



LOVE DEVON

COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS: ISSUE 2, 2018



TURNING 'HEN-THUSIASM' INTO ACTION
*THE FASCINATING SUCCESS STORY OF THE BRITISH HEN WELFARE TRUST
AND HOW A MOVE TO DEVON HELPED TO INSPIRE ITS CREATION*

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WELCOME



Welcome to our LOVE Devon magazine which is packed full of news and information. From hens to bagpipes (yes bagpipes are made here in Devon!) to champion jockey Bryony Frost we are celebrating all that is best and unique about this wonderful county.

We speak to two young Devon women who are pioneers in their respective industries; leading jockey and Love Devon ambassador Bryony Frost, and Katie Long, one of a small but growing number of young women to take up an apprenticeship in the construction industry. These are great role models for women everywhere.

Helping young people get off to a good start with a satisfying job in their home county of Devon is one of Devon Communities Together's (DCT) key aims. This year we launched **CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON (P. 12)**, which will be offering real on-the-job experience to learners and apprentices in the construction sector.

We are pleased to announce the merger of the **DEVON SENIOR VOICE (DSV) NETWORK WITH DCT (P. 7)**. After two years in planning and discussion, we are really looking forward to supporting the many DSV volunteers who do so much to ensure the voice and needs of older people are heard.

The people who run our village halls are the unsung heroes of their local communities. We hear the stories of volunteers who have transformed their village hall and from one volunteer who is part of an ambitious project to provide their community with a much needed new hall. We are running a campaign to raise £1m to repair and maintain our village halls - if you would like to get involved, please take a look at our **LOVE DEVON** article (P. 5) and get in touch.

Why do we all love Devon? Wonderful landscapes, lovely villages, two vibrant cities and market towns and of course the people are all part of why we love Devon. I am delighted that Grand Bard of Exeter and renowned poet Jackie Juno accepted our invitation to tell us why she loves Devon. Of course, she has responded in verse with **LOVE DEVON! (P. 11)**. This is a completely new work that we are thrilled to bring to our readers.

IF YOU ALSO LOVE DEVON WHY NOT TAKE UP OUR INVITATION TO TELL US YOUR STORY ABOUT WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT DEVON? YOU COULD EVEN WIN AN AMAZON VOUCHER (P. 5)!

DCT will be out on the road again this summer so from everyone at DCT we send out best wishes for a wonderful summer and rest of 2018.

E. B. Cook

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH LOVE DEVON



You're probably reading this magazine because you love Devon as much as we do. The good news is that here at Devon Communities Together we've got lots of exciting things planned over the next year to celebrate and support our great county and the people who live and work here.

Devon's communities are wonderful but they also face challenges; whether it's developing affordable housing, coping with environmental issues, managing successful community buildings, creating local employment opportunities, fighting fuel poverty, providing safe spaces for young people and much more, there are lots of opportunities to work together and make lives better. Our role at Devon Communities Together is to 'help communities help themselves' by working on projects and providing services that help people meet these challenges and create thriving, dynamic communities.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Host a LOVE Devon event with us!

We've got a series of high profile fundraising events planned starting in the autumn of 2018 and we're looking for communities to host them. Do you need money for a project in your community? We're offering our professional support to help you run a LOVE Devon event and raise money for your initiative. We've got media backing and a team of professionals in funding, community projects and marketing to help. What are you waiting for? Call us on 01392 248919 or email info@devoncommunities.org.uk to tell us about your community project or idea.

Donate!

Your money will come directly to Devon Communities Together to help fund our work supporting communities across the county. Visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk to donate online.

Share your story to win Amazon vouchers!

Tell us why YOU love Devon. Have you lived here all your life? Maybe you're an adopted Devonian or love to visit? Whatever your connection to Devon we want to hear about it. If you'd be happy to tell us why you love Devon, get in touch on 01392 248919 or marketing@devoncommunities.org.uk. Don't worry about writing reams (although you're welcome to!). Just get in touch with your name, contact details and a brief description of your Devon story and we'll be in touch. **Send us your story by 30th September 2018 and you will be put into a draw to win one of five £20 Amazon vouchers***. Your story could inspire someone to donate money or take action in their community - it really could make a difference.

*T&Cs: Five winners will be chosen at random from all valid entries to each receive £20 Amazon voucher. The winners will be notified by post, email or phone within 6 weeks of the closing date. Entries close on 30th September 2018. Entrants must be aged 18 years of age or over. Individuals may only enter once. Entries from third party or automated services will be automatically disqualified. Neither Devon Communities Together or the prize supplier are liable for costs or expenses sustained outside of what is described, insofar as such liability can be limited in law. E&OE.

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST LOVE DEVON AMBASSADOR: BRYONY FROST

When first asked if she would become an ambassador for Devon Communities Together's Love Devon campaign, National Hunt Racing's rising star Bryony Frost answered with a resounding yes. Why? Quite simply because she loves Devon and its village and community life.



Bryony Frost in action

Devon born and bred, Bryony has frequently (and self-deprecatingly) described herself as “feral” in the national media, for whom she has become one of sport's hottest properties. *“I had a wonderful upbringing on the edge of Dartmoor and my family has for generations lived here,”* she told us. *“For me it is the only life and I will get back to Mum and Dad's whenever I can.”*

The Frost family reside at Hollybrook House and Stables which is located between Holne, Scoriton and Buckfastleigh. Bryony attended school in Buckfastleigh and her memories of her childhood relate to playing on Dartmoor with her siblings Dan and Hadden, and starting to ride; initially the family ponies and eventually the horses, exploring the beautiful Devon countryside.

Bryony will support LOVE Devon events when home and knows that her famous father, Grand National winning jockey Jimmy Frost, will also get behind the campaign.

2017 and 2018 have been life changing for Bryony but you wouldn't think so to meet her. Her success has been staggering with wins in the biggest races at the most famous courses and her smile has captivated the racing nation. In May 2018 she placed an impressive 5th in the Randox Health Grand National with Milansbar. Her friendly personality has been so welcomed by the racing world that its governing body, the Jockey Club, has also signed her up as their Ambassador for 2018 and 2019.

Devon Communities Together's Chief Executive, Elaine Cook, said:

“We're incredibly lucky to have Bryony on board for our LOVE Devon campaign and we're looking forward to her support at events here in Devon whenever she's not off conquering the racing world! We're especially thrilled that she shares our passion for Devon's communities and is willing to lend her support to the work we're doing all over Devon to help communities help themselves.”



A young Bryony Frost

“We had a wonderful childhood in wonderful countryside amongst wonderful people who are friends for life. I believe it is important not just for racing but for life that we do everything we can to preserve rural communities. Some of the work that Devon Communities Together is doing in this area is fantastic and I am delighted to be able to help in whatever way I can.”

WELCOME TO DEVON SENIOR VOICE

We're pleased to announce that Devon Senior Voice, the network of older people in Devon, is formally merging with Devon Communities Together. This is the culmination of a long-standing partnership of many years' duration between our two organisations.

Devon Senior Voice has many achievements of which it is rightly proud. It has been a voice for Devon's older people as well as starting and delivering many projects and services, which have and continue to benefit older people. We are looking forward to building on this legacy and offer a very warm welcome to Devon Senior Voice members, branches and groups on the merger of our two organisations.

Members will be pleased that the name of Devon Senior Voice will continue, together with the magazine and all the activity for which the organisation is well known.

Working with Devon Senior Voice volunteers, the team at Devon Communities Together is aiming to grow the network of older people (55 years plus) and we will be supporting the existing local branches so that they can grow and thrive. We want to hear from older people about what's important to them as we continue to ensure that older people's views and concerns are heard by policy makers and service providers.

We have an ambitious programme to re-establish and set up branches and local groups across the county, and will be continuing to support the work of Devon Senior Voice's existing volunteers as well as offering new and interesting volunteering opportunities. We're also keen to celebrate the contributions that older people make to society and to their local communities, so we will be celebrating Older People's Day in October 2018 with a roadshow of events and activities throughout Devon.

Would you like to join Devon Senior Voice and get your voice heard? We would like to hear from any individual or organisation who would like to be part of the network. We'd also love to welcome back previous members who would like to re-join - please get in touch using the details below.

Are you a current Devon Senior Voice Member? Please contact us to ensure we have the correct contact details for you.

To become a member or confirm your details, all you need to do is email info@devoncommunities.org.uk or call 01392 248919



A TALE OF TWO VILLAGES

Behind every village hall there's a story...

For many of Devon's villages the village hall or community building is the beating heart of the community. It's a space where people can come together to learn skills, run businesses, access services, make friends, host celebrations and much more. And behind every hall is a team of local people who work hard to provide the best possible facilities and services for everyone to enjoy. It's not an easy job, so why do it?

LOVE Devon chats to two of these volunteers to uncover the stories behind their buildings.

We start in the village of Bridgerule, nestled just a mile inside Devon's border with Cornwall. In 1956, in an amazing display of community spirit, a team of volunteers built a hall on the site of an old Atcost cattle shed and - although the building has been much loved - fast forward 60 years and its post-war construction was not meeting modern needs.

"I was part of the committee that took over in 2009 and since then we've made numerous improvements to make it warm, dry and safe," said Chris Hitchings, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. *"It's been insulated, rewired, a new floor and toilet facilities installed and we've even got a defibrillator."*

The committee has also arranged outreach services including a pop up Post Office, which also doubles as a village shop that is particularly welcomed by older people who draw their pensions.

"It's a massive undertaking to apply for the funding for all this work," added Chris. *"I'd estimate we've done about 70-80 applications over the last few years but we've received tremendous professional support from Devon Communities Together to help us achieve what we have. It's all worth it though - especially when we see the hall's income increase by 350% and so many people within the community using it. We've had everything from a belly dancing photography session to a couple hiring it for their wedding first dance practice. We've also had the most beautiful wedding receptions here."*

So what is it about the community in Bridgerule that makes Chris and his wife Rose (who illustrates the local newsletter, Bridgerule Buzz) give up their time to make it all happen?

"We've been here 15 years and from day one we felt so welcome. People were inviting us in for coffee, everyone said hello - even the young people! We have beautiful, fresh air and we feel totally safe. It's a wonderful place to live and we love the fact that our hard work is rewarded by seeing so many people coming together to enjoy the building."

It's surely success stories like these that inspire other communities to modernise their own community buildings. Take Widecombe-in-the-Moor for example - an iconic Dartmoor village that's known the



Bridgerule Village Hall

"It's a wonderful place to live and we love the fact that our hard work is rewarded by seeing so many people from young to old coming together to enjoy the building."



Widecombe-in-the-Moor © Dartmoor National Park Authority

country over for its famous Widecombe Fair. Its current community building is the National Trust-owned Church House which, although picturesque and much-loved, is not accessible, has limited parking and is difficult to heat. That's why in the last year a group of enthusiastic community members has begun the process of developing a new hall.

Yvette Elliott of the Widecombe Village Hall Committee explains: *"Right from the start we knew that if we were to start developing plans for a new community building, the impetus and the decisions must be community-driven. We needed the community to confirm the need and tell us what they want from it."*

With the support of Devon Communities Together, the committee has engaged with the community via surveys and studies, which have proved the overwhelming appetite for a new building, and funding has recently been won to work with architects on site selection and building design. Progress is shared with

the community via a website, Facebook page and Parish Council AGMs, and there are plenty of opportunities for people to get involved.

"There's a real hunger and excitement for this," added Yvette. *"We've got ideas for youth groups, drama clubs, a meeting room to hire out, a new pre-school space, health surgeries - we want the whole community to have their say and benefit from it. We're also working with the Widecombe History Group on plans for a potential Heritage Centre."*

"I was brought up in Widecombe and, having moved away to study, I came back here to raise my family. We need to continue to offer facilities and services to ensure that local people who want to stay in the community feel well catered for. I'm very proud to be a part of hopefully making that happen."

What's next for Widecombe Village Hall project? Summer 2018 will see the results of the full feasibility study with the architects and - if local support remains strong - plans will be submitted. Watch this space!

To find your local village hall, visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk

Love Devon's Village Hall Campaign is aiming to raise £1million to support Devon's community buildings. To donate to the fund and support the work of people like Chris and Yvette, visit devoncommunities.org.uk and click donate!

LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

How one of Devon's most remote communities is making a positive change.

Princetown, as well as enjoying the accolade of being Dartmoor National Park's highest village, is also a wonderful example of a community coming together to make life even better on the 'top of the moor'.

As with many rural communities, the location is stunning and there's a genuine passion to celebrate what's great about Princetown - but there are also challenges, largely due to its remote location.

Princetown's answer has been to create a 'Team Around the Village', comprising a variety of organisations and community representatives whose task is to channel the community's enthusiasm in a positive direction. From youth groups to the church, children's centre, primary school, County Council and Parish Council, around 25 people have joined. Karen Hayes, Area Manager, Early Help - South, Devon County Council, explains: ***"Our purpose is to understand what's great about the community and how we can make the most of that - in short what they would like in order to make their community better."***

Supported by Devon Communities Together, the Team hosted a community event to have fun and socialise as well as gather feedback. Refreshments and entertainment were provided including activities for children.

The event was a huge success, with guest numbers exceeding expectations and lots of insightful feedback received via Devon Communities Together's 'graffiti wall', where people were invited to contribute thoughts and ideas.

"The event was a shining example of what can be achieved when a community comes together," added Karen. ***"We were particularly pleased to see such a wide range of people there from young children through to older residents. We all came away buzzing with ideas."***

More gatherings have since been held, including bingo at the school, and a new parent and toddler group has been launched at the community centre. There are longer-term projects to look at extending wi-fi provision and improving public transport, and the Team Around the Village is passionate about these being community-led.

Devon Communities Together's Chief Executive Elaine Cook commented: ***"It's fantastic for us to see Princetown have so much drive to achieve something special. We're delighted to be lending our expertise and look forward to what's to come!"***

"We've had invaluable support from Dartmoor Forest Parish Council and Devon Communities Together," added Karen. ***"But what will really push this all forward is the community itself. That's what's so exciting about what's happening in Princetown."***

If you'd like to get involved with the Team Around the Village, contact earlyhelpsouthsecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk



AN ODE TO DEVON ...

We asked the Grand Bard of Exeter, Jackie Juno, to create an original poem, exclusively for LOVE Devon, inspired by her love of the county.



LOVE DEVON!

*Lush coombes, wild tors,
snaking rivers; coves and caves,
sandy beaches, open moors,
sheltered woods, groves and glades -*

*cliffs, lakes and waterfalls,
yes, Devon has got them all!
The Jurassic Coast, the Biosphere Reserve,
it seems to have more wealth than I deserve!*

*The mystery: ancient stone circles and rows,
the history that Kent's Cavern shows.
Ancient and new and in between -
a village claimed by the sea -
shiny office blocks and village greens.
The delights of a Devon cream tea...*

*And Devon has birthed some well-known names -
Chichester, Raleigh and Drake
great explorers for which they are famed
today we sail in their wake.*

*Writers' voices speak through time -
Coleridge, Christie, Ted Hughes:
and now those further down the line:
Joss Stone, Ben Howard and Muse.*

*Pretty villages of cob and thatch,
fishing towns and busy ports,
fresh food no other county can match;
bright and buoyant seaside resorts.
My home is here, my bit of heaven
how lucky to live in glorious Devon!*

Jackie is the current Grand Bard of Exeter and multiple slam-winning poet, including Glastonbury Festival 2017 and Plymouth Literary Festival 2017. She recently performed at the Albert Hall National Poetry Slam finals. www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOd2zivGUgc

Her workshops include: • Creative Writing • Working with Oracles A Course in Goddesses (Brixham, Torquay, Chagford and nr Exeter) • Women's Weekends in Cornwall

Jackie is also a celebrant, artist and tarot reader. Her latest tragi-comic multi-media show is called Spellbound - Being the True Tale of a Reluctant Witch unable to Escape her Destiny. Find out more at www.jackiejuno.com



CONSTRUCTING FUTURES



Katie Long at work

Did you know that in construction, there's a job for every letter of the alphabet? We didn't either until we spoke to former award-winning construction apprentice, now qualified plant engineer, Katie Long.

Katie, 22, from Exeter, undertook an apprenticeship in Construction and Maintenance with Myerscough College, Preston, while working for an Exeter-based plant hire company. With the news that Devon Communities Together has launched a new construction company to provide opportunities for local apprentices, we chatted to Katie about her apprenticeship experience.

Why did you choose the construction industry?

From the age of 14 I've been interested in engineering and I did A Levels with a view to going to university but I eventually realised that classroom based learning wasn't for me. After seeing an advert for an apprenticeship it got me thinking, so I Googled engineering apprenticeships and found my current employer, who offered me an interview and placed me on to the course with Myerscough College.

The construction industry is historically very 'male'. What is your experience?

Well, I was the only female on my course and apparently the first female apprentice ever to turn up to their interview with the company! I was nominated for, and won, the Apprentice of the Year at the Women in Construction Awards 2016 and that was a very positive experience that led to other award nominations and more publicity. I guess my experience shows that it's still quite rare to find women in the industry but we are here and it would be good to see more of us. I'd encourage any girls out there who have a passion for engineering or construction to go for it!

You successfully achieved your level 3 apprenticeship and secured a job with your apprenticeship employer. What's daily life like now compared to being an apprentice?

I'm a plant engineer, which means I spend most days out in my van visiting construction sites to service or troubleshoot our plant. It's very varied and I love it. Whilst doing my apprenticeship there was a lot of workshop-based learning but as I progressed I would get to accompany senior colleagues out on site visits. Now I'm qualified and I have my own van, so it feels great.

What advice would you give to young people interested in apprenticeships, particularly in construction?

I would say that if on-the-job, practical learning is your thing then it's worth considering an apprenticeship as plan A. Lots of people see this route as a plan B if they don't end up following the traditional college/university route but it should be seen as a positive, proactive career choice. In terms of construction, it's a hugely varied industry - in fact there's a job for every letter of the alphabet. It's more than bricklayers and electricians - scratch beneath the surface and there's so many different roles to explore. The other thing I would say is that it's not always a case of choosing apprenticeship or university. If I chose to I could progress my level three qualification into a degree and there are also universities out there that offer apprenticeships. It is possible to do both depending on your strengths and interests.

What is Exeter like as a work location for someone your age?

In my industry it's great. There's always lots going on, it's well connected in terms of transport and there's a lot of really interesting developments and construction sites. I grew up here and it's fantastic that I've found a way to build my career here as well.

This magazine is called Love Devon, so it wouldn't be right not to ask you about Devon! Do you manage to get out and about when you're not working?

I definitely do! I love going walking and camping and we've got so many beautiful areas to do both here. Dartmoor has some stunning views and there are also some amazing coastal spots. We're very lucky.



NEW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY TO PROVIDE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE FOR LOCAL APPRENTICES

Constructing Futures Devon is a new company which has been established by Devon Communities Together to facilitate real life construction experience for local young people, as well as provide new homes. Partly funded by the Heart of the South West LEP's Growth Deal funding, it is designed to be a sustainable social purpose business. Constructing Futures will purchase properties in need of major renovation, as well as new build sites, and construct quality homes to be sold on the open market. Profit will be reinvested into Constructing Futures as well as Devon Communities Together to fund its work in communities throughout Devon. Beginning in the Torbay and Teignbridge areas, Constructing Futures will initially partner with South Devon College, where students will be given the opportunity to work on the construction and renovation of the properties under the project management of college staff, as an off campus "real site" work experience opportunity.



HM Government



THE VOICE FOR DEVON'S COUNTRYSIDE

Run largely by volunteers, CPRE Devon is a separate charity, part of the CPRE network, raising awareness locally of important issues which threaten Devon's countryside and green spaces. It is the only non-political, non-aligned organisation tracking and challenging inappropriate development across the whole county.

"Our focus is on preserving and enhancing what makes our county so very special so that our precious land and seascapes can be enjoyed by future generations," said Penny Mills of CPRE Devon. *"You can get involved by offering practical help, taking part in organised activities like litter-picking, and by becoming a member or donating funds."*

CPRE Devon's current campaigns include supporting:

- The provision of good quality, energy efficient, genuinely affordable housing using a 'brownfield first' and 'empty building' first approach to development
- The provision of off road cycle/bridle/footpath routes to allow people to enjoy the countryside in a safe environment
- The reinstatement of local branch railway lines e.g. a passenger rail service between Okehampton and Exeter
- Wildlife and biodiversity e.g. raising awareness of the importance of Devon's hedgerows
- Outdoor learning to foster interest in the countryside in children and young people.

CPRE Devon also runs all kinds of competitions, activities and schemes for communities and children, including the Devon's Best Churchyard competition and the Devon Countryside Ambassador Badge scheme. Writing and painting competitions for primary school children are now run with help from new CPRE Devon member and Head Countryside Ambassador, Barney the Bull!



With more support, we can all do more to protect Devon's countryside.

Find out more about CPRE Devon and how you can get involved at www.cpredevon.org.uk.

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**UPSKILL
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DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING ACADEMY

Devon Communities Together's Training Hub is expanding. We're working together with Devon County Council and a wide range of training partners to deliver accessible, professional training for community organisations, businesses, charities, social enterprises and individuals.

Group learning events and online modules in a wide range of courses cover:

- health & wellbeing
- benefits & money advice
- social & community enterprise
- community development
- business & marketing

Courses can also be held at your location for groups of 6 or more.

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www.devoncommunities.org.uk

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COULD YOU SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY POLICING?

Thousands of volunteers lend their time to support communities all over Devon. Here we invite Devon and Cornwall Police to tell us about some of its volunteering opportunities, so if you've ever wanted to find out what it's like to be part of the police force and make a difference in your local community, read on...

Devon and Cornwall Police is aiming to connect with the public more closely through a wide range of volunteering opportunities. Traditionally the Special Constabulary has been the most visible face of volunteering in the force as they undertake their duties as volunteer police officers. They have the same uniforms and powers as their paid police officer colleagues, and are out on the streets supporting policing at peak times, during major incidents and bad weather, or as part of a rural engagement team or roads policing team.

Soon the force will introduce Neighbourhood Specials who will work in their local community helping to problem solve issues as part of the local Neighbourhood Policing Team. For those people who would prefer to volunteer in a non-uniformed role the force is broadening its reach into communities

with the introduction of Local Policing Support Volunteers, working alongside and supporting neighbourhood policing by undertaking additional tasks to enable the police officers and PCSOs to be out in communities, visible on patrol.

The force also has Volunteer Driver schemes, Victim Care volunteers, Community Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch and Chaplains to name just a few of the many roles in place.

In 2017 our volunteers and Specials respectively recorded an amazing 13,300 hours and 79,000 hours of assistance. There are also opportunities for young people between the ages of 13-18 to volunteer as Police Cadets in Units across Devon and Cornwall. The Cadets assist neighbourhood police teams with initiatives to prevent crime and keeping people safe in communities. Our newest Cadet recruits are in a brand new Unit in Torbay.

If you'd like to know more about the opportunities for volunteering in Devon and Cornwall Police please contact us through the force website www.devon-cornwall.police.uk where you can complete a 'register of interest' form, or email Citizensinpolicing@devonandcornwallpolice.pnn.police.uk



Devon & Cornwall Police



At Devon Communities Together we are a part of Devon's Community Unity project funded by Devon and Cornwall Police. We've been working with groups and organisations in three pilot communities - Holsworthy, South Molton and Lynton & Lynmouth - to help these thriving communities build a volunteer bank and support structure that will bring them together as a team. These teams will be ready and able to assist their friends and neighbours with support across a wide range of opportunities and issues.

We have been providing training opportunities for voluntary groups and individuals, equipping them with the tools and skills required to make them better prepared and resilient to events such as freak weather, or minor emergencies such as power cuts.

We are also helping communities forge closer links with local blue light services, and police volunteering opportunities like the ones highlighted here are a fantastic way of achieving this. There are also many other volunteering and training opportunities as part of the project. If you would like to join us, visit our website and get in touch. Even if you do not live in one of our pilot communities we're hoping to extend the project across other areas.

[www.devoncommunities.org.uk/
community-unity](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/community-unity)

See what others have said about getting involved with Community Unity and making a difference where they live...

"The Community Unity project has been successful in providing a wide range of training opportunities to many volunteers across all our local community organisations, and as a by-product has also increased the valuable interaction and cooperation between those organisations. These networking opportunities will undoubtedly bear fruit in the future."

Mike Sutton, Chairman, Holsworthy Bowling Club

"All my drivers found the course of great benefit ... Our drivers are now equipped to be able to act in the case of an emergency. They feel they are now confident to be able to provide basic [First Aid] but also how to resuscitate if the need arose."

Esther Rowe, Assistant Transport Coordinator, Holsworthy Rural Community Transport

"Thanks very much for the training and yes it has given me more confidence in trying to help vulnerable people and more understanding of what is happening in my community."

Anon

Community Unity is managed by Devon Communities Together and supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Cornwall Police, in support of their Citizens in Policing Strategy.

SUPPORTING RURAL ENTERPRISES: BIOPLASTIC BAGPIPES

There are lots of exciting rural businesses nestled within Devon's moors, coasts and countryside. Devon Communities Together's Rural Enterprise Solutions is a project funded by the Prince's Countryside Fund aimed at supporting the growth and creation of rural businesses across Devon. This is done through one-to-one sessions, networking events, a Facebook group of over 300 members and bespoke training delivered by the School for Social Entrepreneurs.

One of our participants, Cefyn Jones, is a Devon-based bagpiper who has a business idea to revolutionise the production of bagpipes and other musical instruments: he wants to make the pipes from hemp bio plastics!

Cefyn already has a micro-business making hemp-based skincare products and has carried out lots of research into the wide application of hemp, trying to break down the association this amazing plant has with its illegal cousin, cannabis. His work with farm-scale hemp growers in the UK has led him to discover that hemp fibres might be utilised as a green alternative to glass and carbon in the production of fibre reinforced composites.



Why bagpipes though? Cefyn's father's military background led to him becoming a pupil at Gordon's School, Surrey. Whilst there he learned the pipes and became the Pipe Major, playing regularly for members of the royal family.

"I had a dream of wanting to be the Queen Mother's personal bagpiper, mainly because our birthdays are the same day but also because it sounded like a cool job," said Cefyn.

In 1996 he became homeless but was given a set of bagpipes by the Harrogate branch of the Prince's Trust. They helped him survive a very difficult period of his life.

Cefyn now plays pipes at events and also uses his pipes for charity. In 2016 he piped the coastal path from Looe to Smeaton's Tower in Plymouth. He took eleven and a half hours in total, piping for eight and a half of them, and raising over £2,500.

There are many driving forces behind Cefyn's desire to see bagpipes and other instruments made from hemp, not least because their low cost could lead to greater opportunities for younger players from poor families.

We've been delighted to support Cefyn progress this fantastic business idea in a variety of ways including advice on production techniques; an introduction to a local expert in bio-plastics and composites; support with finding a low-cost prototype company and signposting to valuable online resources. We look forward to seeing (and hearing!) his unique bioplastic bagpipes in Devon soon!

For more information on our Rural Enterprise Project, visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk/rural-enterprise-solutions.

TURNING 'HEN-THUSIASM' INTO ACTION

At Devon Communities Together we regularly provide support to local charities and social enterprises, from supporting new ventures to providing learning opportunities. That's why we were delighted to uncover the fascinating success story of the British Hen Welfare Trust and how a move to Devon helped to inspire its creation. We share this story courtesy of Exmoor Magazine.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that Jane Howorth MBE, founder of the British Hen Welfare Trust, had grown up among hens. But it was predominantly horses and dogs that took centre stage; that is until one evening in 1979, when Jane, aged 19, settled on the sofa to watch a Panorama documentary entitled, 'Down at the Factory Farm'. It portrayed the life of caged battery hens and it shook Jane to the core - so much so that she became a vegetarian overnight and the rest of that evening was spent composing a letter to her MP, marking the start of her passionate campaign. It wasn't until 16 years later that she moved from Berkshire to Devon and met her first hen!

Settled in their new cottage, husband Rob said: "Now you can get your chickens!" Jane trawled the lanes close to where she lived, looking for factory farms, eventually finding one with a friendly farmer who agreed to reserve her 12 hens. Arriving in her Mini Metro she expected to return with her dozen birds but her compassion for animals prevailed and she ended up with 36!

Then, when thinking about leaving money to a hen charity in her will, her solicitor informed her that no such thing existed.



Jane Howorth MBE:
Photo by Sean
Malyon



An adopted hen, Fraidy

"I realised there was nobody out there doing anything for these poor little creatures. They were out of sight, out of mind and I could do so much more."

More visits followed to farms and factories but Jane soon realised that it wasn't enough. So she put an advertisement in the free ads which appealed for people to join her in re-homing hens. And that was the birth of Jane's charity. During that first year (2003), she re-homed over 5,000 hens. The Trust has now re-homed over 600,000 hens and has a supporter base of over 60,000. A letter of support from Prince Charles hangs on the wall and she was made an MBE for, as she puts it, 'services to chickens'.

So if you're harbouring a desire to see chickens running round your garden, get in touch with the team at Hen Central. As Jane puts it: ***"Hens really are life-enriching"***.

www.bhwt.org.uk



MEET THE INNOVATORS WHO WILL TRANSFORM AGEING IN THE SOUTH WEST

19 big ideas are set to improve the lives of the south west's people in later life thanks to Transform Ageing.

The Transform Ageing project, for which Devon Communities Together is a partner, is a first-of-its-kind initiative to change the way society approaches and designs services for people in later life. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the Design Council in partnership with UnLtd, Centre for Ageing Better and the South West Academic Health Science Network, Transform Ageing takes a community and design-led approach to improve people's experience of ageing.

19 social entrepreneurs have successfully responded to an innovation challenge from communities in the south-west and will now receive funding and support to make their ideas a reality. Love Devon takes a look at just some of these exciting innovations that are set to make a lasting social impact in Devon and beyond...

Move It Or Lose It; founded by Julie Robinson. This venture provides accessible fitness sessions for those in later life - bringing people together, promoting community cohesion and improving physical and mental health.

The Sewing Rooms; founded by Paula Gamester and Maureen Fazal. The venture improves health and wellbeing by employing people who face specific challenges around isolation or dementia. It does this through bespoke training workshops and a manufacturing department that makes soft furnishings, accessories and bespoke upholstery for private and corporate clients.

Book Of You; founded by Tom and Kathy Barham. This venture uses the proven benefits of reminiscence to create a life story using words, pictures, music and film. It means people can bring family, friends and carers together to show who a person was - and who they are now. It was originally set up to help people living with dementia, but the team now work with a wide range of people, including those living in assisted accommodation and young adults with learning difficulties.

NEDCare; founded by Julia Darby. This innovative social care company provides personalised community-based care and support in people's homes. It brokers carers from the local community, providing trustworthy and friendly carers who help people remain as independent as possible in their own homes.

VRTU; founded by Arfa Rehman. This exciting technology is the world's first platform to provide reminiscent experiences from around the world. It is designed for people in later life - especially people with dementia. The app can be used to revisit old memories in virtual reality and create new memories too.

To stay up to date with the progress of these and the other exciting innovations, keep an eye out on www.devoncommunities.org.uk for the latest Transform Ageing news.



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Interested in finding out more? Get in touch...

Call: 01392 248919 Email: dawn@devoncommunities.org.uk

Visit: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/catalyst-consultancy



KEEPING DEVON WARM

During the winter of 2017/18 Devon Communities Together worked on two projects designed to alleviate Devon's high levels of fuel poverty by helping people to keep their homes warm and reduce their fuel bills. Working in partnership with the Big Energy Saving Network and Western Power Distribution, we provided over 200 one-to-one advice sessions to offer guidance on energy efficiency, and switching fuel tariffs.

We also visited over 40 rural homes, reaching some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach people, and helped to train 80 frontline workers to equip them with the knowledge to support people in their own communities.

We were delighted to be able to help so many people. One client saved £383 per year by switching to a fixed tariff, following our advice. As well as helping people get cheaper energy we've also given people new confidence to use online switching tools themselves and have supported people through stressful debt issues.

We will be launching these projects again in autumn 2018, so if you, or anyone you know, would like support with reducing energy and lowering bills, or navigating the maze of different products available on the market, we'd love to hear from you between November 2018 and March 2019. Perhaps you work for or volunteer with an organisation with frontline workers that we could help to train? Remember to also keep an eye out on our website and social media for new training opportunities during this time.

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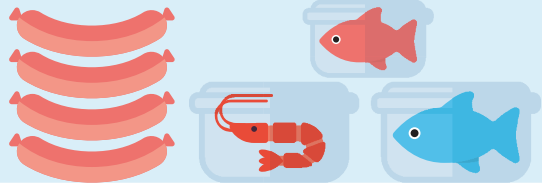
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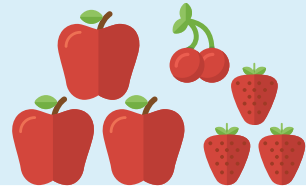


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