

# Plymouth: collaboration in action

This short brochure highlights the breadth of the collaboration between the thirty, Plymouth-based social enterprises which the Rank Foundation is supporting. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive collection, rather it represents a snapshot illustrating just some of those fantastic initiatives which make Plymouth a better place to live. It shows that working together the network is finding innovative and creative solutions to address the City's multiple health, social and economic challenges.

One of the reasons that the Rank Foundation started its investment in Plymouth two years ago was in part because there already existed a well-established social enterprise network - and a genuine warmth in working relationships between many of the City's public, private and third sector organisations evidenced by a real sense of optimism, pride and collaboration. Over the past couple of years Plymouth has seen further growth of this vibrant and diverse social enterprise sector. These organisations are now leading the way in resolving some of our deep-rooted problems - and in recent months many of these challenges have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

Building on existing networks and infrastructure organisations, the Rank Foundation has sought to maximise development and resourcing opportunities to social enterprises to ensure that they are able to collaborate more effectively to address inequalities. This has meant building resilience, capacity, confidence and, perhaps most importantly, it has been about leadership and enterprise.

This compendium seeks to show how that works in practice, celebrating just a few examples of collaboration between the social enterprises in Rank's Plymouth network. We have eschewed top-down quantitative analysis, rather focusing on those narratives and human stories which illustrate just how powerful collaboration within the network can be.

The Rank Foundation is investing in people and the relationships between people by creating, nurturing and growing connectivity. So, if you're looking for evidence that the Foundation's investment in the City is greater than the sum of its parts, then look no further.

**Phil Davies**  
Rank's Associate Director for Plymouth  
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## Bringing The Millennium Building Back to Life

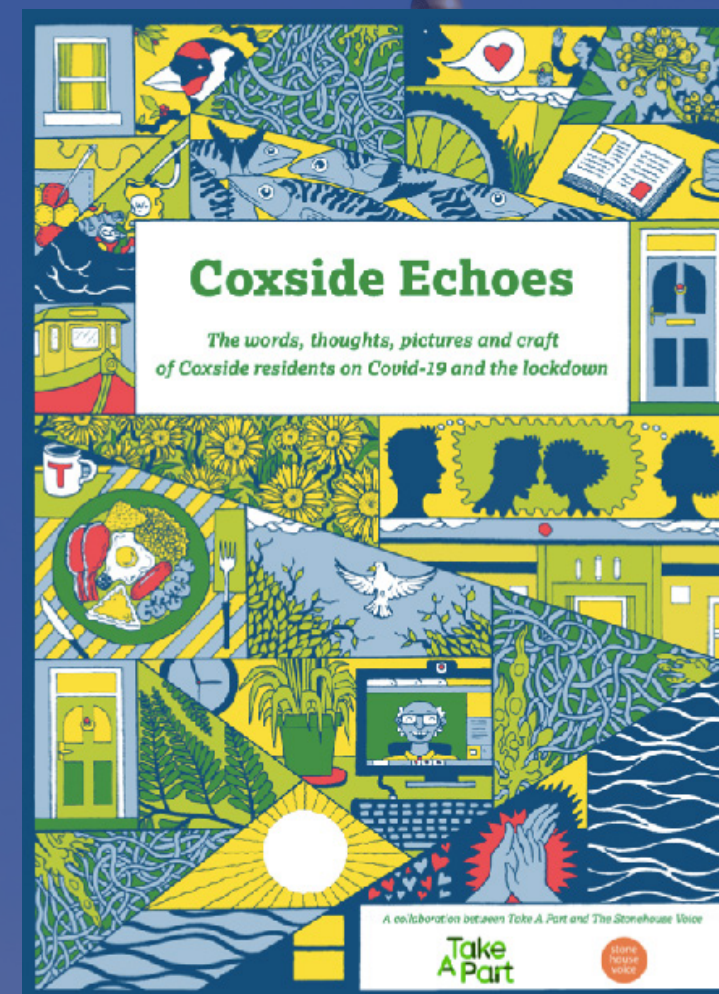
In 2020, **Nudge Community Builders** bought The Millennium Building on Union Street, Plymouth, in partnership with **Eat Work Art**. The building had been standing empty for 15 years and it holds lots of really special memories for many Plymothians. Built in 1931 as The Gaumont Palace, it has been used as a dance hall, roller disco and a much loved night-club.

The Rank Foundation has close historical ties to The Millennium Building, dating back to the early 1940s when Rank acquired Gaumont cinemas – of which Plymouth's Gaumont Palace was one, before it became the Top Rank Entertainment Centre in the 1960s. It is the wealth from The Rank Foundation's film activities which has enabled the Foundation to make charitable grants for over sixty years.

Hannah Sloggett, Co-Director of Nudge said: *"We bought the building because it is too important to our community to be standing empty. Taking on a major building on the street was always part of our plan, it's taken a long time with lots of twists and turns. We are nervous and excited about giving this building a nudge!"*

Nudge and Eat Work Art take a similar approach to breathing life back into buildings. They are planning to make it safe to open up for a mix of temporary and commercial uses as soon as they are able to. They are then going to test what could work and investigate what is needed to get the building back into long term sustainable use.

The building is opposite the City-led development on Bath Street and Nudge look forward to this building connecting the local community to that investment and contributing to the city vision for the area. Nudge will be running a community share offer next year to give local people the opportunity to invest in the project and play a part in making Union Street a street the whole world loves. Read more [here](#).



## Coxside Echoes

**Take A Part** has been partnering with **The Stonehouse Voice** to bring community journalism to Coxside in the form of **Coxside Echoes**.

They were able to commission Alan, from The Stonehouse Voice, to help the community members to develop skills in journalism, editing, illustration, photography and distribution.

As a result of this partnership, both The Stonehouse Voice and Coxside Echoes have been 'case-studied' by Arts Council England, National Lottery Community Fund and Gulbenkian Foundation and they have been co-commissioned (The Stonehouse Voice and Take A Part) to deliver workshops and sharebacks to Power to Change's Empowering Places Programme.

## Social Enterprise Quiz Nights

Every year, **Plymouth Social Enterprise Network** hosts a Quiz Night as part of Social Enterprise Week in the UK. The quiz is organised by Gareth Hart, the Chair of PSEN and the director of **Iridescent Ideas**. For the past two years, the quiz has been held at **Moments Café** in Plymouth City Centre.

These fun quiz nights encourage people to get together and celebrate all things Social Enterprise. The money made from the quiz is split between the winner and a good cause, which is usually announced on the night.

This year, the quiz was held online via zoom, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was still a great turn out and it was a fun evening enjoyed by all.







## Italian Students Visit Plymouth

During the summer, **Makers HQ** delivered a three-week short course in fashion and textiles to seven Italian students.

This course allowed them to fine tune their pattern cutting and sewing skills, along with masterclasses from the Makers HQ team on costings, seasonality, critical path and target customer profiling.

For the final week of the course Makers HQ set them the challenge to design and make a dress for a fellow student. They challenged them to be as sustainable as possible, and as such they headed over to **Plymouth Play Scrapstore** where they sourced fabrics and trims for the final designs.

They had a week to draft the pattern and make the dresses. The final day resulted in a trip to Royal William Yard with a photoshoot to show off their skills.



## Social Enterprise Chat Show

**Iridescent Ideas CIC** has launched a popular 'Social Enterprise Chat Show' thanks to The Rank Foundation. In partnership with a wide range of local and national social enterprises they've delivered shows on themes such as:

1. **Community business**
2. **The Social Enterprise Mark**
3. **Governance**
4. **Social investment**
5. **Plymouth as an international leader in social enterprise**
6. **Environment**
7. **Social enterprise: an outside view**

Partners have included: **RIO**, **DSSE**, Zebra Collective, Plymouth City Council, **Borrow Don't Buy**, Pride and others. They even did a panel with **The Rank Foundation** themselves! They have upcoming shows on 'No health, no economy' and 'Charity and social enterprise'.

Watch some of their films [here](#).



## Supporting New Projects

While the décor and furniture was still fresh, **The Plymouth Lighthouse Project** asked **Fotonow** to take pictures for their website and prospectus. They appreciated having someone come into the project who already knew what it was about.

Fotonow made them a banner and they also took a great photograph of Stonehouse from the Cornwall side of the estuary for the front page of Plymouth Lighthouse Project's website.

Dom met Ken from **Green Hook Fishing** at the first **Rank Foundation** steering group that he attended. So far, they've only had one resident from the project get involved, but they're always on the lookout for volunteers.

Dom recently spoke to one of Plymouth Lighthouse Projects residents who had been to visit the **City of Plymouth Credit Union**. Dom could tell that it had made the resident feel safe when he found out that Plymouth Credit Union already knew about the Lighthouse Project.



## Sharing Knowledge

This summer, [Street Factory](#) worked alongside [Memory Matters](#) to share their knowledge to help them improve their public relations activities. Jo and Toby highlighted the power of authenticity when it comes to building relationships, both in person and on social media.

Street Factory has also been part of [Real Ideas Organisation](#)'s Power to Change film, and their team has been involved in visits, where they show people around their venue and discuss their theory of change.



## Participatory and Engagement Partnerships

Through [The Rank Foundation](#)'s network meetings [Plymouth Hope](#) has met other organisations that they had not previously engaged with. After meeting [City of Plymouth Credit Union](#), they became aware of their services and they have since become active participants. Plymouth Hope like to support [Memory Matters](#) by visiting their Cafe in Plymouth City Centre called Moments. They want their money to go to a good cause and that is why they choose to visit [Moments Cafe](#) instead of a high street retailer.

Plymouth Hope have worked closely with [Street Factory](#) and [Diversity Business Incubator](#). They have taken young refugees to break dance sessions at Street Factory and Street Factory have run sessions at many of Hope's venues as well as performing at their annual events, including their BAME Business Excellence Awards. Diversity Business Incubator and Plymouth Hope have conducted joint initiatives, aiming at consolidating the support and response for the BAME community in Plymouth.



## The Future Is Social Event

Earlier this year, crowds gathered at [The Plot](#) in Plymouth, where people came together to celebrate the success of the RISE Match Trading Programme over the past 12 months.

The event gave people the opportunity to showcase their work. This included things such as food stalls, information stands, speeches, videos, photography, live demonstrations, virtual reality and a sewing workshop.

Phil Davies, Rank Associate for Plymouth said: "Today's event brings together those social enterprises which have just successfully completed the first year of the RISE Match Trading programme, giving us all the opportunity to celebrate their achievements. Hearing the participants talk about their organisations, and seeing them showcase their offer is clear evidence of the profound impact that the programme is having on improving those businesses."

This year ten new organisations joined the RISE Match Trading Programme, taking the total to 19 participants. The new cohort were able to get together with the existing organisations to share their experiences as well as looking at opportunities to collaborate with one another.

The Future is Social event was a great environment for like-minded individuals to get together and share ideas, celebrate achievements, and simply cheer each other on.

[Fotonow](#) put together a video of the event, which you can access by clicking [here](#).



## Working Together to Support Creativity During Lockdown

Throughout COVID, two **Rank Foundation** supported organisations in Plymouth have been collaborating on a very special project, designed to ensure children's creativity could flourish in lockdown, even if supplies weren't readily available at home.

If you walked down any street at the height of lockdown, you'll have seen a riot of colour. Flags, rainbows - messages of hope. But an empty window didn't necessarily represent a household not taking part because they didn't want to.

Sometimes it was because they didn't have the basic materials like craft paper, drawing paper, glue or pencils.

Spotting an opportunity to offer some practical help, the **Real Ideas Organisation** set up a scheme to deliver 'Let's Create' packs, full of basic materials for creative play, to disadvantaged families throughout the south west, from Gloucester to Cornwall.

Head of Impact and Research for Real Ideas, Matt Little, explains: "For all families lockdown was a difficult situation, but what if you haven't got a pen and paper or basic materials and you were a child? You can't create. You can't draw a rainbow for your window. It's almost like missing one of the basics of life."

In response, Real Ideas organised emergency art-drops of Let's Create packs to families across the south west who needed the basic tools to create. Matt says it's been a real joint effort: "We've been working with a whole heap of local partners - artists, play schemes, schools, local authorities.

We were delighted to work with **Plymouth Play Scrapstore**, a fellow Rank supported organisation, who have been fantastic, bringing in staff to assemble packs, giving them work and much needed income."

Read more [here](#).



## Keeping Connected

**Borrow Don't Buy**, Plymouth's Library of Things was closed during the Covid-19 period but continued to push the sharing agenda in other ways by partnering with local community builders **Nudge** to bring upcycled computers, laptops, mobile phones etc. to people who really need it.

When Nudge contacted Borrow Don't Buy to ask if they could help them, to help the people of Plymouth, the answer was yes!

Since then, Plymouth community helpers have been collecting unused and dusty equipment from kind people around Plymouth and delivering them to the fixer elves at Borrow Don't Buy so they can be given a new lease of life.

Read more [here](#).



## Building Relationships

**Nudge** started building relationships with **Diversity Business Incubator**, **Plymouth Credit Union** and **Plymouth Hope** at the **Rank Foundation** network events, which in 2020 developed into two of them becoming tenants in The Plot - Nudge's third building.

The Nudge team is excited that they have joined them in their alternative shopping arcade. The food court, Jabulani, is thriving and Nudge are looking forward to collaborations that will happen going forward.

**Jabulani** is a multi-cultural food court that is situated in The Plot on Union Street. They want to create a bubbly communal experience that celebrates the increasingly diverse culture of the city.

Read more [here](#).



## Repair and Reuse

**Plymouth Play Scrapstore** joined forces with **Borrow Don't Buy**, **Makers HQ** and Timebank SW to participate in a Plymouth Octopus Project - funded learning and collaboration research project, looking at the future of repair cafes in Plymouth.

Next, an extension of that group formed The Stonehouse Collective looking at "slowing fashion down" by upcycling, make do and mend clothing and sharing skills - all contributing to reducing clothing waste.

Plymouth Scrapstore then went on to work with Fotonow to consider new ways to evaluate what they do, learn new IT skills, as well as different ways to engage with their volunteers.

Read more [here](#).

## Time For a Makeover

The team at **Plymouth Play Scrapstore** were concerned that too many people walked past the store either not knowing what was inside, or feeling that what was inside was not for them.

They wanted to make their store stand out better by improving their signage; making a superb creative resource inside equally attractive on the outside.

With some support from **Nudge** as well as some local input, their delivery van got a little makeover and they now have their very own hand-made solar powered sign for their window.



## Virtual Reality Experience

In January 2020, **Memory Matters** collaborated with **Fotonow** and **Igneous Interactive** to introduce 'Immersive Painting' into their Plymouth Day Club.

Members of their Memory Matters Day Club really enjoyed the virtual reality session, as they had never experienced anything like this before. They said it was like "stepping into another world".

Memory Matters staff and volunteers also had a go at some Immersive Painting, and they highlighted the positive effect this activity can have on the brain.

Watch the Virtual Reality session in action [here](#).





## A Community Newspaper

**The Stonehouse Voice** is a not-for-profit community newspaper produced exclusively for the Plymouth Stonehouse neighbourhood.

The main aim of the Stonehouse Voice is to celebrate all of the good stuff going on from art, music and creativity to social enterprise and small business.

They publish stories that other media ignore; their stories are written for the community by people who live in the community.

The Stonehouse Voice includes lots of stories from Rank funded organisations, and it is run by Alan Qualtrough who is currently on the RISE Trade Up programme.

Read the Stonehouse Voice [here](#).



## The Rank Foundation and Us

"We are so very grateful to be included in **The Rank Foundation's** programme.

For us it isn't just about the funding – the support has been instrumental in making us feel more confident about what we do and how we do it. I honestly do not think we would have survived the effects of COVID-19 and the lockdown without the support through Zoom meetings and the Action Learning Sets.

The other Rank Foundation funded organisations have been just as supportive and amazing. They have supported us, given brilliant feedback to problems we have faced and have made us, and especially me, realise that we really are a collaboration and will be even after the programme ends.

I have found I have much more confidence moving forward and actually feel like a better Chairperson moving forward. I have passed along the knowledge I have gained from the programme and from the other members to my team. It has made us a more cohesive team and has improved the way we communicate.

I really cannot express how invaluable the programme has been to our charity and really cannot thank The Rank Foundation enough.

From all of the team at **Devon and Cornwall Furniture Reuse Project.**"



## The Power of Data

After first meeting on the Plymouth RISE programme, **The Data Place** has found ways to collaborate with both **Pollenize** and **Bikespace**. With Pollenize, they are helping them to analyse and visualise data, in order to build a better contextual picture of the environment in which their bees live.

The Data Place have also been helping Bikespace use sensors mounted on e-cargo bikes to generate data about road surface conditions, congestion and air quality as they travel around the city. These data will be used to inform policy-makers about new cycling infrastructure as well as making engaging data products for bike users and helping reduce congestion and improve safety.



# The Rank Foundation

a pebble in the pond

The Rank Foundation operates a model of engaged philanthropy, combining intellectual, social and financial capital in order to maximise impact, whilst leveraging additional funding and support:

- Financial Capital: flexible funding, long term support
- Intellectual Capital: sharing good practice, bursaries, education & training
- Social Capital: networking through RankNet and our Fellowship

Our experience suggests that by concentrating funding, knowledge and expertise in a very focused way, promoting stronger partnerships and increased collaboration, helps to 'add value' where the outcome is greater than the sum of each part.

If you would like to know more about The Rank Foundation then please visit our website: [www.rankfoundation.com](http://www.rankfoundation.com), or if you would like to know more about The Rank Foundation's work in Plymouth then please contact:



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We look forward to hearing from you.

