



Devon Communities Together: Measuring Our Impact

Quarter 3: October - December 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.8)

...support Devon's rural economy, local entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and thrive, and promote community wealth building (see pg. 19)

...identify and work to reduce inequalities to ensure 'rural proofing' of services, and to improve community health and wellbeing (see pg. 17)



...champion diversity and inclusion, hear minority voices and respond to their needs (see pg. 14)

...flourish as an agile, flexible, learning organisation, responding positively to the evolving needs of our communities, stakeholders and staff (see pg. 23)



We supported young people from Exeter College with travel training to give them confidence when using public transport (pg.15)

*SOCIAL VALUE:
TOTAL BENEFITS
IN QUARTER 3 HAS
BEEN VALUED AS
£544,000!*

MEASURING OUR SOCIAL VALUE

We're pleased to report that during Q3 the total benefits we generated have been measured by our Social Value Engine as £544,000. 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. Our staff team itself creates significant social value across all our aims, as shown below.



SOCIAL VALUE BY STRATEGIC AIM (SEE PG.2)

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 **£105,280**
SOCIAL VALUE

6 participants
attended a farm walk
and focus group to raise
awareness of regenerative
farming and understand
barriers to conservation
volunteering



Engaged with **15**
communities about
Community Emergency
Planning and supported
the completion of **5**
new/redeveloped
plans

£500
awarded
in Community
Emergency Plan
grants to **2** parishes



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

Engaged with
18 people at a
community event
in Walkhampton
about Natural
Flood Management
measures

Read more about ...

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Many Devon communities are affected by flooding, with climate change and political factors bringing other hazards, from heat and wildfire to cyber attacks. Devon Community Resilience Forum (DCRF), managed by Devon Communities Together, works with communities to build and harness local resources and expertise to keep people and property safe in adverse conditions.

We engaged with 15 communities during Q3 to support their Community Emergency Planning. This included facilitating a

workshop for seven parishes in the South Hams and an introductory workshop for Buckland-Tout-Saints Parish Council.



What is the impact of encouraging and enabling Community Emergency Planning? In total, three new Community Emergency Plans were completed and two more were updated. These locally-created documents are uploaded to Resilience Direct, a shared online resource that can be accessed by emergency services in the event of an emergency. These communities are now better prepared for, and able to recover more quickly from, adverse incidents.

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

Case history ...

COMMUNITY ACTION: NORTHLEIGH EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Sheena, a local resident from Northleigh, recognised that the parish needed a Community Emergency Plan. She approached the Parish Council for agreement and used the parish magazine to seek volunteers, with 10 people coming forward.

The team, which first met in June 2024, became a working group of the Parish Council. DCT has been supporting them regularly through DCRF, particularly around overcoming challenges which were affecting the progress of the plan. This included the overwhelm felt by one person driving the plan and the enormity of feeling that they had to plan for every eventuality - an impossible task given that the initial great response from volunteers did not translate into people being able to take on specific tasks. Sheena also found it challenging to identify all the vulnerable people in the community to ensure the plan would meet everybody's needs.

As a result of our guidance, Sheena has been able to overcome these issues to focus on some key actions to get a practical Community Emergency Plan started. She has identified some realistic threats and practical responses to them. The work is still in progress, but will proceed and a Plan will be produced to build community resilience in Northleigh.



I want to thank you for coming out to Honiton yesterday, and for all your useful advice." Sheena, Northleigh Emergency Planning Group



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COPING WITH STORM BERT IN EXTON



Additionally DCT has been supporting the stakeholder and community engagement for the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP), which has been piloting nature-based flood prevention initiatives in Devon communities. Through collaboration between the DRIP project and DCRF, we have been working in the pilot areas to encourage them to create Community Emergency Plans.

An example of this was in Exton, where the ink was barely dry on their new plan when it was called into action during storm Bert in November 2024, when the village flooded. The Village Hall had to evacuate a group of children who were enjoying a birthday party. They left the hall in bare feet carrying their shoes and socks as the water surged and was quickly over the top step of the hall entrance.



In previous flood events, damage was caused by vehicles being driven through the flood water and the bow wave being pushed up against vulnerable buildings. Due to the Community Emergency Plan and signage, this situation was avoided and the community felt that they had some semblance of control over the situation.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS: WORKING TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVON

Our Senior Leadership team contributes our rural and coastal expertise to strategic groups and partnerships, which work towards a sustainable, nature-rich, net-zero Devon:

- Worked with the University of Exeter on 'Governing Sustainable Futures: Designing Participatory Mechanisms for addressing Place-based Contestations of Sustainable Living'. The project aims to work with rural and coastal communities to enable an enhanced understanding of environmental challenges and solutions from a place-based perspective to develop findings, tools and theories, which local and national policymakers, communities and practitioners can apply. This quarter, we attended 2 partnership meetings to explore contestations or 'flashpoints' in relation to environmental governance and how we might develop mechanisms for effective dialogue and exchange on these critical matters in future workshops. www.exeter.ac.uk/research/institutes/gsi/research/climateriskresilienceandadaptation/gov_sust_futures/
- Continued our active membership of the Devon Local Nature Partnership Board, which met in December.
- Attended the Devon Water Summit in December, in our capacity as a Local Nature Partnership Board member. The Water Summit attendees shared best practices, discussed strategies and next steps for a sustainable water future and for long-term changes to protect the environment and Devon's residents.

Read more about ...

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND LANDSCAPES

Connecting People and Landscapes is led by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) 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.

On 30th November, we facilitated a focus group for people who have experience in land management, local wildlife groups, species reintroduction or farming, but who are not currently doing any conservation volunteering. The event was run at Ramsland Farm near Holbeton, which is introducing a number of sustainable farming activities, including a grassland restoration scheme. The participants were taken on a walk by the BCT Farm Environment Advisor who described the various interventions taking place to find out what people knew,

inform them about regenerative farming and explore what prevents people from taking part in conservation volunteering.



What was the impact of the focus group? Those who owned land picked up useful tips on sustainable management and were able to see how some of the work on the farm might be adapted to their smaller scale sites. Some expressed interest in bringing their wildlife group to do some volunteering at Ramsland.

The project gained useful insights to inform future engagement, for example even a well-informed group like this found it hard to grasp the scale and scope of wildlife conservation, from the macro-issues (climate change, rewilding, food security) to the micro (local land, wildlife groups) and some displayed scepticism about how valuable farming could be for wildlife.

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



Q: How would you go about improving habitat/wildlife conservation?



"We need to get into cities – it is easier to get young people in the countryside engaged."

"Get people on to farms to get them excited."

"Talk about loss of species on people's own doorstep."



WE AIM TO ...

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



OUR ACTIVITIES
HAVE BEEN VALUED

AT **£32,130**
SOCIAL VALUE

42

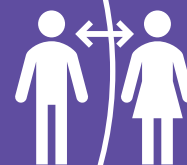
Village Hall committee
members attended a
Q&A panel event and
networking session to get
specialist advice and peer
support



Provided specialist
advice to **38**
Village Halls &
rural community
spaces

Provided 1-2-
1 support **46** times
and trained **131** people
as part of the East Devon
Voluntary, Community and
Social Enterprise Support
Service


Facilitated **2**
community engagement
events in Lapford, where
407 insights were
gathered from **110**
people sharing ideas for
the future of their
community




Distributed
£2,200 to
fund toys and play
equipment for rural
community groups



43,976 litres of
household heating
oil ordered by **60**
households in the
Devon Oil
Collective



Engaged with **2**
communities, St Giles
in the Wood and
Bradninch, to support
the development of
rural housing



841
Exminster residents
contributed their
thoughts and ideas
via a Neighbourhood
Development Plan



2,104
households given
the opportunity
to provide
evidence of local
housing need

Supported
Axewoods Community
Log Bank with
gathering and
analysing qualitative
and quantitative data
to inform future plans

Read more about ...



Funded by
UK Government




MAKING CONNECTIONS IN EAST DEVON

DCT is providing a comprehensive programme of support to build the capacity of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in East Devon.

During Q3, 131 people attended our in-person and online training and networking events, where they developed their skills in managing their organisations, writing and agreeing policies, creating media to communicate their mission, finding sources of funding and developing business plans to guide their organisations in the future.

Our support team engaged 46 times with organisations and individuals to give

personalised advice. The most frequently asked queries were around funding sources and funding applications, as well as looking at potential legal structures, particularly Community Interest Companies (CIC).

 **What is the impact of this support and training?** Having better skills in all areas of running a successful organisation keeps the VCSE sector thriving in East Devon and supports the maintenance of vital services and jobs.

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

“Thank you so much for your help. You really made a difference knowing that there was someone who knows what they are talking about who is able to support. I felt much less alone and a bit more confident in my attempts!” Leanne, Mobilates, received 1-2-1 support and training on funding applications

Case history ...

OPEN ARMS

Open Arms East Devon provides support in increasing social interaction and improving confidence for adults in East Devon with mental health challenges. The group was founded by Garry Wakeham in 2017, after the centre he was attending for support was closed.

Open Arm's Treasurer, Sue, attended several of our training sessions and was part of a group that identified a need for further training on policy writing. Subsequently, a policy writing session was arranged at Open Door, which also provided an opportunity to make connections.

During the discussions we spoke to Sue about working practices and highlighted the risks of lone working, signposting the group to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. We provided policy templates and signposted to relevant sites, for example, NVCO and the Charity Commission. We were also able to support Sue and the group with employment policy and advice about payroll agencies.

Open Arms is now in the process of putting its policies in place and recruiting additional staff to support the one worker already in place. Trustees are more aware of their duties and their liabilities, leaving them better placed to deliver the aims and objectives of the project, by ensuring best practice.



“Thank you very much Anderson – I found the session today very helpful.”
Sue Edwards

Read more about ...

ENABLING RURAL HOUSING IN DEVON

Rural Housing Enabling work is crucial to address housing shortages and preserving rural communities. It ensures affordable housing for local people, preventing the decline of populations and essential services. In Q3, 2,104 households in Exminster and Luppitt were sent housing needs survey questionnaires, giving them the opportunity to record their need for rural affordable housing. Both surveys were undertaken as part of Neighbourhood Planning processes, providing evidence to enable communities to plan for the future.

We provided support to two further parishes, St Giles in the Wood in Torridge and Bradninch in Mid Devon, to start the process of bringing forward new affordable housing to fulfil unmet local need.

At a strategic level, we liaised with the new Devon and Torbay County Combined Authority via the Devon Community Housing Hub to begin discussions about how Devon rural housing needs might be addressed by the new authority working in partnership with the District Councils.



What's the impact of the Rural Housing Enabling service?

There are an increasing number of Devon people who finding it difficult to afford suitable housing in the communities where they grew up, work, or have close relatives. The 766 Housing Needs Survey responses we received will allow us to accurately assess the need for new affordable housing for local people and by working with communities and local authorities, we can help to facilitate getting new houses built where they are needed most.

www.devonhousinghub.org.uk



Devon Community Housing Hub

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY IN LAPFORD

Listening to what communities want and need is vital in determining the future direction of any development. As well as the Housing Needs Surveys, we have been using our Asset Based Community Development skills to support several Devon parishes to engage deeply with their residents on a variety of issues.

This includes co-designing and delivering 2 community engagement events with Lapford Parish Council at Lapford Victory Hall in October 2024. 110 people attended to give feedback on the future of their parish and helped to inform the design of a household survey.



Thanks for your help and support at the event on Friday and Saturday at Lapford. You both engaged extremely well with the community, young and old alike ... We had a far better turn out than expected." Julie Down, Lapford Parish Council




Read more about ...

CONNECTING DEVON'S VILLAGE HALLS

A focus for our Village Hall and Community Building support service during Q3 was bringing committees together to connect with each other, and DCT, for advice and support. We facilitated two Village Hall cluster meetings in North and East Devon and helped to establish a new cluster in West Devon (see below).

As well as these district-based cluster meetings, as part of our AGM (pg.23) we organised a Devon-wide Village Hall Question and Answer panel session featuring an expert panel of Martin Rich (Village Halls Advisor, DCT), Deborah Clarke (Village Halls expert, Action with Communities in Rural England), and David Ayre (longstanding Treasurer for West Down Village Hall), 42 Village Hall representatives attended this lively event in Colaton Raleigh, hearing valuable advice on funding, volunteers, governance and more from our expert panel and connecting with each other over afternoon tea. A video of this session can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjJWLBXlO6I

Feedback and resources developed through this session led to the development of the new monthly Devon Village Hall email newsletter, which launched in January 2025.

 **What impact does connecting halls in this way have?** Hardworking volunteers are in a much better position to ensure their halls remain open, safe, and fit for purpose to serve their communities.

“Just wanted to thank and congratulate you and your colleagues for a very informative, inspiring and thoroughly well run get together yesterday. The Q and A session helped enormously with several problems we’re facing. All very good advice which we will take on board and refer to in the weeks and months ahead.” Village Hall Q&A Attendee

Case history ...

WEST DEVON VILLAGE HALL CLUSTER

Katie from Lamerton Community and Sports Centre made contact with DCT to request that her hall be audited as part of our [Village Hall Audit project](#). After liaison with Katie, we arranged for another two local halls to be audited on the same day, which sowed the seed for a new West Devon cluster.

The audit visits highlighted that the three halls had some similar areas of concern, which proved to be the catalyst for requesting further support in the form of governance training for the three halls, which we facilitated on the 30th October.

Lamerton Community and Sports Centre has strategic business planning professionals on its committee, and due to the improved connections and relationships, they have offered support to the other two halls in this area, which is already a direct benefit for the cluster.

The next step is for us to work with Katie to grow this cluster further into West Devon and extend the benefits across the district.



INCREASED BOOKINGS AT BOVEY TRACEY RIVERSIDE CENTRE

We have been supporting the Riverside Centre in Bovey Tracey with an evaluation programme to help inform its future as an important community space. Part of this has involved helping them to develop a robust data collection system that will continue to be used as a legacy of the project. The data has enabled them to analyse booking trends and so far, bookings - especially for new businesses - have increased. A new website has been created and on DCT's advice, they are promoting events and activities across the town. The centre houses the Town Council, library and Information Centre, making it a destination for a wide range of residents and visitors. As such it is well placed to provide a wider community service and network for other organisations and its increased use and visibility is contributing to its reaching its potential as a community hub. www.boveytraceyhub.co.uk

“There is a good atmosphere in the new library part of the building with lots going on and a noticeable amount of kids/families which is great.”
Paul Beecher, chair of Bovey Tracey Residents' Association




Read more about ...

INCREASING PLAY OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Young people need opportunities to spend time with their peers but rural community groups can struggle to maintain attendance numbers as there are fewer young people in the areas. DCT managed the allocation of a £2,200 fund donated by a publishing company, which provided small grants for play equipment to rural community organisations that offer children and young people social activities close to home.

77 organisations applied for the fund, of which 12 were selected. Three support babies and toddlers, three support primary age children and six provide activities for secondary age young people. Items bought included Duplo, skateboard helmets, giant outdoor games, a play parachute, a mud kitchen, up and down roller coaster, hula hoops, rounders set, soft footballs and a glow-in-the-dark dodgeball set!

 What impact will this funding have? The children and young people's local, social experiences are enhanced, benefitting not only them but also helping to attract new people and secure the future of the groups.

“The mud kitchen really sets their imaginations going wild and we have seen such lovely play as a result.” Shan Keary. The Gardeners Co. CIC

“The funds have enabled the staff and volunteers to extend the range of activities available to the children, whilst allowing the children to come up with their own ideas and games ... It's rewarding to see the young people take ownership and help to plan the activities (they can be very imaginative!)” Shirley Fewings. Dawlish Action For Youth

WE AIM TO ...

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



OUR ACTIVITIES
HAVE BEEN
VALUED AT

£120,780
SOCIAL VALUE

Supported
20 people on
Exeter College's
Gateway to



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

Supported
the Torbay,
Plymouth and Devon
VCSE Assembly to engage
with **258** diverse voluntary
and community organisations
across Devon, providing
opportunities for their
voices to be heard

9 community
surveys and **8**
community-based events
enabled us to listen to
voices that are not often
heard



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



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.

Following our previous travel project 'Connecting You' we had identified a need for ongoing travel training to increase confidence with using public transport. A key group was 16-18s, as this group does not have statutory support for school/college travel and, since Covid, many have significant anxieties about travelling and using public transport. Travel training sessions were delivered to two groups at Exeter College Gateway to Independence programme, over four sessions for each group, a total of 20 students. The groups had two 'classroom' sessions at the college and two travel days by bus and train.

DCT attended the Plymouth Bus Enhanced Partnership meeting with representatives of the Stagecoach, TallyHo and CityBus companies, users groups and other stakeholders to promote the travel training work and a wider awareness campaign we are planning. Following this, we have been able to negotiate free poster slots on the Partnership's buses. More to come on this next quarter!



What impact will the travel training and awareness campaign have? People undertaking the training are gaining greater independence, which for many will enable them to access education, work or social activities that they previously could not. By raising awareness of the public transport experiences of people with disabilities among the transport companies and the public, we can collectively work towards making travel more equitable.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/travelling-confidence



Funded by
 **Motability
Foundation**
Making all journeys accessible

 **Living Options
DEVON**
Empowering people with
disabilities for over 20 years

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.

Based on a Theory of Change framework, we are employing quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyse data. During Q3 we collected nine 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) stories, which use personal accounts to measure how The Pelican Project is changing people's lives and where the most significant change is.

We also updated the qualitative data collection framework in order to make data entry easier, and to ensure we can fully reflect the activity and impact of the project. We have introduced rigorous statistical techniques to analyse the data. We have identified a new way to illustrate how Pelicans develop their social interactions through the project, supporting the project to demonstrate its impact in a rich and robust way.



What impact

is our support having?

The Pelican Project benefits from having comprehensive data and independent advice, which helps to inform decisions and achieve ambitions. For many young people, The Pelican Project is their only contact with the world outside their care facility and the continued presence of this fantastic organisation has a huge impact on the lives of the young people, their parents and carers.

www.pelicanproject.org.uk



“

Thank you for a brilliant meeting yesterday and condensing it in a digestible format! I bounced out of your HQ. It's really helpful for me to talk about Pelican with you guys. So pleased with the reporting so far and excited about how it will continue to evolve.”
Charlie, The Pelican Project Director

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 **£25,190**
SOCIAL VALUE

DCT staff team completed defibrillator training with Jay's Aim charity to enable us to use the equipment with confidence in our office and in communities across Devon



Engaged with **21** people, including those with lived experience, to better understand barriers to accessing drug and alcohol services



Presented to the Devon GP Health Inequalities Fellowship on reducing rural health inequalities



Provided direct support to **14** East Devon organisations that deliver health and wellbeing services in their communities



17 organisations attended a VCSE workshop as part of a Rapid Health Impact Assessment on the Devon and Torbay Draft Local Transport Plan 4



Read more about ...

BARRIERS TO DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT

We have been commissioned by Devon County Council to engage with rural and coastal communities to listen to barriers that prevent people accessing drug and alcohol treatment. This is especially important in these areas where issues are exacerbated by lack of transport, lack of temporary housing and overloaded services.

We have been delivering this through a combination of focus groups and 121 interviews, including in:

- Ilfracombe - focus group with 8 people, including 2 with lived experience and 2 GPs
- Dawlish - interviews with 2 staff at the Teignbridge District Council Rough Sleepers Team and 1 volunteer support organisation
- Okehampton - interviews with 1 GP and 1 voluntary organisation
- Dartmouth - 8 interviews, including 3 with lived experience and a voluntary organisation



What impact will the research have?

Future commissioning of services will be influenced by the experiences and ideas of people with lived experiences and those who support them. The focus groups have been able to discuss and propose possible solutions which could be put into place.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS: REDUCING RURAL INEQUALITIES

- Chaired two Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly Digital Inclusion Groups to address digital inequalities in rural areas with significant health disparities. Activity has included liaising with BT and Ability Net UK around supporting rural communities with the planned BT landline cessation programme.
- DCT's CEO, Nora, delivered a presentation to the Devon GP Health Inequalities Fellowship on reducing rural health inequalities through community engagement.
- Attended three meetings with Devon County Council Children's Services to explore the role of Village Halls as rural family hubs, in the new Family Hubs Strategy.
- Attended 5 cross sector meetings to work on the development of a VCSE Virtual Wards delivery model, to provide wraparound support to people receiving hospital care at home.
- Worked in partnership with Devon County Council to co-design and facilitate a Rapid Health Impact Assessment on the Devon and Torbay Draft Local Transport Plan 4, including the facilitation of an online VCSE workshop on 8th November, attended by 17 organisations.
- Participated in the South West Anchor Partnership, which is focusing on shaping an Anchor Strategy for Devon.
- Met with Disability Focus to explore the potential to expand the reach of the Devon Care Microprovider Advice and Support programme into rural communities across Devon.

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 **£63,310**
SOCIAL VALUE

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



Wrote
1 funding bid for
Blackdown Support
Group to fund works
to new office and
community hub
building



Key partner in
planning pilot
community engagement
programme in
Dunkeswell as part of
East Devon Financial
Resilience Group

£4,150
grants
distributed to
communities

Delivered **14**
training and learning
sessions themed
around business,
enterprise and
financial support



Gave
energy advice to
85 individuals and at
4 group presentations
to support people to
manage their energy
bills





Read more about ...


SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO MANAGE THEIR ENERGY BILLS

DCT is commissioned by Citizens Advice through the National Energy Outreach Programme to deliver advice and support to those struggling to pay energy bills and keep warm in rural Devon.

We are delivering this in a range of ways, including providing 1-2-1 advice, hosting community presentations and visiting public locations for drop-in sessions. As well as advice on topics such as conserving heat, reducing energy usage, accessing financial support and more, we are also providing practical resources including comfort zone

thermometers, radiator foil, and fleece blankets.

In Q3, we gave advice and guidance to 85 individuals and facilitated four group presentations, attended by a total of 50 individuals. To strengthen our approach, we are working with other Devon eco sector organisations to collaborate and provide effective advice and guidance to cover the whole county, and referred 52 individuals to other partners in the energy advice sector.

 What impact will this advice have? If followed, the advice will allow people to minimise their energy costs whilst keeping their homes warm. It will also help people to access financial support they may not have been aware of previously.

To create the biggest impact, we are targeting our support to rural communities where high-cost electric and oil-based heating predominates, and to coastal towns with significant numbers of older residents. We have also worked with partners such as warm hubs, community cafes, Village Halls, lunch clubs and a variety of support groups to identify individuals who are likely to face fuel poverty.

www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/energy-outreach-project



“ Thank you Anderson. You were very helpful and the blanket will be useful! I will now use the thought of the home 'inspectors' coming round to spur me on to declutter the house. It was an interesting and useful meeting, much appreciated.”
Bill, community presentation attendee

Case history ...

SUPPORTING TRACEY TO ACCESS PRIORITY SERVICES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

DCT's Anderson facilitated an Energy Outreach Advice session at the Foodbank in Holsworthy. This was his second visit to the Foodbank, when he met Tracey, who had made a beeline to him as she had heard about our previous visit.

Tracey talked about the arrears she had been trying to manage and how she didn't feel she had any financial support when it was required, despite being in a better position now. During their chat, Anderson identified that Tracey was living with long-term illnesses and was also informed about a car accident which has had a profound effect on her health and lifestyle. One of those issues is challenges with her short-term memory as a result of the car accident. Anderson explained the Priority Services Register (PSR), which Tracey was not previously aware of. The PSR identifies individuals who require priority support in the event of, for example, a powercut. She agreed it would be a good idea for her to be registered.

With the short-term memory condition, Anderson suggested that they could register Tracey there and then, so he could support her through the process, which she gratefully accepted. Tracey is now registered with South West Water and EDF energy and has also been informed of the financial support she may be entitled to, to help with her energy costs.

She was extremely happy with the outcome of the consultation, describing Anderson as "an angel"! She has details of how to contact DCT about any issues that may arise in the future.



PILOTING AN APPROACH TO INCREASING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE IN RURAL DEVON

DCT has actively engaged in a new place-based financial resilience group in East Devon, facilitating four meetings of the cross-sector group, which also includes East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Citizens Advice East Devon, Learn Devon and Exeter Community Energy. We have conducted joint data research and community survey activities, to scope a collaborative rural financial resilience pilot model. We plan to test the model, working alongside local communities in East Devon during 2025, to better understand how we can support rural communities to build local financial resilience.

In December we began liaising with key community stakeholders to plan for the start of the first local pilot in Dunkeswell, to begin in January 2025, with community members, service providers and local businesses working together to identify local solutions. More on this in the next report.



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
£197,300
SOCIAL VALUE
(INCL. £168,690
VALUE FROM DCT
STAFF TEAM)



441

attendees trained
at **43** learning,
development and
networking events



Supported **4** meetings and
issued **3** newsletters for
the Torbay, Plymouth and
Devon VCSE Assembly,
strengthening the
connections and strategic
collaboration between **261**
VCSE organisations

17

partners, funders
and stakeholders
attended our AGM and
heard inspiring community
stories from **3** guest
speakers




Trained
6 people from **2**
District Councils on an
Asset Based Community
Development approach
to working with
communities

Read more about ...

DEVON COMMUNITY LEARNING

We facilitated a packed training programme during Q3, with 43 events attracting 441 attendees. The wide range of topics covered included five training sessions from Citizens Advice Devon to upskill people who support those on low incomes so they can help them claim everything they're entitled to.

 **What is the impact of this training?** Attendees are upskilled to provide better services and support to communities in Devon. For example, in the case of the benefits training participants, their clients will be supported to maximise their income, which could have a huge impact on their daily lives.



Case history ...

ABCD TRAINING IN SOUTH HAMS AND WEST DEVON

Through the Devon Community Learning programme, DCT was commissioned by South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council to facilitate Asset Based Community Development training for their six people in their Community Development teams, throughout the summer and autumn. They wanted to upskill themselves in an asset based approach (which takes as its starting point existing assets in the community), understand the methodologies and see how they could integrate this approach into their work.

This training will enable staff working within communities in South Hams and West Devon to better listen to, collaborate with and support their communities, to create positive change.



“Thank you for our very helpful final session of our ABCD training on the 8th October and we look forward to using this in our work with more confidence!”

Making connections at our AGM

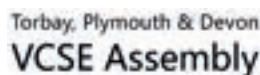
DCT staff, trustees and invited guests gathered to reflect on and celebrate our achievements in 2023-4 at our AGM in November, chaired by our President, Lord Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon.

After the formalities, we were delighted to welcome three guest speakers to share their experiences of their own community projects with the audience: Charles Pallot of Tedburn St Mary Village Hall; Andrew Wiles of Thorverton Community Land Trust; and Matt Staite of Heathfield Farm.

The event gave the DCT team an opportunity to connect with each other, our Trustees, funders, partners and the communities we work with, providing an inspirational springboard as we strive to grow our projects and services - and therefore our impact - into 2025 and beyond.



THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...



Funded by UK Government

