



Devon Communities
Together

Devon Communities Together: Measuring Our Impact

Q1 April - June 2024

LOVE
DEVON

OUR SIX STRATEGIC AIMS ARE AT THE CENTRE OF ALL OUR ACTIVITIES. DCT WILL ...

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

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

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

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



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

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



DCT's Chris delivers training to VCSE organisations in East Devon (see pg.13)

SOCIAL VALUE:
TOTAL BENEFITS
IN Q1 COULD BE
VALUED AS
£452,800!

MEASURING OUR SOCIAL VALUE

We're pleased to report that during Q1 the total benefits we generated have been measured by our Social Value Engine as £452.8k. The chart below shows how the value can be allocated across our six strategic aims (pg. 2), although in reality much of our work encompasses more than one aim.



WE AIM TO ...
**champion
diversity and
inclusion, hear
minority voices
and respond to
their needs**



5 people
attended **2** travel
training sessions in our
Travelling with Confidence
project (pg.5)

OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE VALUED

AT **£3,690**
SOCIAL VALUE



Engaged with
diverse groups
of people at **26**
events

Conducted **9**
community based
surveys, designed to
listen to voices that are
not often heard



Read more about ...

TRAVELLING WITH CONFIDENCE

Travelling with Confidence is a Devon-wide project being co-delivered by Devon Communities Together and Living Options Devon.

Designed to support people with disabilities to gain confidence using public transport, we are providing free training for individuals and disability awareness training to local partner organisations and travel providers. The project also wishes to raise awareness of the barriers faced by people with disabilities, in order to create change.

This quarter we ran a pilot training programme for five people, which consisted of an introductory classroom session, two travel sessions and a follow up. Participants were supported to travel by train from Exeter to Dawlish. The trip was planned with the participants during the introductory session. They experienced and dealt with real-life issues when the station lifts were not working and they had to cross the tracks. www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/travelling-confidence



What impact did the training have? The participants were able to plan and undertake journeys by bus and train, and overcome real-life barriers to travel. One participant who started out worried about travelling at all is now planning longer trips as a result.

We asked the participants what they valued most about the training:

"The professional way training was conducted and information shared and positive feedback."
Colin, participant

"It has helped me using train travel." Clare, participant

"Opened my eyes on how easy it will become with practice. Gave me much needed confidence ... Renewing my future hopes."
Sheila, participant

Do you wish to be more confident on public transport?

FREE travel training for groups of adults and young people in Devon with all types of disabilities, to help you gain confidence using public transport.

Learn to:

- Plan your journey to meet your needs
- Build confidence to communicate positively

Develop skills and knowledge, take supported bus and train journeys, and plan your next steps.

Find out more:
Laila.Underwood@livingoptions.org
01392 459222

We welcome enquiries from individuals & organisations.

Powered by
Motability Foundation
Making all journeys accessible

WE AIM TO ...

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



OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE VALUED

AT **£68,210**
SOCIAL VALUE

Began delivery of a community engagement programme aiming to understand barriers to accessing substance misuse treatment in rural and coastal areas



Rural proofed **13** Devon County Council Adult Social Care policies



Chaired **2** Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly (pg.8) Digital Inclusion Groups

Responded to the public consultation on the Devon Devolution Deal draft proposals, highlighting rural issues

1 site visit to Berrynarbor, supporting the Parish Council with redeveloping their community recreation ground



Read more about ...

A NEW RECREATION FACILITY IN BERRYNARBOR

Berrynarbor Parish Council wishes to upgrade its recreation ground with more modern equipment, particularly for teens and adults. The upgrade needs to be beneficial for particular sports, for which a small multi-use games area may be useful. Adult fitness equipment and a sensory garden are also being looked at, but they need to engage with the community find out what people need and want.

As part of our work to support the Parish Council with this process we have visited the site to gain a greater understanding of the challenge, after which we created a theory of change framework and identified questions for the online survey upon which the consultation will be based. The full



community consultation will launch later this year.



What impact will the consultation have?

The community in Berrynarbor will benefit from a modern new facility that meets its need and facilitates sports, play and activities that will support community health and wellbeing.

Read more about ...

RURAL PROOFING POLICIES

We were delighted to be commissioned by Devon County Council Service Adult Social Care Service to conduct a comprehensive rural proofing review of the 13 Adult Social Care core policies to check for unconscious bias in terms of rurality and deprivation.

Despite Devon being predominantly rural, we identified minimal references to the wider rural determinants of health and inequalities of access to key services in

rural communities.



What impact will the rural proofing have?

We produced a report for Devon County Council Adult Care Service in June 2024, providing key recommendations in four main areas: Identifying Rural Need; Tackling Rural Health Inequalities; Improving Access to Rural Care Services and Digital Transformation. The report proposes six practical next steps, which, if implemented, will help to improve adult social care services for people in rural communities.

A light blue folder with the word "POLICIES" written on it in large, bold, black capital letters. The folder is slightly open, and the text is on a white strip of paper or a label. In the background, there is a cup of coffee and a spiral notebook.

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

OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE
VALUED AT
£115,520
SOCIAL VALUE



20

Wild About
Devon community
wildlife grant
applications
assessed

Produced
evaluation report for
Axewoods Cooperative,
which in a year has
delivered **42** tonnes of
firewood to people
facing fuel poverty



Engaged with **18**
communities about
Community Emergency
Planning to help keep
people and property safe in
emergencies. Supported the
development of **3**
new plans



£3,777
awarded in
Community
Emergency Plan
grants

Evaluated
the impact
on food waste
reduction of
4 community
fridges

Facilitated
1 focus group
for young people to
explore the impact of
the countryside
on their lives



10
community
engagements to
support pilot schemes
for nature-based
flood prevention

Read more about ...

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Devon Community Resilience Forum promotes and supports community resilience by working with communities to develop and enhance their ability to harness local resources and expertise to protect people and property in adverse situations.

During Q1 we engaged with 18 communities to support them with emergency planning, including introductory presentations to 11 local Town and Parish councils across East and Mid Devon. Three new Community Emergency Plans were created.

We also awarded grants to the value of £3,777 to enable communities to develop their plans and purchase vital equipment.



What has the impact of our community engagement been?

As a result of attending an engagement event in West Hill, East Devon, one community leader has brought on board 10 volunteers and received support from the Parish Council, which has agreed to set up an emergency planning working group. This is an inspiring result as most plans are initiated by Parish Councils which often struggle to attract volunteers!

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

Case history ...

A CLUSTER WORKING APPROACH

Previously, our approach to increasing Community Emergency Plans in Devon was to promote widely and respond to expressions of interest from individual parishes. Recently, we have identified a new approach to work with relevant local authority staff to identify clusters of parishes that don't have up-to-date plans in place, and create a joint event at which we present to them as a cluster. So far, the sessions have shown added value in the following ways:

- Parishes have been more likely to participate as part of a group
- Synergies have been identified
- The reluctant are energised by the keen
- Sharing practical work increases understanding
- Relationships are formed
- Old plans, in need of updating were uncovered

It is early in the programme, but subsequent enquiries and requests for assistance indicate that a number of parishes have become active. Sessions in West Hill (East Devon) and Uffculme (Mid Devon) were attended by 12 parishes, most being new to community emergency planning. We are now planning other cluster sessions across the county to support those communities wishing to put together a plan.



Read more about ...



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Devon Resilience Innovation Programme (DRIP), funded by DEFRA, is a collaborative partnership managed by Devon County Council which is designed to help communities become more resilient to flooding.

Each pilot project is working on different geographical areas, the majority looking at nature based solutions (NBS) to slow the flow of water high up in the catchment with the aim of reducing its impact where houses and businesses are located.

DCT has been working with the pilot projects to help them communicate their value clearly and we've also been engaging with Parish Councils to encourage them to consider creating a

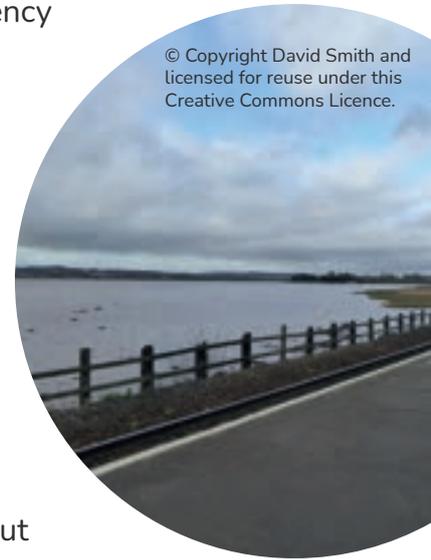
Community Emergency Plan (pg. 9).



What Is the impact of the pilot projects?

A successful example of the engagement is in Exton, which now has a flood group and is working on its Community Emergency Plan. The Parish Council is better informed and more confident about the DRIP intervention, which involves Nature Based Solutions being created upstream and flood warning sensors in road drains, which trigger a warning app. The community is not only better protected by interventions upstream, but should flooding be likely to occur, they are forewarned and can enact their Emergency Plan to keep people safe.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/flood-and-coastal-resilience-innovation-programme-fcrip-managing-big-problems-small-places



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CONNECTING PEOPLE AND LANDSCAPES

Connecting People and Landscapes is a new 18-month pilot project led by the Bat Conservation Trust and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, looking at the impact that climate change is having on wildlife in farming landscapes. It aims to build an understanding of how nature-friendly regenerative farming supports biodiversity and creates resilient landscapes, bringing communities and farmers together.

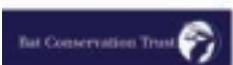
As part of our community engagement role we have so far facilitated a focus group for young people not in employment, education or training, to explore their relationship to farming and the countryside, and raise awareness of how they can be involved in the project, for example by sitting on a youth panel. We have more engagement events planned for the summer and autumn.



What will the impact of this project be?

Farmers and their local communities will be better connected and there will be more widespread awareness of the need to care for our eco systems, our food production industry and our wildlife.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/connecting-people-and-landscapes



WE AIM TO ...

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

OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE VALUED

AT **£26,310**
SOCIAL VALUE



2,162

households given
the opportunity to
share evidence of
housing need

Supported

Bradninch



Town Trust to
develop a new
strategic vision



1st annual
impact report
developed for
Riverside Community
Centre, Bovey
Tracey

Supported

51 community
buildings with
specialist
advice

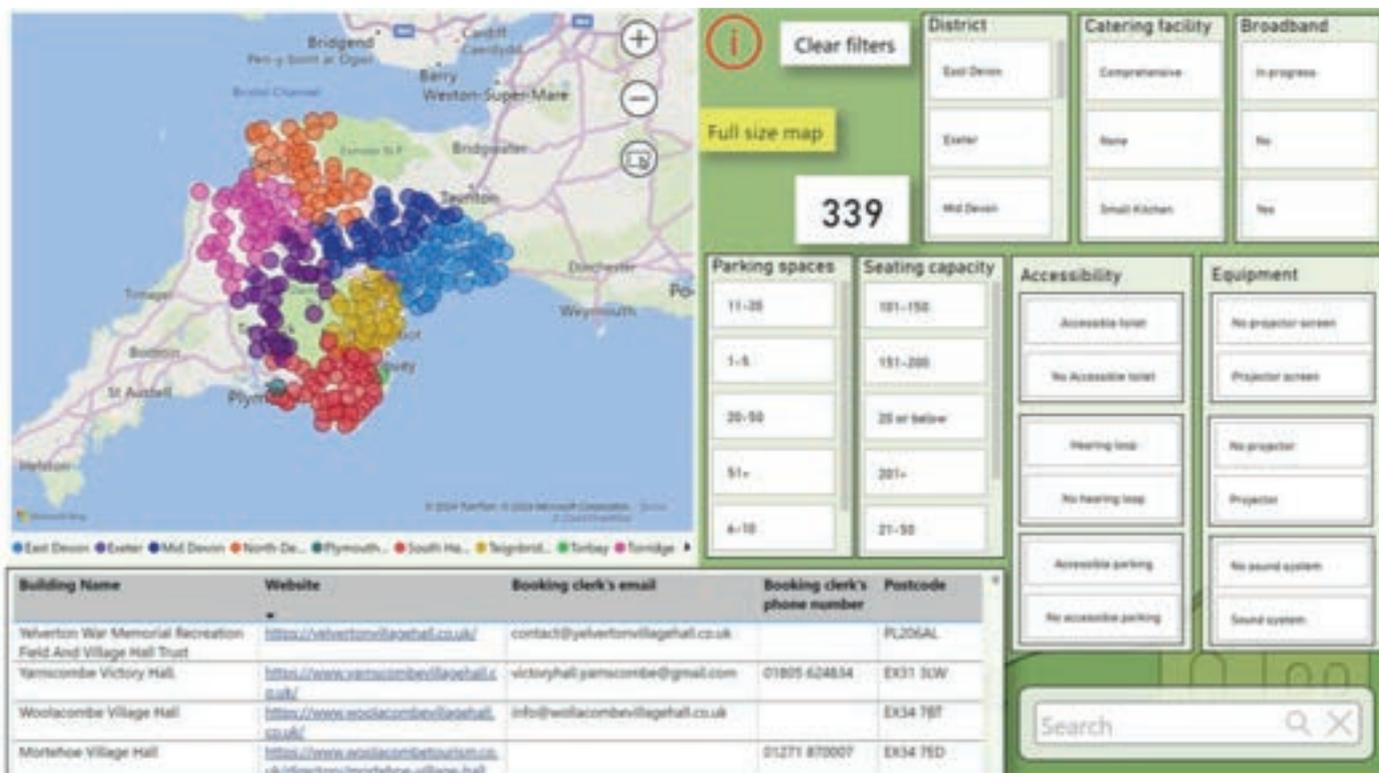
42,841 litres
of oil ordered by
the **307** members
of the Devon Oil
Collective

Trained **60**
people and gave
1-2-1 support to **14**
organisations as part
of the East Devon
Voluntary, Community
and Social Enterprise
Support Service



Produced
final Village Hall
Audit report with
data from **339**
halls





Above: Our new, interactive Village Hall Community Asset Map

Read more about ...

SUPPORTING DEVON'S VILLAGE HALLS

Having completed our audit of 339 (80%) of Devon's Village Halls earlier this year, we were delighted to complete our final report on our findings and launch the new interactive Community Asset Map.

Devon's Village Halls and Community Buildings are significant community assets, but there has never been a central database containing information about the facilities they have or how they are used, until now. The audit was designed to find out what these community assets currently offer and to assess the underused potential that can be harnessed through Village Halls that could provide even greater and vibrant services to their communities. The full report shares exclusive evidence on many key areas from audited halls, ranging from financial sustainability, digital connectivity and access to good quality Wi-Fi, to services for children and young people and environmental sustainability.

 What impact will the audit have? The data can inform the nature of future support and potential funding for Village Halls and the map provides a fantastic new tool for people seeking event spaces, encouraging greater levels of local bookings. Read the report and explore the new map here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/village-halls-community-buildings-audit



Read more about ...

EAST DEVON VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE

DCT is into our second year of a programme of support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in East Devon

During the last quarter, our training programme included sessions on fundraising, supporting volunteers, evaluation and impact and marketing, and was attended by 60 people.

1-2-1 support and surgeries supporting a

further 14 organisations has enabled those groups to increase their skills, knowledge and capacity.

We've also been developing networks across the district, through peer networks such as the Volunteer Managers Peer Network and East Devon Village Hall Cluster.



What's been the impact so far?

Upskilling, connecting and partnering has increased the infrastructure capacity of the VCSE sector in East Devon, particularly addressing local rural matters in the district in a sustainable way.

Led by East Devon District Council, this project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Find out more here: www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/east-devon-vcse-support-service

Case history ...

LLAMAS FOR GOOD

In April 2024, the East Devon based Community Interest Company 'Llamas4Good' was set up. This is a not-for-profit social enterprise that provides therapeutic visits in the community with llamas including at care homes, hospitals, day centres and schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The East Devon VCSE Support Service team has provided both training and 1-2-1 support to Llamas4Good in areas such as finding funding, writing funding applications, budgeting, operational policies, business strategy and how to measure impact and evaluation.

“There is so much to consider when setting up a social enterprise – how and where to find funding, how to write policies and procedures, how to measure impact, how to plan and budget etc - all of which can seem quite daunting! However, the VCSE workshops and one-to-one mentoring take you through each of these in an easy-to-understand way, and in a way that is relevant to your own enterprise. The in-depth knowledge of the workshop facilitators is amazing and I have found the templates provided to be particularly useful for writing policies such as Safeguarding and Health & Safety, and wouldn't have known where to start without them!”

“I would highly recommend the East Devon VCSE Support Service to anyone who is either considering, or has recently set up either a social enterprise or voluntary community service of any sort.”



Read more about ...

ENABLING RURAL HOUSING

Our Rural Housing Enabling service, funded by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) via ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), has allowed us to help Parish Councils and other community groups through the process of creating affordable homes in their community. This quarter we have supported nine different groups with advice and signposting, including those wishing to build affordable housing for local people, older people and people with special educational needs.

We're also continuing our Housing Needs Survey Work through the Devon Community Housing Hub, and during the quarter have worked on eight surveys at various stages of the process to assess the need for affordable new housing in rural communities.

 **What will the impact of our enabling work be?** There are an increasing number of Devon people who find it difficult to afford suitable housing in the communities where they grew up, work, or have close relatives. By assessing this need, we gather the evidence needed to help get new housing schemes through the planning system in the places where they are most needed. Our support to Parish Councils has resulted in greater understanding of the process to developing rural housing. www.devonhousinghub.org.uk



Thank you very much for coming out to talk to us last week- it was really helpful." Tedburn St. Mary Parish Council

Thank you so much for attending our Parish Council meeting everyone found it very valuable. You very succinctly set out for us what was and was not possible." Abbotsham Parish Council



**Funded by
UK Government**



WE AIM TO ...

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

OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE VALUED

AT **£98,220**
SOCIAL VALUE

Supported Axewoods Co-operative to locally promote the posts of **2** Junior Landscape Surveyors, which have been filled



Facilitated **15** training and learning sessions themed around business and enterprise support, with **165** attendees



Supported Blackdown Support Group to develop a three year business plan for health and social care priorities



Developed a South West Peninsula collective Social Enterprise Support Strategy



Read more about ...

BLACKDOWN SUPPORT GROUP BUSINESS PLAN

Blackdown Support Group is a community self-help scheme. Its vision is that people living in the Blackdown Hills are connected to their communities and have a strong sense of wellbeing, as well as being aware of and able to access the services they need to support their health and independence.

We supported the Group with research for the development of three-year business plan with reference to health and social care priorities for the Blackdown Hills area with Devon County Council and Somerset County Council strategies. We worked with the group to draft the narrative, budgets and cashflow,

 **What will the impact of this business plan be?** Trustees have a much clearer idea of where their priorities fit into the health and social care priorities of statutory agencies in Devon and Somerset. The business plan will help them focus more effectively on the needs of vulnerable people in the Blackdown Hills - and the year-on-year costs of operating their services. The business plan and finances are an essential component of any application that Blackdown Support Group will make for funding, which will benefit community wellbeing across the area.



Read more about ...

SOUTH WEST PENINSULA SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

DCT has been working collaboratively with Plymouth and Torbay Social Enterprise Networks and the School for Social Entrepreneurs on the development of a South West Peninsula Social Enterprise Support programme this quarter.

We aim to collaboratively deliver an engaging and inclusive social enterprise support programme, including networking, peer support and mentoring and learning activities in digital leadership; social investment, funding and finance; business development; the circular economy and community wealth building; environmental sustainability and social value and procurement.

 **What impact is this collaboration having so far?** Through our research we are gaining a greater understanding of the support needs of the sector, including an increase in demand for advice on funding and finance, digital support, better sector representation, better networking, communications and business coaching. Post-COVID, the rural social enterprise sector in Devon faces significant challenges around cost of living, cuts in public sector funding and the loss of European funding, emphasising the need for this service.

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



OUR ACTIVITIES
COULD BE
VALUED AT
£140,850
SOCIAL VALUE



260

attendees trained
at **26** Learning,
Development and
Networking Events



Supported **6** meetings
and issued **3** newsletters
for the Torbay, Plymouth
and Devon VCSE
Assembly, bringing
together **243** VCSE
representatives



Welcomed **27**
students from the
Netherlands to conduct
community research in
rural Devon



Provided
6 benefits
awareness courses
in collaboration with
Citizens Advice
Devon



FROM THE NETHERLANDS TO DEVON!

We were delighted to once again organise transportation and accommodation for 27 students from Wageningen University, who visited Devon for two weeks this summer as part of their International Development Studies residential field trip. This year was an extra special year as we celebrated 20 years of our partnership with a social event in Ashburton in June, with live music, speeches and lots of memories from the past two decades!



What has the impact of this partnership been? Over the past 20 years, approximately 640 Dutch students have developed their

important research studies in a new, rural environment, not only furthering their own studies but uncovering insights into community activity in Devon.



What you do does make a difference in our communities. Just by your very presence, by you asking questions, they go 'Oh, I didn't think of that, that's a good question, I never thought in that way.' So what it does, it actually helps the communities to reflect a little bit itself on what its doing." Host of many years standing, Simon Tytherleigh

Read more about ...

TORBAY, PLYMOUTH AND DEVON VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCSE) ASSEMBLY

The Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly brings together independent charities, social enterprises and community-led organisations across Torbay, Plymouth and Devon. The Assembly aims to support, complement and add value to local VCSE networks and partnerships.

As the operational lead for the Assembly, DCT supports the Chair, Executive Committee, and wider Assembly to conduct strategic activities as a collaborative group. We support the Chair to facilitate monthly meetings for the wider Assembly and the Executive Committee, as well as managing a process for representing the VCSE sector at multiple strategic meetings, boards and groups.

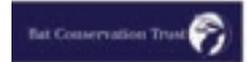


What impact is the Assembly having so far? The VCSE Assembly has increased connections across a range of subjects across sectors in Devon, particularly between the VCSE sector, the NHS and local councils, therefore creating opportunities to increase diversity and influence strategic decision making, which in turn will improve the lives of local citizens through improved services and initiatives.



It's great to be part of the TPD VCSE Assembly. I have been to a couple of meetings and found them interesting with great networking."

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...



 **Funded by UK Government**



Torbay, Plymouth & Devon
VCSE Assembly

