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[**Co-operatives in the spotlight**](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/)

Keeping you up to date with small and medium sized co-operatives across the UK - their news, innovations, stories and developments.





## Blog not bulletin

In the Spotlight used to be a monthly e-bulletin. But co-operatives do so much good stuff that by the time the bulletin went out, the stories were old news. Hence this new blog. In the Spotlight is updated as soon as there's a story to tell or a co-operative hits the headlines.

To make sure you're getting the news as it happens keep checking this blog - even better subscribe. And why not get involved too - send your news, comment on posts, link this blog to your website and follow twitter updates.



## Friday, 21 August 2009

### [Community investment keeps on growing](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/2009/08/community-investment-keeps-on-growing.html)

Co-operatives are a diverse lot. There are over 4,800 co-operative enterprises in the UK and it’s impossible to pick a theme or industry sector that unites them all – they are of very different sizes, different types and work in a whole range of different sectors.

But over the last few months there has been one set of co-operatives that has become increasingly hard to ignore – those doing or have done community share issues, where finance for an enterprise is raised by getting the community to invest in, own and take control of that enterprise.

Through Community Shares (a project Co-operativesUK is doing with the Development Trusts Association) we’ve found more and more communities that already have undertaken community share issue. Research shows there are over 250 now – some, like many village shops, have raised only a small amount of money, but others have raised millions.

We’ve seen frequent mentions of these co-operatives in the media – Busy Bee Toyshop Co-operative and Slaithwaite Co-operative Society were both featured on the BBC and in trade press like Social Enterprise magazine and Regeneration and Renewal. Today there’s coverage of community shares in Third Sector magazine. And in a couple of weeks we’ll be seeing an article on community shares in the Local Government Association’s weekly magazine.

The topic of community investment is also a growing area of discussion at conferences too – the recent Centre for Local Economic Strategies; annual summit, for example, and forthcoming conferences like Good Deals, the Local Government Association’s rural conference and the Development Trusts Association’s annual bash.

Why all this interest? Well, community investment is an exciting and interesting way of raising finance at the best of times, but with lack of trust in finance providers at an all time high, communities are increasingly looking at how they can do things for themselves. More importantly, community investment works – it enables communities to save or even create local services that wouldn’t otherwise be provided.

And it’s not just about money – community investment gives communities ownership and control over the services that affect them, something which is being demanded more and more by the people themselves as well as by Government.

It’s not going to be appropriate for all communities, enterprises or projects. Community share issues can be hard work to bring to fruition and, because you’re dealing with other people’s investments, you need to be careful and follow strict guidelines.

But people are not being put off by this – the potential that community investment offers is massive, hence the interest and number of investments keep growing and growing.

See [www.communityshares.org.uk](http://www.communityshares.org.uk/) for more information, as well as details of the launch of more support available to enterprises using community investment.

Posted by Giles Simon at [03:26](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/2009/08/community-investment-keeps-on-growing.html) 

Labels: [Co-operativesUK](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/search/label/Co-operativesUK), [community investment](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/search/label/community%20investment), [community ownership](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/search/label/community%20ownership), [community shares](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/search/label/community%20shares), [In the Spotlight](http://inthespotlight.uk.coop/search/label/In%20the%20Spotlight)







Co-operatives UK is working as a strategic partner with the Office of the Third Sector to raise the profile of worker co-operatives, community co-operatives, multi-stakeholder co-operatives and co-operative consortia.

