



Devon Communities
Together



Measuring Our Impact

Devon Communities Together:
Q4 January - March 2023

LOVE
DEVON

6 STRATEGIC AIMS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY DCT FOR 2022/23 AND BEYOND. THEY SIT AT THE CENTRE OF ALL OUR ACTIVITIES.

DCT WILL ...

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Community and parish plans

Supporting social enterprise and community businesses

Improving people's health and wellbeing

Reducing fuel poverty

Supporting communities to prepare for an emergency

Helping sport and play facilities

Providing a wide range of training opportunities

Tackling digital inequalities

Helping communities mobilise their assets

Enabling affordable housing

Investigating and addressing health inequalities

Influencing development through neighbourhood planning

Helping communities and organisations reduce their carbon footprint

Tackling rural loneliness and isolation

Supporting village halls and other community buildings

Creating accessible, inclusive training and work opportunities for young people

OBJECTIVE

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

24 young people engaged with to build confidence and support their journeys towards employment.



70 people engaged with about barriers to taking the Covid-19 vaccine



6 volunteers recruited to connect their communities and understand experiences of health inequalities



18 young people attended 4 confidence-building activity days organised by DCT

ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

The confidence and skills of young people grow as they enjoy different team building experiences, supporting their journey towards employment. Local businesses are encouraged and supported to provide these valuable experiences, which offer learning and growth opportunities for the hosts as well as the participants, creating more inclusive workplaces.

EXPERIENCE WORKS

Experience Works** supports young people aged 16–24 who are not in education, training or employment (NEET), or at risk of becoming so. DCT is the support and evaluation partner delivering employer engagement, community engagement and a toolkit to help participants become employment-ready. <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/experience-works-0>



This quarter, we met with the other project partners to plan employer and community engagement activities from April onwards, which are designed to continue to encourage greater inclusive volunteering, experience and employment opportunities for young people.

CASE STUDY



TORBAY LEISURE HOTELS

One inclusive employer that the project has worked with is Torbay Leisure Hotels (TLH). As an evaluation partner for Experience Works, we spoke to the HR team at TLH about their partnership with the Prince's Trust and the benefits of the 'Get into Hospitality' programme they run for young people who are NEET. You can watch the interview here:



www.youtube.com/watch?v=iklIFM8H9do

EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE

Empowering Enterprise* is a partnership of organisations delivering mentoring for the 'hardest-to-reach' 18–24 year olds in Devon to support them towards training or employment. DCT is the evaluation and support partner.

During Q4, we continued to build on the success of hosting group sessions with the young participants, organising five days of group activities. These helped to build social confidence and soft employability skills as well as introductions to specific sectors. These included a virtual reality and video skills day with Cosmic, tree planting with the National Trust, sourdough baking with Appledore Bakery, and two days at Dartmoor Zoo developing animal and customer service skills.

Watch a compilation video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnXjTUz0erU and see pg.5 for some photos and feedback from our days out.



www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/building-better-opportunities-empowering-enterprise.



* Managed by Petroc, Empowering Enterprise is delivered by a partnership of organisations with a wide range of expertise and experience in working with young people across the South West. This is a Building Better Opportunities (BBO) project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund. **Managed by Petroc, Experience Works is delivered by a partnership of organisations with a wide range of expertise and experience in working with young people across the South West. This project is funded by the European Social Fund.



“It’s been lovely meeting all of you! You are such wonderful people and I hope you’ve all enjoyed the experience. You’re all welcome back as volunteers any time.” Rosie (Education Assistant DMZ)

“My young person, Sasha, attended a special action-packed day organised by DCT last week. He really enjoyed spending the day there! Thanks for providing such a lovely experience.” Robert (mentor Young Devon)



“It was just a nice bonding experience. How regularly can you go out and just say you’ve been out with your mates, you’ve been out with people you didn’t really know but you get along with quite well. You know, you’re just having a big feast.” Participant

VOICING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES

People's real, lived experiences of healthcare will inform and improve future policies and systems to reduce health inequalities.

The NHS Core 20+5 Community Connectors programme set out to recruit Volunteer Connectors in two areas – North Dartmoor and Ilfracombe, which have been identified as being amongst those with the highest rate of health inequalities in Devon. These Connectors are helping to bring people's lived experience of key health issues into the spotlight.

DCT's role is to manage the evaluation of the project and as such we have been receiving feedback from the Connectors as to what they have been discovering in their areas. In North Dartmoor a small team of dedicated and committed volunteers has been established, that have integrated themselves into the community and groups, either using connections they already had or forming new ones. The team has been focusing on gathering stories from local people and discussing barriers to healthcare with other VCSE representatives, with lack of public transport and limited digital connectivity. among the arising themes

In Ilfracombe, a challenge has been developing trust, so that people feel comfortable about sharing their experiences. An incentive to win a hamper was developed, as well as the Connector sharing her own experience of health inequalities to try and engender that trust. Some of the narratives being uncovered are below.



“The key message coming out of the project is that for most people, the inequalities are based in lack of access, to both local healthcare and the transport needed to get people to the care they need. This message has been communicated at a local and national level.”

Laura Dixon, Project Manager, DCT

“The common theme amongst the group [people living with Chronic pain, Fibromyalgia, ME and Long Covid] was very much aimed at their local GP surgeries and the care they receive. They felt like enough time isn't given at appointments, there isn't enough support for individuals like themselves that have multiple health complaints and they aren't strong enough to challenge a doctor's opinion or diagnosis if they disagreed with it. They suggested a role being put in place for this, a potential 'patient advocate'.

“[They also felt] that the E-Consult and telephone appointment system was ineffective when treating their conditions, suggesting instead that initial contact could be by telephone, then any subsequent appointments should be in person.” Amy Phillips, Core 20+ Coordinator for North Dartmoor Primary Care Network

The NHS Core 20+5 programme is led by the Integrated Care System, with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) delivery partners West Devon CVS, Wellmoor and Encompass. [Contact: laura.dixon@devoncommunities.org.uk](mailto:laura.dixon@devoncommunities.org.uk)



COLLABORATING TO INVESTIGATE AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Seldom heard voices and rural communities are represented in evidence and strategic discussions about addressing inequalities in, and access to, healthcare.

We are leading and collaborating on a number of exciting initiatives, designed to investigate and explore inequalities and barriers to accessing healthcare for people in rural areas...

1. GIVING EVIDENCE ON PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Co-chair of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Assembly's Health Inequalities Hub and CEO of DCT, Nora Corkery, visited the House of Lords on Monday 27th March to give evidence to the Lords ICS Primary and Community Care Committee. The Committee is investigating the integration of primary and community care and Nora spoke about a number of examples from Devon, including the VCSE Virtual Wards pilot (pg.11), the Deep End Rural Research Pilot (pg.7) and the creation of a community asset map of Devon Village Halls (pg.22), as well as contributing to wider discussions about the barriers to, and benefits of, integrating primary and community care.

We were also pleased to be able to submit further written evidence to the Committee, which includes information from 27 other VCSE sector organisations, which responded to our call for evidence through the Devon,

Plymouth and Torbay VCSE Assembly.

You can re-watch and download the entire session, which also featured evidence from Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, Chief Executive of NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care, Mark Fisher, Chairman of Rose Regeneration, Ivan Annibal and University of Plymouth's Professor Sheena Asthana. <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/b045d84d-d524-4db8-894a-116d287da9bc?in=15:04:18>



For more information of the Health Inequalities Hub, please contact dptvcseassembly@gmail.com.

2. GP SERVICES: TESTING THE DEEP END MODEL

Devon Public Health Contain Outbreak Management and DEFRA funding has allowed us to work with the Mid Devon Medical Practice to explore whether bringing people together who live and work in/have responsibilities for a rural area with pockets of deprivation (Deep End Networks) can lead to improvements and benefits in the same way it has in urban communities.

A series of three workshops was held with primary care staff, VCSE representatives and people living and working in the area.

Whilst some similar themes were explored, which have been explored by other Deep End Networks, there were some notable differences, which are pertinent to rural areas. These were transport, loneliness, stigma, local services, the nature of workforce issues, delivery costs in rural areas and issues for farming communities. The full report can be read here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing



3. EXPLORING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE CV-19 VACCINE

Funded by the Covid-19 Vaccination Outreach Fund, DCT was commissioned to engage with specific groups and communities where the uptake of CV-19 vaccination is lower, to understand what the barriers might be, how we can work to address them and how we can increase the vaccination uptake. Overall, we were successful in having direct engagement with a total number of 70 people - 22 individuals in Mid Devon and 48 individuals in North Devon, through our activities. The evaluation of the data is ongoing and a report will be shared with our funders shortly.

4. DIGITAL INCLUSION

DCT's Chief Executive continues to Co-Chair the One Devon NHS Integrated Care Service Digital Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group, as a result of our ongoing work into researching and addressing rural digital health inequalities. This group has already resulted in VCSE participation in the Vitruval Wards pilot initiative (pg. 11).

We also continue to participate in a South West ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) partnership aimed at developing a funding bid for a South West Digital Accessibility Development Programme, based on digital accessibility framework with 3 key strands: Accessibility; Inclusion and Innovation. The planned framework will include supporting individual digital upskilling and supporting VCSE organisations to achieve compliance with digital accessibility standards.

Looking at our own website, DCT has embarked on a review and redevelopment process. During this quarter we designed and distributed a survey for our staff and trustees to understand our experiences of using the site, before broadening out the engagement to our external audiences. this feedback, along with a commissioned accessibility review, will shape any changes to our website going forward, with an emphasis on making accessing support and information from our site easier and more inclusive.



OBJECTIVE

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



98 participants
at 39 online
wellbeing
workshops and
1-2-1 check-ins

38 people trained at 10 sessions
on how to support people to use
public transport with confidence



3 contacts with sports and
play facilities to give advice



1,617 households
given the
opportunity to
contribute to a
survey about local
housing need



27 households/people
supported to manage their
energy bills



Equivalent of 15,280
meals redistributed via
the Community Fridge
Scheme (to Mar '23)



70,950 litres of
oil ordered by 99
households through the
Devon Oil Collective

13 virtual
ward patients
supported



BETTER WELLBEING ACROSS DEVON

Individuals and organisations have been given lots of different tools, techniques and support to understand and improve their own wellbeing and that of those around them, helping them to feel more positive and resilient.

Ending in March 2023, Wellbeing Works was a Devon County Council-funded programme which provided group and individual opportunities for Devon based businesses, employees and individuals to benefit from the tools, techniques and inspiration we need to prioritise and develop our wellbeing and resilience.

During Q4, we concluded our programme of free workshops and 1-2-1 wellbeing

check-ins, with sessions including Wellbeing at Work, Wellbeing for Men and Individuals Supporting Men and Five Ways to Wellbeing, plus several bespoke workshops for local employers. Overall, over the past three months we supported 98 people across 70 different organisations.

Our evaluation shows that over 75% of people who took part in the programme planned to take further action to enhance their wellbeing as a result and 100% of workshop participants said they understood what self-care is following the sessions.

The full report on the project may be viewed here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing



You can read an article from an attendee of one of our wellbeing workshops here: www.workplacewellbeing.pro/analysis/make-wellbeing-your-everyday-routine/



Even bears need a wellbeing boost!

Watch our short clip featuring the DCT bear, Gert, created during Q4 to engage people with the remaining workshops.



<https://tinyurl.com/2rt93td7>

“

[I benefitted from] the chance to connect with others from the university whom I wouldn't have met otherwise.”



“

It was very peaceful, everyone seemed to be very relaxed by the end of it. I liked to hear about the ways of relaxing, and pausing during the day. Ways to monitor your wellbeing, and the Fika and Hygge techniques are nice to learn about. I could relate very much to the basement versus the penthouse in terms of wellbeing and how this can change in the day/ week/ month.”



SUPPORTING PEOPLE ON VIRTUAL WARDS

Patients are supported to receive care in their own homes, allowing them to feel more comfortable and freeing up under-strain beds and appointments in hospitals.

DCT is part of an innovative VCSE alliance formed to participate in the One Devon NHS Virtual Wards Development Programme. Virtual Wards allow people to receive healthcare at home rather than needing to be in hospital. They use technologies by which patients can be remotely monitored by healthcare professionals.

The VCSE alliance's role is to provide non-clinical support for people in virtual wards, for example in using the digital technology and the support they may need to continue with their lives while on the ward.

This pilot launched at the start of March 2023 and the number of patients assisted has so far reached 13.

The majority of referrals have been for digital support, provided by Wellmoor, who have also trained the other seven other VCSE partners in the digital devices that patients are sent home with.

A good network of organisations is in place, covering the majority of the county, and systems have been created to evaluate patient data at the same time as respecting GDPR regulations.

Although the project is in its early stages, the way of working shows that the VCSE sector is able to support Virtual Wards patients to stay in their own homes. For example, three referrals have been to pick up devices and return them to the hospital; this has saved the Acute Medical Unit (AMU) 90 minutes' of patient appointments which they have been able to allocate elsewhere in an already overloaded service. The cost of a hospital bed for one night is approximately £300. So far the Virtual Wards patients supported would have otherwise spent a total of 57 nights in hospital. This equates to a saving to the NHS of £17,100.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/virtual-wards-acute-hospital-home



“It was really reassuring to hear from the hospital that if we couldn't get [the devices] working then there was someone who could come out to us and look at it.”



COMMUNITY FRIDGES

Food that would otherwise go to waste is redistributed to people in the community to use, diverting it from landfill.

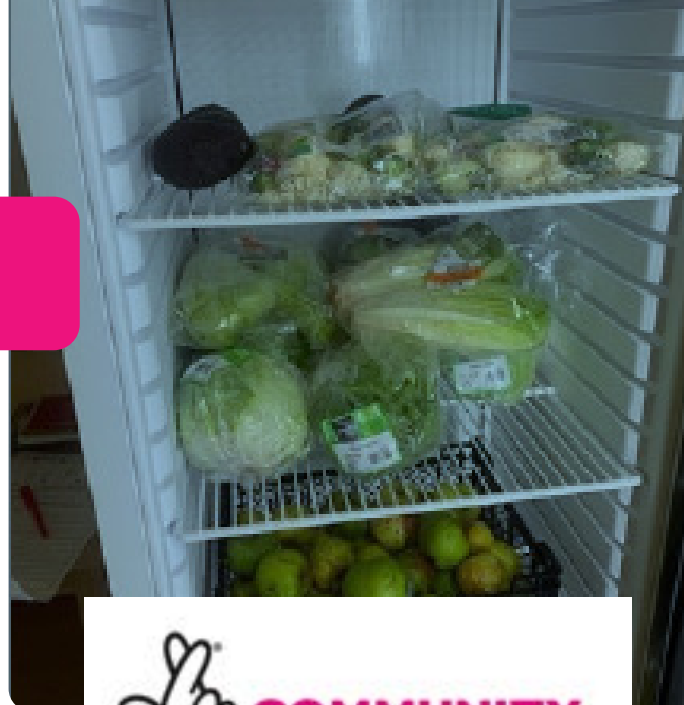
DCT recently produced our first evaluation report into the Recycle Devon Community Fridges initiative.

Highlights include

- Two fridges (Exeter and Okehampton) established
- 6,417.5kg/6.3 tonnes of surplus food redistributed
- £20,176 waste cost savings

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

The project is funded by the National Lottery and being delivered by Devon County Council, with DCT as an Impact and Evaluation partner.



ENERGY SAVING ADVICE

27 households have been provided with advice and practical tips on managing their energy bills and reducing their usage.

As part of the Big Energy Saving Network, this quarter DCT visited five communities to give energy saving advice to 27 households, supporting them to reduce their energy usage and manage their bills. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/big-energy-saving-network-0



Creating more affordable homes in communities encourages vibrant, diverse and multi-generational communities.



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HOUSING NEEDS SURVEYS

The Devon Community Housing Hub distributed three Housing Needs Surveys in Q4, to give everybody living in Thorverton, Moretonhampstead and Dunsford the opportunity to help establish the need for local affordable housing in these areas.

The need for 14 additional affordable homes has since been established in Thoverton, with the other two surveys not yet analysed.

With evidence to support the need for these additional homes, the community can be supported to take the next steps to developing them. www.devonhousinghub.org.uk



TRAVEL TRAINING: INCREASING CONFIDENCE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

38 people across the VCSE sector in Devon now have the skills and resources they need to support their clients to feel more confident and capable in using public transport to reach vital services and connect with family and friends.

Connecting You is funded by the Department for Transport via lead partner Devon County Council. It aims to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation using transport, and increase people's confidence in using public transport. DCT delivers travel training to VCSE sector organisations, providing guidance and resources to help build people's confidence and knowledge in using public transport, and is evaluating the

impact of the project as a whole.

This quarter, we delivered 10 travel training sessions attended by 38 people from VCSE organisations, including an educational establishment, a charity working with young homeless people, a supported living organisation for adults with disabilities and more. These organisations, which support some of the most vulnerable people in Devon, can now better support their clients to connect with people and services, and explore their local areas, using public transport. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/connecting-you



“[It was] really helpful. Thanks so much for offering this to us. [We] would welcome more courses. [The] travel training guide is a great document and we will definitely use it.”



UNDERSTANDING HOW TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

Insights from organisations delivering services 'on the ground' in communities have led to practical recommendations about how to change Public Health Services to better support vulnerable groups and help them to access vital services.

This quarter has seen the completion of the insight work DCT has been undertaking with the Devon County Council Public Health Outreach Team to collect and analyse insights about the ways in which Public Health Services could be delivered in the community.

Focus has been on finishing a series of seven insight snapshots and producing a final impact report, highlighting recommendations to Public Health Commissioners and the impact the Outreach Team has had by delivering a more collaborative Public Health approach with communities. These snapshots and the impact report, alongside a series of short video clips capturing the team's learning have been shared with Public Health Commissioners, professionals within the NHS and community stakeholders across the county.



Read all the insights we produced here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-public-health-insights

The evidence highlights the shortcomings of the current system of how health services are procured and delivered in Devon. It also amplifies voices of communities, who currently experience a variety of barriers in accessing health and services in Devon, especially Inclusion Health Groups such as people leading complex lives, refugees, and Gypsy, Roma and travelling communities.

The following recommendations to facilitate better outcomes for local people were made as a result of the project:

- Need for a system change. Public Health services need to have outreach policies governing their work so that a certain percentage of their programming is for work directly in community-based locations.
- Move to a preventative model of service delivery, providing training and support to VCSE groups to access training.
- Need for Public Health to work with the VCSE groups which are already working with Inclusion Health Groups and to find out where services will be best placed to make them accessible to target groups.




Public Health Devon


Devon
County Council

“This team have been vital in assisting voluntary organisations, who have been limping through this Public Health Crisis - from the beginning. To be listened to, and actually heard has been so refreshing for the so many volunteers who have filled gaps in services - which have been unable to maintain their own basic responsibilities.”
Kingsbridge Foodbank

OBJECTIVE

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

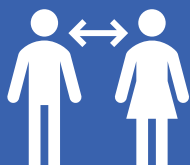


4 full-day bootcamps and **19** workshops hosted to support Devon-based micro businesses and social enterprises



254 members of Devon Social Enterprise Network

9 clients completed 12 hours' 1-2-1 coaching and group workshops



25 participants on a new Enterprising Halls programme to support Village Halls as community enterprises

DEVON'S ENTERPRISING HALLS

Entrepreneurs and Village Hall committees are more confident and upskilled to diversify and grow their enterprises for the benefit of their communities.

New Start Devon (NSD), which receives funding from the European Regional Development Fund, provides a minimum of 12 hours' free online coaching and enterprise support to give people skills and confidence to develop their enterprises or business ideas.

During Q4, along with continuing with our programme of bootcamps, workshops and 1-2-1 coaching for entrepreneurs, we launched our 'Enterprising Halls' strand of the programme. Participants are representatives of community buildings, which are being encouraged to see

themselves as enterprises, with incomes from hires as well as events. This is the first of this type of programme in the country and DCT is representing it at a workshop of the national ACRE (Action With Communities in Rural England) conference in April.

The Enterprising Halls strand comprises 1-2-1 Coaching, including a visit to the hall, a six-hour Bootcamp 'Essentials of Enterprise' and a menu of three-hour deep dive workshops.

25 people have been recruited to this Enterprising Halls programme this quarter and nine people have completed the programme so far.

Participants on the mainstream NSD programme report improved confidence in themselves and their enterprises through learning, understanding and using the business tools. The entrepreneurs coming into the programme through Enterprising Halls have begun to see their halls and their potential in a more enterprising light.

CASE STUDY



WHITFORD VILLAGE HALL

Post-pandemic, Whitford Village Hall has worked hard to recover from the loss of several committee members due to age and retirement. Despite the upheaval, the current committee has been particularly enterprising already, for example in the way they have developed the bar area.

They established a bar group amongst the younger members of the community and listened to what they wanted, which was to make bar area friendly to both male and female customers, change the drinks on sale and get in draft beer from a brewery. They have set new, regular opening hours and organised family friendly events to broaden their customer base.

Now they have begun on the Enterprising Halls programme we look forward to what they decide to do next to continue to develop their hall!



Whitford Village Hall's new bar area



www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/enterprise-coaching-new-start-devon



HM Government

OBJECTIVE

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

Engaged with

42 members

of the public

about nature-based flood

resilience measures at **3**

community events



50 people attended **2**

Devon Community Resilience

Forum events to support

people with developing

Community Emergency Plans



2 new or redeveloped

Community Emergency

Plans in progress



7 community wildlife

grants awarded with a

value of £1,852



£8,777 in grants

awarded to fund

community resilience

initiatives



WILD ABOUT DEVON

Over £1,800 has so far been allocated to schemes that will help to tackle the ecological emergency.

The Wild About Devon Grant Scheme, was set up to help communities across Devon to take action for wildlife as part of the Local Nature Partnership's Wild About Devon initiative and the urgent need to tackle the Ecological Emergency. The scheme provides a very simple way for community groups to access small amounts of funding to kickstart or advance their wildlife projects.

The scheme is funded by the Devon Environment Foundation, Devon Communities Together and Devon County Council. A second round of funding launched in March 2023, with an increased fund of £10,000 available. We have so far received 47 applications, from which seven schemes have been funded so far. These include a parish-wide bee-friendly planting programme, planting a wildflower meadow, planting water-edge wildflowers in a pond to improve biodiversity and reduce flood risk, and creating a sensory garden.



www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/wild-about-devon-community-wildlife-grant-scheme-2023

DEVON LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Trial sites are piloting the new Devon Land Use Framework to help guide effective future decisions about land use to benefit people, environment and the economy.

The Devon Land Use Framework (DLUF) brings together a wide network to design, test, develop and review a Land Use Framework for Devon.

Funded by DEFRA and DRIP (see pg. 19), DLUF now has additional funding from the Geospatial Commission.

This quarter has seen a Leadership Round Table, with speakers including Prof. Michael

Winter, Sir Michael Barber and CEO of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, Sue Pritchard. We also held a workshop for the sites that the framework is being tested on, to work through its principles with them.

Clinton Devon Estates hosts one of the trial sites. Commenting on the pilot, Dr Sam Bridgewater, Head of Wildlife and Conservation, said:

“Under the Devon Land Use Framework Pilot, Clinton Devon Estates, along with many other landowners and land managers in Devon, are sharing their experiences of what can help or constrain the making of good decisions regarding land use. ... It is hoped that this can help guide all those who manage the countryside so that decisions made now deliver far into the future the best possible outcomes for the environment, for people and for the economy.”



www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-land-use-framework



Food, Farming
& Countryside
Commission

FLOODING AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Communities are upskilled and empowered to understand their local situations and better protect people and property in the event of emergencies, such as flooding.

DEVON RESILIENCE INNOVATION PROGRAMME



DRIP is part of the Flood and Coastal Resilience Programme funded

by DEFRA. The project focusses on rapidly responding catchments in predominantly rural areas, seeking to identify what level of protection can be afforded to a community using nature-based interventions, tailored flood warning systems and Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures.

DCT oversees stakeholder engagement for this project that encompasses 35 pilot projects across the county. We've attended

three community events in South Pool, Exton and East Worlington during Q4, enabling the local community to find out, discuss and learn about the DRIP project and the nature-based solutions that could slow the flow of water in their river catchments.

School children from East Worlington enjoyed creating pictures of meandering rivers, having studied flow as part of their curriculum. They also enjoyed making bird boxes to encourage wildlife to their school and gardens. <https://tinyurl.com/2p87uud5>



DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM

As part of our facilitation of the Devon Community Resilience Forum, 21 communities have been supported to form groups, create plans, apply for grants, run events and obtain advice, during Q4. £8,777 in grant funding was awarded to communities like Clyst St Mary, to help protect themselves against serious emergencies like flooding.

CASE STUDY



CLYST ST MARY

On Saturday 4th March, volunteers from the village joined Environment Agency (EA) staff in an exercise to erect the aluminium 'stop logs' at the end of the historic Old Bridge in Clyst St Mary and another at the northern end of Frog Lane. When erected, these barriers complete the vital flood prevention scheme recently completed by the EA.

Each barrier consists of a number of substantial and highly engineered aluminium parts which are stored in a waterproof cabinet nearby which will be erected by village volunteers and EA staff when warned of potential flooding.

The grant that the Devon Community Resilience Forum awarded the Parish Council was used to purchase the four sets of waders and four LED work lamps.



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



SHARING RATTERY'S VISION FOR ITS FUTURE

The community vision for a net zero Rattery has been shared and celebrated, encouraging buy-in from the whole community.

Working with the University of Plymouth, we piloted approaches to visioning a sustainable future for a small South Devon community, Rattery.

This quarter has been about promoting and publicising the vision that has been created by the community, encouraging local people to understand and buy into the vision. Outputs have included: a visioning booklet containing eight visions created by Rattery residents of a sustainable Rattery in 2035,

a link to a film of professional storyteller Steph Bradley reciting a composite vision of Rattery in 2035, and a letter from the Chair of the Parish Council explaining how the process relates to future parish planning.

A feedback survey was shared (print and online) to all households in the community. This feedback, alongside further material produced by Rattery residents such as maps, historical trades, and open mic music were shared at a celebration event 'An Evening for Rattery' in the local pub.

Learnings from this pilot are currently being compiled to be shared with similar parishes in Devon, supporting the journey towards a net zero Devon.

“

I just wanted to formally record our thanks to you personally and DCT generally for working with Rattery on the Visioning Project ... We now have 5 clear aims going forwards, which, subject to approval at the next Parish Council meeting/Assembly, will form the basis of the Parish Plan.” Kim – Rattery Environmental Group and Parish Councillor

OBJECTIVE

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

746 people came along to our **88** training, learning and networking events



83 village hall audits undertaken during Q4



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



Assisted with awarding **£300,000** Cost of Living Grants to grass roots VCSE organisations



£ Awarded Growing Communities grants totalling over **£49,000** to **21** community groups.

SUPPORTING DEVON'S VILLAGE HALLS

Village Hall committees are able to explore areas such as accessibility, attracting volunteers, policies and potential funding streams with DCT staff, helping them to develop their spaces for the future benefit of their communities.

VILLAGE HALL ASSET MAP

DCT, funded by Devon Public Health & DEFRA, has grown our Community Asset Map of Village Halls through our auditing programme, adding an additional 83 halls to the map.

Through our programme of in-person audit visits, we are aiming to understand and celebrate the services Devon's c.450 Village Halls currently provide, as well as examine

their aspirations for the future, with particular emphasis on the physical and mental wellbeing of their communities and their potential to become rural wellbeing hubs.

In total, we have now visited over 200 halls in Devon and continue to visit more halls each week.

Many hall committees have said that they've benefitted from being asked thought provoking questions and hearing examples of the way that other halls approach various issues.

“[The] nearest surgery is 3 miles away [and is] not walkable due to country lanes with no pavement, fast traffic and tractors. There is no public transport from the village to the surgery. So, using the Hall as a Health Hub would make sense.”

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/village-halls-community-buildings-audit



CASE STUDY



VILLAGE HALLS WEEK

To celebrate Village Halls Week in January, South Pool Village Hall teamed up with DCT to hold an event for the local community.

South Pool Village Hall held a 'Fika' event (coffee, cake, and catch up) as a way to drop in for advice from DCT, meet committees from other halls, and enjoy homemade cake, with 58 people attending the event.

DCT's Village Hall specialists attended to provide advice on everything village hall related. Project Managers were on hand to talk about the Village Halls Community Asset Map, provide green energy advice and speak about DCT's Wellbeing Works project (see pg.10).

The event was also a great opportunity for the community to meet the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP) team (see pg.19) and find out about what is being planned for their pilot project in South Pool.

“Connecting with other village halls is an unexpected ‘spin off’ from the Village Hall Community Asset Map project- it’s great to see what it has started. This event certainly was a fun and fitting way to celebrate Village Halls Week.” Charlotte Squire, Project Manager, DCT

ONGOING SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEES

The fourth quarter is always a busy time for village halls and so generates many enquiries. This quarter has seen initial and second stage applications to the Platinum Jubilee Community Buildings Fund, for which we supported seven applications from Devon's Village Halls, three of which have since been awarded so far. Other examples of the support we've given include Landkey and Monkleigh.

Landkey Parish Council and other community leaders have been given advice on preparing a project to build a new Village Hall. With guidance, they have secured an Awards for All grant for preliminary works, appointed an architect and set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Publicity about the project has realised a substantial donation.

Monkleigh Village Hall has new trustees who are being coached in governance, policy preparation, projects planning and funding. We visited the hall to run an energy advice session for the community and took the opportunity to view the building and discuss the trustees' aspirations. We have been able to guide them on structural works and have linked them with other halls in the area who have a mutual support organisation.



(c) Roger A Smith / Landkey as viewed from Coddan Hill

CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON



Construction students gain real-site experience to support their future careers.

Constructing Futures Devon Ltd purchases dilapidated properties and renovates them with the help of local construction learners.

During Q4 we spent time looking back at our achievements over the past five years by producing a report for our funders*.

Highlights included working with over 170 16-18 year olds to complete six 'real' construction projects, including four complete home renovations, one new build and a Housing Association void. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/constructing-futures

UPSKILLING COMMUNITIES



746 people have new skills to enable them to better help people in their communities.

We facilitated 88 online learning and networking events for 746 people during Q4.

Highlights included 39 wellbeing workshops as part of our Wellbeing Works project (pg. 10), and 23 opportunities to learn new business skills via our New Start Devon programme (pg. 16). www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses



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.

BOOSTING GRASS ROOTS COMMUNITY SERVICES WITH GRANT FUNDING

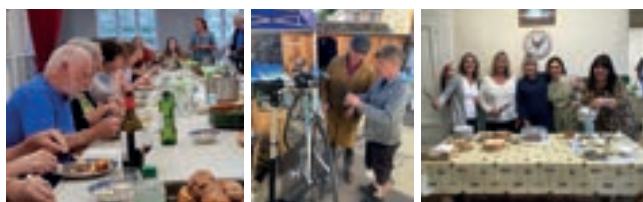
Vital services that support people across Devon have been established, expanded and boosted thanks to grants awarded to community organisations.



DCT administered a £50,000 Growing Communities grant fund on behalf

of Devon County Council, to help build capacity and resilience in communities. We engaged with rural community organisations across Devon, focusing on village halls and community groups to encourage applications, and were delighted to award grants to 21 organisations, supporting initiatives including:

- Rural Community Warm Hubs
- Cycle repair and community bike rides scheme
- Community garden projects
- Stroke survivors isolation support project
- Warm packs for homes impacted by the Cost of Living Crisis
- Village halls facilities improvements around disability access and inclusivity



We also assisted with the management and administration of a £300,000 NHS Cost of Living Community Grant Scheme, using our reach into rural communities to encourage applications from grass roots VCSE groups for initiatives that helped people in their communities navigate the Cost of Living crisis.



CASE STUDY



Estuary League of Friends is a charity based in Topsham, just outside Exeter. They applied for funding from the Growing Communities Fund as they were experiencing an increase in requests for help with the Cost of Living Crisis, particularly from vulnerable older people who had little to no options for increasing their pension income, and who were already struggling to make ends meet before the increase in living costs.

The charity used the grant to establish a Community Warm Room, which was open from 1st November to 16th March 2023. They served free homemade soup and rolls from the café and puzzles and board games were provided for entertainment. It was attended by an estimated 327 people over the 20 weeks, offering a lifeline for people by providing warmth, nutritious food, a chance to socialise and access to other support organisations. 100% of people surveyed want the service to return next winter.

“Thank you for providing a place to come and have a chat in the cold winter months”
“A lovely place to come for some company”

OBJECTIVE

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

The DCT team will be better placed to support effective, inclusive projects, while also supporting each other and building trust as a staff team.

VALUABLE TRAINING FOR DCT STAFF

During Q4, DCT staff enjoyed two full days of team training, looking at Mental Health Awareness and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These important sessions have enabled us to better understand and support each other and the communities we work with. We are committed to keep pushing ourselves to become more inclusive, and support our communities to do so as well.

NEW CRM SYSTEM

DCT staff have been busy getting to grips with our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System over the past few months, having launched it in the autumn. We are gradually transitioning

many elements of our working lives on to the software, which will make our capability for knowledge sharing, communicating and reporting more seamless and benefit everyone who works with us.

WEBSITE REFRESH

As part of our commitment to responding to the needs of our communities, partners and funders, we have begun a programme of engagement to understand what improvements are needed on our website to make it more accessible, easier to use and more useful to users. We have started the process with a staff survey and will be broadening this out to other web users during the coming weeks and months. If you have any comments at all that you'd like to make, please contact marketing@devoncommunities.org.uk.



THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...

