

Devon County Council Grant Funding Agreement

Devon Communities Together:
Measuring Our Impact

Q3 October - December 2023

LOVE
DEVON

OUR 6 STRATEGIC AIMS SIT AT THE CENTRE OF ALL OUR ACTIVITIES. DCT WILL ...



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY A PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES INCLUDING...



£869.2k
SOCIAL
VALUE IN
Q3!

MEASURING OUR SOCIAL VALUE

Our work with Rose Regeneration Consultancy and other Rural Community Councils across England, on a bespoke, nationally accredited measurement tool, The Social Value Engine, continues apace.

Our data and systems specialists at DCT are continuing to draw data from all aspects of DCT delivery to feed into an ever-more accurate picture of the social value we are creating with communities.

We're pleased to report that during Q3 we generated £869.2k in social value. The chart below shows how the value was dispersed across our six strategic aims (pg.2).

Social Value by
Strategic Aim (see
pg.2)

1. £12.52k (1.79%)

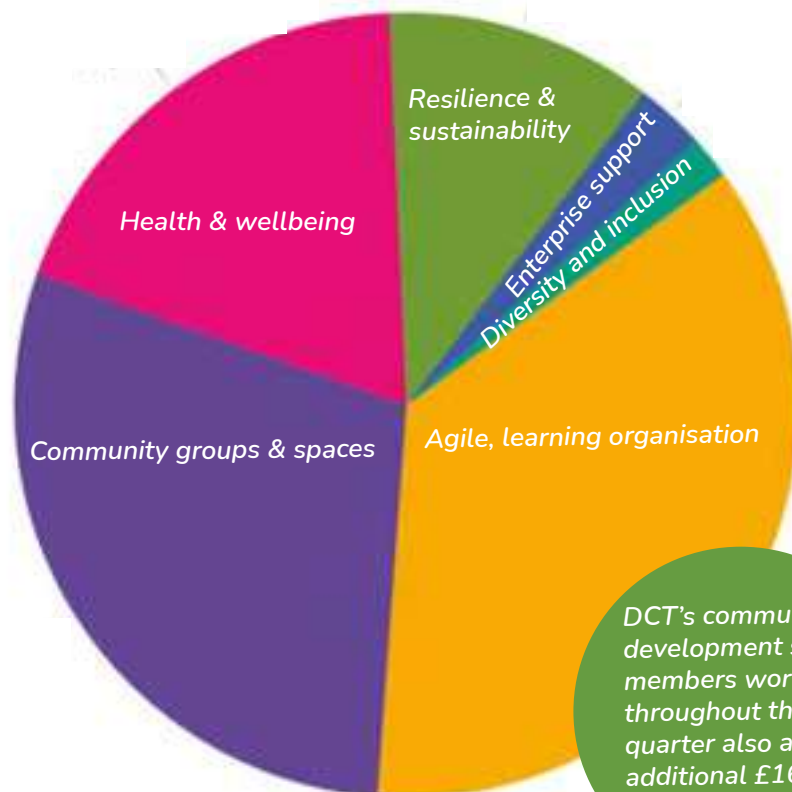
2. £132.2k (18.87%)

3. £77.27k (11.03%)

4. £204.89k (29.25%)

5. £20.15k (2.88%)

6. £253.49k (36.19%)



DCT's community development staff members working throughout the quarter also adds an additional £168.69k to our social value!

...champion diversity and inclusion,
hear minority voices and respond to
their needs

£12.52k
social
value

3 training sessions undertaken to
improve the accessibility standards
of DCT's internal and
external communications



1 website audit undertaken to
review and improve the quality
and accessibility of DCT's
website

1 successful funding
bid secured to deliver
programmes to tackle
barriers to accessing transport
for people with disabilities



We are currently undertaking a project to improve accessibility of our website and look to develop a new website to better reflect the diversity of our work and meet higher accessibility standards.

During Q3, our Digital Marketing Apprentice undertook an audit of our current site, identifying immediate ways we can improve the quality, visibility and accessibility of information, which they are implementing as we head into Q4. We also developed a specification for our website developers as to what changes we would like to make on a new website which would work to the latest WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards.

Additionally, during Q3 members of our team undertook a three training sessions with AbilityNet to allow us to improve the accessibility of the content we produce, including PDFs, Word documents and social media content. This training will be cascaded throughout the organisation during Q4.

DCT staff are more aware of different accessibility needs and are acquiring new skills to deliver more accessible content and support.

Our information, resources and communications will be more accessible to a diverse range of people, including those with particular access needs, for example people who use text-to-speech software.

ALSO... We participated in a National Government consultation on the proposed Cap on Safe and Legal Refugee Resettlement Routes in November 2023.

Tackling barriers to transport for people with disabilities

We are pleased to confirm that we have been successful in our collaborative bid with Living Options Devon to Motability funding. The programme, 'Travelling With Confidence' which will begin later in 2024, will provide a programme of support to build the confidence of people with disabilities and their carers in using public transport and overcome the barriers that might currently exist.

We are pleased to have been commissioned to support Exeter-based The Pelican Project with a programme to evaluate its impact. The Pelican Project is a collective of members with learning disabilities, families, teachers and partner organisations that operates groups, projects and social activities that aim to reduce isolation, raise quality of life and create positive impact in the community.

We have recently met with the team to start planning the evaluation framework and will have more to report next quarter.

... identify and work to reduce inequalities to ensure 'rural proofing' of services, and to improve community health and wellbeing

69 people attended 2 community events in

Tipton St John

to share their ideas and views on a new community sports pavilion



£132.2k
social value

Welcomed 17 organisations to a Rural Community Practice workshop to investigate 'Deep End' rural networking, with GP practice, village hall and other local partners in South Brent

Chaired 2 meetings of the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly Digital Inclusion Strategy Group



Met with the CEO and



Leaders of Mid Devon District Council & were invited to attend 3 local Rural Area Advisory meetings in North Devon

A NEW SPORTS FACILITY FOR TIPTON ST JOHN

DCT is supporting the community in Tipton St John to understand local ideas, wants and needs with a view to replacing the 1950s Sports Pavilion, which is no longer fit for purpose.

Following the community survey we conducted during Q2, we helped to facilitate two community events this quarter.

To ensure children were part of the consultation process, we arranged a children's lego workshop in October for a Key Stage 2 class at Tipton St John Primary School. The workshop was designed to engage children's imagination to say what games they would like to play, particularly in a new pavilion or on the playing field, and to then build these out of Lego. 25 children and three adult classroom assistants took part in the workshop, which was facilitated by DCT staff.

In November we helped to arrange and promote a second community event where we presented the results of the community survey and the children's session. The architects were also there to present indicative ideas about a new pavilion. 44 people attended, sharing their feedback on the consultation and plans so far.

A final report on the consultation will be produced in Q4, which will give the community the evidence they need to move forward with the new pavilion with confidence.



OUTCOMES

69 people have made in-person contributions to the community engagement programme.

IMPACT

The new sports facility will reflect the needs and wants of the community and be designed in a way to maximise its positive impact on the health and wellbeing of people of all ages.



HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN SOUTH BRENT: A COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

Last year, DCT was a partner in the University of Plymouth led Arts and Humanities Research Council funded research programme – Devon Community Assets Research Collaborative (CAN-DO).

At the end of November 2023, we facilitated a place-based workshop in South Brent to talk about health inequalities with residents, local organisations, and services. We partnered with the local GP surgery, Old School Community Centre and local partners in South Brent, to facilitate a community practice study based on Deep End Principles, to explore an integrated approach to addressing local health inequalities. This work built on the work of the CAN-DO research practice case study DCT ran earlier in the year, in rural Mid Devon. 17 local organisations representing both primary care and community service providers attended the event.

Key issues identified

- Loneliness/not wanting to ask for help
- Poverty/finance
- Transport
- Digital Barriers
- Limited resources/capacity of voluntary organisations
- Information/Knowledge about services
- Lack of coordination between services

Potential solutions

- A coordinated plan
- One place for knowledge and information
- More joined-up working (needs to be resourced)



- Finding ways to let people know about and access support
- Finding ways to attract more volunteers
- Improved Funding
- Transport

The full report may be read here, along with a previous community practice study in Mid Devon. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing

This work has been funded by CAN-DO and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

OUTCOMES

The session brought together a new network to understand and collaboratively address local health inequalities.

IMPACT

Testing this joined-up, inclusive approach provides important evidence to inform future approaches to tackling health inequalities at a local level.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS AROUND 'RURAL PROOFING' AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES...

Working in Partnership to tackle rural health inequalities

We have actively engaged in the ICS (Integrated Care System) Population Health Management (Health Inequalities) Steering and Delivery Groups; Devon Inclusion Health Group; ICS Anchor Institutions Strategy Group; Devon System Change Action Alliance and the Devon Local Care Partnerships.

DCT amplifies the voice of Devon's rural and coastal communities and brings a focus on rural proofing by raising issues of rural health disparities at these strategic meetings. The House of Lords Integration of Primary and Community Care Committee Report "Patients at the centre: integrating primary and community care" was published on the 15th December 2023, to which DCT presented evidence in March 2023, as part of an ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) delegation. You can read the full report here: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5804/ldselect/ldcareint/18/18.pdf>

NHS Telehealth Digital Citizen Research

DCT, as a research bid co-applicant, has engaged in the co-design of a series of creative public engagement workshops to ask members of the public about their experiences of telehealth consultations, and their perspectives

on the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that a professional should have to deliver a high-quality consultation.

DCT will lead on the rural community engagement, using village halls as engagement hubs. The intention is to inform the development of the training programme for future research.

Digital support for people with severe mental health issues

DCT chaired two meetings of the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly (pg. 28) Digital Inclusion Strategy Group this quarter which is collaborating with the Community Mental Health Alliance to co-design & deliver a pilot to provide devices and digital support for patients with severe mental health issues and those discharged from A&E in the East Devon Local Care Partnership area. The Group is also developing a Devon Digital Skills Framework, based on the Lloyds Foundation Essential Digital Skills Framework.

Plus, we ...

...met with the CEO and Leaders of Mid Devon District Council in November and were invited to attend 3 local Rural Area Advisory meetings in North Devon.

... attended a Devon Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board meeting in December 2023. and have submitted a funding bid to the Board.

...are a research partner on an Exeter University led research programme on nutrition in older people.

... attended an ACRE CEO Network Annual Conference in November 2023, focused on rural issues.



We gave evidence in March 2023 that has informed a national report about integrating primary and community care, published in December 2023.



STRATEGIC AIM

...work with communities to develop innovative ways to achieve community resilience and a positive impact for climate change and sustainability



4 new/updated Community Emergency Plans being progressed

£77.27k
social value

Supported **15** communities with Community Emergency Planning and resilience advice



186

responses to Community Fridges surveys



36 people benefitted from energy saving advice from our Energy Champions

analysed to evaluate the impact of food waste reduction



Engaged with community stakeholders at **11** trainings/workshops/meetings and advised on **1** stakeholder engagement plan around nature-based community flood resilience.



£4,407
Community

Emergency Grants awarded to community groups

BRINGING AUGMENTED REALITY TO FLOOD RESILIENCE



Devon Resilience Innovation Programme (DRIP), funded by DEFRA,

is a collaborative partnership managed by Devon County Council which is designed to help communities become more resilient to flooding.

Each pilot project is working on different geographical areas, the majority looking at nature based solutions (NBS) to slow the flow of water high up in the catchment with the aim of reducing its impact further down the valley where houses and businesses are located. Some of the pilot projects are working on Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures and others on a surface water flooding app. DCT's role is to manage stakeholder engagement.

Engagement is key to the success of the project as communities need to own their

NBS, and education is also important as society needs to “learn to live with water” due to the effects of climate change. However, DRIP community engagement has shown that most people have very little understanding of how water behaves through a river catchment.

DRIP borrowed an AR (augmented reality) Sandbox table for three community events and found that its interactive nature and ability to visually demonstrate how water behaves in different topography was both engaging and educational.

As a result, DRIP have agreed to buy their own version to use at events, available from March 2024. The topography of the individual pilot areas can be created and a flood event mimicked, so the community can see how water is likely to move downstream. NBS can then be installed in the sand and the flood event recreated, showing the new movement of water. A clear visual representation helps to achieve understanding, learning and buy-in from previously unengaged people.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p87uud5>

“Adults and children were captivated by the Sandbox, and it proved to be valuable for drawing attention and inspiring discussions on catchment functioning.”

“The AR Sandbox acted as an ice-breaker, and a high percentage of attendees at events visited the table first.”

“I never thought that something up the hill could help the village not to flood.”

“Really good learning tool for kids and adults.”



OUTCOMES

The AR Sandbox Table will help people with no prior understanding of flooding to see how NBS can slow and in some cases divert the water flow away from homes and businesses.

IMPACT

Communities will be more aware of and better informed about the flood risks to their area - and potential preventative interventions that they can take.

DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM



Managed by DCT, Devon Community Resilience Forum (DCRF) supports communities to develop Community Emergency

Plans, that will help keep people and property safe in the event of an emergency, such as major flooding.

This quarter, DCRF has engaged with 15 communities to provide emergency planning advice, including giving presentations to five parish and town councils and a further two public engagement meetings.

We approved four grant applications, with communities being awarded a total of £4,407 to spend on equipment or developing their Community Emergency Plan. Examples include Colaton Raleigh,

where they have been able to clear a rill that was prone to flooding and reposition coping stones to protect it; and Northmostown, a very small community in East Devon which suffered frequent flooding due to surface water run-off has been able to install flood barriers preventing damage to property.

We have started planning for an exciting Whole Society Resilience conference, which is taking place in March 2024!

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-community-resilience-forum

OUTCOMES

15 community resilience groups are better resourced and have greater knowledge to progress their Emergency Plans.

IMPACT

Communities are better prepared and protected in the event of an emergency.

CASE STUDY

ENACTING DAWLISH EMERGENCY PLAN

Dawlish suffered flooding on 17th September 2023. The lead officer on resilience, Angie Weatherhead, referred to the Community Emergency Plan and contacted the Town Clerk and mayor, who then contacted the volunteer flood wardens. Due to the community's quick response, the police were able to shut the road and, when safe to do so, volunteers pulled debris from the water. The District Council also agreed to release the town sandbags.

On 16th November there was more flooding in the town and the community utilised their new WhatsApp group and new equipment from the previously received DCRF grant funding. The community also drew on their experience with a different kind of emergency, the Covid-19 pandemic, where volunteers received traffic management and high-vis training. From this previous emergency response, there was a bank of willing and trained volunteers ready to respond to the floods.

The community had been revising their Community Emergency Plan before the flooding event, and Angie noted how some of the response on the day went according to the plan, such as keeping the flood response equipment in one known place, while other aspects of the response were new, such as the quick creation of a WhatsApp group. Angie noted of the plan:

“The only time you know it's going to work is when you've got to use it...It gave us a live training opportunity that we've used to get the grant, training and refine the plan...We need everybody's skills to have the best response.”



EXPANDING OUR ENERGY OUTREACH PROJECT



DCT is undertaking an energy advice programme this autumn and winter, this time through the Energy Outreach Project. During Q3 we began a programme of community energy events, at which we provided advice for 36 people on how they could reduce their energy usage, manage their bills and access financial support.

Thanks to a grant from National Grid/Community Matters Fund, we have been able to enhance the level of support to vulnerable people to enable them to save energy and stay warm this winter. We have purchased Warm this Winter packs which we are able to distribute to those who book energy advice sessions with us from Q4. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/energy-outreach-project.



Our Energy Champions provided advice at community events, including with Hikmat Devon CIC

OUTCOMES

36 people have received practical advice on how to reduce their energy usage and manage their bills.

IMPACT

People can keep their houses warmer and energy usage is reduced.

CASE STUDY

PARTNERSHIP WITH EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

As a result of marketing for the Energy Outreach Project we were contacted by Zoey Cooper of Exmouth Town Council. She was keen for us to give energy advice to vulnerable people in Exmouth.

We helped to produce a booklet of energy saving tips for local residents and we are targeting disadvantaged areas of Exmouth through local community centres to offer drop in energy advice.

In the first two weeks we have supported three with advice sessions, with more sessions planned for Q4 where we will be able to enhance the offer with the new warm packs. We hope that the partnership with the Town Council may help people who would perhaps otherwise have been nervous to talk about their challenges to come forward for support.

Zoey has also borrowed a thermal camera and knocked on doors in a specific area of Exmouth to see if residents would like energy advice and thermal image taken.

“We had a good morning, although the camera decided not to work! Anderson gave some very sound advice to the x2 houses we visited, and we put leaflets through the doors on the side of the road I hadn't knocked on. We will revisit the houses in the new year when the camera is working., and line up some more appointments.

“It went really well on [redacted] Road - we only did one side and have about x12 takersI'm wondering about the best way to handle so many enthusiastic householders!” Zoey Cooper, Exmouth Town Council



COMMUNITY FRIDGES

DCT is working in partnership with Devon County Council as the independent evaluator for the Devon National Lottery Community Fund Food Rescue project. We have been monitoring the activities and quantifiable outputs delivered by four community fridges this quarter (South Brent, St Thomas, Crediton, Bovey Tracey) and analysing the data. The report will be completed in Q4.

186 surveys have been completed across the four fridges, and 'most significant change' (MSC) stories have been gathered from people using each fridge to understand the impact they're having on individuals. We had increased numbers of surveys returned for South Brent, due to volunteers using their local channels to encourage people to fill it in. The local shop supported it by having paper copies there for people to fill in, as well as the QR code. This is an example of the impact the community-led involvement can have on our project delivery.

The overall themes coming out so far from the analysis are:

- beneficial for reducing food waste
- increasing sense of community for users and volunteers
- supplementing food shopping

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-food-rescue



OUTCOMES

186 people have input into our evaluation of the community fridges.

IMPACT

Data will help to support the future success of community fridges, which have been shown to reduce food waste and increase the sense of community.

OTHER RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITY IN Q3...

...DCT is also a member of the Devon Local Nature Partnership Board, which is overseeing the delivery of the Devon Land Regeneration Strategy.

...DCT attended a NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) National VCSE Emergency Partnership (VCSEP) meeting in December 2023, in our capacity as one of two South West Sector Leads.

...DCT was the key community engagement partner in the Devon Land Use Framework project last year, contributing to the final report, ["The Multifunctional Land Use Framework - The key to better land use decisions"](https://ffcc.co.uk/publications/the-multifunctional-land-use-framework-report), published in December 2023 by the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission. It calls for an independent cross-departmental Land Use Commission and National Multifunctional Land Use Framework to bring together cross-government land use targets and related ambitions, and create space for cross-sector joined-up land use decision making, based on learning from two county-level land use framework pilots in Devon and Cambridgeshire from 2021 – 2023. <https://ffcc.co.uk/publications/the-multifunctional-land-use-framework-report>

...develop community capacity building, through local facilities, spaces, services, people and their skills



58 contacts with village halls to support them with specialist advice, including **4** pieces of funding advice

£204.89k
social value



89 on-site village hall audits undertaken during Q3 (334 to date)

Provided the opportunity for **1,018** people in Morthoe to contribute to a survey about local housing need, plus secured **£97k** funding to expand rural housing enabler services



Engaged with **33** VCSE organisations in East Devon to provide training, advice and support



Facilitated **2** meetings attended by **29** Devon Community Shop representatives



Supported **2** communities with their Neighbourhood Plans



41,260 litres of oil ordered by members of the Devon Oil Collective

EAST DEVON VCSE SUPPORT SERVICE



DCT is managing a three-year contract from East Devon District Council to deliver a programme of VCSE capacity-building in East Devon. We're working with VCSE groups to review needs, provide training and fundraising support, and develop new ways of working on and influencing district-wide policy and service development.

During Q3 we have engaged with 33 organisations to support them on their VCSE journey, including 10 1-2-1 conversations, five drop-in events and five East Devon network meetings. We have also published and promoted a comprehensive programme of bitesized and deep dive training sessions for January to March 2024.

In November, Victoria from our team attended the Reflections on the Eastern Devon Local Care Partnership annual conference - 'A Good Place' and we attended an East Devon Financial Resilience Planning Group meeting. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/east-devon-vcse-support-service / eastdevonvcse@devoncommunities.org.uk



OUTCOMES

Organisations and individuals in East Devon are better supported, connected and listened to. There is a wider understanding of the needs of the VCSE sector in the district.

IMPACT

Communities across East Devon benefit from the important services that these VCSE organisations deliver.

CASE STUDY

HEATHFIELD FARM

Heathfield Farm, near Broadclyst, provides meaningful and purposeful day activities that are ambitious for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, that lead to people developing connections, growing in self-esteem, self-belief and confidence, and moving into volunteering or paid employment.

2023 has been a challenging year financially, with a number of redundancies having been made. DCT met with the team to identify and address their ongoing support needs, some urgent.

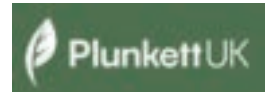
So far we have connected them with a key contact at Devon County Council, as well as a range of other VCSE organisations with potential to build the organisations through partnerships. We've also shared potential funding sources, provided guidance on submitting financial accounts and provided template business planning documents. Two staff members have signed up to our upcoming training sessions and we look forward to supporting the team going forward into 2024.



DEVON COMMUNITY SHOPS NETWORK



Together with Plunkett Foundation, we have been helping to create a Devon-wide community shops network, to enable peer-to-peer support and sharing of best practice. This work builds on a project we undertook during the pandemic, which [you can read more about here](#).



During Q3 we facilitated two meetings, in Burrington, North Devon and Payhembury, East Devon, welcoming a total of 29 attendees representing 14 community shops. Attendees networked and enjoyed discussions on diverse topics including how to recruit and retain volunteers, non-food items including cards, calendars, local art and local maps or jigsaw puzzles of the area, as well as what they would like future meetings to look like. Each shop shared their successes and challenges and many left with new ideas which they will incorporate into their own enterprises.

Nearly 60 people have joined a WhatsApp group for the network, which to date has helped to answer 45 questions about running a community shop!

This phase of the project has been funded by Devon Community Foundation.



“They have been great meetings and it is really good to meet up and talk things over and share with others.”

OUTCOMES

Community shops across Devon are better supported and connected.

IMPACT

A thriving community shop has a positive impact on a rural community, bringing opportunities not only for shopping but also for making connections, especially for those who can't easily access transport.

“Really enjoy these meetings.”





VILLAGE HALLS COMMUNITY ASSET MAP: 334 HALLS TO DATE!

Thanks to funding from DEFRA and One Devon NHS, we have audited another 89 halls during Q3 bringing the total to 334 so far, which is 79% of all the halls in Devon!

Data from these face-to-face audits is enabling us to build to a first-of-its-kind Devon Village Halls Community Asset Map, which maps the spaces and facilities on offer at all the halls, as well as recording the successes, challenges, aspirations and needs of the committees.



OUTCOMES

We now have data from 334 halls to input into our Community Asset Map.

IMPACT

The evidence from the Halls allows us to better support the committees, attract new funding and develop new initiatives that will ultimately benefit these rural communities.

CASE STUDY

SPACES FOR ONLINE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS?

A particular area of focus has been whether Village Halls could provide facilities for online medical appointments. This would need a confidential space, Wi-Fi and suitable IT equipment. A volunteer would also need to be trained to support people who might find the technology challenging.

Data analysed so far shows that 56% of the halls have a confidential space that needs little or no work for it to be useable. Of this 56%, 41% have Wi-Fi but only 2% have a laptop or desktop computer.

Hall Committees are keen to support their communities with medical appointments, particularly where access to healthcare is difficult, but the audit has demonstrated that funding for IT equipment would have to be provided for this proposal to be taken further.

We asked:
what is your
hall's vision
for the future?

“Would love to see online medical appointments with a buddy system.”

“Would like the second room to be used as a medical satellite facility, e.g. health screening, diabetes clinic, mental health support and vaccinations. Local community and school nurses could use this facility for appointments in a neutral environment. Villagers have to travel a long distance for appointments and public transport is infrequent.”

These are exciting ambitions that would have a significant impact on their local communities.



ONGOING COMMUNITY BUILDINGS SUPPORT

During Q3, the Village Halls and Community Buildings advice team engaged with 58 halls to provide support on a range of subjects.

For example, we advised the Printworks in Tavistock on potential funding sources for a new roof and Kingston Reading Rooms with model policy documents.

OUTCOMES

58 halls have benefitted from specialist advice.

IMPACT

Helping to keep Village Halls open and thriving has a significant impact on the local community

CASE STUDY



ENTERPRISING HALLS CONNECT AT HALLSHARE MEETING

On 17th October we attended a Hallshare meeting at Lapford Victory Hall. Hallshare is a support network for village halls in the north of the County. Founded 12 years ago, the network has now grown to include 23 Village Halls. They meet three times a year to discuss topics of common interests, listen to presentations and demonstrations, and learn from each other.

This particular Hallshare 'crossed the border' to meet in Mid Devon, with 27 attendees representing 15 halls. The northern Devon halls are keen to help Mid Devon halls set up a similar organisation and this meeting was an opportunity to come along and see what goes on. Topics discussed were alcohol licensing, communication between halls in the local proximity to ensure events are not booked at the same date, insurance, employment of care takers and cleaners, food hygiene queries and energy advice for the winter. The session also included a demonstration of the Hallmaster booking and invoicing system.

Martin Rich from Devon Communities Together handed out framed certificates to halls who had completed DCT's Enterprising Halls programme, a training programme designed to help halls with knowledge and skills to operate as 'enterprises'.

We were delighted to award certificates to Ashreigney Village Hall, Hartland Recreation Ground, Morchard Bishop Memorial Hall, Sheepwash Village Hall and Witheridge Village Hall. The programme is operating again from January to March 2024. Further details can be found here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses/category/enterprising-halls and on pg. 27).

“It was brilliant, very useful.”

“Excellent course, really helpful.”

COMMUNITY HOUSING STORIES FROM TAVISTOCK

At the end of Q3 we wrapped up our DEFRA and Devon Community Housing Hub funded project to gather lived experiences of people who have tried to rent or buy a home in Tavistock. This is part of the Tavistock Neighbourhood Development Plan that DCT has been supporting Tavistock Town Council with.

We recorded seven different stories from a range of different people, presenting our key findings in a report for Tavistock Town Council. An example can be seen below:



CASE STUDY

Tavistock HOUSING STORIES

"Many landlords won't take people with children."

MARIA, YULIA, SVETLANA

Who: Maria, Yulia and Svetlana brought their children to Tavistock from Ukraine.

Their story: When Russia invaded their country and it was no longer safe to stay at home, these women were offered accommodation with host families in Tavistock. When it was time to move on they were still not able to go home, but they all found it very difficult to find rented accommodation. They are reluctant to leave Tavistock, where their children have settled at school after a very disruptive time in their lives.

Outcome: At the time of writing all three women are in rented homes that are either insecure or not suitable for their needs, or both.

Challenges:

- All three women have found work, but local wages in the minimum wage jobs they are able to find here mean they can't earn enough to pay the high prices of the accommodation they need.
- Properties are let very quickly, usually within a day. There are often 30-40 people going for the same place.
- While Tavistock has been welcoming, the housing situation in the town does not make life easy for them.

For more information on the Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan please visit; <https://tavistockplan.info/>

ILLUSTRATION: MARCEJ NAPIERASKI



This project is funded by Tavistock Town Council and Devon Communities Together.



Read the report here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/community-consultation-publications



OUTCOMES

A broad range of housing experiences have been gathered.

IMPACT

Tavistock Town Council and the wider community are better informed of the real challenges of accessing housing.

£97,000 TO DEVELOP RURAL HOUSING ENABLER WORK

As facilitators of the Devon Community Housing Hub (DCHH), we completed three housing needs surveys this quarter, two in East Devon and one in North Devon. Each housing needs survey covered a whole parish and all residents were given the opportunity to respond to a questionnaire about their housing needs, as a way of understanding if there is a need in the parish for new houses to be built. One new housing survey was sent out to 1,018 residents in Morthoe Parish.

We were delighted to find out during Q3 that we were successful in our bid to access £97,000 in DEFRA Rural Housing Enabling funding, which is being administered by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England). This funding will allow us to offer even more support to communities, including helping to assess housing needs in a parish; advice on the best way to deliver new houses that respond to local circumstances; helping to find suitable sites for new housing; advice on local planning processes; liaising with local partners including Local Authorities, Housing Associations and technical experts.

The new funding will also support community engagement in housing policy and delivery, including in relation to Neighbourhood Planning.

www.devonhousinghub.org

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SUPPORT

DCT is providing evaluation support to two community projects:

Axewoods Co-operative Community Support project is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation which undertakes a range of Woodland Management activities in East Devon, to both private, public and charitable woodland owners in return for the felled timber, which it makes available as a 'log bank' for members of the community facing fuel poverty. It also provides timber and services to other VCSEs for community projects.

Bovey Tracey Riverside Community Centre has commissioned us to provide support with a digital evaluation framework to enhance its community engagement initiatives, as well as guidance on data collection and evaluation.



OUTCOMES

Over 1,000 people have had the opportunity to have their say on the level of housing need for local people.

IMPACT

The long term impact of the housing needs surveys will be to support the provision of suitable housing in rural areas where it may be currently inadequate, giving all residents the chance to live in a decent and affordable home.



OUTCOMES

Evaluation frameworks are established, including Theory of Change.

IMPACT

Robust evaluation will strengthen the initiatives, providing evidence for future funding and support of the projects.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

DCT has extensive expertise in supporting community groups to engage with their wider communities to provide opportunities for input into future plans for buildings, spaces and whole parishes/villages/towns. At the moment we're working on three of these valuable projects.

DCT is supporting Exminster Parish Council and Kenn Parish Council with community surveys. The evidence from these surveys will be used to inform their Neighbourhood Development Plans and will include some housing needs questions for individuals in the household.

We are also supporting Woodford Methodist Community Church to consult the local community on the future of its community space 'The Meeting Place', with the aim of turning it into a new community hub.

During Q3, we helped each of the steering groups develop and distribute a community survey, giving everyone in the parishes a chance to contribute their views. We also began to help to plan for a community event in February 2024 in Woodford.

DCT is currently receiving the survey data back to be analysed, with more to report on in Q4.

OUTCOMES

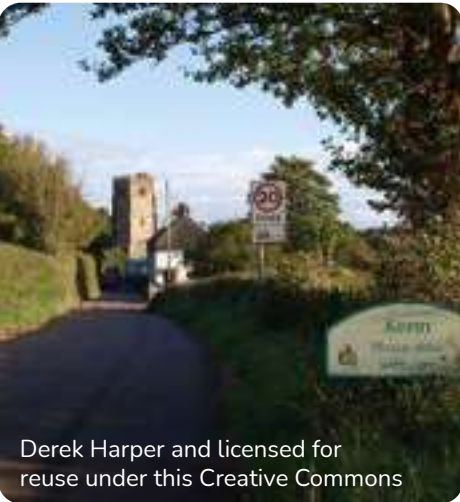
Three community consultation surveys distributed.

IMPACT

Local people have the opportunity to contribute to their Neighbourhood Plans and have a say in their local community facility. Any future plans will be rooted in the needs and wants of the local community.



Roger Cornfoot / Former almshouses, Exminster



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TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

In October we facilitated a strategic planning day for Totnes Town Council, whereby we helped the Councillors examine and define priorities which could form the basis of a new Strategic Plan for the town, including looking at community-led priorities, as well as statutory requirements.

“It was so useful to have you take us through the process – on our own we would just go off in all directions as we've all got our own priorities!” Totnes Town Councillor



...support Devon's rural economy, local entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and thrive, and promote community wealth building



Produced **1** final evaluation report for the Experience Works programme, which supported **252** young people towards their journey to access employment, with **151** entering employment, education or training

Produced **1** final report on our New Start Devon programme, which engaged with **193** entrepreneurs and enterprises



Produced **1** final evaluation report after engaging with **7** learning providers to gather and analyse data from SMART SKILLS training programme

£77.27k
social value



269 members
of Devon Social
Enterprise Network

EVALUATING THE SMART SKILLS PROGRAMME

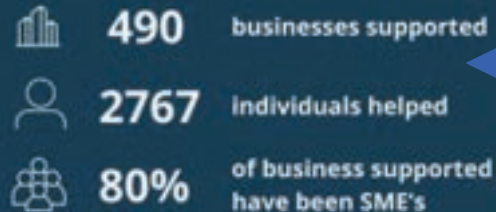


At the end of Q3 we finished our evaluation work on the the CSW (Careers South West) Group SMART SKILLS project, which offered fully funded training to businesses in Devon to help them upskill their workforce, thanks to £3.5million of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).

Throughout the evaluation we engaged with the CSW Group and six local skills agency delivery partners to gather data and evaluate the impact of the programme in upskilling people within Devon businesses and organisations.

You can read our full report here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/supporting-enterprise-and-business

Key Achievements



Key achievements included in our report

OUTCOMES

A final evaluation report was produced, including data from seven key partners.

IMPACT

The learnings from the evaluation will inform future programmes, which upskill people and organisations.



Example of the outcomes included in our report

EXPERIENCE WORKS

Experience Works, which was funded by the European Social Fund, supported young people aged 16 – 24 who are NEET or at risk of becoming so. The lead partner was Petroc College, with DCT being the support and evaluation partner.

During Q3, we finalised the end-of-project report, which marks the end of a comprehensive programme of evaluation. You can read the final report here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/supporting-young-people-empowering-enterprise-and-experience-works

OUTCOMES

A comprehensive report based on Theory of Change methodology has been produced and published.

IMPACT

The outcomes and impact of the Experience Works project will inform future skills learning provision in Devon.



LOOKING BACK AT NEW START DEVON

During Q3 we completed our evaluation and reporting for the New Start Devon enterprise support programme, which received funding from the European Regional Development Fund.



Designed to provide coaching and support for entrepreneurs, start-ups, small businesses and social enterprises, including Village Halls. Participants benefitted from a minimum of 12 hours' free coaching, training and enterprise support to give people skills and confidence to develop their enterprises or business ideas.

A final report covering the whole programme from 2019-2023 has now been developed and is available here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/supporting-enterprise-and-business

Highlights include:



80 existing businesses and 113 potential entrepreneurs engaged with the programme - 193 in total



119 people completed over 12 hours of enterprise support (62%)



66 people benefitted from some but not all of the full 12 hours (34%)



8 people were referred elsewhere for support (4%)

94% of participants surveyed rated the programme 'Excellent' or 'Good'

“I feel that, in coming to understand how my enterprise (and I) work, I am much better placed to move on towards success. I have developed a solid foundation. With a strong base in place, I have the confidence to play around with different ideas and give things the time and space they need to unfold.” Wide-hearted Women

“Without the support of Devon Communities Together and New Start Devon the ambitions would still be in a stew of discussion and vagueness! So thank you for helping me and us find direction, objectives, and energy. It has been invaluable.” Christine Fraser Newton St Cyres Cyres Village Hall



OUTCOMES

People have new skills, knowledge and advice to help the develop and grow their ideas for new or existing enterprises.

IMPACT

This leads to new and/or more developed businesses and enterprises, greater income and funding, and the opportunity for new career paths for participants.

We engaged with 193 entrepreneurs and small enterprises

STRATEGIC AIM

...flourish as an agile, flexible, learning organisation, responding positively to the evolving needs of our communities, stakeholders and staff



Supported **3** meeting of the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly, with **132** attendances in total, and **4** meetings of the Assembly's Executive Group

£253.66k
social value



Facilitated **3** community case study presentations at our AGM

246 people came along to our **24** training, learning and networking events

DCT staff delivered across **18** activity programmes





DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING

During Q3, we facilitated 24 learning, training or networking sessions, attracting 246 attendees.

These included three sessions delivered by Citizens Advice Devon to upskill attendees in areas that can directly support their clients to navigate the Cost of Living Crisis, including Universal Credit, Benefits for Older People and Personal Independence Payments.

We have also been busy planning an exciting extension of our Enterprising Halls training programme, which will be delivered in Q4. The programme takes participants through a range of training, from accessing funding, to governance and more. It will be fully funded for Community Buildings in East Devon as part of our VCSE Support Service (pg.16) and affordable for any other Devon community building, with up to 10 sessions for an unlimited number of attendees per hall, for £100. More information can be found here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses/category/enterprising-halls



OUTCOMES

246 people have new skills, knowledge and connections.

IMPACT

Organisations and communities benefit from improvements in performance and services that come from more confident and knowledgeable staff and volunteers.

CASE STUDY

AN ENTERPRISING HALLS SUCCESS STORY!

One of the first halls to sign up for our Enterprising Halls programme in 2023, Stowford Parish Hall, has been successful in raising £10,000 for improvements.

Trustees said as soon as they had completed the Enterprising Halls workshops they used everything they had learned to put as much as possible into their funding application. They got the full £10,000 they asked for, and as a result will have a more energy efficient hall and an improved space where more local people will want to attend activities.



They will be gaining a new front door to keep the heat in, a new floor in the storeroom to reduce the damp and a refurbished hall floor. Sound clouds will improve acoustics for people who are hard of hearing and the hall will also benefit from a new projector screen and PA system so they can host a film club. All of this will make the hall more efficient and attractive for people to hire, increasing income for the Hall.

DEVON, PLYMOUTH AND TORBAY VCSE ASSEMBLY

DCT provides operational management and communications support to the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon (TPD) Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Assembly, which brings together independent charities, social enterprises and community-led organisations across Torbay, Plymouth and Devon. The Assembly aims to support, complement and add value to local VCSE networks and partnerships.

During Q3 we supported the Chair to facilitate three wider Assembly meetings and four Executive Committee meetings, which include our CEO, Nora. We also

compiled and issued 12 VCSE email updates and newsletters to the Assembly's 278 VCSE mailing list recipients, previewing forthcoming meetings and sharing the latest news and opportunities.

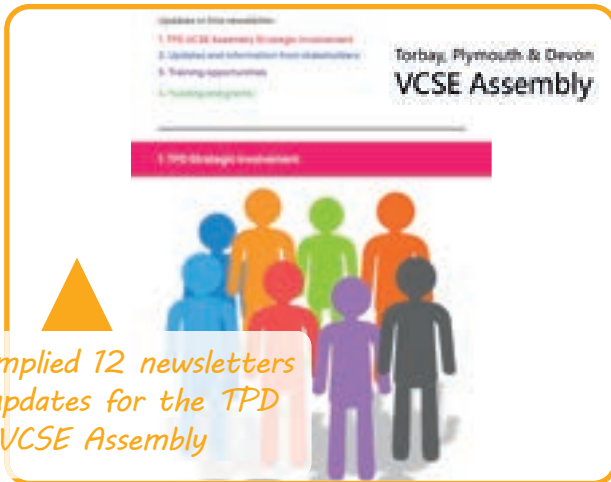
As a result of VCSE Assembly strategic working, it was agreed that those in the Executive Committee could be involved in a two-day outward mindset training programme, giving the VCSE sector leadership added capacity regarding collaborative working, particularly with statutory sector partners who are also involved in the training. The training will be conducted in Q4.

OUTCOMES

The network is collaborating to develop funding proposals, respond to stakeholder requests for VCSE involvement in strategic decision making, and creating links and opportunities.

IMPACT

VCSE responses, proposals and service delivery are strengthened by the collaborative and inclusive Assembly model.



We compiled 12 newsletters and updates for the TPD VCSE Assembly

INSIDE DCT DURING Q3...

...In November we were pleased to welcome guests, Trustees and staff to our AGM, presided over by our President, HM Lord Lieutenant David Fursdon. As well as the formal proceedings, during which we welcomed two new Trustees, we also heard three community stories: Angie Weatherhead from Dawlish Town Council spoke about Emergency Planning; Torie Hitchings from Wellmoor spoke about the impact of the Connecting You programme; and Corony Edwards spoke about the successes and challenges of running Teign Valley Community Hall. You can watch these presentations here, along with a special video 'I am Devon', created by our Digital Marketing Apprentice, Josh, celebrating DCT and our communities. www.youtube.com/@devoncommunitiestogether/videos

...We have continued with our programme of cleansing and refining datasets onto our CRM system and our support programme of 1-2-1 coaching and group training sessions for staff. We have also successfully completed the active transition of all of our remote server data onto Sharepoint, which will improve efficiency and collaboration going forward.

...We held an All Staff meeting in the office in December, followed by a festive celebration, featuring Christmassy faye and a quiz!



THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...

