNING POINT

PERSONALISED CARE, NATIONAL REACH



More than 200,000 people received support from Turning Point across England last year, through services spanning mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, learning disabilities and autism.

Working with the NHS, local authorities and community partners across more than 270 locations, the social enterprise helps people improve their health and independence.

With 94% of its CQC-registered services rated Good or Outstanding, Turning Point generated £171.95 million in social value during 2025/26 and invested £10.79 million in local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

www.turning-point.co.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Community Dental Services CIC

Employee-owned Community Dental Services CIC brings specialist dental care to people who struggle to access conventional services, through mobile clinics, home visits and outreach. Last year, its mobile units treated 2,250 patients, while supervised toothbrushing programmes reached more than 6,400 children.

www.communitydentalservices.co.uk



CONSUMER-FACING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

UNICORN GROCERY

THIRTY YEARS OF GOOD FOOD FOR ALL



Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Manchester’s worker-owned Unicorn Grocery serves around 6,500 customers each week with affordable, sustainably sourced plant-based food. Its annual turnover exceeds £9 million.

Democratically run by its employees, Unicorn champions equal pay, fair trade and sustainable farming, while supporting growers, co-operatives and projects working towards food justice.

www.unicorn-grocery.coop

HIGHLY COMMENDED

NEMI Teas

NEMI Teas creates employment opportunities for refugees through paid work experience, hospitality training and employment partnerships. Its Fairtrade teas now reach over 1,100 locations nationwide.

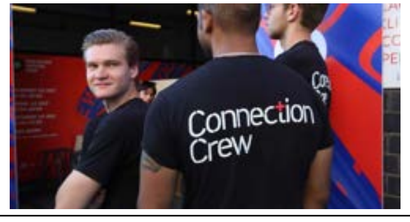
www.nemiteas.com



EDUCATION, TRAINING & JOBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

CONNECTION CREW+STITCH

BUILDING CAREERS BEHIND THE SCENES



Connection Crew creates career opportunities in the events industry for people affected by homelessness through training, mentoring and paid placements. Since 2005, it has provided more than 300,000 hours of paid work.

Together with its circular production arm, Stitch, it delivers events that prioritise reuse and waste reduction, with crew paid at or above the London Living Wage.

www.connectioncrew.co.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Platform

Platform draws on over 35 years’ experience in mental health and community services to deliver training in trauma-informed practice, compassionate leadership and workplace wellbeing. Last year, it delivered more than 200 training sessions to almost 3,000 people across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

www.platform.org



ONE TO WATCH AWARD

JASKULLA MENTORING

FROM EXCLUSION TO BELONGING

Jaskulla Mentoring is helping children at risk of school exclusion stay connected to education through specialist, trauma-informed support. The Oxford social enterprise has been recognised for its innovative approach, bringing together one-to-one mentoring, support for families and training for educators to help children overcome barriers to learning.

Working with children experiencing trauma, neurodivergence and emotional distress, Jaskulla Mentoring provides tailored support through a team of qualified teachers, Thrive practitioners and therapeutic specialists.

Its 'Exclusion to Belonging' approach extends beyond the classroom, helping school staff develop more supportive practices while giving families practical guidance and access to free parent support groups.

The results are promising, Jaskulla Mentoring has delivered more than 2,900 hours of mentoring and reports an 86.67% reduction in recorded behavioural incidents across 14 educational settings during 2025/26.

With rapid commercial growth and plans to expand its services, Jaskulla Mentoring is demonstrating the potential of an approach that helps children feel safe, supported and included in education.

www.jaskullamentoring.co.uk



PROVE IT: SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD

MIGRATEFUL

COOKING CLASSES THAT CHANGE MINDS

Migrateful's cookery classes are helping refugees and migrants build skills, confidence and routes into employment, while bringing people from different backgrounds together. Its growing body of research also demonstrates how these shared experiences can challenge misconceptions and change attitudes towards migration.

Last year, 54 refugee and migrant chefs delivered 860 cookery classes to more than 10,700 participants. Alongside cooking skills, the programme provides training, mentoring and practical support to people facing barriers to employment.

Migrateful measures the impact on both its chefs and the public. Its 2025 findings showed that 94% of chefs felt a stronger sense of belonging in the UK, while 23% of class participants reported warmer attitudes towards migrants. Among chefs graduating last year, 86% progressed into employment, education or training.

Importantly, this evidence is helping the organisation improve its work. Independent evaluations have informed changes to chef training, class facilitation and messaging, while new measurement systems track outcomes throughout the programme.

www.migrateful.org



HIGHLY COMMENDED

Breathe Arts Health Research

At Breathe Arts Health Research, creativity is supporting recovery and wellbeing. Breathe Magic uses magic tricks to help children rebuild hand function after stroke or brain injury, while Breathe Melodies uses group singing to support mothers experiencing postnatal depression.

Research found improved hand function in 75-92% of children and a 41% reduction in symptoms for mothers over ten weeks, helping shape NHS practice and widen access to creative healthcare.

www.breatheahr.org



THE BIG CONVERSATION

HAVE WE BECOME TOO MUCH LIKE THE SYSTEM WE'RE TRYING TO CHANGE?

As social enterprise celebrates its achievements, is it time for some uncomfortable questions? Louise Graham speaks to Alex Evans of Barely Civil Society about the economic assumptions we've inherited, what we've come to value and whether the sector is ready to challenge the rules it has spent decades trying to satisfy.

AT A GLANCE

ALEX EVANS

Writer, speaker and founder of Barely Civil Society

Alex Evans has spent 27 years working across civil society, including charities, social enterprises and grantmaking organisations, and now works as a strategic consultant across the sector.

Through Barely Civil Society, he writes and speaks about the deeper political, economic and philosophical questions facing the sector, challenging established thinking about power, value and social change.

www.barelycivilsociety.org

Alex Evans is a writer, speaker and strategist, and the founder of Barely Civil Society, a platform exploring how ordinary people can create a fairer, more democratic and more hopeful society.

His work sits at the intersection of politics, power and social change, and he has become one of the most influential voices on how we rebuild trust, agency and community in a time of profound disruption.

We spoke with Alex about the big questions facing social enterprise right now, from what the sector is prepared to challenge to the realities of working for change in a market-driven world and what needs to happen next.

Have we become too much like the system we're trying to change?

Alex: I think we have, in some important ways. For years, social enterprise has tried to prove its credibility by behaving more like conventional business. We've adopted the same language of efficiency, innovation, growth and measurable impact.

But in doing so, we risk accepting the very assumptions we should be questioning, particularly the idea that economic value should determine what matters in society.

What do you mean by that?

Alex: Think about a small café employing people with learning disabilities. It might take longer to make a sandwich. It might never generate significant profits. By conventional business standards, you could call that inefficient.

But what are we actually measuring? The café might be creating belonging, friendship, dignity and meaningful work. What are we throwing away when we make things 'efficient'?

That's where I think social enterprise has something genuinely different to offer. It can choose what it values, and organise its economic activity around those things.

Is this also about how we measure success?

Alex: Absolutely. We've become fixated with metrics. Everything has to be quantified, measured and justified. And those metrics are drawn from a totally different way of seeing the world.

But some of the most important things in life, including love, community, belonging and a sense of place, don't fit neatly into a spreadsheet.

There's a difference between having organisational values and deciding what we actually value.

The real test is what we're prepared to protect, invest in and prioritise, even when it doesn't make 'financial sense'.



> *Social enterprise has the chance to choose what it values above and beyond profit.*
>
> ALEX EVANS

So what needs to change?

Alex: We need to recognise that social enterprise has sometimes been used to reinforce the economic model it was supposed to challenge.

During austerity, enterprise models were used to justify withdrawing public funding from care and essential services.

We need to ask harder questions about who owns our institutions, who controls resources and who gets to decide what matters. Changing processes without changing those relationships of power and ownership will only get us so far.

And what gives you hope?

Alex: More people are questioning the assumptions of neoliberal economics and whether the pursuit of growth, efficiency and profit is delivering the kind of society we want.

Social enterprise could be at the forefront of demonstrating something different.

But we need to be prepared to say no. To defend the things we know matter, even when funders, policymakers or conventional business thinking tell us otherwise.

The question I'd leave people with is simple: ***What do you value, and what are you prepared to do to protect it?***

LISTEN IN

WHAT TO DO ABOUT... CIVIL SOCIETY?

Hear Alex Evans join the What To Do About... podcast for a conversation exploring power, politics and the future of civil society.

Watch on YouTube "What to do about civil society"

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

THE CONVERSATION DOESN'T END HERE.

Join Louise Graham and Alex Evans for an online discussion exploring the assumptions social enterprise has inherited, the structures it could challenge and what a genuinely different economic model might look like.

26th November 2026 | 1-2.30PM | On Zoom

SCAN TO REGISTER FREE

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUILDING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY & JUSTICE AWARD

FOUNDERVINE

ACCELERATING UNDERPRESENTED FOUNDERS



Founders supported by Foundervine have raised £103 million since 2018, demonstrating what's possible when access to investment widens. Founded by Izzy Obeng MBE and Cecil Adjalo, the social enterprise specialises in supporting women, Black, disabled and other underrepresented entrepreneurs through tailored accelerator programmes, mentoring and investor connections.

With 1,654 businesses supported, Foundervine is also challenging inequalities in the wider investment system, helping create a more equitable business landscape where entrepreneurial talent has greater opportunity to succeed.

www.foundervine.com

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WOMEN'S CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

AREEJ ABUALI

A GLOBAL VOICE FOR WOMEN IN TECH



When Areej AbuAli founded Women in Tech SEO in 2019, she wanted to make the professional networks, visibility and opportunities she had struggled to find more accessible to others.

Today, the community reaches more than 12,000 members across over 100 countries. Through mentoring, scholarships, conferences and opportunities to speak and publish, Areej has helped women and people of marginalised genders advance their careers, develop leadership skills and challenge barriers in the technology industry.

www.areejabuali.com

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AWARD

WILDHEARTS OFFICE

TACKLING PERIOD POVERTY THROUGH ENTERPRISE



WildHearts Office is using the profits from its office supplies business to support social and environmental programmes, including an initiative tackling period poverty in South Africa.

Through the WildHearts Foundation's StartHer in Health programme, local women manufacture reusable menstrual pads and provide education to schoolgirls, helping reduce barriers to school attendance while creating employment opportunities.

More than 220,000 pads have been manufactured and distributed, with products designed to last up to five years. The initiative brings together girls' education, women's economic opportunities and environmental sustainability.

www.wildheartsgroup.com/office

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie

MyCWA, Cheshire Without Abuse (Domestic Abuse)

For more than 30 years, Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie has championed new approaches to domestic abuse, including early behaviour-change programmes for perpetrators. As CEO of MyCWA, she leads survivor-led, whole-family support, and founded Domestic Abuse Experts to share frontline knowledge and help sustain specialist services.

www.mycwa.org.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Social Enterprise World Forum



Since its first gathering in 2008, the Social Enterprise World Forum has grown into a global network connecting social enterprises, policymakers and support organisations. Across 17 international events, it has brought together more than 30,000 people from over 130 countries. Its year-round work includes People and Planet First verification, rural enterprise networks and policy collaboration, strengthening the conditions for social enterprises to succeed worldwide.

www.sewfonline.com

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

CHANGEWORKS

MAKING THE MOVE TO NET ZERO FAIRER



Making Scottish homes warmer and more energy-efficient sits at the heart of Changeworks' approach to climate action. The social enterprise combines advice on energy use and fuel poverty with practical help to install insulation, renewable technologies and cleaner heating.

Between 2022 and 2025, it supported more than 40,000 households to install energy-saving measures and provided advice to 164,000 householders. Together with its Warmworks joint venture, Changeworks reports saving 1.2 million tonnes of carbon over the same period, demonstrating how environmental action can also improve people's lives.

www.changeworks.org.uk

COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARD

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE KENT

JOINING UP SUPPORT ACROSS KENT



Affordable food, better health and routes into work are all part of Social Enterprise Kent's approach to strengthening communities.

Its social supermarkets, training programmes and health projects reach more than 10,000 people each year, while its Social Impact Gateway directs funding and partnerships towards local charities and social enterprises.

In 2025/26, it trained 2,764 learners and recorded more than 55,000 social supermarket transactions, alongside practical work tackling health inequalities and food waste.

www.sekgroup.org.uk

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Brymbo Heritage Trust & Baltic Creative CIC



Brymbo Heritage Trust has transformed part of Wrexham's former steelworks into Stori Brymbo, a £12 million visitor attraction celebrating industrial heritage and a 300-million-year-old fossil forest. The project has created 25 local jobs.

www.brymboheritagetrust.org

Baltic Creative CIC provides affordable workspace for more than 100 creative and digital businesses in Liverpool. Profits are reinvested into buildings, tenants and the wider sector, helping regenerate the Baltic Triangle.

www.baltic-creative.com

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY OR INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

OUTCOMES STAR

MAKING MEASUREMENT MORE HUMAN



Outcomes Star is using technology to make support services more collaborative and accessible. Its new Collaborative Session feature allows practitioners and the people they support to explore progress, strengths and goals together through a shared digital experience.

An Offline App, currently in trial, enables the same work to continue without an internet connection. Developed with users, these innovations build on Outcomes Star's evidence-based tools, used by organisations across 26 countries to understand progress, strengthen relationships and improve services.

www.outcomesstar.org

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Hope 4 The Community CIC



Hope 4 The Community CIC develops research-backed programmes that help people living with long-term health conditions and carers manage their wellbeing. Its flexible digital offer includes guided courses, self-paced learning and ongoing peer support, reaching more than 36,000 people to date. Through its Powered by H4C platform, the Coventry University spin-out also enables other organisations to develop digital health programmes without building technology from scratch.

www.h4c.org.uk

HALL OF FAME

The people who helped shape the movement

The Social Enterprise Awards Hall of Fame recognises individuals whose leadership, imagination and contributions have left a lasting mark on social enterprise. Since 2017, it has celebrated people who have opened doors, challenged conventional thinking and inspired others through their ideas, actions and commitment to building a fairer economy.

2017

- Sophi Tranchell MBE
- Prof. Muhammed Yunus
- Mark Sesnan OBE
- Lord John Bird MBE and Nigel Kershaw OBE
- Jo Pritchard OBE
- Gerry Higgins
- Marget Elliott OBE and Guy Turnbull
- Gina Rowlands
- Liz Tapner MBE
- Lindsey Hall MBE and Matt Little
- Fay Selvan and Edna Robinson
- Prof Mariana Mazzucato CBE
- Kelly Davis
- John McMullen
- Clive Hurst

2018

- Graham Bell OBE
- Claire Dove CBE DL
- Phil Geraghty
- Elaine Lilley MBE
- Paul Roberts
- Alastair Wilson OBE

2019

- Karen and Nigel Lowthrop
- Anwar Ali OBE
- Sarah Craley Beaumont OBE
- Marie Marin
- Faisal Rahman OBE
- Gordon Roddick

2021

- Dr Hinnah Rafique
- Kate Welch OBE DL
- Stephen Bediako OBE
- Dai Powell OBE (In memoriam)
- Dr Imadeep Kaur
- Jenny Irvine

2022

- Yvonne Chouinard
- Shona Sinclair
- Junior Smart OBE
- Rt Hon Dame Patricia Hewitt DBE
- Meena Jones
- Paula Jennings

2023

- Lemn Sissay OBE
- Mark Simms OBE
- Yvonne Field OBE
- Francesca Findlater OBE
- David Jenkins OBE

2024

- Susan Aktemel
- Bobby Seagull MBE
- John Steel
- Jennifer Ogole OBE
- Patrick Grant
- Kresse Wesling CBE
- Baroness Glenys Thornton

2025

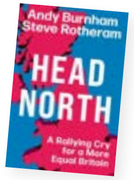
- David Adair
- Gareth Hart
- Tracey Muirhead
- Navjot Sawhney
- Janet Schofield
- Gary Stott OBE
- Andrea Wayman
- Douglas Westwater

NAMED FELLOWS 2026

- Sophy Green
- Jacinta Linden
- Paul McColgan
- Dr June O'Sullivan OBE
- Su Pickerill
- Albert Tucker
- Iain Tuckett MBE
- Steve Wyler OBE
- Mark McKenna MBE
- Dan McCallum MBE
- Georgina Grieves

RECOMMENDED READING

FOUR BOOKS TO INSPIRE A BRIGHTER, FAIRER TOMORROW



Head North: A Rallying Cry for a More Equal Britain

Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram

Why should the North have to wait for change? Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram make the case for a fairer Britain, with greater power, opportunity and prosperity beyond Westminster.



The Common Good Economy: A New Compass

Mariana Mazzucato

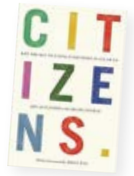
What would an economy organised around the common good look like? Mariana Mazzucato explores how governments, businesses and communities can work together to create shared prosperity.



Imagination: A Manifesto

Ruha Benjamin

Imagination becomes a powerful tool for challenging injustice and creating new possibilities in Ruha Benjamin's invitation to envision a more equitable world.



Citizens: Why the Key to Fixing Everything is All of Us

Jon Alexander with Ariane Conrad

Discover how everyday people are reclaiming their power as citizens. Jon Alexander and Ariane Conrad explore how participation and collective action can help us tackle shared challenges and create meaningful change.

Inspired to read more? Find these titles at your local independent bookshop

COSMIC OUTLOOK

YOUR FORTUNES FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

As divined by Rose Marley of Co-operatives UK and Peter Holbrook of Social Enterprise UK

ARIES
21 March - 19 April

Your co-operative instincts are unusually strong. Join forces, share the glory and resist going it alone. The stars predict collaboration and possibly someone suggesting you start a new co-op before Christmas.

TAURUS
20 April - 20 May

Your social life and enterprise are beautifully aligned. Nurture your boldest ideas carefully. An improbable conversation could become the next big social enterprise everyone claims they spotted first.

GEMINI
21 May - 20 June

Two heads are better than one, especially when co-operating. Find your natural partner, pool your talents and remember: collaboration always looks more convincing when you're both holding trophies.

CANCER
21 June - 22 July

The social enterprise universe is sending strong signals. Trust your instincts. Recognition may arrive unexpectedly, possibly involving applause, Prosecco or both. Your social purpose remains considerably more reliable than astrology.

LEO
23 July - 22 August

Step into the co-operative spotlight. Your instinct may be to take a bow alone, but cosmic co-operation demands otherwise. Share the credit extravagantly. Your collaborators will remember.

VIRGO
23 August - 22 September

You've analysed every detail, but social enterprise magic rarely follows a spreadsheet. Embrace glorious imperfection. Your next breakthrough might begin with the words: "This may sound ridiculous, but..."

LIBRA
23 September - 22 October

The co-operative planets are perfectly balanced. Partnership and mutuality surround you. When faced with a difficult decision, ask: "Could we do this together?" Unless it's the last pudding. Then all bets are off.

SCORPIO
23 October - 21 November

Your social mission burns brightly and your enterprise instincts are formidable. Channel both carefully. Seek out the person who says: "Let's actually do it." The stars suggest you'll recognise them instantly.

SAGITTARIUS
22 November - 21 December

Adventure calls, but don't travel alone. Co-operative energy favours bold alliances and unlikely partnerships. Say yes to collaboration. Although if someone proposes merging organisations over cocktails, perhaps sleep on it.

CAPRICORN
22 December - 19 January

Your enterprise determination is legendary, but the social stars demand celebration. Stop checking emails, look around you and remember: building a better economy occasionally requires abandoning the inbox and raising a glass.

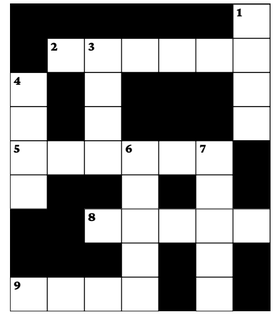
AQUARIUS
20 January - 18 February

Your co-operative imagination is running riot. An unconventional partnership could unlock something brilliant. Co-operate boldly and ignore anyone saying it can't be done. Historically, that's when co-operators become most interested.

PISCES
19 February - 20 March

A social enterprise dream you've carried may be closer than you think. Follow the people who combine imagination with action. The universe predicts purpose, possibility and, reassuringly, absolutely no need for another strategy document.

CROSS PURPOSES



Across

2. What social enterprises aim to create (6)
5. The difference an organisation makes (6)
8. Worth created beyond financial profit (5)
9. The opposite of harm, and what we hope to do (4)

Down

1. People working towards a shared goal (4)
3. Give someone a hand (4)
4. Just and equitable (4)
6. Recognition presented at the awards (5)
7. Confidence in someone's integrity (5)

ADVERTISEMENT



OUR 2026 NOMINEES

UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

- Belu Water
- Breadwinners
- Community Dental Service CIC
- Flexible Childcare Services Scotland
- Highland CIC
- Locala Community Partnership CIC / Locala Health & Wellbeing
- Myddfai Trading Company
- Resurgam Trust
- Standing Tall
- Unicorn Grocery

CO-OP OF THE YEAR

- EMERGE Recycling & Touch Wood
- Fram Farmers Ltd
- Signalise Co-op
- Stretford Public Hall
- The Channel Islands Co-operative Society Limited
- Unicorn Grocery

'BUY SOCIAL' MARKET BUILDER AWARD

- Bunzl Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies
- Compass UK&I powered by Foodbuy
- Coop
- Freshfields
- Lyreco UK Ltd
- Mitie Limited
- The DataKirk
- Willmott Dixon

SOCIAL INVESTMENT DEAL OF THE YEAR

- Forest Schooling UK & Charities Aid Foundation
- Getting Clean & Postcode Innovation Trust (PIT)
- Micro Rainbow CIC & Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
- New Start Highland & Foundation Scotland
- The Brick & Social & Sustainable Capital (SASC)
- The Reader & Livv Investment (Part of Livv Housing Group)

PUBLIC SERVICES SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

- Active Prospects
- Community Dental Services CIC
- East Coast Community Healthcare
- Handcrafted Projects
- South Ayrshire Escape From Homelessness (SeAscape) Ltd
- Turning Point
- Wellbeing Enterprise CIC

CONSUMER-FACING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

- Hey Girls CIC
- Homelands Trust-Fife
- NEMI Teas
- True Origin
- Unicorn Grocery
- Y.O.U Underwear
- Yellow Submarine

EDUCATION, TRAINING & JOBS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

- Breakthrough Social Enterprise
- Clean for Good
- Connection Crew + Stitch
- Migrateful
- Platfform
- Scran Academy
- Tap Social Movement

ONE TO WATCH AWARD

- Clean Slate Clinic
- Creative Arts Therapies Space CIC
- Growing Me CIC
- Jaskulla Mentoring
- Ride Recycle Repeat Ltd
- Silent Cuts
- The Hull Community Pub Society / The New Clarence

PROVE IT: SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD

- Boss and Brew Academy
- Breathe Arts Health Research
- Connection Crew + Stitch
- Firstport
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore
- Migrateful
- The Skill Mill Limited

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUILDING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY & JUSTICE AWARD

- ArtsEkta Ltd
- Breakthrough Social Enterprise
- Entrepreneurs Unlocked
- Foundervine
- Migrateful
- More than Flags and Rainbows CIC
- Studio Lutalica CIC
- Tooting Works

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WOMEN'S CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

- Areej AbuAli *Women in Tech SEO*
- Beverly Campbell *South Ayrshire Escape From Homelessness (SeAscape) Ltd*
- Cat Hyde *Seagulls Re-use*
- Danielle John *EmpowerHer*
- Lesley Sackey *Fight Forward CIC*
- Lucy Hebberts *GINA, The Gina Project CIC*
- Oksana Kalala *New Arrivals Support CIC*
- Rebecca Smith *Social Enterprise Kent*
- Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie *MyCWA, Cheshire Without Abuse / Domestic Abuse Experts*
- Teresa Canavan *Rural Action*

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AWARD

- Fair Tax Foundation
- Foundervine
- OurCoop
- Social Enterprise World Forum CIC
- True Origin
- WildHearts Office

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

- Amplify Goods
- Benthyg Cymru
- Changeworks
- Fruitful Office
- Open Kitchen MCR
- PEC Trust *(Trading as Plymouth Energy Community)*
- Remake Scotland
- Seagulls Reuse

COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARD

- Baltic Creative CIC
- Breathe Arts Health Research
- Brymbo Heritage Trust
- Cumbria Health
- New Arrivals Support CIC
- Raised In CIC
- Social Enterprise Kent
- The Circle

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY OR INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

- Change Please
- Hope 4 The Community CIC
- IDEMS International
- OurCoop
- Outcomes Star
- PACTO - *Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations*
- Socialudo: Serious Games for Social Change

WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS & SPONSORS

AWARDS PARTNERS

The Awards were a joint partnership between Social Enterprise UK and Co-operatives UK.

NEWSPAPER PARTNER

Our thanks to The Connectives for sponsoring this special edition and helping us celebrate the people and organisations making a difference through social enterprise.

OUR SPONSORS

Thank you to our sponsors for backing this year's awards and standing alongside us in celebrating the people and organisations making a difference.

OUR PARTNERS

We are pleased to be working with Cwmpas, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland and Social Enterprise Scotland to deliver the Awards.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

WE BELIEVE

We believe business can be a force for good. We believe enterprise can create **decent work**, **stronger communities**, **healthier places** and a **fairer economy**. We believe **the people closest to a problem** should have **power** in solving it. We believe in **buying social**, **sharing ownership**, **investing with purpose** and putting **people and planet** at the heart of how decisions are made. We believe good business should create **value that travels further than the bottom line**. We believe **communities should have a stake** in the places they call home. We believe public services can be **compassionate**, commerce can be **responsible** and **innovation** can make life better. We believe ideas that begin around kitchen tables, community halls, workshops and high streets can **change whole systems**. We believe success should be measured in **lives improved**, **opportunities opened** and **futures** made **possible**. **And after tonight, we know we're in very good company.**

Social Enterprise UK

CO-OPERATIVES UK

#AllTogetherNow