



Devon Communities Together

# Devon Communities Together: Measuring Our Impact

Quarter 2 July - September 2024



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

We have divided this report into chapters that focus on activities that contribute to these aims. Click on the boxes below or head to the relevant pages to explore our work in these areas.

...work with communities to develop innovative ways to achieve community resilience and a positive impact for climate change and sustainability (see pg.4)

...develop community capacity building, through local facilities, spaces, services, people and their skills (see pg.7)

...support Devon's rural economy, local entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and thrive, and promote community wealth building (see pg. 16)

...identify and work to reduce inequalities to ensure 'rural proofing' of services, and to improve community health and wellbeing (see pg. 14)



...champion diversity and inclusion, hear minority voices and respond to their needs (see pg. 11)

...flourish as an agile, flexible, learning organisation, responding positively to the evolving needs of our communities, stakeholders and staff (see pg. 18)

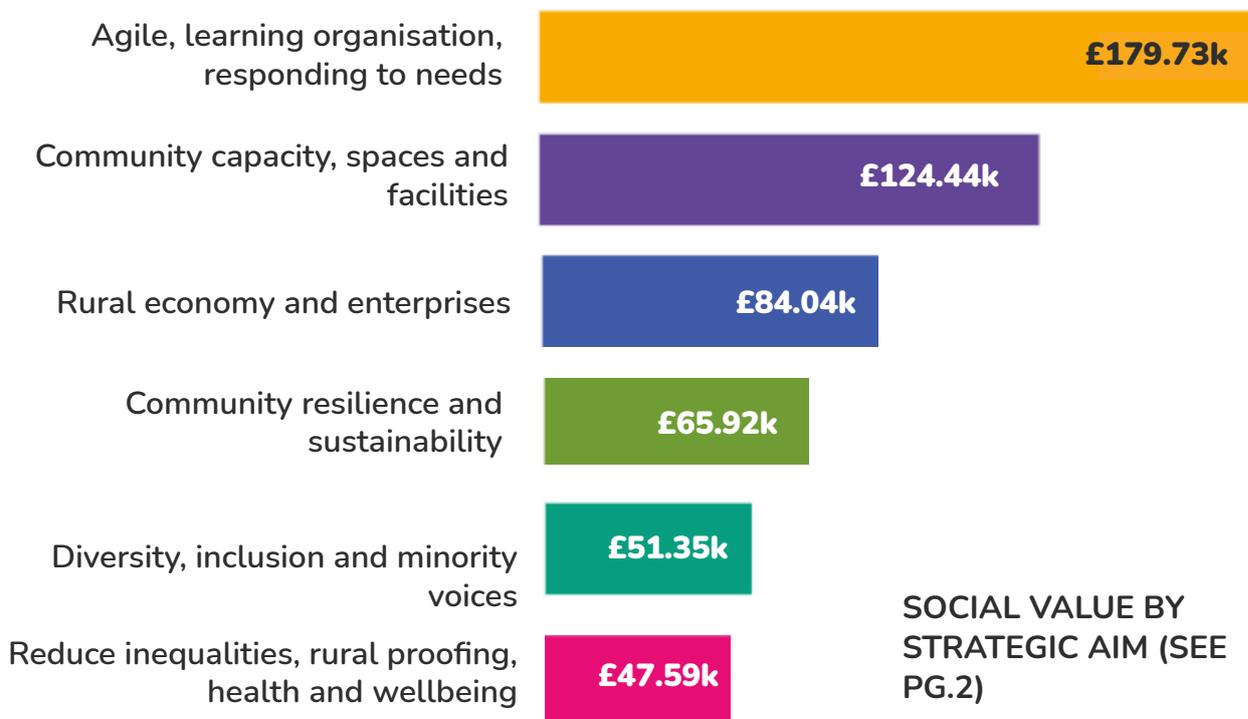


*DCT's Rod introduces a speaker at the Devon Community Resilience Forum conference in September (see pg.5)*

*SOCIAL VALUE:  
TOTAL BENEFITS  
IN QUARTER 2 HAS  
BEEN VALUED AS  
£533,060!*

## MEASURING OUR SOCIAL VALUE

We're pleased to report that during Q2 the total benefits we generated have been measured by our Social Value Engine as £533,060. 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.



\*A note on language: throughout this report we have endeavoured to use terminology that is used by the specific organisations and people to which we refer, as we feel it is important to reflect how they chose to describe themselves.

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  
HAVE BEEN VALUED  
AT **£65,920**  
SOCIAL VALUE



8

stakeholder  
engagements to  
support pilot schemes  
for nature-based  
flood prevention



Engaged with **10**  
communities about  
Community Emergency  
Planning and supported  
the completion of **5**  
new plans

**85** delegates  
increased their  
knowledge of  
community resilience  
at our September  
conference



Launched  
our 2024-  
25 programme  
of energy saving  
advice for rural  
households



**17** carers  
and autistic  
adults enhanced their  
connection with local  
landscapes at a farm  
experience day

**£17,410**  
awarded in  
Community  
Emergency Plan  
grants

Completed  
the allocation  
of **£10,000**  
community wildlife  
grant funding to **33**  
community groups



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.

This quarter, we provided support and advice to 10 local communities, resulting in five completed emergency plans. We also allocated £17,410 in Emergency Grant Funding.

Our September Forum event attracted 85 delegates from parish and town councils, with speakers from BT, British Red Cross, Environment Agency and Dorset Local Resilience Forum. As a result of discussions from the day, we are exploring ways to offer first aid training for Forum members.



**What was the impact of our resilience support?** Five communities have completed emergency plans, so will be better prepared to deal with local emergencies.

An example of the impact of attendance at our Forum training and conferences comes from a resident of Northleigh in East Devon. Sheena King has engaged 10 volunteers to take part in emergency planning and has encouraged the Parish Council, who previously did not engage with the Forum, to adopt the team as a working group of the council. This represents a significant step in creating an emergency plan and a response team for the community.

[www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-community-resilience-forum](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-community-resilience-forum)

“

Always find these sessions interesting and informative.”

“

The event was superb! It covered all areas well.”



*DCT's Martin Rich features in one of the case study videos for Devon County Council's Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP), for which DCT is the stakeholder engagement partner. Hear Martin and the team talk about the importance of community buy-in around flood resilience: [www.devon.gov.uk/drip/case-studies/](http://www.devon.gov.uk/drip/case-studies/)*



Read more about ...

## 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, aiming to build an understanding of how nature-friendly regenerative farming supports biodiversity and creates resilient landscapes, bringing communities and farmers together.

This quarter, we supported the Bat Conservation Trust to organise an event at Gappah Farm near Chudleigh. We welcomed 17 participants from Honiton Carers and Autistic After Hours (an organisation for autistic adults without a learning disability) who experienced a fun and informative day learning about food, farming and wildlife.



### What was the impact of the Farm Day?

Feedback showed that it provided a welcome outing for people who have restricted access to the countryside, forging a new connection between people and their nearby farms, and allowing for greater understanding of farming practices.



[www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/connecting-people-and-landscapes](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/connecting-people-and-landscapes)



*Please can I, on behalf of the carers group, thank you so very much for giving our group such a wonderful day yesterday. They are all totally full of it all and have shared so much with us that the rest of us are so envious we did not attend."*



## PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN DEVON

Members of the staff team here at DCT regularly participate in strategic discussions, collaborative groups and lend our expertise to initiatives focused on increasing sustainability and protecting Devon's natural environment ...

- Actively involved in the Devon Local Nature Partnership Board, which oversees the statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
- Supported Naturally Healthy May and Invasive Species Week
- Key delivery partner in new University of Exeter-led programme that aims to work with rural and coastal communities to enable an enhanced understanding of environmental challenges and solutions from a place-based perspective

WE AIM TO ...

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



OUR ACTIVITIES  
HAVE BEEN  
VALUED AT

**£124,440**  
SOCIAL VALUE



**1** site visit  
to South Molton  
Pannier Market to  
begin our professional  
support for the new  
roof fundraising  
campaign



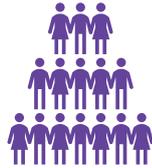
Provided specialist  
advice to **52**  
Village Halls &  
rural community  
spaces

Supported **46**  
organisations as part of  
the East Devon Voluntary,  
Community and Social  
Enterprise Support Service



Supported  
Riverside Community  
Centre, Bovey Tracey,  
to restructure its  
funding to suit its  
current needs

Co-designed upcoming community engagement programme with Lapford Parish Council to give local people a voice in the future of their community



29,395 litres of household heating oil ordered by the 311 members of the Devon Oil Collective



Advised 8 community groups on developing affordable rural housing in their communities

1,978 households given the opportunity to provide evidence of local housing need



Funded by UK Government

## ENABLING RURAL HOUSING

Our Rural Housing Enabler has been supporting rural parishes across Devon, whether that's through facilitating Housing Needs Surveys to establish the level of new housing required, or by providing advice and making connections. For example:

- Managed Housing Needs Surveys in Brayford, Landkey and Swimbridge, Kilminster and Petrockstowe
- Advised a landowner in North Devon

who has been trying to get planning permission for new homes in their parish

- Liaised with a landlord and the District Council regarding a potential new Council lease property in East Devon
- Advised on - and began to arrange - a new Housing Needs Survey for a parish in East Devon, following on from its recent Neighbourhood Plan

[www.devonhousinghub.org.uk](http://www.devonhousinghub.org.uk)

## MAKING CONNECTIONS IN EAST DEVON

DCT is providing a comprehensive programme of support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in East Devon. During this quarter we have engaged with 46 organisations including 16 new contacts. For example, we ...

- Met with a bowling club to support them with their funding challenges, including finding a fund they could be eligible for and advising them on ways of shaping an application
- Supported a play therapy organisation with business planning and governance
- Facilitated connections between East Devon Village Halls via the Village Halls Cluster and a WhatsApp group, so they could stay connected between meetings



Hear from Gittisham and Membury Village Halls: [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ6J\\_LdidCkmZbjnz-6BliSAIN\\_Fgb9WL](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ6J_LdidCkmZbjnz-6BliSAIN_Fgb9WL)

*"I've been to two of the meetings now and it's been great to talk to committee members of other Village Halls and discuss having similar problems [and] ways they've solved theirs or ways we can work together." Alex, Gittisham Village Hall*

 **What's the impact of this support?** Upskilling, connecting and partnering increases the capacity of the VCSE sector in East Devon to deliver vital services to its communities, particularly to address local, rural matters in the district in a sustainable way.

This project is funded by East Devon District Council, through the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. [www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/east-devon-vcse-support-service](https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/east-devon-vcse-support-service)

### Case history ...



#### WOMEN'S CRAFTING FOR WELLBEING

DCT was approached by Women's Crafting for Wellbeing (WCW) who were in the process of setting up as a CIC (community interest company) to provide peer support and creative expression for women in Honiton following the closure of another mental health support service. We met with WCW to provide support, including sharing resources to guide them through the process of establishing a CIC (which they have now done), and signposting them to free training. We also facilitated a new connection between WCW and Devon Mental Health Alliance.

It's fantastic to help a CIC that's going to have such a big impact and we look forward to working with them as they develop and grow. Find out more on their Facebook page here: [www.facebook.com/p/womens-crafting-for-wellbeing-61562272086094/](https://www.facebook.com/p/womens-crafting-for-wellbeing-61562272086094/)



Read more about ...

## SUPPORTING DEVON'S VILLAGE HALLS

This quarter, we engaged 52 times with Village Halls across Devon to help the committees and trustee boards keep these important assets at the heart of their communities.

What sorts of things have we helped them with? Running a Village Hall is a complex business and we provide advice on a wide range of topics. Here are a few examples ...



**Funding advice** - we gave a South Devon hall advice on ways to source an additional £5k required to complete roof repairs



**ICT** - we helped a North Devon hall looking to install wifi to increase bookings



**Building advice** - we supported a hall in Torridge to find local suppliers to improve their acoustics



**Model policies** - we supplied a hall in West Devon with hire agreement and constitution templates



**Governance** - we gave advice to a hall in East Devon that wants to set up as a charity to access new funding sources



**Sustainability** - we advised a hall in Mid Devon on sustainable heating systems and more ...



**What impact does this advice have?** Halls are supported to maintain and improve facilities, in turn leading to enhanced social, recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities, promoting inclusion and resilience in their largely rural communities.

### VILLAGE HALLS COMMUNITY ASSET MAP: SPREADING THE WORD

Following the launch of our Village Halls Community Asset Map last quarter, we've been raising awareness so that halls can start to benefit from this fantastic new map and data set.

As well as sharing it via our own social media, website and emails, we also launched a media campaign and achieved coverage via a live interview on BBC Radio Devon as well as through online and print publicatins including Crediton Courier, One Magazine, Devon Live, and Mid Devon Advertiser.

We're delighted to report that we have since audited more halls and one hall in the South Hams has already used our data to support a funding application!

Take a look at the map and our final report here: [www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/village-halls-community-buildings-audit](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/village-halls-community-buildings-audit)



WE AIM TO ...

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



Supported  
**11** people on  
Exeter College's  
Gateway to



Independence programme with  
training to help them become  
more confident on public  
transport

OUR ACTIVITIES  
HAVE BEEN VALUED  
AT **£51,350**  
SOCIAL VALUE

Engaged  
with **50** people  
at a public event to  
raise awareness of the  
challenges of travelling on  
public transport with a  
disability

Conducted  
**11** community  
surveys and engaged  
with **734** people at **16**  
community-based events to  
listen to voices that are not  
often heard



Conducted  
**3** in-depth  
interviews to understand  
the experiences of young  
people with learning  
disabilities and their  
families



*"[it] always feels it's an imposition and passengers are wondering how long he is going to take...Will I be causing an inconvenience?" David, folding scooter user*



*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 and raise awareness of the challenges they face.

This quarter, we began delivering a programme of travel training sessions with Exeter College, directly supporting people with new skills to use buses and trains with more confidence.

We also launched our public awareness campaign at the Plymouth 'Take the Bus Month' event in the city centre, where we met with bus users to find out their experiences of using public transport, including in the more rural areas of South Devon.

Visitors to our stand were able to experience boarding a bus using a mobility scooter. Some found this to be valuable practice, without the pressure of other passengers watching. Some felt they or a partner might need to use a scooter as they got older, so found it helpful to try out. Bus drivers who were attending the event said it gave them a valuable insight into their passengers' experience. Encouragingly, several people said that bus drivers and passengers are usually really helpful.



**What impact did our engagements with the public have?** One learner at Exeter College, who does not usually engage and spent the first session reading their book, has now started looking up and has been reading some of the travel training information. We hope that these two people will continue accessing the support on offer to enable them to travel with confidence.

At the Plymouth event, as well as increasing general awareness of the challenges for people with disabilities and learning valuable insights from people with lived experience, we have also been able to provide direct support to individuals. For example, we met a woman with autism who expressed that she finds it hard to use buses due to lack of signage at bus stops. We introduced her to a representative from Stagecoach to discuss it further.

[www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/travelling-confidence](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/travelling-confidence)

Read more about ...

## THE PELICAN PROJECT

DCT is supporting The Pelican Project with a bespoke evaluation programme to help the collective of young people with learning disabilities, families, teachers and partner organisations to understand its impact.

A key part of this evaluation is gathering 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) stories, which use personal accounts from the people involved to measure how The Pelican Project is changing people's lives and where the most significant change is. MSC is just one aspect of a robust Theory of Change that we've put in place.

A unique characteristic of this project is that the Pelican family isn't just made up of the young people themselves; parents, carers and staff are all 'Pelicans'. Therefore, we were delighted to attend the enrolment day of the new term and conduct three MSC interviews with a

parent, a carer and a member of Pelican staff to understand their stories.

The Pelicans started their new term in September with new members, meaning that they have almost reached their end-of-project target of 50 clients. We Over the summer The Pelican project attracted five new partner organisations who will provide activities for the Pelicans



### What impact is the evaluation having?

Our evaluation programme uses qualitative and quantitative data, enabling us to evaluate progress during the project. So far, figures show over 40 people with disabilities, plus their carers, have started to benefit from a new programme of activities. For some, it is the only activity they get to do, and one of the few opportunities that parent-carers have to meet other families and get some respite. Having independent, robust evaluation of these successes will support the project in future funding applications.

[www.pelicanproject.org.uk](http://www.pelicanproject.org.uk)

### The Pelican Project

*"There is nothing else [for my son]. Coming to Pelican is part of his routine, he comes to sessions when he is not in hospital. Sometimes when he is at Pelican I get time to go to the shops." From an interview with the Mother of a young Pelican*

*"These young adults have so much to offer without the Pelican project many of them would be lost...The project has totally changed [carer's] views and ignorance about Pelican youngsters." From an interview with a carer for a young Pelican*

*"O loves Pelican as it's a good place to make friends. It's a busy and accepting space. Often, O will make new friends here who she can then meet outside and go to lunch with. When Pelican is on break, [carer] and O always wonder what they can do as it leaves a huge gap and no meaningful activity to do." From an interview with a young Pelican and their carer*



Stock image

WE AIM TO ...

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



OUR ACTIVITIES  
HAVE BEEN VALUED

AT **£47,590**  
SOCIAL VALUE

Facilitated a co-design workshop for providers and people with lived experience to better understand barriers to accessing drug and alcohol services



Launched a **£2,200** fund for rural community groups to purchase toys, equipment and devices that will support socialisation of children in their communities. **55** applications received to date

Provided direct support to **13** East Devon organisations that deliver health and wellbeing services in their communities



**171** local people had their say via a survey in Berrynarbor to ensure that a potential new recreation ground is what the community needs



Read more about ...

## CONSULTING THE COMMUNITY IN BERRYNARBOR

Berrynarbor Parish Council wishes to upgrade its recreation ground with more modern equipment, particularly for teens and adults.

Our main focus for Q2 has been producing and promoting a survey (online and hard copy) for Berrynarbor Parish Council, encouraging residents of Berrynarbor to share their views on the future of the Berrynarbor recreation ground. This survey concluded on 30th September, gathering 151 responses.



### What impact will the survey have?

The impact of the project on the Berrynarbor community can be derived from the survey responses, which are currently being analysed.

Preliminary findings highlight a strong desire from the community for improvements to the recreation ground. Key priorities for the community to address include increasing green space, upgrading play equipment, hosting more community events, and creating dedicated walking and cycling paths. The survey revealed that the community has concerns around the maintenance and overall safety of the recreation ground. If these key issues are addressed the Recreation Ground could greatly enhance the quality of life for the community.



## REDUCING RURAL INEQUALITIES



The Senior Leadership Team here at DCT works collaboratively across the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and with statutory bodies at a strategic level to keep driving forward our mission to reduce inequalities in rural communities...

- Active member of the Devon Transport and Health Inequalities Strategic Group
- Submitted the co-designed Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly Virtual Ward Delivery Model proposal to Devon NHS. This builds on the VCSE Virtual Wards Pilot led by DCT in Eastern Devon last year, which coordinated non-clinical wraparound support for people receiving hospital care in their own homes
- Following our commission to rural-proof 12 Adult Social Care policies for Devon County Council, we provided key recommendations in four main areas: Identifying Rural Need; Tackling Rural Health Inequalities; Improving Access to Rural Care Services and Digital Transformation
- Chaired two Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly Digital Inclusion Group and represented the group at meetings of the Integrated Care Service Population Health Data & Digital Transformation Board
- Input into the One Devon Joint Forward Plan Digital Strategy on digital access to health and care services from a rural perspective.
- Promoted the capacity of rural village halls to develop into a rural community and family health and digital hub network

WE AIM TO ...

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

OUR ACTIVITIES  
HAVE BEEN VALUED

AT **£84,040**  
SOCIAL VALUE

Provided  
**20** pieces of  
funding/business  
advice to community  
groups, Village Halls  
and other voluntary  
organisations



Supported  
Blackdown Support  
Group to develop  
a template funding  
application and seek  
funding sources



Planned  
and scheduled  
**13** training and  
learning sessions  
themed around  
business and  
enterprise support for  
autumn 2024



Collaborated  
with Plymouth and  
Torbay Social Enterprise  
Networks and the School for  
Social Entrepreneurs on the  
development of a South West  
Peninsula funding business case  
to deliver an inclusive social  
enterprise support programme



Read more about ...

## BLACKDOWN SUPPORT GROUP FUNDING SUPPORT

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.

Following the development of the business plan last quarter, we have been continuing our support by firstly conducting a horizon scanning exercise focusing on capital funding to support their building improvements, alongside funding to support development of their microprovider care coordination service.

We have also been working alongside the group to write a template funding application to support the development of the project.

 **What will the impact of this business support be?** The group is much better placed to drive forward its ongoing bid development for the Care Connections service (a care support service), as well as for wider funding applications.

Care Connections acts as a broker between those in need of care and micro-businesses providing care services, aiming to facilitate an increased income from fee-based services by. With a sound business plan and robust funding strategy, Care Connections will address an identified need in this rural community, bolstering the local economy through supporting micro-businesses as well as increasing local care provision.

<https://blackdownsupportgroup.org.uk/>



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



OUR ACTIVITIES  
HAVE BEEN  
VALUED AT  
**£179,730**  
SOCIAL VALUE



**325**

attendees trained  
at **23** learning,  
development and  
networking events



Supported **5** meetings and  
issued **3** newsletters for  
the Torbay, Plymouth and  
Devon VCSE Assembly,  
strengthening the  
connections and strategic  
collaboration between **258**  
VCSE organisations



Attended  
**4** summer  
shows in Holsworthy,  
Honiton, Tiverton and  
Okehampton, engaging  
with **416** people

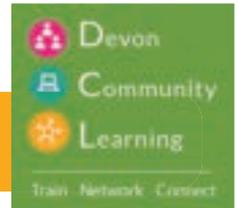


Trained  
**67** people from  
**2** organisations on an  
Asset Based Community  
Development approach  
to working with  
communities

Read more about ...

## DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING

Despite a traditionally quieter summer period for training, we facilitated and attended 23 learning, development and networking events with 323 attendees. As part of this we launched our bespoke Asset Based Community Development training offer for organisations in Devon, which you can read more about below.



### Case history ...

#### ABCD TRAINING: ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Through our Devon Community Learning programme, DCT was commissioned by Action for Children to facilitate Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training. Action for Children delivers family, children's and young people's services across Devon and the teams have begun working in a different, more community-led way. They wished to upskill their staff to take an asset based approach.

ABCD focuses on engaging with and mobilising existing community assets, whether that's people, spaces or services, and seeking ways to connect, enable and empower them to achieve change. DCT facilitated a 3 half-day training package for four groups in South, East and North Devon.

A total of 62 people were trained in ABCD over four groups. Attendees responded positively and increased their understanding of the principles of ABCD, becoming more confident in how they can use it in their work. They left with ideas of what projects they were going to work on in an 'ABCD way'.

 What impact will this training have? This training will enable staff working with children and families across Devon to support and add value to communities, by providing crucial support to families experiencing additional challenges, as well as increasing connections and reducing isolation for all families through their community-based activities.

*"I've come away feeling inspired and more confident. I can't wait to use these tools and skills and our team already have a plan of a project we are going to use this for."*

We are also working with West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council on an ABCD training programme for their staff, which is due to finish during October 2024. More on this in the next report.

*DCT staff enjoyed engaging with 416 visitors to the Holsworthy, Honiton, Mid Devon and Okehampton Shows, where we listened to important community feedback about a variety of topics including volunteering, village halls, our East Devon VCSE support service and more!*



# THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...

