



Devon Communities Together

helping communities help themselves



Q3 REPORT 2019/20



February 2020

OUR VISION is of dynamic communities shaping their own futures.

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

NET ZERO TASK FORCE

DCT is a member of the Devon County Council convened Net Zero Task Force. During Q3 we represented rural voices at four task force meetings and co-chaired an expert witness hearing to gain a deeper understanding of the issues around sustainability in Devon. We also shared the Task Force's processes at the ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) national conference.

A contemporary new kitchen has been fitted in the second Constructing Futures Ltd property

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



Constructing Futures is partly funded by £574,320 from the Heart of the South West LEP's Growth Deal funding.

CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON: SECOND PROPERTY SUCCESS

The second Constructing Futures Devon Ltd (CFDL) property has been sold, after an extensive re-model and modernisation project supported by trainers and students from South Devon College (SDC).

The property had been purchased on the open market in a very dilapidated state. Two apprentices were employed by SDC to complete the works, with one seconded trainer position backfilled by the College. 32 other trainees from the College also visited the site to contribute work across various trades.

The property was completely transformed into a family home, with the extremely high standard of work being complemented by the selling agent.

IMPACT

2 apprentices and 32 trainees from around South Devon were given experience on a real building site and contributed to a dilapidated property being transformed into a modern family home.



CONSTRUCTING FUTURES



We used some of the money to purchase a high quality set of tools for apprentice Jack Vaughan, as a mark of his hard work and to help him when he sets up his future decorating business. Well done Jack!

COMMUNITY GIVING AWARD

In December 2019 CDFL was delighted to receive the news that we had been nominated to receive £1,000 from Skipton Building Society's *Community Giving* initiative.

Laura Lees, broker at Mr Mortgages in Paignton, was our nominee: "I recently helped first time buyer clients purchase a renovated property in Torquay. The property had been completely transformed by building students from South Devon College working with Constructing Futures and learning new skills along the way. Skipton's Community Giving was a great way for me to nominate CDFL and help them with the further funding they need ..."

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

3 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANS PUBLISHED



62 YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINED AT CONSTRUCTING FUTURES DEVON SITES



32 NEW HOMES COMPLETED/ DELIVERED



46 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS SUPPORTED WITH ADVICE AND SUPPORT



60 PEOPLE ADVISED ON ENERGY SAVING AT 4 COMMUNITY EVENTS



5 PARISH COUNCILS INTRODUCED TO EMERGENCY PLANNING

8 NEW CLIENTS SIGNED UP TO ENTERPRISE COACHING



401 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SUPPORTED AS MEMBERS OF NEW HOTSW ENHANCE NETWORK



240 EMPLOYERS REACHED OUT TO REGARDING INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

1,433 HOUSEHOLDS SURVEYED ON HOUSING NEEDS



102 PARTICIPANTS AT 4 LEARNING AND NETWORKING EVENTS



2 E-NEWS-LETTERS ISSUED TO OVER 3,060 RECIPIENTS



4 PLACE-BASED DISABILITY WORKSHOPS DESIGNED



KEY

DEVON COMMUNITIES OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK:

-  Understanding Community Needs
-  Brokering Relationships
-  Capability Building Within Communities
-  Support for Community Resilience
-  Opportunities for Individuals to Become Active Citizens

DCT OBJECTIVE

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



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EXMINSTER COMMUNITY PLAN REFRESH CONSULTATION

DCT supported Exminster Parish Council to consult the community about a refresh of its 2014 Community Plan. Our activities included advising on the questions and formatting for the 2019 Household Survey and creating and hosting an online survey. DCT also digitalised data from responses returned on paper forms, analysed the data from over 1,000 completed surveys and produced an Evaluation Report for Exminster Parish Council.

IMPACT

The consultation exercise provided valuable data from the community on local issues and community ideas for improvements throughout Exminster.

DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING ACADEMY

During Q3 we facilitated 4 learning and networking events through the Devon Community Learning Academy, with a total of 102 participants. We collaborated on delivery with 2 external training providers.

In October we ran a course in conjunction with Learn Devon entitled 'Becoming a Community Volunteer and Managing Community Volunteers in Devon'. The two-day course was attended by a mixture of individuals, charities and Parish Councils who all left with a good understanding of how to get the most out of volunteering, as individuals and organisations.

“ full of up to date information, friendliness and help! ”

“ The best part of the training event was the detail. ”



IMPACT

Delegates from all over Devon benefitted from increased knowledge and skills to create positive change in their communities. In particular, delegates on the community volunteering course can put their learning into action by helping to inspire, recruit and manage community volunteers.

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

DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES BECOME ECONOMICALLY STRONGER



ENHANCE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Q3 saw lots of work continue go into the set-up of the new Enhance Social Enterprise Network for Devon and Somerset. Working closely with Somerset RCC and CAG Consultancy, we developed and launched www.enhancesocialenterprise.org.uk, which is an interactive online asset map for social enterprises in the Heart of the South West (HotSW) region.

DCT is the lead partner in this project (covering rural Devon), working with Plymouth Social Enterprise Network, Essence of Exeter, Torbay Social Enterprise Network and Smart Communities Somerset. DCT managed the process of connecting these previously disparate networks to form an umbrella Enhance Social Enterprise Network. An offer for members of the Enhance Social Enterprise (ESE) network was formulated based around enabling meaningful networking and connection, communication, advocacy, and practical offers such as a network logo and a discount on the social enterprise mark.



DCT has so far signposted over 300 social enterprise contacts to the Enhance Social Enterprise Network. We have also created a suite of marketing materials to promote the network and act as an advocacy for social enterprise. We are planning two DCT-led events as part of a schedule of 16 events for the whole area.

Online asset map at www.enhancesocialenterprise.org.uk



Do you run a social enterprise? Join Enhance today for a range of business benefits!

IMPACT

The creation of a HotSW LEP area network provides greater connectivity between social enterprises to support each other to learn and grow.

Research by Social Enterprise UK together with the School for Social Entrepreneurs has demonstrated that social enterprises have an increased resilience to recession, are likely to have a fast growth rate, and are 20% more likely to survive for five years compared to the average UK business. Therefore this project, reaching those who may be unsure of their social enterprise status or potential, and signposting to tailored support, has the potential to boost the economic strength and resilience of Devon's communities.

DCT OBJECTIVE COMMUNITIES BECOME ECONOMICALLY STRONGER



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

ENTERPRISE COACHING FROM NEW START DEVON: THE TRIBE

Our enterprise coach, Matthew Porter, has been supporting an entrepreneur to set up a new creative co-working space for fellow female entrepreneurs, as part of our New Start Devon project.

Interior design blogger Stacey first met with Matthew for an initial session at which they discussed her goals, barriers and unfulfilled potential - and how this could change. By the time of her first coaching session she had decided on her vision - to create a creative coworking space for female entrepreneurs.

They talked through fears and personality traits that had held her back and how she always talks herself out of the things she wants to do for fear of failure. During the session Stacey wrote down **“I will not talk myself out of this”**. This was a real turning point for her.

Throughout the following sessions Matthew helped her work out what she needed to do to make this coworking space a reality. They set tasks that she needed to do by their next appointment.

Because Stacey was now accountable to someone, she absolutely had to do all those things. Things moved really fast for her and in less than four months from the decision to go down this route, she created a brand identity, built a website, built a social following, networked with target audience, built a mailing list, found a venue, decorated it and kitted it out. She finally opened the “Tribe” coworking space in December 2019.

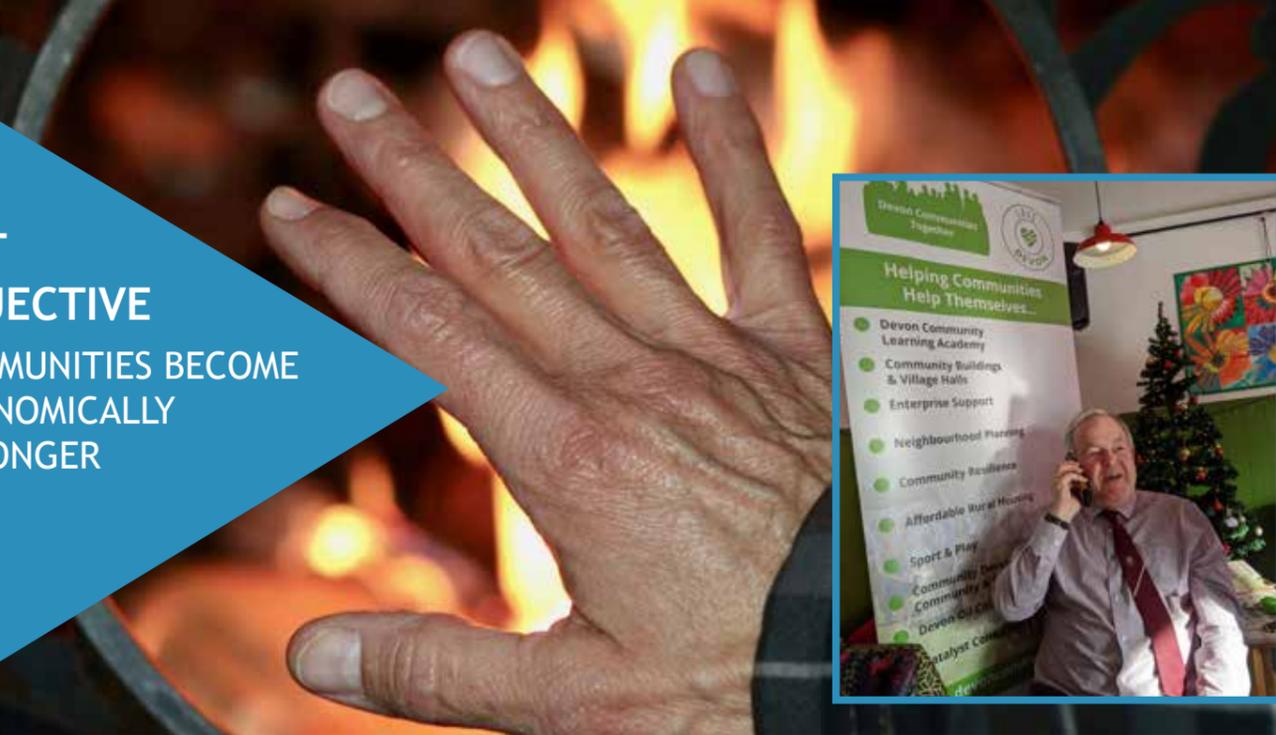
IMPACT

This work in launching an entrepreneurial coworking space succeeded in upskilling, training, supporting and advising Stacey the founder to create something new for her own business and that will directly support many other business start-ups and rurally self-employed women across the area that were not finding support elsewhere.

“My coaching sessions with Matthew have honestly changed my life and given me so much more confidence in myself. I have already been recommending his coaching sessions to friends I know are in a similar position feeling stuck in their business. 🗨️ Stacey Sheppard

OUR VIBE
ATTRACTS
YOUR TRIBE

DCT OBJECTIVE COMMUNITIES BECOME ECONOMICALLY STRONGER



BIG ENERGY SAVING NETWORK: REDUCING FUEL POVERTY

As part of our drive to reduce fuel poverty in Devon we have once again been delivering advice and support to vulnerable residents as part of the Big Energy Saving Network. Kicking off the campaign in Q3, we have provided a range of bespoke advice and support to help people to search, apply for, and access energy related grants, reduce home energy consumption, and clear fuel debts.

We set up a website page, created a social media campaign, distributed leaflets and emails, and explored referral routes with local authorities, housing associations, GP practices and local community groups.

In Q3 we advised 60 people, including at four community events/drop-in sessions, which not only helped many vulnerable and older individuals to understand their bills and explore ways to save money, but they were also organised to foster peer support amongst attendees; vital within isolated rural areas. Our energy saving champions have been training community volunteers to cascade the advice and support in their areas and there are 20 further events scheduled for Q4.



IMPACT

Reducing fuel bills for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities makes a tangible difference by saving money and improving health and wellbeing. We are also empowering and upskilling people in the community to continue to provide support and advice beyond our project.

EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE: AN UPDATE

In Q3 we focused on promoting the benefits of inclusive employment in Devon. We supported the delivery of Untapped Talent Business Breakfast in Barnstaple which was attended by 30 employers who received breakfast, free disability awareness training and networking opportunities.

We networked with around 60 local employers at South West Business Expo about Empowering Enterprise and inclusive employment.

We also circulated Inclusive Opportunities Toolkit to around 150 employers and 50 ‘allies’.



DCT OBJECTIVE

COMMUNITIES BECOME MORE RESOURCEFUL AND RESILIENT



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COMMUNITY BUILDINGS: A VILLAGE HALL IN CRISIS

DCT has been providing support and advice to a village hall* committee that was facing some challenges around governance, operations and financial irregularities, with concerns being raised by the local community.

To begin the process to resolve the issue, we had lengthy discussions with the concerned parties about the alleged mis-management and the capacity of the community to respond to an investigation. We also contacted one of the trustees to discuss the matters and obtained agreement to a meeting between the community and the trustees. DCT attended this meeting and gave advice on correct procedures and how the current shortcomings might be addressed, as well as providing clarity on financial matters. DCT also sought advice from the Charity Commission on resolving an unusual constitutional issue. This is ongoing.

As a result of discussions it became clear that there was some confusion about trustee responsibility, and that the hall could be operated more effectively and better serve the community. In order to support them to make improvements we provided model documents and guides to assist an emergent new management committee.

We are pleased to report that a new management structure is in place; financial matters are being addressed and there is a focus on establishing the effective operation of the hall with proper governance, management, policies and procedures. Solicitors are to be engaged to ensure all processes are fully compliant.

“ I'd therefore like to say a huge personal thank you for all the work you've done and helped us with, your input has been invaluable and I feel we've come a very long way since April, without your help we may well have written it off as a lost cause. ”

New Village Hall Chairman



IMPACT

We have helped to restore an important community resource to run effectively and to grow as a community asset.

We have resolved conflict within a community and enabled some participants to withdraw from the situation with dignity.

*DCT has chosen not to name the village hall in question, as the process is ongoing.

DEVON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FORUM: ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

As part of our drive to grow the number of communities engaged in producing a local emergency plan we designed and delivered two training workshops, held at Sparkwood and Broadwoodkelly village halls, in addition to our main Devon Community Resilience Forum event in Rattery, South Devon in November 2019.

The delegates from 12 communities attending the two workshops were given an understanding of the background to community emergency plans, guided through the process of completing the plan template plan and provided with an insight into running local support teams.

Topics at the Forum event, attended by 70 people, included presentations on the management of rainfall, coastal safety, technical developments in domestic flood security and flood risk management. The British Red Cross also conducted an interactive emergency planning exercise.



IMPACT

The events grew and strengthened commitment to the emergency planning process, increased understanding and generated peer support. Participants were able to further their local plans. DCT was able to build its portfolio of relevant contacts and explore the potential for future collaboration. The Forum has resulted in invitations to make presentations to four communities, a number of funding enquiries and a request to support the public presentation of a community plan.

We were delighted to host Exeter University graduate Olivia for a week during November to give her a flavour of rural community resilience work, which is an area she is keen to explore as a career.

“ My week spent at Devon Communities Together has provided me with an interesting insight into emergency planning at the community level. From time spent in the office learning about the variety of projects run by DCT, to attending events including the Devon Community Resilience Forum and a village planning meeting in Holcombe Rogus, my time at DCT has been very informative. ”



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



DEVON HIGHLIGHTS: ESTABLISHING OUR HOLSWORTHY GROUP

A major focus in our Devon Highlights project has been establishing a new group to tackle loneliness among people in later life in Holsworthy. Taking an Asset Based Community Development approach, we gathered and researched information about community assets already in place in Holsworthy to understand who the group could potentially use as referrers and to get a sense of what was already operating.

We also networked with service users and local voluntary organisations to develop a first-hand understanding of the needs of the community and existing community assets.

In December, we held a soft launch in the town with 11 members of the community representing: Bowls club; Methodist Church; TTVS; Walk and Talk; Day companions; move it or lose it fitness; and Holsworthy community forum.

“It’s really nice to have someone that wants to collaborate to strengthen community assets that are already in place, rather than coming in and only asset stripping’.
Voluntary Sector Service Provider Manager”

IMPACT

Collaborative working will lead to a referral pathway into the Highlights loneliness project for specific services users that have been identified as struggling with isolation and loneliness due to having a fall or illness.

The open dialogue being fostered is generating a greater understanding of the real needs within the community and building a sustainable platform for the ongoing delivery of impactful services.

WEST DEVON YOUTH PROJECT

We created evaluation tools and trained 11 youth workers in the use of evaluation and monitoring tools as part of a wider project to support four disparate youth services in West Devon to work together to better support young people.

IMPACT

The evaluation support enables this project to evidence its outputs related to the wellbeing and quality of life of young people in West Devon, often in remote and deprived communities.



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



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ILFRACOMBE PLACE-BASED DISABILITY PROJECT

DCT, in partnership with Devon County Council Adult Care Services and One Ilfracombe, is facilitating an innovative multi-stakeholder programme of a series of ‘Exploring the Challenge’ workshops in Ilfracombe to better understand the realities for people with living with disabilities in the town, and help develop new solutions to challenges. In Q3 2019, foundations were laid to help service users, service providers and community groups to work together.

Activities included running a local Design Led Thinking Workforce Development Training Workshop and participating in a local Steering Group with representatives of nine organisations, including people with disabilities, social care service providers, representative community bodies and other strategic service providers. We contributed to an asset map to be used to inform conversations during the project. This is an exciting and innovative pilot, enabling people with disabilities to have an equal say in the development of local services.

IMPACT

We have begun to foster greater inclusivity by connecting service providers and service users, exploring each other’s motivations and their roles in the town related to disability in Ilfracombe. We have increased skills and knowledge by training front line and strategic management in Design Led thinking; and by sharing asset maps and information about the accessibility requirements and needs of those with disabilities with the steering group members.

RURAL HOUSING AWARDS

During Q3, DCT’s rural housing enablers were delighted to announce the winners of the Devon Rural Housing Awards. The Outstanding Community Contribution Award was won by **Denbury Parish Council**, which overcame significant challenges over six years to provide affordable housing in the Parish.

The Best Rural Development Award winner was **Hastoe** for its development of eight affordable homes at Higher Shippon, Cheriton Bishop.



Affordable Hastoe homes at Higher Shippon, Cheriton Bishop

AND FINALLY ...

BRIXHAM TOWN HALL REGENERATION BUSINESS PLAN:

In December 2019, DCT began working with Brixham Town Council on an exciting town hall regeneration community engagement and business planning project, aimed at increasing public access, economic sustainability, and the development of a cultural community hub.

COMMUNITY LED HOUSING HUB:

DCT has recently been awarded a grant of £36,666 to develop a Community Led Housing Hub in Devon. The hub will offer signposting and support for all forms of affordable community led housing across the whole of Devon including Exeter, Torquay and Plymouth.

Watch this space for more news on these two exciting projects ...



DCT has adopted four 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.

