



# Community Unity Pilot: Project Review and Impact Evaluation Report

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April 2019



# Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Project Legacy to date	4
3. Key Learning	5
4. Strategic context and Drivers for the pilot	9
4.1. About Devon Communities Together	
4.2. Target Localities and their demographic profiles	
5. Strategic Aims of Community Unity Pilot Project	14
6. Delivery Plan & Outputs Achieved	16
6.1. Community Asset Mapping	
6.2. Ideas Factory events	
6.3. Connector events	
6.4. Know Your Neighbour Campaign	
6.5. Training provision	
6.6. "Let's Do It!" seed fund	
6.7. Marketing and Communications Strategy	
7. Outcomes and Impact Indicators	32
7.1. Outcomes achieved and indicated in relation to the projects strategic aims and activities	
8. Conclusion	49



## 1.0 Introduction

Community Unity was a pilot project delivered by Devon Communities Together in partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police over a 21 month period from March 2017 to November 2018. The first 15 months of the project was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with the remainder of the delivery being funded by Devon Communities Together. The aim of this report is to provide a retrospective review of what was achieved and an evaluation of the impact within the communities supported by the project, in order to guide future initiatives aimed at addressing similar issues.

### Acknowledgements:

DCT would like to acknowledge and thank the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for funding this project and the following organisations and individuals without whose help and support this pilot project could not have been undertaken; Devon and Cornwall Police Citizens in Policing Senior Co-ordinator and Support Manager, the Local North Devon Policing Team and the many local organisations and individuals from South Molton, Holsworthy and Lynton and Lynmouth who participated in meetings and events providing help, information and support.



*“Let’s Do It”: South Molton Meddlers intergenerational wild flower planting project*



## 2.0 Community Unity Project Legacy to date

### Key Legacy Outcomes

3 new community asset maps created, available online and shared with key local connector organisations including the Town Councils and local police teams as part of the on-going legacy of the pilot.

3 Ideas Factory events attended by 30 community members increased community engagement.

3 Community Connector and several street engagement events were attended by 48 community members (100% of whom reported that they felt better connected, of which 90% indicated that their improvement in connectivity was very good or excellent) created new links between community groups and potential volunteers.

36 additional active community based volunteers signed up to a volunteer bank.

10 Newsletters/ e bulletins were received by an average of 2000 community groups and individuals contributing to raised levels of awareness of social isolation and potentially vulnerable community members.

Over 100 visitors accessing resources and information from the website (only recorded from June 2018) and a total social media reach of over 39,000.

Know Your Neighbour Campaign circulated approx. 600 leaflets created increased awareness of social isolation and vulnerable members of the communities.

15 community based training events resulted in upskilling 137 community based volunteers, 90% of training participants reporting “strongly agree” satisfaction level for personal skills development outcomes.

8 new community based initiatives supported through “Lets Do It” seed fund grants.

Increased levels of awareness of Citizens in Policing community volunteering opportunities.

3 communities experienced Devon & Cornwall Police Force actively engaged in community engagement activities.



## 3.0 Key Learning

**3.1** This is an effective and scalable model. Aspects of the delivery model which worked very well contributed some key learning in terms of refining the model include:

- Community based Ideas Factory Events
- The Know Your Neighbour Campaign
- Community based Learning Events
- The Seed Fund Grant scheme

During this pilot project, DCT were also the local delivery partner for the national pilot project Transform Ageing - led by the Design Council. As part of this process, DCT community development staff were trained in the use of taking a “design-led” approach to project development.

This knowledge helped the Community Unity pilot project manager to develop and utilise a range of useful interactive visually engaging tools by which to enable people to participate at Community Unity events.

A rolling programme could be scaled up to benefit additional communities, building on the learning and experience gained during the pilot phase.



- 3.2** When an Asset based Community Development initiative is introduced to a community, the quality of the initial positive community engagement is critical to getting “sign up” from the local community. The earlier that community co-design activities are introduced, the better. During this pilot, the Ideas Factory model proved very effective in engaging local community members and groups and providing an opportunity for them to input into the project and to see the project design evolve to reflect their ideas and concerns.
- 3.3** There was valuable learning in working in partnership with Devon & Cornwall Police. It took time to develop a working understanding of each partner’s organisational cultures and to establish effective communication routes.

The staff of the Northern division of D&C Police were very supportive of the project and helped delivery and the Steering Group deliberations in many ways:

Paul Searle, North Devon Sector Inspector took the lead in ensuring that the team were kept aware of project progress. He held regular meetings via telecom with DCT Project Manager and provided advice on for example risk assessment of the proposed Know Your Neighbour campaign. He was also very insightful as to the practicalities of the proposed vulnerable persons referral service and helped the Steering Group to re-iterate this proposal on the basis that it would duplicate an existing multi-agency referral and response team. The local police helped to promote events and local learning events via their social media platforms and of course provided free training in the three localities through their Cyber-security Unit.

Most of the Ideas Factory and Connector events benefited from the participation of the local PCSO.



There was an intrinsic value in the shared experience and learning to both members of the partnership. The Police personnel were able to learn more about asset based community development and positive community engagement techniques and DCT were able to learn more about the Police force's structures, challenges and strategic priorities.

- 3.4** The introduction of the “Let’s Do It” community seed fund small grant scheme fund was very well received and resulted in a lot of early and anticipated positive outcomes including: raising the positive profile of the project; new community action; recruitment of new volunteers; enhancement of community owned assets.
- 3.5** The “Know Your Neighbour” awareness raising campaign, during which project staff directly handed flyers to over 600 local people and sparked many conversations in the process, was an effective means of community awareness raising. A lot of people expressed surprise at the high levels of single pensioner households and NHS statistics on impact of loneliness on mental and physical health. Many people (50 +) indicated that they were going to take action in terms of visiting a lone pensioner they knew lived on their street or keeping more of a watchful eye on elderly neighbours. More than 1,100 people living in Holsworthy and the surrounding areas responded to the “Healthier and Happier lives” survey conducted between September and October 2018.

13% of survey respondents reported that they had a feeling of loneliness or isolation and not surprisingly 94% of these considered ‘Loneliness and social isolation’ a priority issue for them. The survey also showed that of those who answered what would help them the most to alleviate the feeling of loneliness and isolation over 60% said community activities in their area and help with



transport to community activities would be most helpful to them. It is possible that the Community Unity “Know Your Neighbour” campaign which coincided with this survey had an impact on the issue figuring so highly in the responses to the survey.

- 3.6** There has not yet been sufficient passage of time for longer term impact evaluation of project outcomes and therefore what the lasting impact has been in relation to the project’s strategic aims. DCT will commit to 2 impact evaluation follow up exercises within each of our 3 communities aimed at individual participants, community groups and “Let’s Do It” grant recipients at 6- and 12-month intervals. The impact learning will be shared with the communities, Devon & Cornwall Police and will feed into Devon Communities Together’s positive engagement work with communities in the future.





## 4.0 Strategic context and Drivers for the pilot

In these recent times of austerity, there have been unprecedented pressures on public services. Devon & Cornwall Police have the challenge of trying to reduce demand on the service particularly as a considerable number of calls for support do not involve any criminality, and could be more appropriately dealt with by a different statutory partner or agency.

The Police Service, along with other public services, have had a reduction in resources due to central spending cuts, resulting in demand outstripping resourcing in some areas. Hence, there has been an increasing need to enable communities to be responsive to general, low level, non-criminal, issues within their own communities, instead of relying on the Police to intervene.

In 2016 Devon Communities Together, as a trusted intermediary between the Devon Community Resilience Board and local communities, was approached by Assistant Chief Constable Paul Netherton and invited to submit a pilot project proposal.

The pilot project entitled Community Unity was developed in the context of the following two key Devon & Cornwall Police strategic documents:

- i) ***The Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2017 - 2020 "Safe, Resilient and Connected Communities"***.

The Community Unity proposal supports the overarching theme of "Safe, Resilient & Connected Communities". The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has stated a strategic intent to be well connected to communities, with a focus on those who are most vulnerable due to ethnicity, age, disability, rural or social isolation. The link between police and local communities will be reinforced:

*"Through a new Local Policing Promise to ensure policing in a local area is 'Accessible, Responsive, Informative and Supportive'."*

This pilot project would add value to the PCC's Plan by delivering outputs which will support the following relevant objectives in priorities 1 & 3:



- Connecting police and communities (facilitating a dialogue and enabling the community voice to be heard)
- Prioritisation of keeping everyone safe, especially those that are most vulnerable
- Fostering better understanding between police and the community
- Community volunteers playing an active role in preventing crime and harm and keeping their community safe



**ii) The Devon & Cornwall Citizens in Policing Strategy 2016 - 2019**

This Strategy advocates a twin track approach of:  
“Drawing together the activity of citizens operating within policing” and  
through the “creation of collaborations and partnerships with existing third  
sector organisations who can add value to policing”

The Community Unity pilot project intended to play an integral part in achieving this approach by: supporting the training of community-based volunteers; increasing volunteer capacity; nurturing the connectivity between local services, citizens and the local police service.



It was recognised that Devon’s communities are asset rich in respect of citizens with a broad range of skills, experience, motivation and values. The Community Unity project delivery plan aimed to empower and support communities to harness and nurture these assets to help address three of the five areas highlighted in the Strategy:

- Community Resilience
- Community Engagement
- Supporting the vulnerable

## 4.1 About Devon Communities Together

Devon Communities Together (DCT) is an independent charitable company founded in 1961, and part of a national network of Rural Community Councils. DCT has a vision of dynamic communities shaping their own futures, and its mission is to inspire and support communities to be thriving, resilient and inclusive.

DCT is a membership organisation with over 250 members including principal statutory bodies, Local Councils, voluntary organisations, and many local groups and individuals from across the county. DCT’s ability to add value to strategic initiatives and interventions has been developed through a long track record of support across rural communities and its ability to use existing networks and trusted relationships to enable connections and facilitate collaborative development work.



## 4.2 Target Localities and their demographic profiles

Devon presents a wide geographical area and communities range from cities and urban centres to market towns, coastal communities and smaller villages and settlements. The project wanted to test it's approach in a variety of settings including coastal, deep rural and market towns ideally within a single Local Policing Area (LPA). With this criteria, Devon and Cornwall Police highlighted northern Devon as their preferred LPA and nominated South Molton, Lynton & Lynmouth and Holsworthy as the three communities:

- 1.South Molton, a growing market town and surrounding rural parish in the middle of North Devon District
- 2.Lynton & Lynmouth a typical coastal community and parish on the edge of Exmoor National Park
- 3.Holsworthy, a traditional market town - a hub for the surrounding rural parish, very remote, near the border of Cornwall within Torridge District.



Demographic profiles of project localities compared to Devon and England averages (based upon 2011 National census data)

	Population	No. of households	Older people over 65 (England average = 16.3%) (Devon average = 22.6%)	Single pensioner households (England average = 12.4%)
South Molton	2640	1195	700 = 26.5%	225 = 18.7%
Lynton & Lynmouth	1440	625	400 = 27.6%	100 = 15.8%
Holsworthy	4875	2170	1130 = 23.2%	385 = 17.8%

The demographic comparison table above illustrates that all three of the selected communities have an even higher proportion of older people over 65 than the Devon average, and significantly higher proportions than that of England as a whole. Similarly, the proportion of single pensioner households is significantly higher in all three communities than the average for England.



## 5.0 Strategic Aims of Community Unity Pilot Project

### Steering Group

A Steering Group was set up in March 2017 chaired by the DCT Vice Chair (a former acting Chief Constable) and comprising the Devon and Cornwall Police Senior Co-ordinator Citizens in Policing, the Support Manager Citizens in Policing, the DCT Chief Executive, representatives from the Local Policing Team, Devon County Council Community Team and the DCT Project Manager. The Steering Group was tasked to meet regularly to plan, review and guide delivery of the project.

The project was launched in March 2017, initially with the four aims listed below:

**Aim 1:** To help build the capacity of and connectivity within each community: Between the local groups, services, volunteers and residents in order to grow their resilience, empowerment and impact

**Aim 2:** To raise awareness of potentially vulnerable or isolated sectors of each community and to support initiatives that seek to reduce negative impacts of these issues

**Aim 3:** Supporting the recruitment and training of bodies of community-based Volunteers to improve the connectivity between local services, the local police service and citizens.

**Aim 4:** Communities to be better organised and supported by the creation of “volunteer banks”, to be able to be mobilised quickly and respond to local incidents and emergencies

- A fifth aim was added following a mid-term review, which coincided with the launch of Devon and Cornwall Police’s new Citizens in Policing Strategy 2017-2020



**Aim 5: To raise awareness of Devon & Cornwall Police’s “Citizens in Policing” programme and its volunteering opportunities.**

As is often the case with pilot projects, the role of the Steering Group was to review progress with the original aspirations for the project and if appropriate to re-iterate and re-focus the aims, objectives and resources. After the first 6 months of delivery the Steering Group became increasingly aware that Aims 3 and 4 above - both focussed on the recruitment and training of new volunteers and roles were not being achieved at the sort of level anticipated. Scrutiny of this challenge suggested that this was due to the following strategic and local factors at play:

- **Community Feedback:** Local people attending the launch events and early activities felt strongly that local emergency volunteers already existed and could already be relied upon if emergency incidents arise. There was no appetite from these people to have a “badge of recognition” or a more formalised role.
- **‘Volunteer fatigue’** - The majority of local people who participated in the early Community Unity activities told us that they already had “several hats” as volunteers for their community and did not have the capacity to take on new roles.
- **National new evidence** around the growing risks of social isolation and loneliness was emerging as a challenging priority to be addressed, particularly in communities with higher than average ageing demographics and in deep rural locations like our target areas.
- **The NHS introduced its strategy on social prescribing:** It’s priorities for action aligned with the Community Unity aims of growing local community capacity and opportunities for active participation.



Consequently the Steering Group agreed to re-focus project resources and interventions on achieving Aims 1, 2 and 5 as described above. The project continued to offer the option to local people of signing up to a “Volunteer bank” (Aim 4) as a potential asset to draw upon in emergencies but it was no longer seen as a strategic aim of the project. Similarly Aim 3 was dropped as no longer perceived to be a useful priority for the project.

Interestingly, the Police have, more recently, found it relatively easy to recruit volunteers into formalised North Devon ‘police support volunteer’ roles. This is felt to be because the community members could identify with being a ‘police volunteer’ when viewing their Volunteer Adverts, and in addition Northern Devon now has a dedicated police Citizens in Policing Development Officer, which wasn’t in place for the majority of the project.

The project evaluation has identified that having sufficient resources on the ground, working within the communities, is key to achieving the community engagement necessary to meet the aims of the project.

## 6.0 Delivery Plan & Outputs Achieved

The initial 15 month period of the pilot funded a part time Project Manager/ Co-ordinator and a part time Community Projects Officer. For the remainder of the project DCT continued to fund staff resources of a part time Project Manager with ongoing Project Officer and administrative support.

In the initial few months of the pilot the staff focussed on building relationships, scoping and mapping of existing community assets within each locality, and holding meetings/providing presentations to key local forums in order to gather their support, identify local connectors and glean local intelligence needed to effectively roll the pilot out. Members of the Steering Group also promoted the pilot at strategic forums and agencies including the Devon Strategic Partnership, the Devon Rural Churches Network and the Devon Association of Local Councils.





The Project Manager developed an impact assessment framework for the pilot using the Theory of Change methodology (see section 5)

A range of interventions were delivered over the course of the project in each of the three communities. A summary with record of outputs is provided in Table 1 and a description of the aims and content of each intervention is described below.

## 6.1 Community Asset Mapping

These events brought together local residents and community based organisations in order to identify and document the range of community groups and support services already available within the three communities. They were intended to uncover unknown groups, activities, assets and opportunities across the community. Using the findings to make new links, networks and recommendations for development opportunities and activities.

The resultant Asset Maps are available on the dedicated Community Unity website for each of the three communities:

<http://communityunitydevon.org.uk/south-molton>

<http://communityunitydevon.org.uk/lynton-lynmouth>

<http://communityunitydevon.org.uk/holsworthy>

## 6.2 Ideas Factory events

These events aimed to build upon the asset maps for each town, facilitate networking, and provide interactive workshops to explore three topics together:



### 1. *Challenges and Connections*

Participants explored past examples of the community working together for collective benefit and developed ideas about how to build stronger and more connected relationships between the different sectors in each locality.

### 2. *Activities and Engagement*

Participants brainstormed ideas for future activities they would like to see in their communities that don't currently happen.

### 3. *Resilience and Opportunities*

Participants discussed how they could help the community in a minor emergency, and what skills and resources individuals could bring in the event of an emergency.

As well as facilitated discussion around the topics, the Ideas Factory events provided time set aside for tea, cake and networking. To facilitate this networking, a 'Notice Wall' was provided and individuals were invited to complete an 'Ideas Person' template as a visual prompt to help them think about what they could contribute to the community, what they need help with, and thinking ahead; an aspiration of what they would like to see happen in their community.



The participants were then encouraged to circulate, connect with one-another and exchange contacts details if they wanted to follow up the issues the Notice Wall had raised.

**Example of networking tool used: An Ideas Person**



**I AM ...**

Contact Tel / Email

**I'm looking for help with...**

- Using Community Buildings
- Engaging with vulnerable children and families in the community.

**I'm Good at (Skills)...**

- Linking with statutory services.
- Supporting families to achieve required / desired outcomes.
- Engaging vulnerable families we are aware of.

**I Could Help People With ...**

- Striving Children's resources
- Offering Children's Centre space
- Support families with children under five and signpost them to appropriate services

**I wish the Community did ...**

- Had weekly network meetings
- Had more resources



## 6.3

## Connector events

**Holsworthy**  
**CONNECTOR EVENT**

Do you support vulnerable people within your community? Do you support a neighbour or a friend?

You are invited to attend a **Community Unity Connectors Event**

**6th July**  
**2pm-4pm**  
**Holsworthy Memorial Hall**  
**EX22 6DJ**

- Find out about other groups supporting vulnerable people in your community
- Help design a training programme to strengthen your skills
- Find out how groups in the town can help each other through sharing skills and resources!
- Tea, cake and a chat

For more information, contact Dawn Eckhart:  
[dawn@devoncommunities.org.uk](mailto:dawn@devoncommunities.org.uk) 01392 248 919

These half day events began by introducing the Community Unity project for any new attendees and providing an update on delivery plans for those already involved.

A facilitated “Cat Walk” showcase then provided representatives of local groups with the opportunity to tell the other participants about the local groups they volunteer for, what they do for the community and what they need help with.

Participants were then informed of the opportunities available through Community Unity and were encouraged to:

- Sign up to scheduled training opportunities
- Give ideas and vote on ideas for further training
- Sign up to the Community Unity volunteer bank
- Hear about Citizens In Policing volunteering roles
- Provide ideas for how they could contribute to the forthcoming ‘Know Your Neighbour’ campaign



## 6.4 Know Your Neighbour Campaign

The original concept for a street-based engagement campaign was planned to be a call for action entitled “Knock For Your Neighbour”.

However, following a thorough risk assessment with the local police team and community representatives, the campaign was re-designed to be an awareness raising and sign-posting venture - “Know Your Neighbour.”

The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the declining community connectivity in an ageing demographic and the resultant risk of isolation and loneliness experienced by individuals. The promotional material pointed out some simple steps that people could take to look out for isolated people in their neighbourhoods.

The campaign, held over a two month period, included the following interventions:

- Presented at the connector events to raise awareness of social isolation and what can be done to overcome this.
- Emailed each of the community groups identified on the asset map to raise awareness of social isolation
- Held promotional stalls in each of the localities during September 2018 in which ‘Know your Neighbour’ campaign information flyers were distributed and conversations encouraged
- Promoted campaign materials on the Community Unity website
- Promoted campaign materials on community Facebook pages across the Community Unity localities
- Encouraged community groups to assist with the promotion of the campaign.



Table one; Summary of Community Unity Engagement Activities & Outputs

Activity	Date	Location	Outputs
Relationship building and project promotion with key local stakeholders	Spring/summer 2017	various	
Asset mapping - X 3	Spring/summer 2017	Desk based research	3 on-line annotated and interactive maps created illustrating each localities social capital
Impact measurement framework and process planning	Summer 2019	Desk-based	Theory of Change impact framework + set of tools/methodologies to monitor on-going progress
Ideas Factory event designed to enable: networking, asset map checking, training needs assessment and ideas generation	27.09.17	South Molton	9 members of the community attended
Ideas Factory See above details	11.10.17	Lynton & Lynmouth	7 members of the community attended
Ideas Factory See above details	04.10.17	Holsworthy	14 members of the community attended
Connector Event A networking, information exchange, and local groups showcasing event	27.06.18	South Molton	13 members of the community attended
Connector Event See details above	07.07.18	Holsworthy	7 members of the community attended



Activity	Date	Location	Outputs
Promotional Stall at the Pannier Market	25.07.18	Holsworthy	Approx. 20 members of the public engaged in conversations around issue of ageing population. Three representatives of local groups expressed interest in applying for seed funding for their related initiatives
Connector Event See details above	08.08.18	Lynton & Lynmouth	8 members of the community attended
Know Your Neighbour campaign /Let's Do It fund Launchpad	01.09.18	Lynton Community Market	Approx.175 KYN invitation leaflets handed out directly to local residents and organisations, held many conversations and received offers to help spread the word
Know Your Neighbour campaign /Let's Do It fund Launchpad Posters and leaflet supplies also hosted by the Library; Town Hall Information centre and Museum	13.09.18	Holsworthy Community Hospital Forum	Briefing and distribution of KYN campaign flyers & posters to 12 representatives of Health and Social Care agencies - all keen to help spread the word
Know Your Neighbour campaign/Let's Do It fund Launchpad	26.09.18	Holsworthy Community Coffee Morning	Handed out Approx.160 KYN invitation leaflets directly to local residents and around 15 local groups represented.
Know Your Neighbour campaign /Let's Do It fund Launchpad	27.09 18	South Molton Pannier Market	Distributed approx.108 KYN invitation leaflets directly to members of the community



## 6.5 Training provision

Attendees at the initial events were asked to suggest their ideas for training that would help them to support their community activity. After everyone had listed their suggestions, they all showed their support for other ideas by placing a sticky dot next to the suggestions that they too would find useful, hence collective priorities were identified. Based on this exercise, a delivery plan of training opportunities to meet these needs was scheduled and delivered as shown in table two.



The training covered a range of topics which responded to the aspirations of community members.

Table two: Summary of Community Unity Training Delivery & Outputs

Intervention/ activity	Date	Location	Outputs
First Aid Course delivered by Ultimate Care (certificated)	2nd February 2018	South Molton Methodist Church	11 members of the community received training during a 3 hour workshop.





First Aid Course delivered by Ultimate Care (certificated)	16th February 2018	Lynton, The Church	14 members of the community received training during a 3 hour workshop.
Mental Health First Aid training delivered Ultimate Care	23rd February 2018	Lynton, The Church	6 members of the community received training delivered in a 3 hour workshop
First Aid Course delivered by Ultimate-Care (certificated)	14th February 2018	Holsworthy Bowling Club	15 members of the community received training during a 3 hour workshop.
Crowdfunding Workshop "How to run a successful crowd-funding campaign" delivered by Crowdfunding Strategist Anthony Lovell de Souza	10th February 2018	Barnstaple Library	7 members of the three Community Unity localities received a day's training
Mental Health First Aid Training delivered Ultimate Care	8th February 2018	South Molton Methodist Church	9 members of the community received training during a 3 hour workshop
Holsworthy Defibrillator Course delivered by the South-Western Ambulance Service	27th February 2018	Holsworthy Bowling Club	11 members of the community received training
Adult Safeguarding Course delivered the Safeguarding Officer from URC South Western Synod	8th March 2018	Holsworthy Bowling Club	13 members of the community received training
Volunteer Management Training delivered by DCT staff	23rd March 2018	South Molton	6 members of the community received training
Volunteer Management Training delivered by DCT	26th March 2018	Lynton, Lynton United Reformed Church	5 members of the community received training.



Cyber-security “Be safe On-Line” delivered by Devon & Cornwall Police	1st August 2018	S. Molton Methodist Church	8 members of the community received training
Cyber-security “Be safe On-Line” delivered by Devon & Cornwall Police	2nd August 2018	Holsworthy Bowling Club	5 members of the community received training on cyber security
Cyber-security “Be safe On-Line” delivered by Devon & Cornwall Police	24th September 2018	Lynton united Reform Church	4 members of the community received training
Post Falls Care - delivered by SWAST	18th October 2018	Lynton Town Hall	Cancelled due to low bookings
Fund Your Community Projects delivered by DCT Social Enterprise service	22nd November 2018	Holsworthy Memorial Hall	13 members of the community received training during a 3 hour workshop.
Fund Your Community Projects delivered by DCT Social Enterprise service	12th December 2018	South Molton, Amory Centre	10 delegates received training during a four hour workshop



## 6.6 “Lets Do It!” seed fund

At the Connector events one of the barriers to new community action that several long-serving volunteers mentioned was their lack of financial reserves to enable new initiatives to be instigated. These conversations suggested that quite small amounts of funding could enable really valuable new activities and help “lever in” larger external investment. In response to these suggestions the Community Unity Steering Group committed to identifying a budget to enable a “light touch” seed fund to enable local initiatives and community action to take place.



The fund was launched in August 2018 as the “Let’s Do It” grants, with stated aims in the guidance notes based upon the Community Unity aspirations as:

1. To help build stronger connections and encourage more collaboration within the community
2. To support the community to strengthen its resilience and self-sufficiency in the light of recent challenges such as:
  - An ageing community with increasing levels of vulnerability to loneliness and isolation
  - Over-stretched public services
  - Extreme weather events
3. Supporting young people to become more actively engaged citizens within their community - particularly keen to hear from inter-generational initiatives



Each of the three localities had a pot of £1500 they could apply to with maximum awards of £500 per initiative. The fund was open to both local constituted organisations and individual community activists. The deadline for applications was the end of October 2018, with a requirement to complete all expenditure by the end of November. This latter time-line was in reality extended to better reflect the logistical requirements and volunteer capacity of the successful applicants.

Applicants were asked to describe the intended outcomes and outputs of their proposals at the application stage, which were scored by the Steering Group against the strategic aims of the project.

Recipients and their initiatives that received Let’s Do it fund awards are listed in the table below:

Table three; Summary of ‘Let’s Do It’ Fund Awards

Project or organisation	Locality	Outputs
The Red Box Project	Holsworthy	£200 awarded to provide free menstruation products in schools for girls and young women who may otherwise experience ‘period poverty’.
Lynton Town Council sports nets	Lynton and Lynmouth	£50 awarded to replace the sports nets in Lynton and Lynmouth, and an article in the Lyn Valley News to celebrate and invite new users
Lyn Table tennis club	Lynton and Lynmouth	£200 awarded to contribute to next 6 months running costs and new publicity with a view to them establishing a more financially sustainable model for the club



The Meddlers - wild planting group	South Molton	£500 awarded to purchase wild flowers, to engage people from later life and children, as volunteers to beautify various piece of “wasteland” around the town.
Holsworthy Rubies W.I. group	Holsworthy	£445 awarded for a community celebration event and recruitment drive to diversify the age-range of members for the Holsworthy Rubies’ 50th anniversary.
Friends of South Molton Library outdoor social space	South Molton	£500 awarded for capital items required for the Library’s outdoor garden social & sensory space providing access for all
Community support café Lions/Youth Club	Holsworthy	£500 awarded towards capital items to create a community café safe space for vulnerable groups along with training fees for the community leaders. Signposting advice towards other potential funding opportunities also provided
Thornbury Hamlets Parish Plan Action Group: Pop-Up village hall	Holsworthy	£300 awarded towards a marquee to provide a pop-up village hall. This investment enabled them to lever in their short-fall of £500 needed to purchase the marquee



## 6.7 Marketing and Communications Strategy

The delivery team also had the input and support of DCT's Marketing Officer and apprentice to manage the dedicated website, develop promotional material and implement a social media strategy. The marketing team delivered the following outputs:

### *Newsletters and bulletins*

Content on Community Unity was featured in 10 DCT email newsletters and bulletins, which were issued to 1,892 people each time from May 2018 (8 newsletters and bulletins), and 2,873 for each bulletin or email prior to May 2018 (pre GDPR contact review, in which time 2 newsletters and bulletins were sent).

The newsletters and bulletins are received by DCT members, community groups, organisations, local councils, community activists, community buildings trustees and individuals.

### *Website*

Website analytics were available from June 2018 when DCT launched its new website. In the first six months of the launch the Community Unity Page on the Devon Communities Together website showed 99 views, 80 of which were unique page views. The average time spent on the page was 1 minute 36 seconds.

The Community Unity website hosted a wealth of information about the pilot, including sections on:

Get Involved - How to become a volunteer, training opportunities and workshops, crime prevention advice

Community Pages for each community - showing the Asset Maps, Know Your Neighbours information, Ideas Factory reports



Volunteer Toolkits - full of toolkits and a wide range of resources for individuals, groups and group leaders.

### *Social media*

97 posts related to Community Unity were made on social media which had the potential to be seen by DCT's 2,120 followers on Twitter, 552 followers on Facebook and 236 connections on LinkedIn. The posts on Facebook were shared 159 times, liked 109 times, generated 126 post clicks (followers clicking through the links in the posts) and had a total reach of 39,403 (the potential to have been seen by 39,403 people).

### *Flyers*

Flyers were created for individual Community Unity events and training opportunities. Flyers and promotional material were distributed to the 3 target communities in person and via personal email contact lists by the project staff. They were also shared within social media posts.

### *Devon Communities Together office foyer screen*

Dedicated slides about the Community Unity project and related individual events were created and shown on rotation on the screen in the foyer of the DCT offices. They had the potential to be seen by all DCT staff, trustees and visitors to the offices, which host regular community learning events.



## 7.0 Outcomes and Impact Indicators

In order to identify measurable indicators of the difference this pilot could make to individuals, organisations and the community a Theory Of Change (TOC) model was drawn up at the start of the project. This model provided a framework by which the project aims, resultant activities and potential outcomes could be described and evidenced over time.

The TOC model was re-iterated at the projects mid-point review when the strategic aims and allocated resources were updated as described in section 3.0 to provide the monitoring framework illustrated below.

This framework was used as a baseline and point of reference throughout the delivery of the project: In order to design methods and tools which provided both quantitative and qualitative data evidencing outcomes, collected at the time of each intervention and retrospectively in order to inform this evaluation report and learning from the project.





## Community Unity pilot project: Overall Theory Of Change Outcomes Framework



The tools used to capture outcomes and evidence collected are described below in the context of achieving each of the projects strategic aims.



## 7.1 Outcomes achieved and indicated in relation to the projects strategic aims and activities

**Strategic Aim:** To help build the capacity of and connectivity within each community in order to grow their resilience, empowerment and impact

This aim really encapsulates the under-pinning value and intended impact of the entire pilot project as all the other strategic aims, can be seen as contributors to this core purpose. All of the activities/interventions undertaken were with a view to building upon this core intention including: The asset maps; Ideas Factory; Connector events and street-based engagement; the training programme; the awareness raising and signposting and the project seed fund.





## Outcome: Increased connectivity between local organisations and individuals

At the close of each Connector event the participants were asked to evaluate their experience, by placing a colour sticker on three “target boards”. Each target asked them to score one of three key questions:

- Was This Event Useful?
- Was this event enjoyable?
- Do you feel better connected?

Participants placed a sticker where they felt appropriate on each of the three targets to represent; the bullseye if “excellent” through concentric rings outwards indicating “very good”; “good”; “OK” to “not very good” or worse on the outer ring.



*Participants at a Connector Event using targets to indicate their personal outcomes*

The combined feedback from the three Connector events provided the following indication of impact:

- 100% of participants indicated that they found the event useful, of which 80% indicated that it was very good or excellent in terms of usefulness
- 100 % of participants indicated that they found the event enjoyable, of which 80% indicated that it was very good or excellent



- 100% of participants indicated that they felt better connected, of which 90% indicated that their improvement in connectivity was very good or excellent

The Lets Do It fund awards were in many instances given on the basis that the recipients will undertake specific commitments to ensure their project provides new opportunities for inter-generational collaboration and new partnerships with other local organisations. For Example: The South Molton Meddlers wild planting project were awarded funding as the planned steps to positively invite and engage children and young people in the planting schemes as they arise, and that planting is promoted throughout the parish to encourage more people of all ages to join in.

Similarly, the Lyn Table Tennis Club was given an award towards capital equipment on the condition that they publicise the club sessions and encourage additional members to join, hence helping to make the club more financially sustainable and benefitting a broader cross section of the community.

### Outcome: Increased connectivity between local organisations and individuals

The Interactive Asset Maps that have been created for each locality contribute towards this outcome: From the information researched and elaborated on by local people, community assets such as buildings, organisations, services and clubs are represented as a 'pin' on a publicly available map which is designed to act as a directory that will grow and develop over time.

Completed asset maps are available for each locality on their page of the Community Unity Website [www.communityunitydevon.org.uk](http://www.communityunitydevon.org.uk) and will be shared with key local connector organisations including the Town Councils and local police teams as part of the on-going legacy of the pilot.



**"The development of a Community Asset Map is another very useful initiative created by this project which I hope will be developed further to include a system to share/loan physical assets as well as skills resources within the community."**

*Quote from the Chairman of a Holsworthy sports club*

*"I did manage to get involved with a volunteering scheme as a result of the connector meeting in Lynton, and was able to fill in for some duties at the Lyn and Exmoor Museum."*

*Quote from Anne who lives on an outlying farm and who shared with the group that she felt isolated since retiring from farming*



**Outcome: Local Groups strengthened through their volunteers acquiring new skills and greater confidence to act**

The project delivered 15 training workshops over the course of the pilot which attracted nearly 140 attendees in total. At the close of each workshop participants were asked to complete an evaluation form to rate the content, learning and confidence acquired, trainer's knowledge and their anticipated actions as a result of the training.

Analysis of the participants evaluation feedback across all the courses shows a 90% "strongly agree" satisfaction level for personal skills development outcomes.

100% of participants feedback indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the courses were well organised and that the trainers were knowledgeable.

**Below are some examples of beneficiaries' anecdotal comments:**



*Participants in South Molton & Holworthy  
volunteer learning events*



*"Gave me the confidence to 'have a go', ... a very useful afternoon for volunteers who don't want to do a full first aid course"*

*Participant in the Lynton & Lynmouth 1st Aid Training*

*"The instructor was knowledgeable and gave good practical advice, thank you"*

*"A quick word of thanks to Louise and Harry for the funding course in Holsworthy last week, which was very useful in helping us to sharpen up our skills for future applications, in connection with our plan for a new permanent community hall."*



## Training Outcomes Case Study

### Contributed by the Chairman of Holsworthy Bowling Club

“There are many organisations with willing volunteers but often cannot match the volunteers with the skill sets required. Providing willing volunteers with the required skill set is essential to building resilience and capacity within the community. The Community Unity Project has been successful in providing a wide range of training opportunities to many volunteers across all our local community organisations and as a by-product has also increased the valuable interaction and cooperation between those organisations, these networking opportunities will undoubtedly bear fruit in the future.

The verbal feedback that I have received from the Bowling Club members who attended training has been overwhelmingly positive. They now feel competent and confident to use an AED and administer First Aid when a situation arises. In particular the level of confidence is impressive, they have all said that now they would have no hesitation to help in any incident they come across in their daily life, not only at the club.

We now have a core of trained and confident members, which has increased the likelihood that there will be such an individual in attendance at all our bowling activities. There were 6 members trained in First Aid and 9 on the AED Competency session with Club membership of around 60.

I will have attended the Volunteer Management training, which will, I hope, help the Club to continue to improve its capacity and wellbeing; volunteer training will be an important part of the process. I would have liked to attend the Mental Health training but was unable. I think this is a much-neglected subject and I hope that further training will be available in the future.

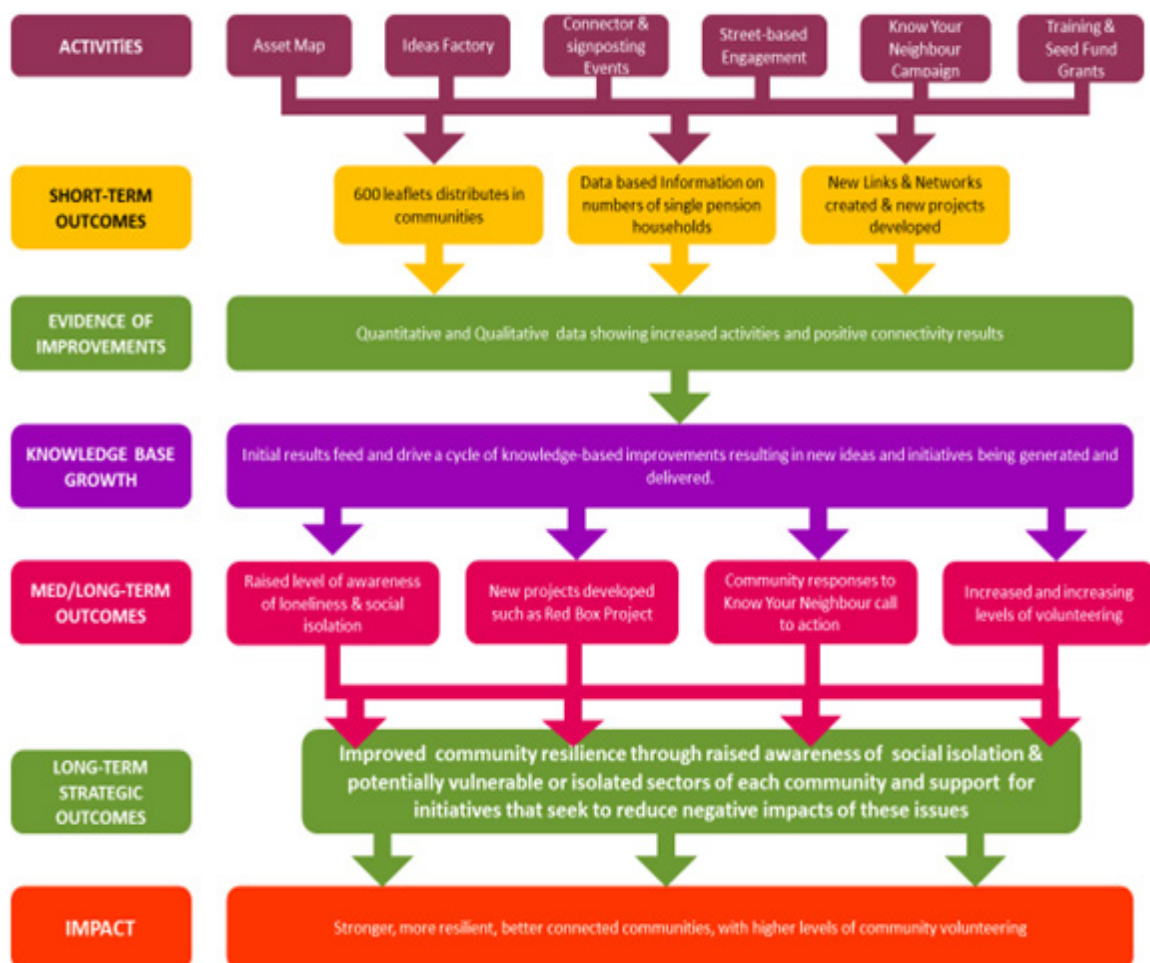
I am sure that we would not have achieved this level of training, confidence and reassurance within our membership without the impetus of the Community Unity Project. Our thanks goes to all those involved.”





**Strategic Aim:** To raise awareness of potentially vulnerable or isolated sectors of each community and to support initiatives that seek to reduce negative impacts of these issues

This aim provided a theme for conversations between project staff and community members throughout the project. These conversations informed the prioritisation and delivery of specific initiatives toward the latter half of the pilot including the Know Your Neighbour awareness raising campaign and eligibility criteria for the Let's Do it Fund applications.





## Outcome: reducing impact and risk of social isolation for hard to reach groups by raised awareness and new initiatives enacted

The issue of social isolation particularly for specific sectors within the community was a recurring conversation instigated throughout the process. This culminated in the Know Your Neighbour awareness raising campaign held throughout August and September 2018.

Over 600 promotional leaflets were handed out directly to local residents from market stalls, community forums visited, and via street-based engagement in the town centres. In addition, many local organisations and connectors offered to host posters and cascade the flyers via their own networks and meetings including: Libraries, town hall foyers, local councillors, Holsworthy Helping Hands, the Coast Guard, local churches, shops and luncheon clubs.

The street engagement and market stall activities enabled DCT staff to spark up a lot of conversations directly with local residents. Many of the people DCT spoke to during the promotional events stated that they did not realise that the risk of isolation and loneliness was such a growing issue in their communities. Similarly, many were very surprised to hear about the number of single pensioner households in their town. The use of these statistics, which were derived from the 2011 census, caught the attention of local residents. Using data in this way, to challenge preconceptions about their community, encourage them to take action, and to cascade the issue by word of mouth was a really positive outcome of these interventions. The campaign invitation flyer is illustrated below presenting thought provoking statistics, simple ways to help, sign-posting and risk awareness information.



You will have members of your community who may feel lonely and you can help them. Here are some simple steps that you can take to encourage them to feel part of their community.

**TAKE ACTION**

- **Smile and say hello when you see them.**

It's just a small step but seeing someone smile and being acknowledged can make a huge difference to how someone is feeling.

- **Encourage them to join a community group.**

Have a chat and find out what their hobbies/interests are and see if there's a group in your area they might like to join. You could offer to take them along or contact the community group to see if someone can pick them up to make them feel welcome. You can find information on your local community groups via [www.communityunitydevon.org.uk](http://www.communityunitydevon.org.uk) or [www.pinpointdevon.co.uk](http://www.pinpointdevon.co.uk)

- **Be mindful of lonely people.**

If the weather is bad ask them if there's anything they need from the shops, or if you are concerned about their wellbeing contact the NHS on 111 or the Police on 101:  
T: 111 W: <https://111.nhs.uk/> T: 101 W: [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk)

**REMEMBER**

- **You might not always get a positive response.**

Some people value their privacy, so please don't take it personally if someone ignores you or does not respond positively to your smile. Just be polite and let them be.

- **Invitations into each other's houses.**

Please be careful if you decide to invite someone into your home, or if you are invited by someone else. Make sure that a friend knows where you are and make sure you know the person well enough to feel comfortable first. Please be cautious of slips and trips, or any pets that might be around.

To find out more come to our coffee morning at **Holsworthy Memorial Hall 26th September 2018, 9:00-12:00**



## Outcome: new links forged, and new opportunities created

One of the three criteria against which Let's Do It fund applications were assessed was that of developing new initiatives and opportunities for sectors of the community who were experiencing or at risk of social exclusion.

A great example is the Holsworthy Red Box project which was set up to mitigate the financial exclusion, stigma and truancy that some girls and young women experience as a result of menstruation. The young mother who initiated the project has developed strong collaborations with the local secondary school, the Town Council and local shops.

***“Myself personally and Holsworthy Town Council feel that this Red Box project is a fantastic way to emphasise the need for such project in Holsworthy which is going to help so many young girls”***

*Holsworthy Town Council endorsement of the application.*

*“Firstly I would like to say a massive thank you, for providing The Red Box Project Holsworthy, with this grant. The money received has allowed us to purchase numerous red boxes for both donation points along with the boxes that will be going into schools next week. We have also been able to purchase a range of other items that we have not had donated from members of the public such as pants and wet wipes. Without this grant we would not have been able to get this project up and running.”*

*Lisa, Holsworthy Red Box co-ordinator*

**'OMG Miss. That red box well saved my life!'**

*Beneficiary of the red Box project.*



**Strategic Aim:** Communities to be better organised and supported by the creation of “volunteer banks”, to be able to be mobilised quickly and respond to local incidents and emergencies.



South Molton Library Garden project



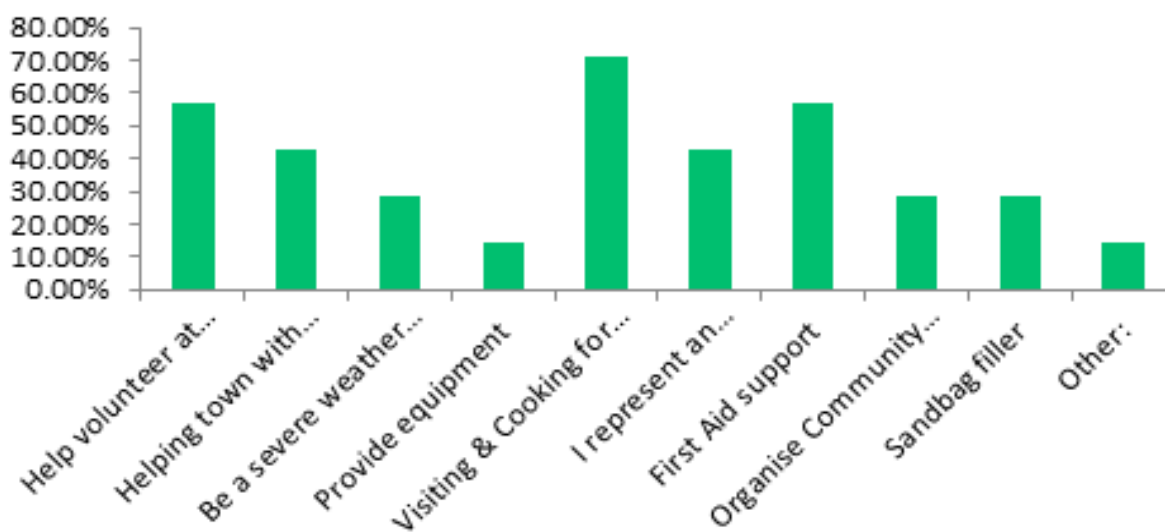


## Outcome: Increased awareness of value and opportunities to volunteer

Although this aim was de-prioritised during the course of the project (see section 3.0) We kept the opportunity open for people to sign up to a local volunteer bank with a view to being called upon to help respond to occasional emergencies that might arise.

A total of 36 individuals signed up to the volunteer bank. In March 2018 these potential volunteers were asked to participate in a short on-line survey to ascertain which skills and tasks they would be willing to help with. A summary of their feedback is illustrated in the chart below. Around 70% of volunteers were willing to be called upon to support vulnerable individuals in their homes. Over half of the volunteers were willing to help in emergency situations by providing 1st Aid or refuge centre catering.

### What would you like to help with in an Emergency or to assist vulnerable members of your community:



Feedback from volunteer bank members survey March 2018



In signing up to the volunteer bank, individuals gave permission for their contact details to be shared for this purpose with key local agencies such as the Parish Council and the local police team. The legacy plan for Community Unity includes sharing the volunteer bank's contact details with these key agencies so that they have a set of willing individuals who can be called upon in times of locality emergencies or to assist vulnerable members of the community.

### Let's do it Funding

The Let's Do It Fund has confirmed funding for eight community initiatives ranging from small scale community resource support, such as the replacement of games nets in Lynton and Lynmouth, to partial funding towards larger community initiatives such as the creation of a community café safe space in Holsworthy. The full range of awards confirmed are summarised in table three.

All awards were made with reporting criteria that recipients are to provide on the completion of the project:

- i) A log of expenditure on an excel spreadsheet or word table**
- ii) Copies of receipts for any items over £50 if applicable**
- iii) A short report back to DCT (1-2 paragraphs) about how the project went, how the applicant and the community has benefitted.**



**Strategic Aim:** To raise awareness of Devon & Cornwall Police’s “Citizens in Policing” programme and its volunteering opportunities.



**Outcome:** Increased awareness of value and opportunities to volunteer

As part of the Connector events agenda, the Citizens In Police Support Manager provided a short presentation about the range of volunteer roles and tasks that the service offers. He explained that: There are over 500 police support volunteers working with Devon and Cornwall Police: As a Police Support Volunteer, participants can gain new skills, meet new people and obtain an insight into the role of the police whilst making a positive contribution to their local community: Some of their volunteering initiatives also involve working with partner agencies and organisations to make communities safer and more resilient.

Conversation was opened up and the event participants expressed an interest to hear about the volunteer roles currently needed across the force area. The Support Manager described some examples including:

- Volunteer Drivers
- Victim Care Volunteers
- Administration Support
- CCTV Volunteers
- Vehicle Check Volunteers





## 8.0

## Conclusion

The Pilot Project demonstrated that it was important to identify at the outset each of the partner organisations' drivers, as well as the resources required to deliver the strategic objectives. It was apparent that having 'feet on the ground' in each of the locations was paramount to getting buy in from each town, and to achieve a mutual understanding that the Project was there to support what was happening in each location rather than assert its own agenda. The mapping exercise, was seen as very beneficial in each town and welcomed, as was the small funding allocations for 'Let's Do It' to bring community volunteers together to achieve a common aim.

Like many towns and villages there tended to be a core of dedicated volunteers already in place, working hard through local groups as well as individually, and most of these people therefore didn't have any spare time to become a police support volunteer as well. The Know your Neighbour campaign highlighted the issue of loneliness and isolation and had a good reach and buy-in across the communities. The training was well supported, feedback was very positive and the link with supporting their communities was apparent and well understood. These all contributed to building resilience and connectivity within these three towns.

With public sector strategies, all seeking to build the capacity, capability and well-being of local communities, the Asset Based Community Development approach used throughout this pilot project and initiated through the ideas Factory meetings, provides a useful model and guide for future initiatives which are seeking to address similar community issues.