



Q3 REPORT 2020/21

January 2021

OUR VISION is of dynamic communities shaping their own futures.

OUR MISSION is to inspire and support communities to be thriving, resilient and inclusive.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

* These figures represent where we have had direct, personal contact. Support and funding advice was provided in all e-bulletins, so many more will have had the opportunity to benefit from our advice.



- KEY**
- DEVON COMMUNITIES OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK:**
- Understanding Community Needs
 - Brokering Relationships
 - Capability Building Within Communities
 - Support for Community Resilience
 - Opportunities for Individuals to Become Active Citizens

COVID-19 RESPONSE DURING Q3

0808 196 3390
Covid-19 Helpline
Mon-Fri 9-5

Help your community to navigate the new tier system with our help ...

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE TIER SYSTEM AND LOCKDOWN NUMBER TWO

Q3 has perhaps witnessed the highest rate of changing restrictions in Devon, against the backdrop of the new strain of Covid-19 and a worsening national picture. Devon moved from the 'rule of six', through lockdown number two and into Tier 2, then Tier 3, along with the evolving 'Christmas bubbles' situation. This complex situation in turn resulted in a level of concern and confusion among communities as to how the rapidly changing situations would apply to them.

As we have done since March, DCT quickly responded according to the new national guidance, handling hundreds of enquiries from concerned community buildings, parish and town councils and community groups, who wanted to understand how best to support their communities with every new piece of information that emerged. Frequent topics we have supported communities with during Q3 include:

- Clarification on 'the rule of six' for events, activities and meetings held at village halls and community buildings.
- Advice on market operations (especially indoor markets).
- Use of QR codes by halls and hirers for Covid-19 NHS Test and Trace purposes.
- Guidance on local council meetings (especially for AGMs).
- Transitioning into and out of lockdown - what activities are permitted? What about gaps in the guidance?
- During the second national lockdown, requests for support mostly included clarification on cancellation of events and hall management.
- Information and support on how to access available Covid-19 relief grants.
- Covid-19 isolation grant for people who were self-isolating.
- Covid-19 compensation funds for village halls.

IMPACT

Communities are enabled to continue to operate vital services in a Covid-19 secure way while reducing the spread of the virus and keeping vulnerable people safe.

10 e-news-letters issued to 2,700+ people

50 pieces of social media content shared

297 contacts with communities to provide advice, through the helpline, online focus groups and training

COVID-19 RESPONSE DURING Q3 (CONT ...)





STAY SAFE STAY HOME

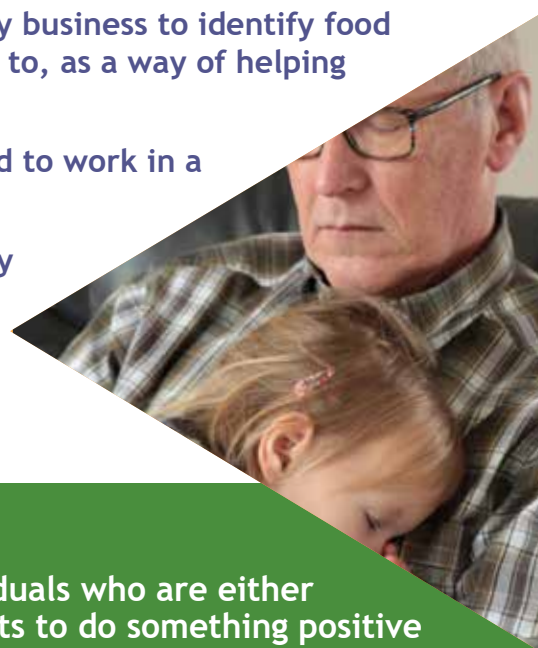
SUPPORTING VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS AND HANDLING SPECIALIST QUERIES

As well as supporting Town and Parish Councils and Village Halls with the types of 'typical' queries highlighted on pg. 3, our well publicised helpline has attracted a number of less common calls, sometimes from individuals seeking support, other times from organisations with queries that they cannot find the answer to in any other guidance.

In these cases our helpline team undertakes research with the appropriate bodies, sharing our findings with the enquirer, or makes a referral to another agency that may be better placed to help. In all these instances we have sought to ensure that the enquirer feels confident to take a positive step forward in resolving their concern.

Examples of these less common queries during Q3 have included:

-  Request for support from a local community confectionary business to identify food banks and other relevant places to deliver food gift packs to, as a way of helping and treating people in need in his community.
-  A children's care worker needed guidance on being posted to work in a children's care home with potential Covid-19 infection.
-  Providing support to a family during lockdown, specifically with the issue of dealing with multiple family households.
-  Linking a patient to their local support group for collection of medication.



IMPACT

These less common enquiries are often examples of individuals who are either concerned about themselves or someone else, or who wants to do something positive in their community but isn't sure how to achieve it. By supporting people with these queries alongside our mainstream remit, DCT is directly helping some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, not only reassuring them and listening to their concerns but also making sure they are signposted to other appropriate services.

DISTRICT BASED FOCUS GROUPS

Working with the District Council emergency planning and Covid support leads across Devon, DCT helped to facilitate 11 district-based focus groups during Q3 - in some instances sub-divided into groups for towns and parishes per district.

The groups began with an update from the district, before going into facilitated learning and peer support. There was a high level of information sharing and connectivity, for example learning about local business initiatives that have worked in different locations, and linking up locally.

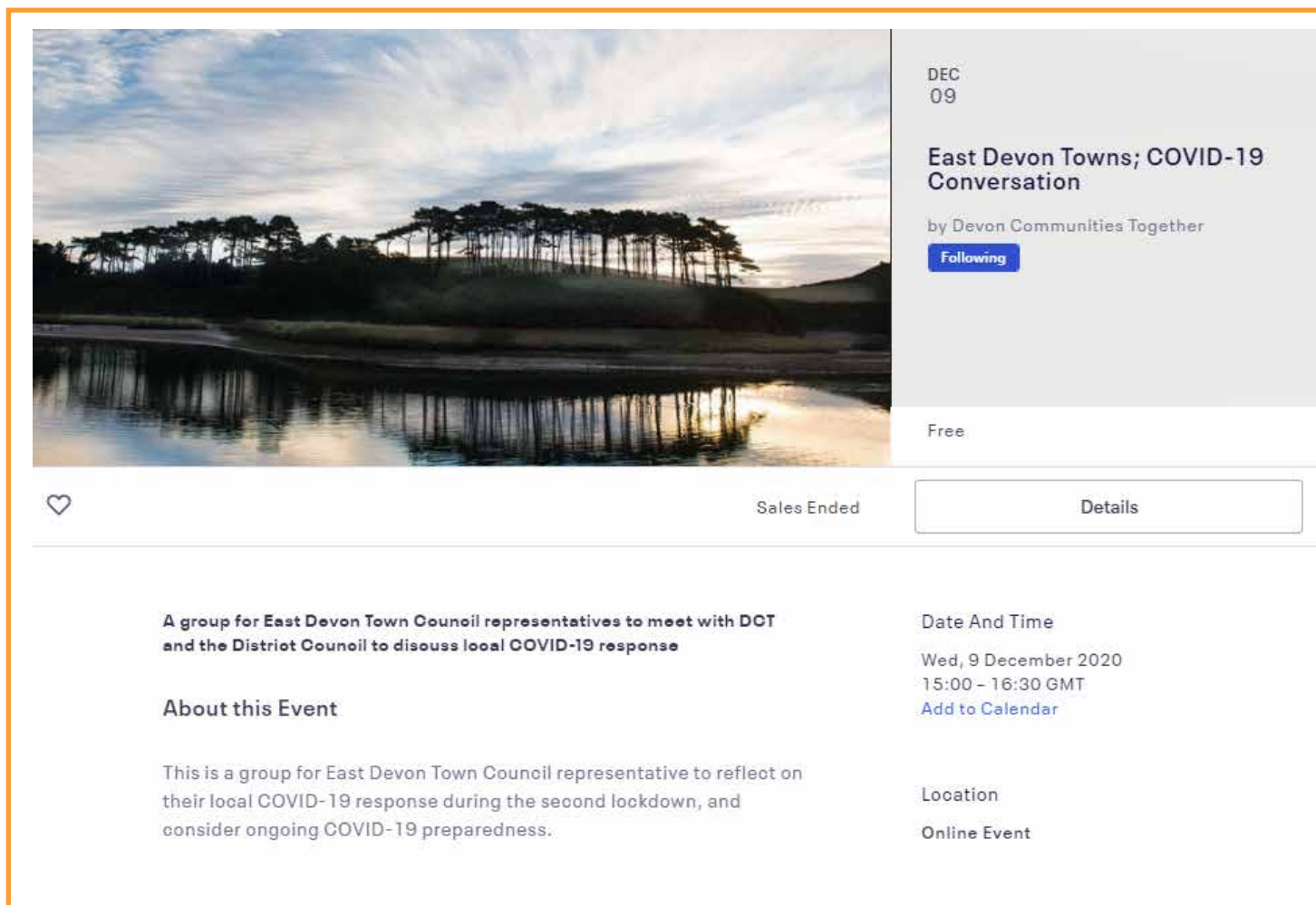
The unique structure of DCT's phase online focus groups and close collaboration with District Councils, has been very effective, and enhanced engagement with local councils; mostly with regards to getting first-hand information on available support, communicating local issues to District Councils, and collectively discussing potential solutions and improvement of overall support mechanisms in the respective districts.

A particular example of this local connectivity is the Woodbury, Exmouth and Budleigh areas, which all share a health hub. Following one of our online sessions, representatives agreed to meet separately to discuss support coordination in their very local area.

Overall, all the District Councils, and their respective local communities that were engaged, displayed significant readiness and capacity to provide support to community members during the second national lockdown. We are pleased to be continuing this work going forward into Q4 from January-March 2021.

IMPACT

District Councils are upskilled, empowered and supported to maximise the quality of their local Covid-19 response. New connections made during the groups have led to the possibilities of new collaborations and further improvements within the district-level response, which directly benefits all communities.



DEC 09

East Devon Towns; COVID-19 Conversation

by Devon Communities Together

[Following](#)

Free

[Sales Ended](#) [Details](#)

A group for East Devon Town Council representatives to meet with DCT and the District Council to discuss local COVID-19 response

About this Event

This is a group for East Devon Town Council representative to reflect on their local COVID-19 response during the second lockdown, and consider ongoing COVID-19 preparedness.

Date And Time

Wed, 9 December 2020
15:00 - 16:30 GMT
[Add to Calendar](#)

Location

Online Event

**DCT
OBJECTIVE**
COMMUNITIES BECOME
HEALTHIER, MORE
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE
WITH IMPROVED
WELLBEING

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-highlights

DEVON HIGHLIGHTS: INCREASING DIGITAL SKILLS DURING LOCKDOWN



Our Devon Highlights project supports people in later life who are at risk of loneliness and social isolation.

how to watch **You Tube recordings of Devon Highlights sessions** and how to use Zoom

- Scams Awareness session: to highlight new and local scams, with advice on how to remain safe on the internet

Covid-19 restrictions have meant facilitation of our three weekly social groups now takes place entirely online, therefore we have been working to address the challenges posed by low levels of digital skills in some of our participants, which create a barrier to digital social interaction.

During Q3 we undertook a survey to ascertain all participants' digital needs. The results of this survey (from 93 respondents) led to our project team providing:

- Personalised support: 34 1-2-1 phone training sessions held on how to use internet and zoom
- Resources: shared with 117 participants on

IMPACT

117 people aged 55+ have new or better digital skills. Due to their new digital confidence we have welcomed 14 new participants on our weekly Zoom sessions, giving them new opportunities to socialise each week. Our own evaluation has shown the participants to be visibly happier, more outgoing and more likely to get involved in wider online community activities.

Away from our weekly sessions, people are able to use their new skills elsewhere, for example chatting with friends and family, promoting even greater opportunities to combat loneliness.



HM Government

The Highlights project is supported by the National Lottery's Community Fund and HM Government - together forming the Building Connections Fund.

"It helps me, as I always watch the recorded zoom session and I have noticed that at the end of each zoom session people say hello to people like me as (who can't join live session) which meant a lot to me. "

"I feel more empowered because of Highlights, I've learnt how to use Zoom , and I'm proud of it. It gave me more independency and helped me feel less isolated! I'm grateful for that. "

"I haven't done much since we went into lockdown with this virus. The contact with Aggie has been very helpful. "

"I think it did help me to feel that I'm not as lonely as I thought I might be during lock down, I thought that once we finished our meetings it will be over, but then Aggie came to this project and she was so positive and friendly so I agreed to keep going with our 121 occasional calls and I'm happy I made this decision. "

"Aggie and Harry do a brilliant job encouraging us. I hope this group can continue as I'd miss it. I'm sure. others feel the same. "

DEVON HIGHLIGHTS: COMBATING LONELINESS WITH OUR BEFRIENDING PROGRAMME

Alongside the Zoom groups, Devon Highlights also runs a 1-2-1 befriending phone call service to give a weekly support to our participants who may not yet feel comfortable joining the social groups or have the skills or equipment to do so.

During Q3 we supported 32 participants in this way, making weekly calls to ensure they have a friendly listening ear and some important human contact.

In order to ensure this important befriending service is sustainable and has longevity, we have spent time recruiting and training volunteer befrienders. So far we have worked with nine new volunteers to ensure they have the appropriate resources and skills to undertake this important role.



IMPACT

32 older people at risk of isolation and loneliness have been provided with bespoke, 1-2-1 support each week to help improve their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. As a result of the new befriending volunteers, we now have increased capacity to befriend more older people at what remains an extremely challenging time.



**DCT
OBJECTIVE**
COMMUNITIES BECOME
HEALTHIER, MORE
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE
WITH IMPROVED
WELLBEING



DEVON RURAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP: UPPER COLY VALLEY COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

When it comes to rural affordable housing, the process can be a long one and we're delighted to share a recent update on an ongoing scheme that our Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) have been involved with, which has just been granted planning permission.

Three small rural parishes in Upper Coly Valley wished to provide affordable housing in their area with a housing scheme that will benefit people across all three parishes. As these parishes are so small and rural, with very few facilities and amenities and virtually no public transport, the local planning policy is to refuse any development.

Back in 2014, DCT carried out a housing need survey to identify housing need across the three parishes, which established the need for three new homes. DCT's RHE was the

main point of contact for all Parish Councils and arranged two public meetings where the establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT) was supported and subsequently incorporated. The RHE then organised a site appraisal with Parish Councillors and the East Devon District Council Housing Enabler, which identified the best site.

Our RHE has refreshed the housing need on two occasions to keep the evidence of community need relevant. Despite not being policy compliant, the development has just been passed by the planning committee. Planning was gained for six affordable homes, which will allow local people to remain in the area where they grew up or have lived for a considerable time and cannot afford to rent or buy. This in turn increases the possibility of inter-generational support.



IMPACT

Through the formation of a CLT this community has increased capability, skills and confidence in addressing local issues. The community has become more inclusive as people on low incomes will be able to remain in the parishes, which has very high house prices that are out of the range of most local people. The CLT will receive a ground rent of £1,200 from the housing association which will own the leasehold of the homes. They will be able to spend this on local projects of their choice to benefit the community.

To follow the progress of the CLT, visit: <https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/>

**DCT
OBJECTIVE**
COMMUNITIES BECOME
HEALTHIER, MORE
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE
WITH IMPROVED
WELLBEING



DEVON MATERNITY VOICES PARTNERSHIP (MVP): ENGAGING WITH MATERNITY CARE THROUGH CORONAVIRUS

At the end of the previous quarter, DCT facilitated an election to elect a new Chair and four new area-based Vice Chairs for Devon MVP. The new team has been working hard during Q3 to continue delivering this important project that links parents-to-be and young families with maternity services, giving them a voice that helps to continually improve and evolve maternity services. They have been ...

Helping to improve the maternity care of BAME people in Devon through creating awareness of associated risks (including around Covid-19). The MVP team reviewed the key messages surrounding these topics, which were then distributed to clinical staff throughout Devon to ensure they were better able to support people in their care.

Sharing up-to-date Covid guidance by reviewing the FAQs on maternity care and Coronavirus bi-

weekly, and sharing any updates to the Facebook page.

Increasing social media reach by setting up a new Instagram account and increasing Facebook activities. Resources and updates from all four trusts across Devon are shared to help build engagement and provide support. We are currently speaking with families who wish to share their positive birth stories which we will share to help provide reassurance to people currently going through their maternity care during the pandemic.

Building relationships with better birth midwives - the vice chairs have been in touch with a better births midwives from their Trust area to discuss aims and goals for the year ahead.

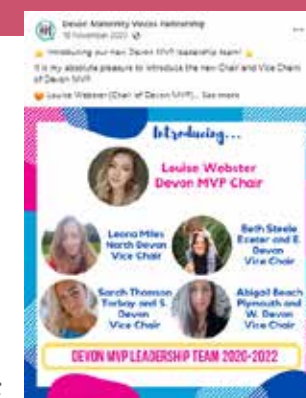


IMPACT

Parents and parents-to-be are more engaged with maternity care providers and can help to shape and improve services at what is an uncertain, worrying time for many expectant and new parents.



Social media content from Devon Maternity Voices Partnership:



**DCT
OBJECTIVE**
COMMUNITIES BECOME
HEALTHIER, MORE
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE
WITH IMPROVED
WELLBEING



**DCT
OBJECTIVE**
COMMUNITIES BECOME
ECONOMICALLY
STRONGER



To access our energy saving video, visit
www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/big-energy-saving-network.
To book a 1-2-1 appointment call 01392 248919.

SOVEREIGN HOUSING ASSOCIATION: COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY PROJECTS

We are pleased to have begun a new relationship with Sovereign Housing Association in which we will work collaboratively to achieve overall community development in Devon communities with Sovereign Housing stock.

This will involve adding value and expanding our existing projects and services, but also developing new community initiatives in alignment with Sovereign's key strategic priorities (see below). These pilot projects will be co-designed and be of direct benefit to the identified communities.

During Q3 we collaborated with Sovereign to

develop a new Ageing Well project, which will involve an expansion of our Devon Highlights Zoom groups and 1-2-1 befriending call services (pg. 6) to support older people at risk of loneliness. The project is due to be rolled out - in collaboration with Sovereign's Community Officers - into an area of Plymouth where a need has been identified to support residents in a Housing for Older People Scheme.

Along with Sovereign, we will use the HACT Social Value tool (developed specifically to measure the social value around housing www.hact.org.uk/social-value-bank), to measure the overall social value of our community development work. During Q3 DCT has integrated this tool into our existing impact measurement, which has been very insightful and useful. During October and November alone there was a total social value of £398,811 for DCT's overall work.

BIG ENERGY SAVING NETWORK: FIGHTING FUEL POVERTY IN DEVON

The Big Energy Saving Network (BESN) is an assisted action project made up of local community groups and charities across the UK, for which DCT is a partner in Devon. Our aim is to provide advice on energy saving in the home, switching energy suppliers, different energy tariffs and available support to help vulnerable households stay warm and lower energy bills.

DCT has two BESN Champions, Aggie and Martin, who have been fully trained by Citizens Advice. Aggie and Martin have been providing a mixture of 1-2-1 and group advice sessions (all online or over the phone) during Q3. During the sessions, our

Energy Champions provide information and advice to clients to ensure they are not paying more than they need to for their energy. Where consumers are struggling to pay their energy bills, we highlight where help is available, for example the Warm Home Discount scheme.

During Q3 we provided an advice to 45 individuals, and undertook three online group zoom sessions. In order to broaden the reach of the advice we have also created an online video for those who are unable to attend the group sessions but would like to view the advice in their own time. Viewers are encouraged to contact us for tailored advice after they've watched the session, if they'd like more help.

Key Strategic Areas



How DCT's work currently aligns with Sovereign's key strategic areas.

IMPACT

Communities will directly benefit from the additional co-designed projects such as the Ageing Well initiative.

The collaboration adds value to the existing activities of both organisations and allows for more insightful measurement of impact.

IMPACT

45 people now have the tools to be able to proactively reduce their fuel costs and energy usage, helping them save money during what for many is an extra tough period financially. They have also been introduced to the Energy Company Obligation and Warm Home Discount schemes. Our advice will help domestic consumers get good value from their expenditure on energy, to use energy effectively and have warm, comfortable homes.

FREE ONLINE ENERGY ADVICE SESSIONS!

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses or search on Eventbrite

26th Nov 11am-12pm
14th Dec 6pm-7pm
14th Jan 11am-12pm

Devon Communities Together
Big ENERGY SAVING NETWORK

Energy Advice Booklet

Would you or someone you know like a free Energy Advice booklet? Please contact us and we can pop one in the post!

Devon Communities Together
Big ENERGY SAVING NETWORK

DCT
OBJECTIVECOMMUNITIES BECOME
ECONOMICALLY
STRONGERWITH POSITIVITY AND
STRENGTH

Are you feeling stuck? Are you at a crossroads in
or returning to work after cancer treatment?

Even the strongest among us can feel lost at



Dr Dianne Dowling

NEW START DEVON: DR DIANE DOWLING

Despite the challenges around Covid-19, our New Start Devon enterprise coaching project has been continuing apace in providing one-to-one business coaching for Devon start-ups.

One of our clients, Dr Dianne Dowling, has a vision for building a business that helps people who have suffered with cancer return to work and provides Executive Coaching. She needed help in developing a clear plan to develop the business and the space to explore its true nature.

Over a series of five bespoke coaching sessions we considered her ideal clients, the language to use, the route to market, her website and the collaborations that will serve the growth of the business.

“Matthew held the space with such expertise and sensitivity that allowed me to explore fully the two sides of my coaching business: working with cancer patients returning to work and executive clients changing career paths. He helped me recognise how I straddled two areas of coaching: health and work, and strengthened my vision of how my charity and private sector clients might work.

As a coach myself, I came away from my sessions with Matthew with a renewed sense of confidence - like the ‘can’ in cancer, I can also offer the ‘care’ in career.”

The conversations allowed Dianne to re-evaluate her approach to career coaching blockers for her clients, and to explore how to apply her evidence based methodologies to best serve different types of people, in differing situations.

Diane’s practice is up and running and thriving, focused on serving cancer survivors and executives who are changing career paths.

“I recently had a successful coaching session with a client regarding her career and the session was brilliant. I remembered Matthew’s words, ‘let go of needing to know’ and my client was able to reach a positive outcome by moving herself forward.”

IMPACT

The work with Dianne in developing her practice succeeded in upskilling, training, supporting and advising the founder to start to make changes and give her business the best opportunity to achieve positive outcomes for its community both locally and nationally.

Contact matthew.porter@devoncommunities.org.uk to find out more about our coaching.



New Start Devon is receiving funding from the European Regional Development Fund

DCT
OBJECTIVECOMMUNITIES BECOME
ECONOMICALLY
STRONGER

“When I met Sarah [mentor] I was very vulnerable and unstable... Sarah attended meetings with me which has improved my confidence. Paying for the gym has changed my life. Making these small steps has really helped me evolve into the young strong woman I want to become.” Kate*

EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE: EVALUATING THE IMPACT

After three and a half years of supporting the Empowering Enterprise partnership with impact measurement and employer engagement, during Q3 DCT was pleased to produce an Impact Report covering project activity from 2017-2020.

Empowering Enterprise has worked with the most socially-excluded young people (18-24 year olds) in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to equip them with skills for life and work giving them the confidence to find a path to a brighter future. The project was managed by Petroc and delivered by a partnership of organisations with a wide range of expertise and experience in working with young people across the South West.

‘Helping communities help themselves’ is a key objective that motivates our work at Devon Communities Together. Producing this report has enabled us to communicate areas of strength and areas for development to key organisations in the county and it is our hope that this work will

serve, and offer insights to, the future activities of partnership organisations and wider stakeholders. It is the culmination of the development of an impact measurement framework, extensive data analysis, the conduction of video case studies and focus groups, and other interim evaluation.

In November 2020 Petroc was offered further funds to recommence project activity from January 2021. We are delighted that, as Empowering Enterprise resumes and enters its second phase of delivery, the learnings from this work can be immediately implemented to further refine approaches used to support young people towards a positive future. We also look forward to evaluating the impact of the evolving delivery which will build on existing experience and learnings, as well as respond to the new and volatile climate in which we find ourselves.

Contact anna.lane@devoncommunities.org.uk for more information on Empowering Enterprise.

IMPACT

Due to the achievements of the wider partnership, Devon is now home to 600+ more young people who have experienced support and encouragement to desire and pursue a future that serves their own and their communities’ best interests. DCT’s impact evaluation will shape the future direction of the project and ensure that many more young people will enjoy similar life-changing experiences.



Read the full
report here

“What I love about my job is getting people and organisations to work together with a joined up approach, trusting and learning from each other which in the case of Empowering Enterprise has created a partnership in the truest sense of the word. It’s never a one person job, it’s always a team effort.”

Lesley Taylor, the Empowering Enterprise Project Manager at Petroc 13

DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES HAVE INCREASED CAPABILITY, SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES



DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING ACADEMY: BENEFITS SYSTEM TRAINING

During Q3 DCT facilitated 42 online training events, networking opportunities and focus groups, with 342 participants.

Along with our Covid-19 focus groups (pg. 3) and an Asset Based Community Development session, we also ran seven online seminars from Citizens Advice Bureau Devon, which upskilled delegates on all aspects of the benefits system. Session topics ranged from Universal Credit to Personal Independence Payments, Benefits for Older People and more.

We welcomed attendees from a diverse range of organisations including Parish Councils, the NHS and a mental health charity, all of whom have taken their learning into their job roles to better support people on low incomes.

IMPACT

Delegates are upskilled in key topic areas, including supporting people with benefits claims and local Covid-19 responses. The knowledge gained in these sessions will disseminate out to their wider communities and help people to better support vulnerable people.

CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON LTD: GETTING BACK TO WORK

Constructing Futures Devon Ltd (CFDL) is a property company which purchases dilapidated properties and brings them up to modern standards to be sold on the open market. Works are completed with the help of local construction learners from South Devon College, giving them valuable 'real life' on-site experience.



After a long lay-off during the first lockdown and a gradual site re-opening over the summer period, work at Constructing Futures' latest Torquay property gathered more pace during Q3, with the site fully compliant with the Government's Covid secure guidance. The new windows have been installed, which means that it is now possible to keep the building and the working environment a bit warmer which makes for a more comfortable working environment for our learners and their trainers!

IMPACT

Two full-time apprentices alongside 20 bricklaying, electrical, plumbing and carpentry learners, have contributed to the works onsite in Q3, providing them with invaluable experience to support their current learning and future careers.



HM Government

Constructing Futures is partly funded by £574,320 from the Heart of the South West LEP's Growth Deal funding. The Heart of the South West LEP's total Growth Deal is worth £598m; including £239m from Government and £359m match funding. Over the lifetime of the Growth Deal: 2015 - 2021; HotSW LEP estimates the investment will create up to 22,000 new jobs and 11,000 new homes.

DCT OBJECTIVE

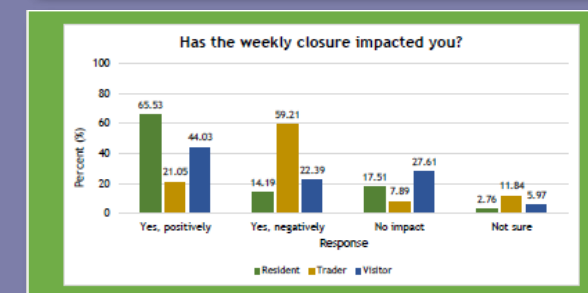
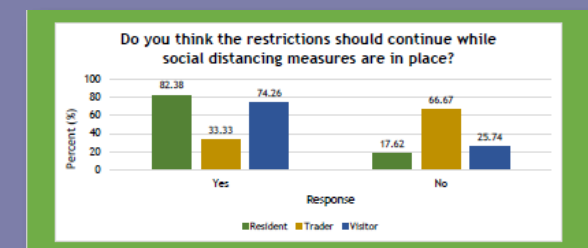
COMMUNITIES HAVE INCREASED CAPABILITY, SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: TOTNES TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIANISATION

Totnes Town Council had instigated a road closure in its town centre to aid Covid-19 social distancing for shoppers. It was due for renewal but had caused some conflict in the town, therefore it was agreed that some independent public engagement would help the community's voice be heard and inform any future decisions.

DCT worked with Totnes Town Council to design an online survey, which we widely publicised via a social media campaign and advertising in targeted local media. We also distributed over 6,000 printed copies of the survey to local essential business, to ensure inclusivity for those who did not have digital access. 1,356 responses were received and analysed by DCT, and we recently provided the Town Council with our final report.



Left: example graphs from the report showing the opinions of the local community. Below: promotional material to publicise the consultation.

Totnes Town Centre
Have Your Say

Upper Fore Street, High Street and the Narrows are closed on Saturdays from 9am-1pm until 5th December 2020 (currently). Totnes Town Council would like to understand the effectiveness of this measure and consult on whether it should be extended, and so has asked Devon Communities Together to carry out an independent survey.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/totnestown

Closing date: 20.12.20.

Paper copies (FREEPOST return) available on request: 01803 862147 (10am-12pm Mon-Fri) / reception@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk, or at local businesses.

IMPACT

Totnes Town Council was provided with an independent reflection of the whole community's feelings towards both the closure, and towards proposed further 'shared space' town centre measures. This ensures that the wider community had a voice in the process and the Council could move forward with confidence.

DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES
BECOME MORE
RESOURCEFUL
AND RESILIENT

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS: PLANNING FOR A POST-COVID FUTURE

The autumn saw most village halls re-opening with restrictions, until the winter lockdown. In addition to extensive Covid-related support we provided (see pg. 3), DCT began to start receiving some more 'non-Covid' requests for support with the day-to-day operation of halls and the associated management committees, which was a positive sign that building committees were beginning to look beyond the short-term emergency response and start planning for a post-Covid future.

Examples of the support we provided included advice on funding opportunities for building improvements, and guidance on governance and day-to-day building management issues to ensure the smooth running of the buildings. Exceptionally, we also supported three community buildings where there were disputes between committee members, enabling them to move forward and helping to avoid any disruption or damage to the important services the halls provide.

Another example of the valuable work carried out through our community buildings support service is the assistance we are providing to West Anstey Village Hall, whose management committee wants to amend the constitution to extend the area of benefit to East Anstey, where no similar building exists. Many residents use this neighbouring hall and with our support the hall will be seeking a 'Scheme' from the charity commission, which will enable it to alter its governing document and formally recognise its remit in East Anstey.

IMPACT

Community building committees have been supported to not only deal with short-term Covid compliance challenges but also to maintain and improve their buildings and management structures going forward.

40 community buildings supported with CV19 advice, including 4 with funding advice

This support will enable them to continue providing vital services to communities during and after the pandemic, from acting as a support hub during Covid restrictions to working their way back to becoming places of community gatherings, celebrations and services when restrictions are lifted.

"...I always value the support that Martin Rich & DCT give our village halls, particularly during the past few months, so if your hall doesn't belong to DCT you may want to consider the option!"

Tanya Hussell, Fileigh Village Hall

16

DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES
BECOME MORE
RESOURCEFUL
AND RESILIENT

DCC Winter Service



Andy Cole IEng

Network Response and Winter Service Engineer



DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM: DECEMBER DIGITAL EVENT

Community Emergency Planning is particularly important this winter as multiple pressures may interact, for example Covid-19 risk factors combined with extreme weather, meaning planning is all the more important. This was an important message for DCT to emphasise through Devon Community Resilience Forum communications, including in our second digital Forum of 2020, which took place from December 2nd - 3rd via Zoom.

The Forum started with a keynote session from Simon Kitchen (Devon County Council) which emphasised these multiple risks. The two-day event continued with a variety of sessions to help learn about risk and community emergency planning.

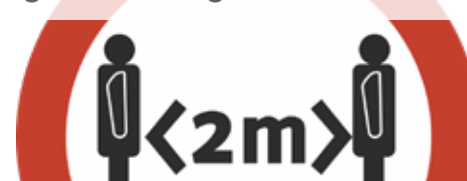
Other sessions fed into this overall theme, including Preparing for Winter; Communicating via Zoom; Flood Action; Property Protection; Challenges for People with Hearing Loss; Learning from Lockdown; and Community Emergency Shelters.

102 tickets were booked across the 8 online sessions.

46 communities were represented across the two days, including 2 'new' communities who had not previously engaged with us about Community Emergency Planning

OVER £3,480 IN GRANTS AWARDED!

During Q3, four communities successfully applied for grant funding from Devon Community Resilience Forum, enabling us to distribute over £3,480 so that communities can purchase essential equipment to help keep communities safe. Over the past few months we've helped communities to purchase flood warden protective clothing, signage for designated emergency rest centres; social distancing signage; emergency lighting and sandbags.



IMPACT

By focusing very specifically on the challenges due to be faced in winter 20-21, these online sessions gave communities the opportunity to plan for potentially serious issues that could arise, helping to protect people and property in emergency situations.



Contact louise.macallister@devoncommunities.org.uk for support with your Community Emergency Plan.

DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES ARE SUPPORTED TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO PROTECT AND REGENERATE THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

"[I] look forward to sharing ideas and experience with other concerned parties."

"We need to avoid reinventing the wheel in every parish so Devon wide sharing of expertise [is] essential"

PLANNING FUTURE SUPPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS ADDRESSING CLIMATE EMERGENCY

DCT has received several enquiries, either direct to us or via the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC), seeking advice on how a Parish Council can respond to the climate emergency. Notably, Parish Councillors involved in our Covid support networks are seeking similar support networks on this topic.

There is a clear need for a joined up, collaborative approach, which DCT has begun to facilitate.

We talked to the enquiring Councils and also to DALC to better understand their needs. In close collaboration with two Parish Councillors in North Devon, and via additional input from a DALC working group, a survey was drafted.

This survey was designed to a) understand the existing work being done by Parish Councils across the county; b) better understand the support needs of parish councils; and c) understand the demand for establishing Parish Council support networks

The survey was shared to all parish councils in December 2020 and we have so far received 75 responses (it is still open at the time of writing).

So far, interim results indicate that:

65% of these respondents are from 'Rural Villages', while **42%** represent a population of less than 1,000 people. This demonstrates the deep rural reach we have succeeded in gaining, ensuring that these smaller communities are represented.

81% would like to be provided with further training or support for their community's efforts to address the climate emergency.

47% would like to be part of a Devon network of Councils supporting each other with topics on Climate emergency and green economy.

21% have started developing an action plan, with **37%** having formed working groups to address particular topics/actions and **50%** having started awareness raising communications in their community.

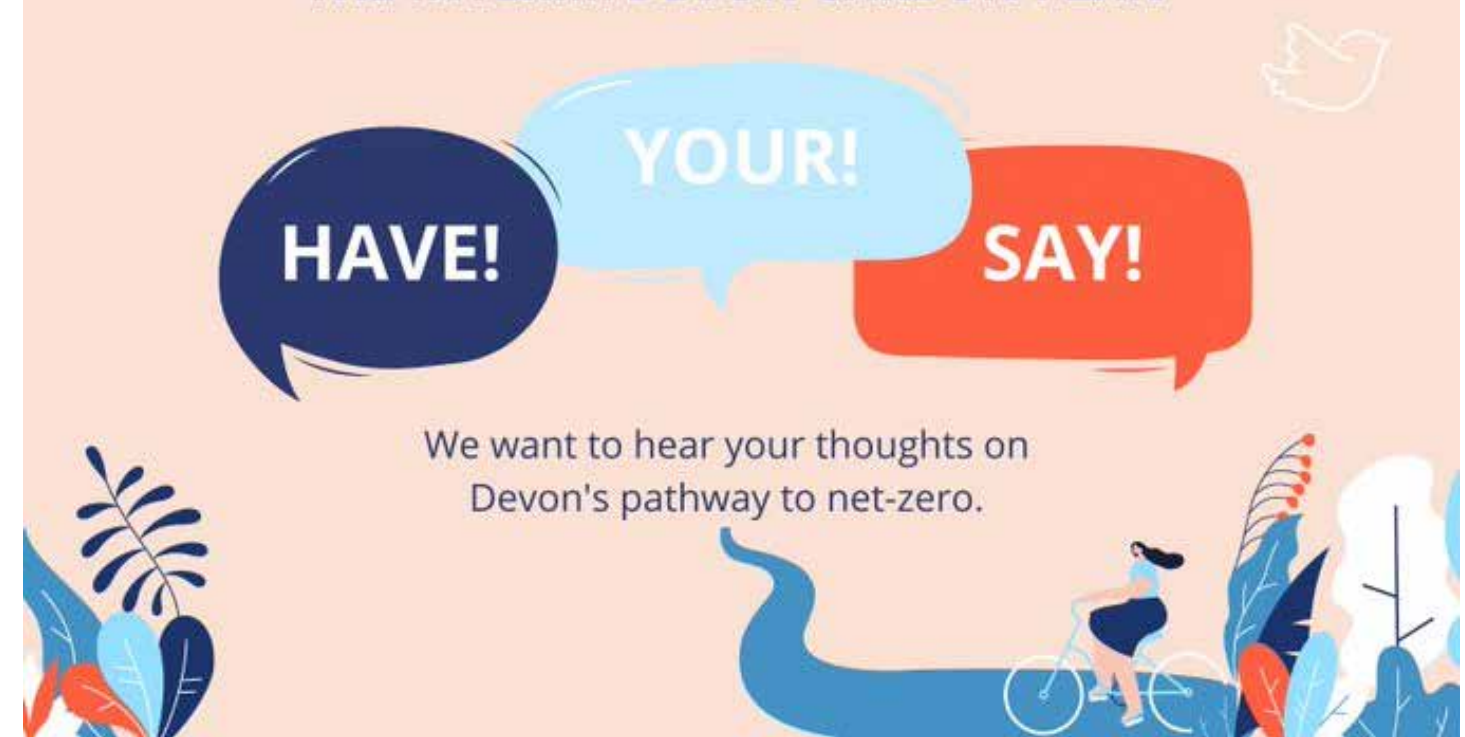
32% understand the need to take action on the climate emergency, but have not yet started to act.

We will report further on the full results of the survey once its closed but the initial results are encouraging in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the current situation in Devon and where future support will be best placed.

IMPACT

We are confident that the conversations stimulated amongst Parish Council members have already contributed to ensuring communities have increased confidence in addressing climate change issues in an inclusive, collaborative way. The full results of the survey will help shape future support to protect and regenerate Devon's natural environment.

THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN



As a member of the Devon Climate Emergency (DCE) partnership, DCT supported the December launch of the Interim Devon Carbon plan. The plan, which DCT helped to develop in our role in Devon's Net Zero Task Force, is currently out for public consultation and we are proactively supporting the communications campaign to ensure as many people in Devon share their views as possible.

Alongside the consultation on the plan, since December DCE has been running a series of online seminars to address different aspects of the plan for different groups in the community. DCT's Harry Bonnell has spoken at the community groups workshop in January 2021 and we look forward to providing further updates on these workshops and the consultation in the Q4 Impact Report.

Take part in the consultation here: www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk

COMING IN Q4: LISTENING EAR

Just before Christmas, DCT launched a new mental wellbeing service for business owners who are struggling with the pressure of trying to keep a business afloat during the pandemic.

Rather than offering business advice, Listening Ear is a way for people to let off steam without having to turn to friends and family, if they don't feel comfortable doing so. It is designed so that business owners can prioritise their own mental wellbeing and practice self-care at this very stressful time. Find out more about the project in the Q4 report!

Running a business during a pandemic is HARD.

Listening Ear is a safe space for you to share your feelings and experiences over the phone with our experienced volunteers.

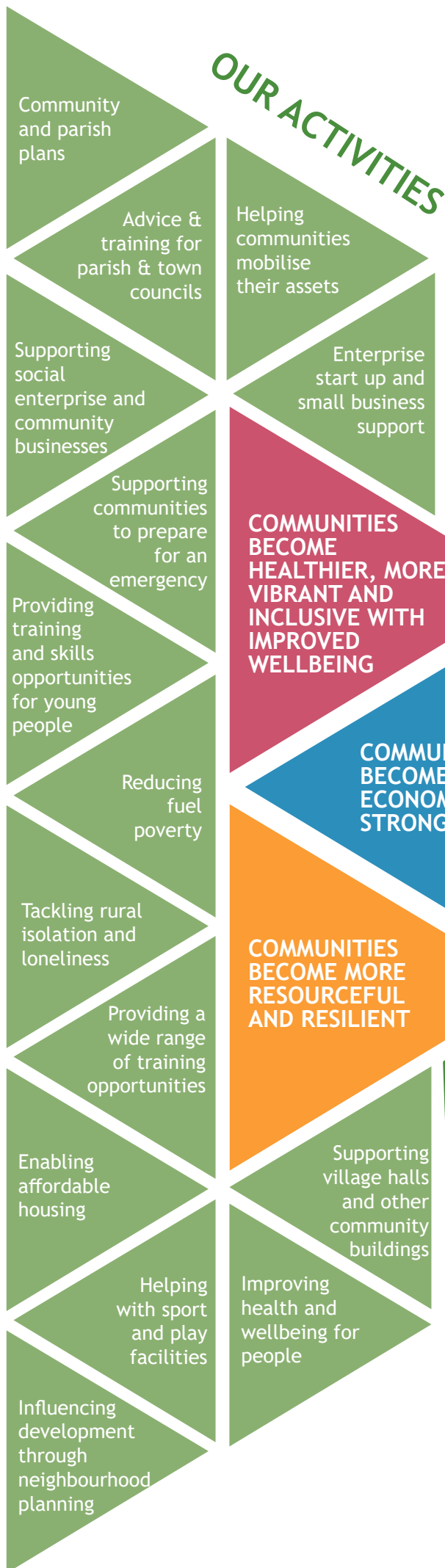
Listening Ear

01392 248919
info@devoncommunities.org.uk

Devon Communities Together
Devon County Council

AND FINALLY ...

Find out more: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/listening-ear or call 01392 248919



DCT has adopted five social objectives.

All of our key activities are measured against one or more of the objectives to enable us to assess impact and to share the evidence with funders, stakeholders, policy makers and commissioners.