



DEVON COMMUNITIES TOGETHER ANNUAL REVIEW 2016-17

A champion for the people and places of Devon
helping communities help themselves.

Engaged in a wide range of projects, services and funding opportunities that
support our vision of dynamic communities shaping their own futures.



devoncommunities.org.uk |
Charity No. 1074047



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



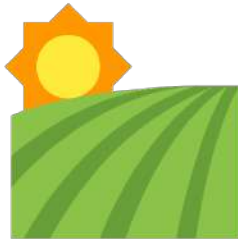
239 Members of DCT

The number of community buildings inquiries dealt with

360



3 New rural projects



Participants to 54 learning events

64

Communities assisted with their emergency plans



6 Conferences



Delegates to each of our Resilience conferences

100



2500



Readers of Village Green



224

Members of the Devon Oil Collective, helping people to save on their heating bills

221



Energy consumers received free support and advice from our work with the Big Energy Saving Network

ABOUT US

Devon Communities Together, the Community Council for Devon, is a champion for Devon's people and environment - helping communities help themselves.

We are engaged in a wide range of projects, services and funding opportunities that support our vision of dynamic communities shaping their own futures.

We have a strong focus on the development of rural communities, coastal and market towns, their needs and aspirations. At DCT we are focused on helping communities plan for and secure their futures.

We are experts in securing funding and delivering programmes which respond to the changing needs and challenges of Devon's communities.

More information can be found on our website devoncommunities.org.uk

"Our vision is of dynamic communities shaping their own futures."



ROOM HIRE FROM DEVON COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

We cater for everything; small meetings, large boardrooms, training events and seminars.

For more information visit devoncommunities.org.uk/venue-hire-exeter-area or call 01392 248919

Devon Oil Collective

We started the Devon Oil Collective in 2012 as part of our concerns to address 'fuel poverty' in the County, but it has developed an appeal to all consumers.

We encourage local co-ordinators to promote the scheme and try to organise common ordering dates, but individual members of the scheme are able to place their order directly and be confident that a competitive price will be obtained.

We are working in partnership with a large agricultural co-operative, AF Affinity, that has considerable buying power and professional negotiators.

AF Affinity help provide a number of similar schemes across England with organisations such as ourselves.

The modest membership fee helps us promote the scheme so that more of Devon's oil consumers can benefit.

In 2016/7 we took 404 orders totalling 310,838 litres, and in the financial year 2015/16 scheme members saved an estimated £11,837 compared with the average prices during this period.



Want to save on oil heating costs?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk
Call: Huw Edwards 01392 248919 ext.7104
Email: info@devoncommunities.org.uk

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Parish planning

Parish plans are often a 'turn-key' to significant local developments that enable us to deploy our skills and help move local projects forward.

We help parishes get started on the process, implement their plans, review and update plans. They have been the starting point for:

-  Building a stronger community and local economy
-  Better relationships with service providers
-  Gaining funding for local projects and investment in community buildings
-  New play and sports facilities
-  Community shops and pubs
-  Business development opportunities
-  Starting local clubs, choirs, activities, self-help groups

"Thank you for coming last night, your input was very helpful"

A Parish Council in Devon

Want to find out more?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk
Call: Martin Rich 01392 248919 ext.7141
Email: martin@devoncommunities.org.uk

Neighbourhood planning

In 2016-17, we provided direct support and advice to 30 Neighbourhood Planning groups. This is how we helped:



Forming a steering group



Producing project plans and budgets



Guidance on community engagement



Vision, aims and objectives development



Applying for grants



Presenting an overview of Neighbourhood Planning



Community surveys and data analysis



Policy writing and Neighbourhood Plan drafting and design



Support with formal consultation

Want to find out more?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk/catalyst-consultancy
Call: Martin Parkes 01392 248919 ext.7106
Email: catalyst@devoncommunities.org.uk

Devon community halls & buildings

Community buildings and village halls are often the vital hub of a village, a home for a range of activities that bind a community together.

This year we continued to offer a range of support to community buildings including:



"You have given us some valuable advice and the trustees have agreed on some fundamentals that will allow us to put a project plan in place"

North Devon Village Hall

[Want to find out more?](#)

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk
Call: Martin Rich 01392 248919 ext.7141
Email: martin@devoncommunities.org.uk

Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC)

DCT provides Parish Councils with advice and support on behalf of DALC. This year we have recorded the following highlights:



3 Free briefing events

Were held to help small councils comply with the Transparency Code and apply for the available funding

48 grants received

By small councils in the year, making a total of 136 councils which have benefited from The Transparency Fund



3 Summer socials

Were held in conjunction with the Devon branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). They were well attended by clerks from across Devon



1 Annual conference

DALC organised a Regional conference for active councils attended by over 140 delegates



27 Training events

For clerks and councillors - 170 councils have benefited

"I have not been in this situation before so I really appreciate you letting me know the correct way to proceed".

Local Council Member

[Want to find out more?](#)

Visit: devonalc.org.uk
Call: Lesley Smith 01392 248919 ext.7130
Email: lesley@devoncommunities.org.uk

Rural Futures Conference 2016

Our theme, Thriving and Healthy, examined health and well-being issues at a time when they are evolving to meet the needs of communities. John Siddal, Director of Innovation at South West Academic Health Science Network, talked us through the latest innovations in healthcare.

We heard from Stuart Horne, managing director of Business Information Point, about the impact of enterprise in Devon. Adele Dawson, Assistant Principle at South Devon College discussed work related learning for young people.

As ever, it was a chance to get together and examine what lies ahead for Devon's rural communities.



Community Unity



Working with three pilot communities, Holsworthy, Lynton and Lynmouth, and South Molton, the project is undertaking a range of development activities and delivering practical training to existing community groups and local volunteers.

As public services continue to shrink, local voluntary and community groups have been stepping in. This project will work with the communities to build a structure that will encourage further unity within each area, and the sharing of best practice across the three communities.

The project will encourage them to think of themselves as a unified team, ready and able to assist their neighbours with support across a wide range of issues. It will also equip them with the tools and skills required to make them better prepared and resilient to events such as freak weather, or minor emergencies such as power cuts.

We'll help each community strengthen its links with the statutory bodies, agencies and blue-light services; some of whom will provide training and access to facilities for the project teams.

The project is a pilot to test the concept for a potential future roll out across the whole of Devon and Cornwall. It will run for fifteen months and is supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Cornwall Police.



Want to find out more?

Visit: communityunitydevon.org.uk
Call: Mike Felstead 01392 248919 ext.7186
Email: mike@devoncommunities.org.uk

ECONOMY & ENTERPRISE

Devon Social Enterprise Network (DSEN)

DSEN was launched in summer 2015, aimed at social entrepreneurs, community activists and supporters of the Social Enterprise movement across rural Devon. Membership is free and provides access to regular E-bulletins, a programme of networking events and training workshops.

Do you run a social enterprise and want to get involved? Join for FREE:

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk/devon-social-enterprise-network

Rural Enterprise Solutions Network

Funded by the Prince's Countryside Fund, this project delivers free advice and support to would-be entrepreneurs, new businesses, and community enterprises across rural Devon.

We're delivering a programme of networking events, 1-2-1 business mentoring and training sessions, and access to an in-depth training programme for the most promising business ideas. This is all supported by an active Facebook group and a dedicated resource hub website:

devonhub.org.uk.

"I recently went the social media course this month and wanted to apply what i learnt to my business...I used Facebook to advertise my product and I was blown away with the amount of interest and future possible orders".

Geoff, Rural Enterprise Solutions Network Member

Want to get involved?

Visit: devonhub.org.uk
Call: Mike Felstead 01392 248919 ext.7186
Email: mike@devoncommunities.org.uk

HOTSW LEP



We have been able to play a key role in the Heart Of The South West (HOTSWSW) LEP's Social Enterprise and Rural Special Interest Groups, with the remit of influencing LEP policy and collaborating on future bids.

We also maintain an active involvement with the LEP People Group enabling us to promote the importance of the rural economy and represent the interests of rural communities.

Affordable housing



We facilitate the development of affordable housing in rural areas across Devon working within a partnership of Local Authorities and housing associations, known as the Devon Rural Housing Partnership (DRHP).

Interest in Community Land Trusts (CLTs) as a way of delivering affordable housing, retained for local people in perpetuity, has been growing among rural communities.

This has been supported by government grants to all of Devon's Local Authorities specifically to support this type of community led housing. It is hoped that this grant funding will be repeated over the next 5 years. Jamie Bennett moved with his family to a new affordable home in Moreleigh. At the opening ceremony he said:

"Moving into this house will make a huge difference to me and my family. We will be close to my parents and other relatives and to my job. At the moment we are renting privately and this rent is much more affordable for us. It also means that our utility bills will go right down and I will only have a short journey to work and to take my children to school. For all of these reasons life will be much less stressful."

The Rural Housing Team continue to conduct additional housing need surveys where required and are providing additional enabling support in North Devon for community led schemes and the coordination for the Exmoor Rural Housing Network.



100 homes

100 affordable new homes were completed and made available to local families across Devon



15,295 responses

We surveyed and provided information about affordable housing to over 15,000 homes in Devon

Want to get in touch?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk
Call: Sue Southwell 01392 248919 ext.7121
Email: sue@devoncommunities.org.uk



LOVE Devon

Devon Communities Together cares about our village halls. For over 50 years we have been helping Devon's village halls by providing advice and practical support to the dedicated volunteers who manage them.

Village halls play a vital role at the heart of local communities. There are over 500 village halls & community buildings in Devon where essential services are provided and community activities take place.

If you Love Devon's Village Halls you can help them to continue to thrive.

As funds become tighter keeping these much loved buildings comfortable to use gets even harder. Funds are needed for; emergency repairs, to upgrade facilities, meet new legislation, for major refurbishments or complete re-builds.

Our aim is to raise £1 million to create a LOVE Devon Village Halls fund that will provide loans and small grants open to all of Devon's village halls and community buildings.

General Appeal

Devon Communities Together is a charity dedicated to supporting people and communities across Devon. Would you like to support some of the essential work we do, as highlighted throughout this booklet? You can:

- Donate to our LOVE Devon General Appeal which will help us to continue supporting Devon's Communities in the future.
- Become a member of Devon Communities Together.



**To DONATE
to either our
LOVE Devon Village Halls Campaign
or our
General LOVE Devon Appeal:**

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk
Call: 01392 248919
Email: info@devoncommunities.org.uk

Catalyst is our in-house consultancy service, supporting communities throughout Devon. Highlights from the past year include:



Crediton Town Council commissioned us to undertake a Feasibility Study to support the negotiation of an asset transfer of Council Buildings which were no longer in use. Their aim is to enhance the assets and ensure that they reach their full potential as a hub of activity and services for local people

Willand Village Hall Trust used our expertise in bid writing to help them make a successful grant application to Viridor to install a new roof



Bickington Village Trust Ltd recruited us onto their team to design and facilitate a community consultation survey and event, to inform the future development options for the community hall

Bovey Tracey Town Council employed our expertise to help them to undertake an "investment ready" process for a proposed multi-use community center. This included help with developing a Business Case



Axminster Community Enterprise steering group (ACE) commissioned Catalyst to undertake a targeted engagement process with young people under the age of 30 to ensure their voices are heard in their future development planning

"It has been a pleasure to work with the catalyst team. They have demonstrated foresight, given sound and helpful advice and are clearly well versed in the discipline of funding applications."

Do you have a project you'd like us to work on?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk/catalyst-consultancy
Call: Dawn Eckhart 01392 248919 ext.7170
Email: catalyst@devoncommunities.org.uk

At the beginning of last year, we were accepted for a place on the Pilotlight National Business Mentoring Programme.

Pilotlight is a capacity building charity offering free tailored strategic planning support to charities and social enterprises that are tackling disadvantage in the UK.

Through the programme, the charity matches directors and trustees from charities and social enterprises with teams of senior business people to facilitate an engagement to plan for sustainability, development and growth.

We successfully worked through a 12 month programme where strategic support was provided by four business leaders to help us develop and grow.

Constructing Futures

During 2016/17, we were the first South West voluntary sector organisation to be provisionally allocated a grant under the Growth Deal 3 funding programme to set up "Constructing Futures".

Constructing Futures is planned to be a sustainable social purpose business. It will create opportunities for young people to gain skills and qualifications within the construction sector.

The project will purchase properties and sites for renovation and development, initially in the South Devon area.

It will provide learners, through South Devon College, with practical on-site work experience. The project is expected to commence by the end of 2017.

Completed builds and refurbishments will be sold on the open market and the monies re-invested in the project.



Training Hub

In June 2016, we launched a new online Training Hub. With over 20 years' experience of designing and delivering a broad range of learning events, we wanted to provide a virtual "shop window" of affordable and relevant training and learning events.

Planned to be open to all, but specialising in the capacity building and development needs of community groups, the social purpose sector, social enterprise and micro businesses at all stages of their development.

During the first 10 months of the Training Hub, we:



6

Worked with 6 external trainers



9

Provided 9 training events



90

We had 90 Participants to our training



45

We promoted an additional 45 learning events



The Hub offers a mix of training opportunities delivered by external partners and in-house specialists within Devon Communities Together.

Want to find out more about our courses?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk/training-hub
Call: Huw Edwards 01392 248919 ext.7104
Email: info@devoncommunities.org.uk

If you are interested in promoting your learning events through the Training Hub, please contact: ncorkery@devoncommunities.org.uk.

DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



Working with the Devon Community Resilience Board (DCRB)

DCRB members aim to help communities be **Prepared**, be ready to **Respond** and ready to **Recover** in the case of emergency.

We encourage as many communities as possible to create a Community Emergency Plan, and send it to us. Full, un-redacted Plans are uploaded to Resilience Direct - a secure website accessible by the Emergency Services, Local Authorities and Environment Agency in times of emergency.

We set up the Resilience Forum in October 2015 which now has over 250 individuals from 106 communities. There is no charge to join this group - members receive invites to exclusive forum events and training. Anyone interested can join using the details below.

In 2016-2017, we hosted two events, attended by over 160 delegates from 40+ communities, who heard speakers from the emergency services, Environment Agency, local authorities and some local community case studies. Delegates also took part in practical working sessions covering subjects such as risk assessment, putting together and testing your emergency plan.

There is a good programme of events planned for the future, looking both at strategic issues and including some hands-on practical sessions. The events are free to attend and all aim to make it easier to put a community emergency plan together.

In 2016-2017 we also administered the Devon Emergency Flood Resilience Grant fund which has helped 37 community groups secure funding to provide equipment for use when there is a flood.

What people say about our events...

"Great group of speakers"

"Excellent speakers who knew their fields"

"Fantastic to have so many stake holders there"

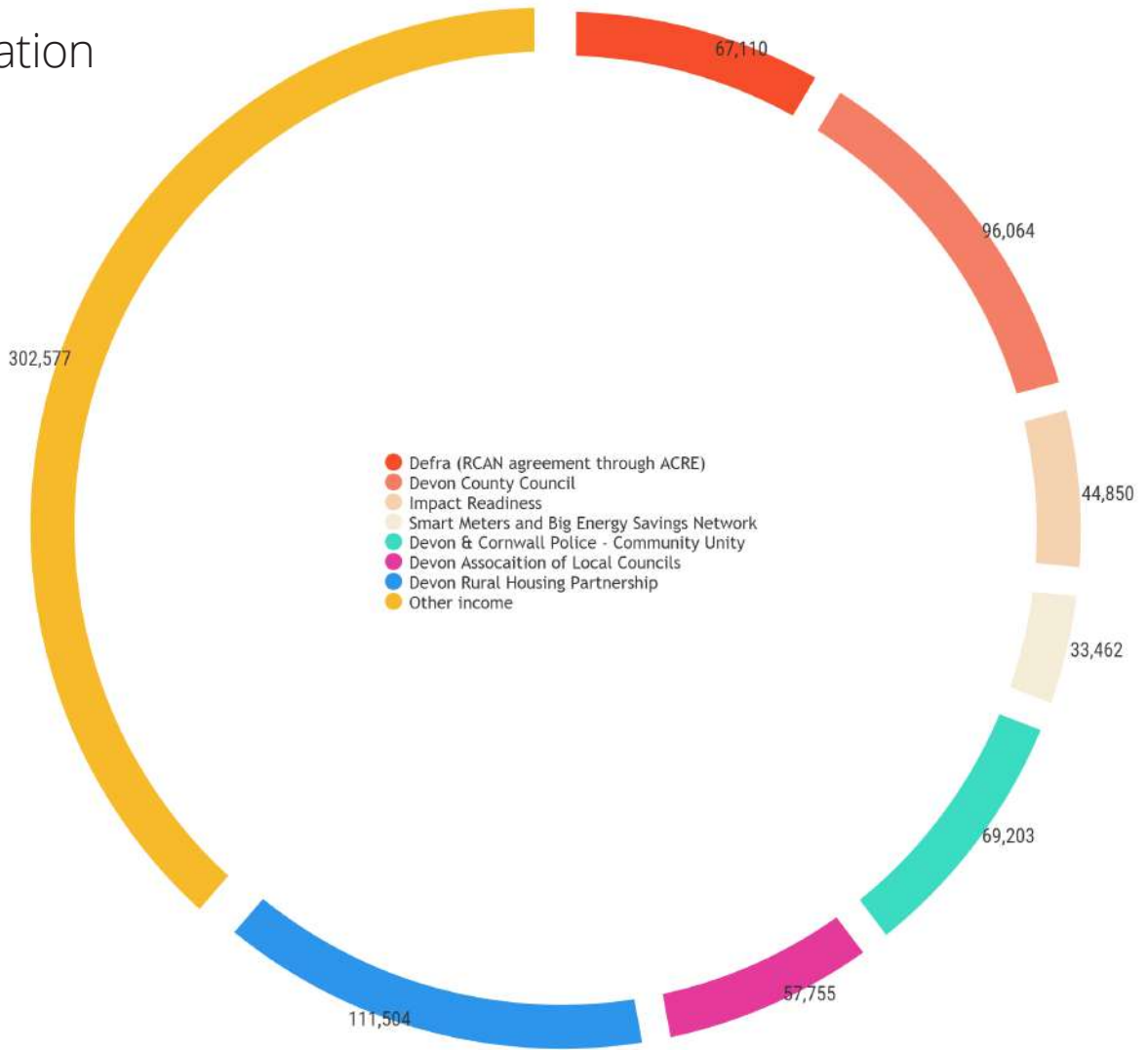
Interested in becoming a member?

Visit: devoncommunities.org.uk/Pages/Category/devon-community-resilience-forum
Call: Lesley Smith 01392 248919 ext.7130
Email: lesley@devoncommunities.org.uk

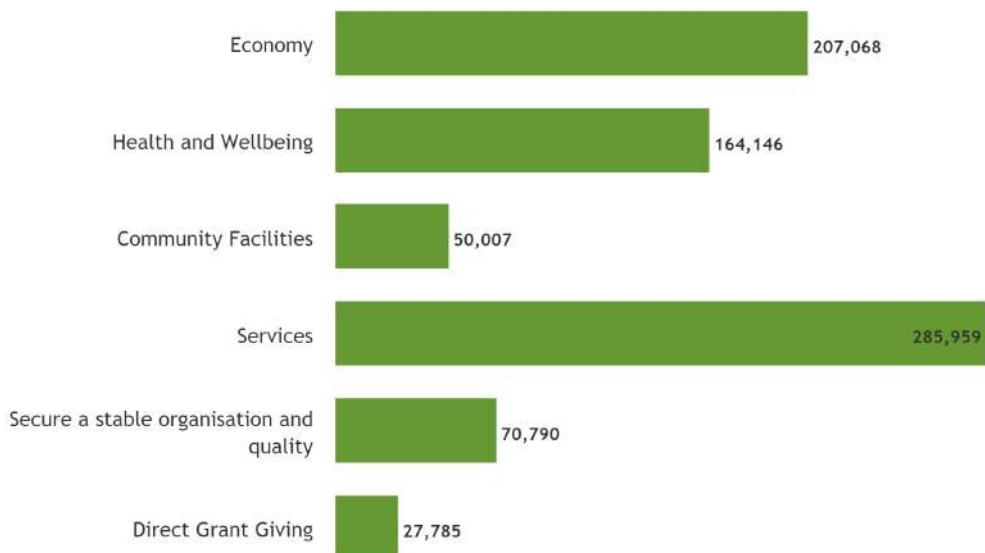


Our income (£)

A sustainable
organisation



What we spent (£)



The team

Our success is driven by our people...

JOHN
LEE OBE

PRESIDENT



TERESA
BUTCHERS

CHAIR



ELAINE
COOK

CEO



TRUSTEE BOARD

NIGEL ARNOLD

VICE CHAIR

LINDA BEALEY

TRUSTEE
(2010 - 2016)

IAN COWLING

TRUSTEE (NOV 2016)

KEVIN FINAN

HON. TREASURER

CLLR GAY HILL

TRUSTEE
(2010 - 2016)

ROB HATT

TRUSTEE (MAY 2016)

ALAN QUICK

DENNIS SMITH

MIKE WHARTON

RENEE SMITHENS

TRUSTEE (FEB 2017)

STAFF TEAM

JANICE ALEXANDER - RURAL HOUSING ENABLER

ISAAC BUTTERFIELD-KENDALL - APPRENTICE

NORA CORKERY - HEAD OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

GREG DAVIES - DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

DAWN ECKHART - SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MANAGER

HUW EDWARDS - CUSTOMER SUPPORT OFFICER

PETER HARDING - DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PAULINE MOORE - FACILITIES COORDINATOR (JAN 2017)

JON FREEMAN - FACILITIES COORDINATOR (JAN - MARCH 2017)

JESSICA OATES - MARKETING EXECUTIVE (JAN 2017)

TOM BRIDGE - MARKETING EXECUTIVE (JAN - MARCH 2017)

MARTIN PARKES - SENIOR PROJECTS OFFICER

KAREN REED - FINANCE MANAGER

MARTIN RICH - COMMUNITY PROJECTS OFFICER

COLIN SAVAGE - RURAL HOUSING ENABLER

LESLEY SMITH MBE - SENIOR MANAGER/DALC COUNTY SEC

SUE SOUTHWELL - RURAL HOUSING TEAM LEADER

CARA STOBART - COMMUNITY PROJECTS OFFICER

AGGIE SZPINDA - COMMUNITY PROJECTS OFFICER

CAROL TOMPKINS - HR & SUPPORT SERVS MANAGER



Devon Communities Together

helping communities help themselves



Get in touch



01392248919



info@devoncommunities.org.uk



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[#LoveDevon](https://twitter.com/DevComsTogether)



[/devoncommunitiestogether](https://www.facebook.com/devoncommunitiestogether)

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