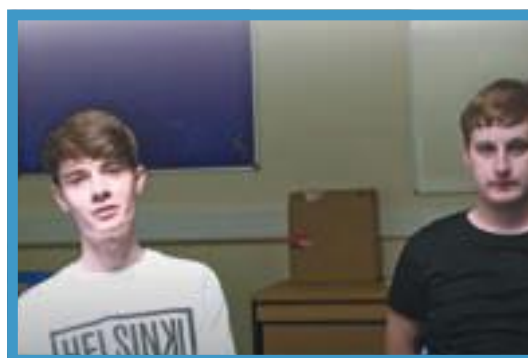




THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY ACTION DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

DEVON COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER

APRIL 2020 - MARCH 2021



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

7 COMMUNITY SURVEYS DESIGNED AND SHARED

£10,030

AWARDED IN GRANTS TO DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM COMMUNITIES

508 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ENGAGED WITH ACROSS THE HotSW AREA

2,922 HOUSEHOLD HOUSING NEEDS SURVEYS

249 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS ADVISED AND SUPPORTED

962 ENQUIRIES TO CV-19 COMMUNITIES HELPLINE



£2.4M IN SOCIAL VALUE ACHIEVED BY DCT'S PROJECTS

284 MEMBERS OF DCT



170 ATTENDANCES AT SOCIAL GROUPS FOR OLDER PEOPLE AT RISK OF LONELINESS

296,678 LITRES OF OIL ORDERED AT DISCOUNTED RATES THROUGH DEVON OIL COLLECTIVE

24 YOUNG PEOPLE GROUPS ENGAGED WITH TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

29 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS RECEIVED FUNDING ADVICE



110 NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES

27 SMALL BUSINESSES SIGNED UP TO 121 COACHING PROGRAMME

16 NET ZERO FOCUS GROUPS & WITNESS HEARINGS CO-CHAIRLED

155 COMMUNITIES ATTENDED 11 RESILIENCE EVENTS

1,154 ATTENDANCES AT 79 TRAINING & NETWORKING EVENTS

177 HOUSEHOLDS ADVISED ON ENERGY AND MONEY SAVING

5 COMMUNITY PLANS SUPPORTED



64 SMALL BUSINESSES SUPPORTED AT CV-19 WELLBEING WEBINARS

11 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANS REVISED OR PUBLISHED



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

I am pleased and incredibly proud to present the Devon Communities Together 2020/21 Annual Impact Report. This has been an unprecedented and turbulent year for the communities of place and the communities of purpose we work alongside across the county of Devon. This report will hopefully provide a flavour of the impact of the work the wonderful DCT staff team has managed to deliver, support and co-produce remotely (due to CV-19 social restrictions) during the past year.

With the support of DEFRA and Devon County Council, we have been able to run a communities Covid Response & Recovery telephone helpline 5 days a week throughout the entire year, providing accessible information, advice and online resources to a broad range of local

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www.devoncommunities.org.uk

Chair: Nicola Gurr
President: HM Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon



Devon Oil Collective
Heat Your Home for Less

- Discounted heating oil
- Single point of contact - no shopping around!
- Friendly, accessible customer service team
- Raise money for Devon Communities Together!

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/services/devon-oil-collective



Devon Community Learning Academy
Train. Network. Connect


For online and face-to-face training, learning and networking opportunities for community groups, local councils, businesses, social enterprises, voluntary organisations and more.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses

Discounts available for DCT members and charities. Many courses are FREE!

councils, village halls and community spaces, local businesses and of course to the hundreds of amazing neighbourhood community volunteer and mutual aid groups, many of whom mobilised during the first lockdown and organised local place based help and support to the shielding/self-isolating and more vulnerable members of their communities in a myriad of creative and innovative ways. More recently they have been supporting the drive for testing and vaccinations in their communities.

This year, we have - through our partnership with Sovereign Housing Association - been supported to calculate the financial social value of our asset based community development work, across our broad range of activities and community projects. So, for the first time, we can tell you that this year we have generated over £2.4 million of social value through our activities.

If you are reading the report in digital format, please do click where you see this symbol  for further information on any of the initiatives reported on (if you are reading the report on paper, we have also included full website links to type into your browser).

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to the entire DCT Staff Team and to our Board of Trustees for their constant support, dedication and commitment in this difficult period and to let you know that we are looking to the future with enthusiasm and passion, as we celebrate our 60th anniversary year.

Nora Corkery

Nora Corkery Chief Executive, Devon Communities Together

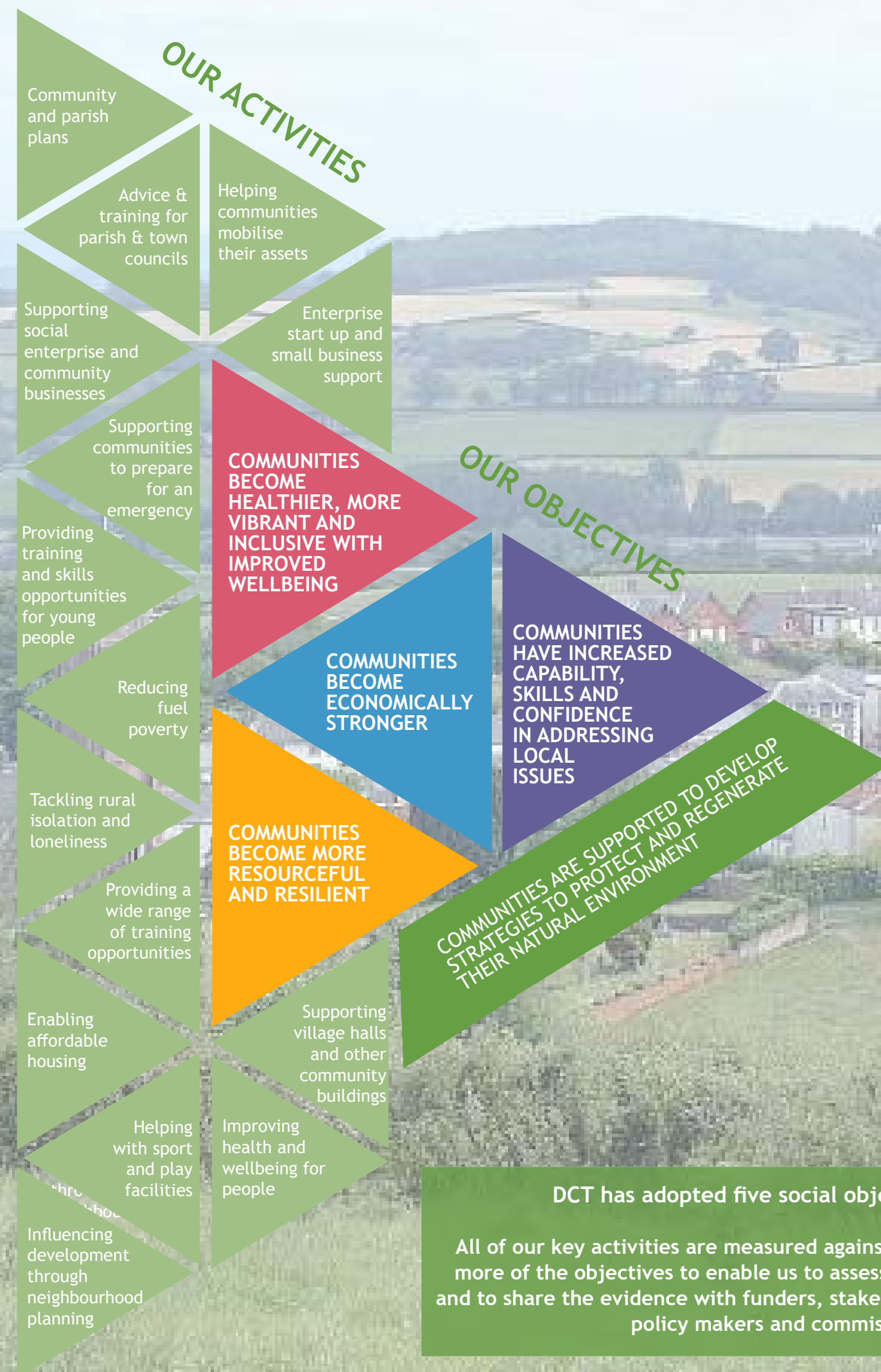



Catalyst
Create positive change with professional support and expertise from Catalyst consultancy.
We're here to help Devon emerge from Covid-19 and begin to rebuild. Speak to our team today about your challenges.

- Fundraising Strategies
- Feasibility Studies
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- Positive Community Engagement
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- Design Led Initiatives
- Rural Housing Services
- Community Land Trusts
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Draw on 60 years of in-house expertise and a diverse network of associates. Let us make a real difference to your business, organisation or project.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/catalyst-consultancy



DCT has adopted five social objectives.

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

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER: MEETING NEW AND INCREASED COMMUNITY NEEDS

During April 2020 - March 2021, Devon's communities witnessed unprecedented scale changes to everyday life. This report will take a retrospective look back over the first year of the pandemic, reporting on how we responded at various points during the year against a backdrop of the changing lockdown restrictions and a national news agenda (both of which we give a flavour of on each page).

As a charity, DCT needed to respond very quickly to these changes, not only establishing new services but adapting our existing projects to address the new and increased needs of the communities with which we work.

All the projects and services we were involved in over this period fed into at least one of our social objectives (pg. 5). Throughout this report we have used colours to indicate the primary social objective being met by the activity (as per the colours on pg. 5), however, in reality many of these activities met several - if not all - of our objectives and always met our central mission of 'Helping Communities Help Themselves' during the most challenging 12-months in our charity's 60 year history.

MARCH 2020: NEW HELPLINE AND INFORMATION SERVICE



Thanks to funding from Devon County Council, we had set up the Devon Towns and Parishes CV-19 Helpline on 16th March 2020, building on our relationship with the Devon Association of Local Councils and our work with Devon Community Resilience Forum. To the end of March 2021, the helpline had dealt with **961 enquiries** from community buildings, town and parish councils, community groups, and those seeking support for themselves or another member of their community.



We established a regularly updated Coronavirus resource centre on our website: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/coronavirus-information, which to the end of March 2021 had been visited **over 13,000** times.



We developed an e-bulletin service through which we would disseminate timely, important information in response to changing Government regulations and changing community needs. To the end of March 2021, **48 emails** had been issued to up to **2,874 recipients** each time. As a Local Infrastructure Organisation we submitted fortnightly "Pulse Check" local intelligence reports.



ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES REMOTELY

We usually enjoy spending lots of time getting out and about and meeting people in communities across Devon; listening to their thoughts and ideas, and understanding what they want and need. Due to CV-19 restrictions we were unable to do any face-to-face community engagement this year, but alongside the many online focus groups, networking and training opportunities, we undertook 7 community surveys with 485 responses, giving people the opportunity to share their thoughts on a number of different topics, which would help us to shape our future services.

- ✓ Town and Parish Councils survey to gather intelligence on the challenges arising from the first lockdown (pg.10)
- ✓ Village Halls and Community Buildings survey to understand the issues from the early stages of the pandemic (pg.10)
- ✓ Enterprise support surveys to understand the impact of CV-19 on local businesses
- ✓ Community Shops survey to find out how trading had been affected by the pandemic
- ✓ Devon Climate Emergency survey for Local Councils to establish what the current picture is and seek opinions on a potential new support network (pg.16)
- ✓ Digital needs survey to find out how we could support participants in our Devon Highlights project (pg.9,19) to access digital technology successfully

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANS

As facilitators of the Devon Community Resilience Forum, a major part of our work is working with communities to help them develop Community Emergency Plans (CEP). These plans are shared with the emergency services via the Resilience Direct website, which is a private network that enables civil protection practitioners to work together during the preparation, response and recovery phases of an event or emergency. CEPs can help a community to respond efficiently and successfully.

This year CEPs took on an even bigger significance with the added risks of the pandemic on top of the usual emergency scenarios. We were pleased to support 11 communities to upload their plans to Resilience Direct. Look out for this symbol to see which communities uploaded their plans this year!

For more information on CEPs, visit: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-community-resilience-forum



SEE WHICH CEPs
HAVE BEEN
FINALISED THIS
YEAR!



DCT's website also includes a map indicating the communities in Devon which have a CEP in place.

APRIL - MAY
2020

151
enquiries to
our CV-19
helpline

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS: CLOSURES AND FUNDING

Following March's lockdown announcement, during April and May, 61 out of the 151 enquiries to our new CV-19 helpline (pg. 4) were from village hall committees who needed urgent guidance about how to close their halls. Topics include cancelling bookings, moving Trustee meetings online and applying for funding.

Through our helpline, e-bulletins and website, we promoted village halls' entitlement to the £10,000 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Covid Business Support Grant. By March 2021, we would go on to have **802** contacts with communities to provide CV-19 funding advice.

Not only were Devon's community buildings supported to comply with these unprecedented new regulations to keep their communities safe, we were also able to clear up confusion around funding sources and help them claim money to mitigate against the inevitable loss of income.



23 March 2020:
Social distancing is now legally mandatory. The first lockdown is announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson on national television:

"From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home."

BRINGING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES TOGETHER DURING LOCKDOWN



In May, DCT hosted two online events as part of our Enhance Social Enterprise Network project, which was designed to further develop and consolidate the Heart of the South West (HotSW) social enterprise sector. Having quickly moved delivery of this project online, 'The Resilience of Social Enterprises' and 'The Value of Social Impact' webinars attracted 22 social enterprises. Read more about our Enhance project here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/enhance-social-enterprise-network

Social enterprises benefitted from new strategies and techniques to implement as well as invaluable peer-to-peer networking with other enterprises at a time when many were having to significantly adapt to survive lockdown.



The Heart of the South West Enhance Social Enterprise Programme received funding from the England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural & Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

Lockdown:
Life in lockdown means all non-essential contact between people is stopped. Life is turned upside down for many people and there are huge financial, practical, and healthcare challenges faced by communities all over Devon.

DEVON HIGHLIGHTS GOING DIGITAL: TACKLING LONELINESS DURING LOCKDOWN



At the start of lockdown, DCT quickly redesigned our Devon Highlights project, aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation in people aged 55+, launching two new weekly online Zoom groups to allow people to meet virtually and join in with a range of fun and social activities. We also launched a befriending phone call service which makes regular calls to people who are unable to join the online groups. This new programme replaced the previous place-based social groups, which were no longer permitted under lockdown rules. Read more about our Devon Highlights project here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-highlights.

IMPACT

At a time when the issues of loneliness and isolation were exacerbated hugely by lockdown, people were given alternative opportunities to connect with others on a regular basis. In the first two months, 12 online groups were held with a total of 40 participants (also see pg. 19).

"I haven't done much since we went into lockdown with this virus. The contact with Aggie has been very helpful getting me set up to be able to do zoom."

"[the phone call] breaks the day up and it's a surprise. It's just a nice thing to think that someone is thinking of you, and I like hearing about Harry and what has been up to... gives me something else to think about."

"I have only been living in Bideford for 4 months and due to the virus am unable to socialise other than with my family and Zoom meetings."

VOICING LONELINESS: A UNIQUE SOUND ARCHIVE

As part of Devon Highlights, we also launched our Voicing Loneliness Sound archive, which set out to record the individual experiences of loneliness from people of all ages, all over Devon. We would go on to record **157** entries to the archive by March 2021!

NET ZERO TASK FORCE WORKSHOP

DCT is pleased to be part of Devon County Council's Net Zero Task Force (NZTF), which aims to help Devon become carbon neutral by 2050. In May, we helped to facilitate an Informed Systems Thinking Workshop, during which DCT provided expertise in thinking in a systems-led way to draw together key overlapping topics from the main themes being discussed for the Interim Devon Carbon Plan.

Read more about the NZTF here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/net-zero-task-force



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



JUNE - JULY 2020

180 enquiries to our CV-19 helpline

Sampford Courtenay Community Emergency Plan published to Resilience Direct website.



1 June 2020: Schools re-open for some year groups. Groups of 6 people are allowed to meet outside.

13 June 2020: first 'social bubble' scheme is announced.

Gradually, throughout June- July many non-essential businesses are permitted to re-open.

UNDERSTANDING NEW CHALLENGES: CV-19 SURVEYS

In June we reported on the results of two DCT online surveys (from March - June 2020), one for Town and Parish Councils and the other for Community Buildings. We wanted to better understand the challenges faced during the CV-19 pandemic and related lockdown, and how we as a rural community council could support them during this time.

27 village halls reported they would be at the point of failure within 12 months should lockdown continue. Councils reported that they were facing challenges from ageing populations, dispersed rural areas, discouraging visitors; and top-down support and communication was confusing, conflicting, or lacking. Read the full findings here: <https://tinyurl.com/b3reyvne>

IMPACT

This new data gave DCT and other key stakeholders with which we shared the report, insights into how to best support our communities during this unprecedented situation.

ONLINE BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR START-UPS

All business coaching as part of our New Start Devon project (pg. 22) had now been moved online and in June. Our business coach, Matthew Porter, began to host free two-weekly seminars to help people understand how their character strengths could help them in their professional and personal lives. Read more about New Start Devon here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/enterprise-coaching-new-start-devon



CONSTRUCTING FUTURES: MAKING OUR SITES COVID-SECURE

Constructing Futures Devon Ltd* (CFDL) is a DCT subsidiary company which purchases dilapidated properties and, in partnership with South Devon College, works with young construction learners to renovate them to be sold on the open market. Over the summer, the team worked hard to make its current site (in Torquay) Covid-secure, so that our young learners could return to work (see pg. 17).

South Devon College



RE-OPENING DEVON'S VILLAGE HALLS

When community buildings to begin to re-open, DCT worked with Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) to tailor and disseminate its national guidelines for village halls. These guidelines would be regularly updated and re-issued to ensure the halls were compliant with the latest regulations.

IMPACT

In combination with our helpline, these guidance documents allowed hundreds of community buildings to re-open safely and provide vital services to their communities.

"... this is such a helpful document and has made what at first thought felt like a daunting process to be much more simple - huge relief! We feel much more confident planning for the reopening of our Community Buildings..."

FIRST ONLINE DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM



62 people attended the event, with 42 communities represented, including 9 communities new to the Forum.

As a result, 3 new communities engaged with DCT to develop a community emergency plan.

On 29-30 July we hosted the first ever online Devon Community Resilience Forum event, bringing communities together to listen to speakers, take part in workshops and engage in peer learning on topics of community resilience and preparedness, with a specific focus on the challenges of CV-19.



*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.

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2020

215 enquiries to our CV-19 helpline



12 August 2020: ONS figures confirm that the UK is in its worst recession since records began.

8 September 2020: Matt Hancock warns of a possible second wave, after case numbers rise significantly.

24 September 2020: NHS Track and Trace app is launched.

NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH SOVEREIGN

In August, DCT began a new partnership with Sovereign housing association to collaborate on community development initiatives in Devon communities with Sovereign housing stock. This involves adding value to, and expanding our, existing projects and services, but also developing new community initiatives in alignment with Sovereign's key strategic priorities, as well as measuring the overall value of our work with the HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust) social value impact measurement tool (see pg. 17). Read more here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/sovereign-housing-partnership



INCREASED HELPLINE CALLS AND ADDITIONAL ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS

By now, our CV-19 support service was in its second phase, during which we were tasked with creating a service around recovery, and we responded to many queries relating to reopening as lockdown eased over the Summer. However, by the end of this phase, CV-19 cases were once again increasing and concerns around this were reflected on the helpline.

To ensure the support we were providing was based on community need, DCT facilitated a total of 8 themed online focus group meetings with 106 local leaders and representatives participating. These groups, focused on different elements of the Local Outbreak Management Plan, not only provided up-to-date, targeted information and advice to different audience groups, they also provided a space to share challenges, issues and best practice.

During this period, we also carried out 4 surveys/polls, generating 64 responses, to gather community feedback and information on topics including enterprise support and Devon's Local Outbreak Management Plan. Read about this in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/hb5z7vda>



196 communities (mapped here) benefitted from the activities of our helpline, focus groups and surveys.

IMPACT

- Town and Parish Councils
- Community buildings incl. village halls
- Social enterprise and businesses
- Community groups and organisations



Early September 2020: Schools re-open to all year groups, with many extra restrictions in place.

14 September 2020: Social gatherings of more than six people are made illegal in England.

Ax-mouth Community Emergency Plan published to Resilience Direct website.

TACKLING FUEL POVERTY



In September we began sharing advice and information on how people could save energy and reduce their bills as part of the Big Energy Saving Network. We provided more than **150 people** with 1-2-1 advice to help them save money and reached more people via a free information video and free online energy saving sessions.

For example, we engaged with a shared ownership tenant of a housing association who was concerned that her electricity bill had risen significantly. After investigating, we found that although her partner had

recently moved in which accounted for some of the increase, the usage was not excessive for the property but the bills did appear high. On further examination we were able to establish that her heating system was designed for highly insulated homes, therefore it was not operating efficiently. We shared our research and advised her to liaise with her neighbours to discuss shared experiences and make a combined approach to the housing association. Read more about the project here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/big-energy-saving-network



Over 150 people have been enabled to reduce their energy usage, save money and also learn about discounts and grants that are able to support people with their fuel payments.

IMPACT

SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE FOR DEVON'S YOUNG PEOPLE

In September we started development work for Experience Works, a new project that supports young people aged 15-24 who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or at risk of becoming NEET, across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. This project equips them with skills for life and work, giving them the confidence to find a path to a brighter future. 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. Read more about the project here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/experience-works-0



EXPERIENCE WORKS



DEVON MATERNITY VOICES PARTNERSHIP (MVP): A NEW TEAM

In September, DCT facilitated leadership team elections for candidates who would take the group forward with some exciting new ideas (pg. 15, 18).



CHULMLEIGH ENGAGEMENT

From August-October we engaged with community groups in Chulmleigh to explore potential community uses for St Mary Magdalene Church, providing the Church committee with intelligence to support its future plans for the building as a valued community asset.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020

157 enquiries to our CV-19 helpline

In November, to meet growing demand, we expanded our 1-2-1 befriending service to include volunteer befrienders, with 9 new volunteers being trained.

MANAGING RAPIDLY CHANGING RESTRICTIONS

In this phase of our CV-19 support package, we were largely dealing with a fast changing picture from central Government, including re-closing village halls and cancelling events, to transitioning into the tier system.

We worked closely with Devon County Council and Devon Association of Local Councils to produce a 'Local Outbreak Management Plan for Town and Parish Councils' briefing, and also worked in partnership with the Devon District Councils to run 10 focus groups. These were initially planned to be a discussion of local outbreak management planning and awareness, however due to a fast moving situation, by the time we held the first groups we were in a national lockdown.

IMPACT At a time of huge concern and confusion, communities - both at grass roots and Local Council levels - were empowered to deliver what services they could compliantly, while sharing best practice and finding support from others in similar positions.



31 October 2020:
A second national lockdown is announced, due to rising Cv-19 cases. The furlough scheme is until the end of November.

November 2020:
Results from two of the vaccines in development (Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZenaca), are very encouraging, indicating 90% and 70% effectiveness respectively.

STAYING ACTIVE WHILE IN LOCKDOWN

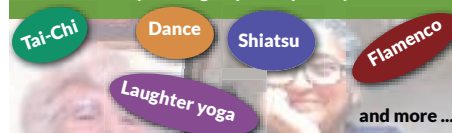
In November our Devon Highlights project (pg. 9,19) launched a new weekly meeting in partnership with Active Devon, where participants could try different activities all designed to get people moving and support their physical and mental wellbeing. Take a look at one of the sessions where participants tried laughter yoga, here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WAKD7OKzWI&t=2877s

To maximise inclusivity for the project (while all delivery still had to be digital) we also surveyed participants on their digital skills to target support where it was needed, including giving 34 1-2-1 sessions and sharing resources on Zoom and YouTube to 117 participants.

Over 55 and looking for new ways to get active at home?

Join our friendly online groups every Friday 11-12.



Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86497739192?pwd=NDRyNDNk-d2cxOGpKVkxjdDh0Q0-1FuUT09>
Meeting ID: 864 9773 9192
Passcode: 148547



In a bumper month, Community Emergency Plans from Colaton Raleigh, Thoverton, Yealmpton and Lymington were published to Resilience Direct website.

PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE

In November, DCT joined the Pathfinder Property Flood Resilience (PFR) project. The Defra-funded South West PFR Pathfinder, is being led by Cornwall Council, and supported by Devon Communities Together, Devon County Council, Council of the Isles of Scilly, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, and JBA Consulting. Working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Risk Management Authorities across the South West, this project aims to support individuals, businesses and communities at flood risk. Read more on pg.18 or visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/pathfinder-be-flood-ready



AGEING WITHOUT CHILDREN (AWOC)

On 9th November we hosted an online event for local businesses and organisations with Kirsty Woodward of AWOC, who talked about how to ensure that organisations are set up to deliver services in the most effective way to support those older people who do not have children, or whose children may not live locally.

DEVON HOME CHOICE TRAINING

On 5th November, Devon Rural Housing Partnership facilitated an online training session on the Devon Home Choice website. It gave delegates, predominantly District and Parish Councils, as well as Community Land Trust members, the knowledge required to explain how Devon Home Choice works to people seeking affordable housing in their area.



5 November 2020:
The country enters a second national lockdown, this time with schools remaining open. It is expected to last for one month.

BETTER CARE FOR BAME PARENTS

In line with nationally published risks (especially around CV-19) around maternity care for BAME patients, the Devon MVP team reviewed the key messages surrounding these topics, which were then distributed to clinical staff throughout Devon to ensure they were better able to support people in their care.



NEW ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMME



In October, Devon Community Learning Academy launched a new programme of online learning opportunities, including a series of live webinars from Citizens Advice Devon, which upskilled delegates on all

aspects of the benefits system. By the end of March 2021, we had run **11** benefits training courses, welcoming **65 attendees** from a diverse range of organisations including Parish Councils, the NHS and a mental health charity.

DCT also delivered two successful online training courses in Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), looking at ways in which Councils and community organisations can build on existing community assets to create positive change. Find out more about our courses here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/courses

IMPACT Delegates are able to take their learning and utilise it in their professional and personal lives, supporting vulnerable people, creating positive community development and upskilling colleagues to cascade the training further into Devon's communities.



DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

123 enquiries to our CV-19 helpline

Sto-kenteign-head and Exminster Community Emergency Plans published to Resilience Direct website.

ENABLING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Together with our partners in the Devon Rural Housing Partnership (DRHP), we adapted many elements of our Rural Housing Enablement service to be delivered digitally. Highlights include:

- ▶ Free Community Led Housing Advisor Accreditation online training course.
- ▶ 10 Rural Housing Need Surveys allowed households to contribute to local development plans.
- ▶ Supported 2 Community Land Trusts
- ▶ Engagement with 16 Devon parishes
- ▶ Support for the building of 110 new homes

In December, DRHP approved a business for the launch of a new Devon Community Housing Hub, managed by DCT, to be launched in 2021.



8 December 2020:
The UK's vaccine roll-out begins.

2 December 2020:
The UK becomes the first nation to approve a Coronavirus vaccination: the Pfizer-BioNTech.

COLLABORATION ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Working with Devon Association of Local Councils, from December-February we shared a climate emergency survey with all Town and Parish Councils in Devon. We wanted to understand their current activities, where there might be more support needed, and whether there was a need for a network. The findings showed strong support for developing a network. Full results may be read here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/councillors-climate-support-network

IMPACT A new network has now been established to allow local councils to share best practice, discuss ideas and challenges and work collaboratively towards a zero carbon Devon.

The inaugural meeting (on 7th April 2021) was attended by over 70 people.

Through DCT's involvement with the climate emergency, different groups have been in touch looking for funding or support, including the The Yealm Climate Emergency and Environment Action Alliance. We were able to connect the group with a project being developed by the University of Plymouth to imagine, in detail, what a NetZero future in their area will look and feel like.

“That’s why it’s good to join parishes together. Because we can get the attention of organisations like this”. Chair of The Yealm Climate Emergency and Environment Action Alliance

2ND ONLINE RESILIENCE CONFERENCE

From 2nd - 3rd December, **46 communities** were represented at our second online Devon Community Resilience Forum event, which had a strong focus on Community Emergency Planning, due to the increased risks from winter weather combined with CV-19. We were pleased to welcome 2 ‘new’ communities which had not previously engaged with us on Community Emergency Planning.

In January 2021 DCT was pleased to have reached our **£1m Social Value** target as part of the project with Sovereign (pg. xx). By March we would reach **£2.4m in social value** across our projects and services!

WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES



In December DCT launched a new pilot project, co-designed with and funded by Devon County Council, to provide mental wellbeing support for business owners who were struggling due to the pandemic. We recruited 13 volunteers who were trained to support business owners via 1-2-1 phone calls. Although the take-up for the service was lower than expected, the chance to talk to other people made a positive difference to both volunteers and business owners alike.

IMPACT The Connect5 mental health training that one volunteer received gave her the confidence to successfully bid for some paid coaching work, which was important financially as well as being hugely beneficial to her sense of worth and confidence.

“[The volunteer] was very nice, completely empathetic to my situation...all my friends have their own problems, and my little business doesn’t seem important to bring up. It can’t fix my problems but it was useful.”



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IN TOTNES

From October-December, DCT surveyed the community in Totnes on a proposed extension to a road closure in the High Street, established as part of social distancing measures. The final report DCT produced represented the views of 1,356 people (equivalent to >10% of the population), including residents, visitors and businesses. The Town Council benefitted from meaningful data upon which to base its decisions.



2 December 2020:
We emerge from lockdown into the three tier system, with Devon being placed into Tier 2 initially.

19 December:
A planned 5-day relaxation of the restrictions for Christmas is reduced to just one day.

31 December:
Devon moves into Tier 3.

5 January:
We enter a third national lockdown.

CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON LTD

Progress continued at our construction site in Torquay (pg. 11), despite the challenges involved in getting learners on site in a Covid-secure way. We recently received a small grant to support work experience placements on the project alongside our apprentices and other trainees.

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

INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

From December - February, DCT helped to publicise the public consultation period for the Interim Devon Carbon Plan and a series of webinars, created by Devon Climate Emergency Partnership, of which DCT is a member. The consultation received over **1,300** responses, which will help the Partnership to move towards the target of a net zero Devon by 2050.



FEBRUARY - MARCH 2021

136
enquiries to
our CV-19
helpline

Brentor,
East Budleigh
and Sidmouth
Community
Emergency Plans
published to
Resilience Direct
website.

FREE COVID SUPPORT BUSINESS WEBINARS

Listening Ear (pg. 17) provided two high impact online events: 'Supporting you and your business through the pandemic; a holistic approach' on 23rd February and 'Surviving and Thriving in Devon's Tourism and Hospitality Sector' on 19th March.

64 people attended these events, which boosted wellbeing for business owners in a tumultuous year, enabled peer support, and provided tips for balancing life and business based on the real life experiences of our speakers.

EVALUATING TRAINING IN NORTH DEVON

DCT provided independent evaluation of a pilot training programme for the hospitality and tourism sectors in North Devon, undertaken by Petroc College and commissioned by Devon County Council.

22 February:
Boris Johnson announces a roadmap showing the route out of lockdown through until 21 June at the earliest.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING WORKSHOPS

DCT hosted two community emergency planning workshops: 25th February with Torridge District Council and the Environment Agency; and 4th March with North Devon District Council and the Environment Agency. We welcomed around 70 attendees.

IMPACT Communities in Torridge and North Devon are encouraged and upskilled to create or develop their CEPs, leading to more resilient communities in these areas.

POSITIVE BIRTH STORIES



Devon MVP recognised a need to communicate positive feedback for health staff morale and to reassure people who may be choosing a hospital to birth. They developed positive quote posters and a new positive birth stories Instagram account, which launched in March, to convey these positive messages for the benefit of both healthcare staff and expectant parents. Follow @dmvp_positivebirthstories

A COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR SHERFORD

In March, DCT produced an organisational and finance plan for a temporary community building in Sherford, a new town being developed in South Devon. This followed community engagement with 35 organisations that were interested in using the hall.

IMPACT People living in Sherford will have access to a well-run space that will provide much-needed services for the community.



RESERACHING COMMUNITY MUTUAL AID GROUPS

As Devon began to emerge from lockdown throughout March, DCT carried out research into the activities of those small local community groups which had provided support to people in the communities who had been shielding or otherwise vulnerable during lockdowns. We carried out telephone surveys and conversations with 26 groups.

IMPACT Our learnings from this research help us to paint a picture of the fantastic grassroots support that has sprung up over the past year and more deeply understand what these groups want and need so that a) we can better support them going forward and b) they can continue to support their communities in innovative ways as we recover from the pandemic.

DEVON HIGHLIGHTS: SOME AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

As we reached the end of the financial year we were delighted to secure additional funding for Devon Highlights, which would enable us to continue supporting Devon's older people at risk of loneliness beyond the planned March 2021 end date.

To March 2021, some of our key achievements have included...

- ▶ 170 Zoom groups held with 67 regular participants
- ▶ We've welcomed over 300 participants in total, engaging with over 500 others including health care services and volunteers
- ▶ 670 befriending phone calls made to over 70 people, with 12 active volunteers continuing to make calls
- ▶ 135 people have new digital skills, including using Zoom
- ▶ 23 out of 30 people agreed that our service helped them to reduce or prevent loneliness
- ▶ 19 out of 24 people agreed that our service helped them to feel empowered and supported in everyday life.

23 March:
The UK holds a national day of reflection, one year on from Boris Johnson's request for people to "stay at home".

PROMOTING PFR



Work on the collaborative Pathfinder project (pg. 15) continued apace. The partnership has secured a collaboration with Oscar winning filmmaker, Aardman Animations, and will be releasing our short film 'BeFloodReady, Missy's Tale' later in the year. We have developed the: BeFloodReady.uk website; Twitter profile; resources, including our BFR PFR booklet and newsletters/articles, and will be arranging testimonial filming and PFR animations. We are also delivering both Flood Group, community and private sector training on PFR and working up a support package of PFR CPD and training for local builders, property agents and developers. There are lots more activities planned for the summer 2021; all designed to protect communities against the adverse effects of flooding.

IMPACT Awareness of PFR is raised across the region, and support is given to minimise risk.

ZERO CARBON IN BEEF FARMING

We were busy planning for Ruby Country Beef Farming Forums taking place from April, convened by a partnership of research organisations and Ruby Country community groups. The forums were to explore research into aspects of net-zero and to discuss how this could be applied to the Ruby Country beef sector in Devon.



Hear how Devon Highlights has impacted on our participants' lives in our short video: <https://tinyurl.com/jmmvsdyc>

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

There is no better way of demonstrating our impact than sharing these stories from the communities we’ve been supporting over the year.

Our research into CV-19 community mutual aid groups (pg. 19) uncovered some wonderful examples of supportive communities, including in Bradninch, Mid Devon and Lynton and Lynmouth, North Devon ...

BRADNINCH CV-19 RESPONSE: CATCH 77
Catch 77 (named after the 77 towns and villages in Devon) was set up in May 2020 by Bradninch locals in response to the pandemic. Working alongside local schools, the project reached out to help families who found themselves in financial difficulties during the first lockdown.

Through providing a ‘Food Hamper’ of free ingredients and meal plans for five hot meals a week, Catch 77 has been able to provide food-stability to parents who have been struggling to feed their families during this time. The project has since expanded to deliver to other areas, including Tiverton, Willand, Uffculme, Copplestone, Honiton and Cranbrook.

22 volunteers have provided over 5,000 free food boxes to families. The project is now supporting, on average, 95 families per week, with 107 families registered.

The initial CV-19 grants from the local

authorities proved invaluable help to set the project up, but rapid expansion spurred the group to apply for CV-19 Emergency Funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, allowing them to employ a part time Co-ordinator as well as paying someone to plan menus and source free food. Some clients of the scheme have also developed the confidence to volunteer as food deliverers.

Catch 77 also received funding to enable them to set up a website <https://catch77.org/> and to set themselves up as a Community Interest Company.

The group’s vision is to expand into more towns and villages. The group also has a vision to become a mobile kitchen and family education point. They want to raise funds to obtain a bus from which they can promote healthy food, teach cookery skills and sell meals at market rate to cross-subsidise the free food boxes they will continue to supply.

LYNTON AND LYMOUTH: FEEDING THE COMMUNITY

The community-led CV-19 volunteer group has been active since the first lockdown and activities have not really slowed after the first rush!

In the beginning, they divided the parish into discrete areas, each co-ordinated by a ‘captain’ who supported and organised the volunteers in their area. Early on, when heading for the first lockdown, organisers realised that the many B&Bs and Guest Houses in Lynton and Lynmouth would have food going to waste. They arranged collections of the food, collected freezers from Lyn Valley Railway and froze the food for later deliveries. What could not be frozen was cooked as ready meals for delivery. They estimate that to date they have cooked and distributed over 3,000 meals.

They also started a foodbank - still going strong with community donations - with the number of people coming to the Foodbank having increased since its inception. People who have lost their jobs or are facing financial difficulty because of the pandemic are now visiting the Foodbank for help, many of whom have never used one before. The foodbank is now affiliated with the North Devon Foodbank in case there is a need for their local food bank and deliveries to remain for the foreseeable future, beyond the pandemic.

The group is now organising community transport for vaccinations and collecting tests for people to do at home. Their District Council Officers and the Parish Council have been very helpful in applications for grant aid. It really has been an amazing example of community togetherness creating positive impact!



Image of generic foodbank. © Copyright Staffs Live, Flickr, reproduced under Creative Commons license.

*not her real name

SUE AND MARG’S STORIES ...



We’ve been delighted to get to know Marg and Sue over the past year. They are a wonderful example of the impact the online get-togethers calls are having ...

Two twin sisters have been joining our Zoom calls since the beginning of lockdown. They live in the same house, but sit in different rooms for the calls so that their audio doesn’t echo in each other’s tablets. This seemed such a strange, unexpected by-product of interacting with technology, and it seems to mirror the strangeness of the time!

As people, one sister awakes before 6am each day and is so used to being busy and doing for others, that lockdown has been a big adjustment. The other with severe health conditions has been shielding inside the whole time. Marg and Sue join the Highlights calls every week and have told

stories of their family on the Isle of Man, and their regular holidays there; they have told us of secret family recipes (who knew mash potato could go in chocolate cake!), and shared their joy at finally having a hairdresser come to give them a haircut - in their garden!

These two women, who have shared so much of their life together, have shown us that even with a pair so close and happy living together, there is still much need for other chances to socialise - and by sitting in separate rooms they share their own stories and enjoy the calls in their own way.



VANESSA’S STORY

Vanessa*, who was referred to us by a Social Prescriber during lockdown, has been a very complex case, with lots of issues and complex needs, including health and emotional issues, She has anxiety as part of her condition, and so was very scared of catching Coronavirus.

She had lots of paperwork and other things to sort out in her flat but was finding it very hard to do anything due to her anxiety.

As well as the challenges from her health conditions, she had only just moved in to the area from somewhere else in the country and didn’t know anyone.

Since she was put in touch with us at the beginning of April, we have been in touch in many ways - firstly through 1-2-1 phone calls. Vanessa spoke to us about feeling worthless and not having achieved anything in her life. We spent a lot of time comforting her and listening to her emotional stresses, supporting her through her panic attacks. We helped her arrange a regular food delivery and to organise her house - all over the phone - and helped to find volunteers who could collect her medication. We signposted her to local mental health support service and were regularly in touch with the Social Prescriber to ensure we worked together to help meet her needs in the most suitable ways.

After some time, Vanessa felt willing to try joining the weekly Zoom calls. With our support via a tutorial over the phone, she set up Zoom on her tablet. She has since joined the Zoom calls and is a very active and vocal on them.

Vanessa has regularly said that she would have been much, much worse without our support. She says the sessions give her purpose for her week; she looks forward to them as it helps her to have something to prepare for. They make her feel much happier, and she says that she doesn’t know what her life would be like without our groups.

We have been doing a ‘jar of hope’ activity, where Vanessa puts something positive she has done or seen that day into a jar, and look back at it at the end of the week. This exercise reminds her that she has been doing something and helps to change her thoughts about herself. It helps her believe in herself and recognise she is achieving things - it gives her purpose and meaning, and helps to combat her self-confessed feelings of worthlessness.

Vanessa has also now started volunteering at a local park activity, which is a massive step for her because she was previously very anxious. Now she is more active and open, and feels she is starting to get to know people in the area.

ENTERPRISE COACHING: HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES ADAPT TO CV-19

Our New Start Devon business coaching programme (which began in January 2019) is designed to support small and start-up businesses to grow...

After lockdown, delivery quickly moved online and, after a period of reflection, our business coach Matthew Porter decided to integrate an aspect of wellbeing into the coaching conversations, alongside the business and employment ideas.

Many people on the Enterprise Coaching programme had to transition to the digital realm. Nikita Dixon, founder of "Story Sense"

ran a story-telling and play course for young parents and their children. Her business stopped immediately due to CV-19 and she had to work out what to do. Through a series of coaching sessions, Nikita envisioned and created an online video subscription model called Mumma & Me, which met the needs of her customers and took her business in a whole new direction.

The Enterprise Coaching programme has helped many people like Nikita pivot their business to continue to serve their customers and support themselves and their families during lockdown. Find out more about New Start Devon here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/enterprise-coaching-new-start-devon



"Matthew has been a fantastic support for my business and personal growth...His holistic approach and questioning made me come up with the answers to my questions, instilling in me that I am able to be confident within my business knowing the answers are in me somewhere. When I started the process, never in a million years did I imagine having a whole other side to my current business within 12 weeks ... I cannot thank him enough for his time and knowledge and would recommend working with him to everyone in business." Nikita Dixon



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



HELPING COMMUNITIES BECOME MORE RESILIENT TO FLOOD DAMAGE

Working on the Pathfinder PFR project (pg. 15, 19) has helped us to support people at risk of the devastating affects of flooding. Here are just two examples of how people have become more resilient ...

Jayne's bungalow in Feniton, East Devon, is at flood risk. After a previous flood, Jayne had to move out of her home to allow repair work to be completed by her insurance company.

Jayne now has a range of PFR products to protect her property from future flood events. These products include airbrick covers to stop water from going under the floors and causing damage. She also has flood barriers for her front and back door. These resilience measures have been put through their paces during a recent flood in Feniton, protecting this home from flooding again.

"We had the barrier up at the back door because usually our back garden floods first. Water came right up to the back door and the barriers stopped the water from coming in".

Caroline's business in Croyde, North Devon, has flooded three times since 2008, including when the whole ground floor was flooded and the fire service had to pump flood water out of the property.

Caroline successfully applied for grant funding available from Devon County Council to fund PFR at her property. Following an independent survey, the stone wall in front of the building was re-built by local craftspeople and a flood barrier was installed. A portable pump was also provided to manage any remaining flood risk from the nearby watercourse. Caroline is now better prepared for any future flooding in Croyde.

"It's reassurance more than anything. The comfort of knowing that I can sleep at night and come downstairs in the morning and my feet will still be dry."



Picture not directly related to Jayne or Caroline's stories.

EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE: HEAR FROM DEVON'S YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN WORDS

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



After three and a half years of supporting the Empowering Enterprise partnership with impact measurement and employer engagement, in the first quarter of 2021 DCT was pleased to produce an Impact Report covering project activity from 2017-2020. You can read the Report here: <https://tinyurl.com/nwwdxwjx>



Throughout our time on the project, it has been a pleasure to meet many of the young people who participated, creating some incredible, inspiring video case studies. What better way to hear about the impact of this project than from the young people who contributed so much to its success? Hear from the young people here: <https://tinyurl.com/yuckbedf>



"[There are] people whose mental health deteriorates because they don't have routine in their life. this have given me a bit of a routine ..."



"[I've] got back into the gym, my whole life's different, I've come off drugs and stuff, it's really good..."



"You're a more bubbly and open and confident young lady ... and holding a lot more presence of yourself - you can see it, it's good."



Devon is now home to 600+ more young people who have experienced support and encouragement to aspire to and pursue a future that helps them fulfil their potential and contribute to their communities. DCT's impact evaluation will shape the future direction of the project and ensure that many more young people will enjoy similar life-changing experiences.



This is a Building Better Opportunities (BBO) project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund.

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

