

“If you haven’t got a social network it’s very difficult to cope when things get tough. The people who come through our doors don’t have this network and we offer friendship to help them through,”

says Dawn Hampshire, project coordinator at the Tiverton-based Voluntary Support Scheme.

foundation tackles isolation at grassroots

coast2coast

People may be isolated by a disability, their ethnicity or because they are elderly or live in a rural area. Loneliness is also rooted in homelessness or the crippling sense of isolation that comes with addiction. Others it affects include carers, young parents overwhelmed and alone with small children and those on low incomes struggling to make ends meet. Triggers include bullying or shocks like bereavement and redundancy. In our refreshed newsletter we will focus on different themes every quarter, starting with a look at the difference the groups we support make in tackling loneliness and isolation.

In fact, scratch beneath the surface and most of the small, local charities we fund are dedicated to rebuilding and nurturing relationships and alleviating loneliness at one level or another. Something as simple as a weekly get together for the elderly, a group inspiring excluded teenagers, or sending volunteers to comfort vulnerable people in their own home all ease loneliness and foster

social bonds. The people these charities support see the human contact, association and routine they offer as a lifeline. Yet these small groups say they would struggle to stay afloat without our help - 85% of charitable donations in the UK go to just 5% of charities. They also offer support where conventional services fall short, yet research shows that loneliness leads to unhappiness and ill health, and increasingly affects large swathes of society as traditional social networks like family and church congregations decline.

And loneliness is just as pervasive in Devon as the UK’s more urban areas. Contrary to the perception of Devon’s rural affluence, many vulnerable people live in rural areas out of easy reach of the facilities and services that could support them. Pensioners are a case in point: 150,000 of Devon’s elderly live alone and the majority in rural areas. Devon’s growing rural homeless population is another example, up 30% in 2007.

To find out more about how our grants are helping to tackle isolation and loneliness, [see inside](#).

inside this issue

-  Kitson Hutchings set up named fund
-  Devon & Cornwall Police Authority join forces with Foundation
-  Dame Steve Shirley, Ambassador for Philanthropy to speak



projects tackling isolation

Freedom Social Projects receives no statutory funding and has to raise around £200,000 a year to support its work with offenders, drug users, the homeless and others battling deprivation and social exclusion from its day centre in Barnstaple.

“Between 50-75 people come through our door every day for food, showers and human contact,” says Projects Manager Phil Noall. “Loneliness is part of the jigsaw: our work is also about building confidence, self esteem and relationships, and promoting inclusion.”

Tom’s Story

“I’m 31 and suffer from depression. I come to the centre everyday for a hot meal and a cup of coffee. I don’t have family around here. Am I getting better? I don’t know. I have good days and bad days. Some days I feel like I am and others I still feel stuck. I don’t give myself targets otherwise I will let myself down if I don’t achieve them. I struggle to find people to talk to and tell my problems to but the Freedom Centre is a place to meet people and socialise. It’s a good place.”
www.freedomsocialprojects.org.uk

The group has been awarded £5,000 from the DCF May Gurney Fund.



The Mid Devon based **Voluntary Support Scheme** helps people through patches of loneliness, depression and anxiety. We awarded the charity £11,000 to help fund its activities for vulnerable people like Denise in Tiverton. “I come to a self-help group. I am bi-polar and have had a problem with drink and low self-esteem. I needed emotional support and acute loneliness was eating away at me. Through the group I have met people I can talk to. We don’t just sit round and discuss our problems. We are encouraged to meet up outside the group and I go swimming with new friends. We’ve also had a romance. A couple met through the group and they are still together.”
www.voluntarysupportscheme.org.uk



Elderly people, particularly those living in rural areas are some of the most isolated in Devon. **Combe Martin’s Senior Citizens Club** was set up by Ann Davis to reach out to isolated elderly residents in her village after the closure of local shops, the post office and a reduced bus service left many with no regular contact with others. A grant of £4,965 from Devon Community Foundation helped the group to continue with its befriending service and arrange regular meetings and outings for members.

thank you for your support

Without the vital support of our donors we wouldn’t be able to help important projects like St Petrock’s or Torbay Homestart. Here we highlight the recent amazing gifts our supporters have pledged and the reasons why they chose Devon Community Foundation.

police property act fund

Devon & Cornwall Police Authority has joined forces with Devon Community Foundation to help it work even more closely with local communities. The Foundation has been chosen to manage the Police Property Act Fund, which has been set up with money raised from selling goods recovered by the Police which can’t be returned to their owners.

Money from the Fund will be used to make small grants to local community groups helping the Police to tackle local community issues like making local areas safer and reducing anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime as part of their PACT initiative (Partners and Communities Together).

Superintendent Emma Webber, Head of Territorial Policing and Partnerships comments, “The Foundation’s knowledge of local community groups and issues will really help us to ensure that the money is spent in the best possible way.”

coutts

Exeter bank **Coutts & Co** raised £1,550 in a charity raffle during a reception to celebrate its first year of business in the region. Top prize was a dinner for six at the bank’s London office, fetching over £1,000. “We’re thrilled to be marking our first year of business with this charity event, raising over £1,550 for such a worthy cause. Our first year of business in Exeter has been enormously successful and we are now one of the fastest growing offices for Coutts in the UK,” says Peter Blatchford, Senior Client Partner at the bank.



community spirit in action devon and somerset law society

Seven members of **Devon and Somerset Law Society**, together with Olive George from the Foundation, raised £1,800 on a fifty mile sponsored walk across Exmoor and Dartmoor. This will now be matched by the Grassroots Challenge to make £3,600.

“The Walk was tough going due to the really bad weather but despite the conditions, it was great fun and we’re delighted by the sum raised. I’d like to thank everyone who supported us in anyway in aid of this really worthwhile cause,” says James Cross, President of the DASLS.



homestart torbay

Homestart Torbay sends trained volunteers into homes to offer practical support and comfort to parents with young children struggling to cope. The group received over £10,000 from the Foundation last year to help families with children, aged 5 and under, feeling isolated and overwhelmed. “Some of the people we support are in a dark place, almost unable to cope, and on their own most of the day. Many are young mothers without family close by. They have lost confidence and struggle to access wider groups in the community. We provide these people with somebody they know and trust to talk to and help them build their confidence,” says Sharon Clayborough at the Paignton-based charity. The charity currently supports 22 families in the area.
www.homestarttorbay.org

“The longer somebody is on the streets the more socially excluded they become. They lose belief in themselves and in many cases don’t think they deserve accommodation,” says Mel Hartley, Project Manager at homeless charity **St Petrock’s** in Exeter. A £5,000 Foundation grant is funding initiatives to help people back into employment with a job club and sessions to improve literacy and numeracy.

st petrocks

“We make people aware of skills they often don’t realise they have,” says Mel citing a recent example of one suicidal young man’s traumatic journey from desperation to getting off the street and into employment. “He came to us after losing his job and accommodation.” St Petrock’s found him temporary accommodation and he now has a job.
www.stpetrocks.org.uk



named fund for kitson hutchings

Solicitors **Kitson Hutchings** has also set up a charitable fund with the Foundation to donate to community groups in Torbay. Income earned from its endowed fund will go towards annual grants, with staff at the firm’s four offices choosing which local groups to support. “We have secured a sum of money and have been able to transfer this to our chosen charity, Devon Community Foundation,” says Managing Partner James Cross. “We acted now as we knew the sum donated could be doubled by the Grassroots Challenge. Setting up our own fund means we can make a long-term commitment to the local communities where we work. It’s great to know that as a local business we can be part of building better and more caring communities in Devon.”

savills sign up for devon 100 club

Estate agency **Savills** and the **Midas Group** are two of the latest businesses to join our Devon 100 Club. Launched in November by motivational coach and adventurer Humphrey Walters, the Club is a rewarding, cost-effective and simpler way for businesses to support local projects. “It’s a great way for us to connect with the local communities where we operate and to give something back,” says Martin Lamb, Director of Savills in Exeter.

“As a home-grown west country business, supporting the local communities where we work is an important part of the way we operate. The 100 Club is a great way for us to target our support locally and is integral to our CSR Policy,” says Steve Hindley, CBE and Chairman of the Midas Group. To find out more about joining the Devon 100 Club call Sarah Gunn on 01884 235887 or email her on sarah@devoncf.com

Sidmouth Quilters and Patchers

This group (which has been supported by a grant from the Foundation) raised £285 by putting on a coffee morning and display of their work.

Bring and Buy Sales

Village and Church halls across Devon raised over £1,350 through taking part in the Western Morning News 150th Challenge appeal on behalf of Devon Community Foundation.

coming soon

DAME SHIRLEY TO HOST EXETER PHILANTHROPY EVENT

The first ever Ambassador for Philanthropy, **Dame Steve Shirley** will host our Philanthropy Forecast event to be held at the Met Office on May 18th. A moving and inspiring speaker, Dame Shirley will share her personal experiences about charitable giving and her work as Ambassador for Philanthropy. She'll be joined by **Tim Smit** of the Eden Project, whose latest project is to bring communities together by getting them to grow and share food. These busy and influential people and the Met Office are giving their support for free; community spirit in action! The event provides an opportunity for individuals and companies to understand and explore the impact that local philanthropy could make on our own communities into the future. There are limited places available and will be by invitation only, anyone interested in tickets for the event should email Martha on Martha@devoncf.com

NEW WEB-SITE

Look out for the new Devon Community Foundation web-site coming soon.

We've teamed up with AB Graphics to create a new web-site which will be easier to use, include lots more examples of people and projects we're supporting and discussion forums where you can link up with other community groups and donors to share news, views and ideas. It will also include DVDs of your giving in action and loads of ideas on fundraising and events.

FANCY A PAMPER?

The Foundation has teamed up with the Business League in Mid Devon and Blundells School to put on a whole evening of pamper treatments and therapies, music, wine, workshops and local crafts. Come along and join the fun. Saturday 27th March, Blundells School, 7- 11pm. £15 per ticket. Call Kathy on 01884 235887 for details.



Mad Hatters party

On March 31st, there'll only be one year left to go to raise the full £1.25 million for our Grassroots Challenge. To mark this 'very important date', we're holding a mad hatters tea party at Crealy Park – complete with white rabbit and other characters from Alice in Wonderland. Groups which have received grants from the Grassroots programme, as well as the committed businesses and private donors which have contributed so much to Devon will attend. We're also asking brownies and other groups around the county to hold their own Mad Hatters Tea Party and enter our Mad Hatters Hat Competition to raise money for the Grassroots Challenge.

If you'd like to know more email Sarah Yelland on sarahy@devoncf.com



grassroots arounddevon



- We awarded Winkleigh Youth Club £2,500 to improve its facilities in this rurally isolated area where income levels are low.
- Shaldon Over Sixties Club received a £300 grant to fit a broadband connection for its members who struggle to access the internet.
- Sunbeams after School Club received £1,006 to provide before and after-school care for pupils at the local primary school. This will help working parents in an area renowned for unemployment and poverty.
- We awarded £2,047 to Loddiswell Playing Fields and Village Hall to help fund equipment and overhaul the play park.
- We granted £495 to Orcombe Court Residents Social Club to help fund a Christmas lunch outing that included hire of an especially adapted coach for the disabled.
- We awarded £1,425 to Torbay's Brixham Young Volunteers. This group works to break down barriers and build bridges within the local community.

£7 million grants in last 7 Years

The Foundation reached its £7 million grant making total by awarding a £5,000 grant to Exbourne and Jacobstowe Community Shop and Café which provides a vital service to elderly residents and young mums in this isolated village.



CONTACT DETAILS

To find out more about supporting the Foundation, call Martha or email Martha@devoncf.com

To apply for a grant, email Heidi on Heidi@devoncf.com

To hold a fundraising event on behalf of the Foundation email Laura@devoncf.com

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