

TRUSTEE REPORT

SUMMARY 2023

This year has been our busiest yet where the ebbs and flows of our seasonal economy, the cost-of-living crisis, housing crisis have all mixed together and kept us on our toes.

But this is where the Community Café space has come into its own and provided a local anchor for people who have a visible space to come to and to reach out for help if needed, not only around food, fuel or a hot meal, but company, friendship and also with our co-located services, it means service support is on hand to give advice and help find solutions.

We have cemented existing service partner relationships and built many new ones and have been excited to see the return of the health sector back into our lives and back into the café.

We have continued to work in partnership with TQ6 Community Partnership to deliver the National Lottery project which started back in 2018 when the local community identified a need for a dedicated community hub with the Placed Based Social Action work. Having a space has seen so many things flourish including the development of local peer support groups, how exciting has it been to see our local community finding its own solutions to its needs through connecting, sharing and learning and supporting each other.

The community café is full to the brim with activities every day of the week and often weekends. Its become a hub for connecting, sharing, support, all around food. Its provided a place of belonging for those 'up town' to feel part of 'down town' and it has also been a place to welcome services who benefit from our connections within this safe and trusted space, to meet and support and be able to deliver their services. And amongst this daily bustle, services like South Hams housing teams, Drug and Alcohol teams, housing providers, energy support, household support, public health, veterans' mental health support, Changing Futures peer researchers, Exeter University and many more.

COMMUNITY CHEST FOOD & FUEL SUPPORT

Food Parcels, pantry and hygiene bank

During 2023 we delivered **3,095 Large food parcels** to families in Dartmouth and the surrounding villages

We have had a dedicated food pantry that people can discreetly help themselves, it runs all year and we keep no numbers, the point is discretion and removing barriers. People never abuse an open trusted system and it supports taking care of the 'small issues' without the 'walk of shame'. We keep this permanently topped up, which means a lot of shopping, and we are very grateful to **Sainsburys, Lidl and Co-op** for all their donations to support this. And of course a big shout to Jilly's Farm Shop for all the lovely fruit and veg.

We also have a dedicated and discreet hygiene bank for anyone to access and we also supply hygiene goods to the school for their pupils.

A Community Chest Christmas

Christmas is a busy time of the year for us and this year we delivered **174 Christmas hampers**, with the help of our fabulous Queen Elf, **Sue Payne** and her Hamper Scamper, without Sue and her elves this wouldn't be possible. This is what a community can do for itself when people work together.

Similarly the toy parcels come together with good will and this year a massive thanks to Lidl for all their support, we delivered 211 toy parcels locally.

Then there is the Christmas day meal, held at the café and bringing people together on what can be the loneliest day of the year, but not for us! 45 people, including volunteers and all no charge to anyone

Fuel Poverty

Fuels top ups this year were only **74**, this is because working closely with **South Dartmoor Community Energy**, they have taken care of the community need around energy poverty.

Warm Space

6,151 hot nutritious meals have been cooked and eaten at the Café between Oct and Dec 2023, a meal is main meal and a dessert. All thanks to the creative skills of lead volunteer Lyn Garton - who is passionate about good food and using what we have, her creative and delicious dishes have kept the café full. All is free and all by using local food donated - thanks again to Sainsburys, co-op, Lidl, Food in Community and of course the Royal Castle Hotel.

Not to mention the hundreds of thousands of teas and coffee - as you may have guessed it's all free.

During the winter months we also held Sunday Roasts in the café, bringing folk together during those darker months .

Recycling and repurposing furniture and household goods.

We repurpose peoples upgraded white goods and furniture, we house-clear, especially around bereavement with many older folk having retired here and their family live elsewhere. We have repurposed dozens and dozens of items of furniture and used these items to rebuild many lives of people who have come to Dartmouth through situations of trauma and challenge.

Community social @ the café

Having the community café space means the community have a dedicated free space to use and for us all to be more creative and support not only each other, but also a whole host of fabulous community groups in town through fundraising. Here are some of the things that have happened ..

- Kicking off with a **New Year's Eve party with the Ukrainians**, a space for them to come together with locals and celebrate and share their traditions, wow their baking skills are second to none.
- We were able to have a drop off point for collecting used Christmas cards to raise funds for our treasured community asset of the outdoor swimming pool.
- We hosted community bingo to raise funds for the outdoor pool and the local guides
- We have held free arts and crafts days in school holidays and half terms, these are creative messy play days, and everyone is fed too, it supports discreetly any food poverty issues, whilst also bringing people together and providing local and free activities.
- A collection point for aid to Ukraine, collected in café and delivered by van to Ukraine by the lower ferry staff
- Fundraising for a local family whose child has a serious health condition and needed an operation, we helped to raise enough for Holly's operation which was a success.
- A space for the Ukrainian families to have English lessons with Beth.
- Lantern making craft day for our own version of Candlelit which didn't happen this year.
- Community crafts days to create seasonal window displays in the cafe.
- Baby shower for local mum Ali and her first baby, Trent.
- With the Royal Castle hotel donating a massive cardboard North pole post box, we had 'Letters to Santa' post box for the local children (and some adults too)

Community Hub Space

The opening of the café works to the ebbs and flows of the local seasonal economy and so from the end of October, usually marked by half term and Halloween, we see the seasonal work finish and the need for support in our town increase, so we open a Warm Space Monday Wednesday and Friday. During the rest of the year, we still open 2 days a week and food and drinks are still available.

A place for service partners to deliver their support:

Face to face is a key component of how people seek help in Dartmouth, so wrap the trust of a space and we have great partnership working and also free to services.

We also have a school uniform - preloved rail and a winter coat swap shop rail.

Working with services to benefit all

- Public Health Vaccination clinics
- Probation working with community payback.
- South Dartmoor Community Energy
- South Hams District Council Homeless/Housing Officer
- **Police and Fire service drop in**
- **Housing Hub, with Livewest and Westward Housing**
- **Together Drug and Alcohol**
- **Public Health drop in for learning about community need**
- **Local District councillors drop in and working closely with the community to develop solutions to issues.**

Partnerships

- **With Universities, we are a place for research projects to connect, this year it has been about the role of communities and connections in accessing social welfare law** [The role of communities and connections in social welfare legal advice - Nuffield Foundation.](#)
Report due May 24
- **With the** Naval college, who support us with things like donating easter eggs for local children.
- With the Police, building new relationships with police embedded within a community setting, In Dartmouth, community policing needs to be a partnership. Good to see new police with this community partnership mindset.
- South Hams council in the café explaining new bin days.
- Livewest Housing, dropping in every week but also getting involved in partnership working and supporting us with activities, events, skip days and a new playpark upgrade.
- What's Your Problem provided legal and domestic abuse advice, but sadly their own capacity meant it was only for a few months. However seeing the need and understanding how vital their support was, we have a sessional support worker based in the café, who supports people through issues, supports forms filling, phone calls and generally walks alongside the, often disconnected journey to help and support in a rural area.
- Together, Drug and Alcohol in café, this is a partnership based on mutual trust and shared working. It's a safe space for their clients and its so good to see a service being delivered locally because they as a service they have someone to go

- Jane Newland @ GP surgery. A responsive connection to the GP when moments of crisis happen locally. And also, when a patient may be struggling with practicalities, they are directed to Community Chest.

Community Outreach

- Skip day in January and November, dealing with lack of local recycling centre , working closely with housing and residents and making sure we don't have a need to fly tip.
- Spring's Up, Easter event bringing services to the community through a fun, easter day theme.
- Fundraising stalls in the market and gardens
- Community Natters, with TQ6 Community Partnership, listening to community priorities to address in partnership and of course an opportunity to bring the community together around fun and food.
- Visiting the surrounding villages, supporting them to set up their own hubs and just keeping them connected through activities and support through food.

Season Celebrations

Whilst bringing support to people where it's needed, it's also important for us to celebrate as a community. We have lots of events in the café, (see café events) but working with TQ6 CP the social side of community life has been consistent and bigger and bolder. Working with the local football club we have seasonal milestones of [Halloween](#), [Christmas](#), [Easter](#) and [summer holidays including Bushcraft day, arts and crafts days, and swimming pool days](#), where bringing people together for fun is key and its free for all, no referrals no means testing, it's all about community engagement, cohesion, a chance to be together and for us all to share and update what we are doing, what we have planned, recruit new volunteers and most importantly continue to be visible and to be listening to our community on their terms, **so our events are never just parties.... They are always so much more**

4th Emergency Service

Because we are the community, we are here 24/7 so often when services are closed, we are the only place or people around to help, evening, weekends and holidays . This includes emergency medication picked up from Totnes, family crisis, domestic abuse, suicide attempts (there were 4 over the Christmas holidays) , police issues, the list is long, its it in these moments that the strong partnership we have with services kicks in and we have the responsive reciprocal relationship that wraps around our community in crisis.

Training and learning for volunteers

We have trained our volunteers and wider team to support all the community action that is happening in the café and beyond. Just a few below with more planned for 2024

- Safeguarding
- Food Hygiene
- Playworker training
- First aid and paediatric first aid training

Peer led support groups

SEN Support Group, previously known as 'Fight Club'. This has grown and adapted to the needs of the families. With local mums taking on the peer mentor support roles and playworking roles, the group has grown from strength to strength. Initially it was supporting parents and children, but the focus has moved into the children being central to the group. It now meets every Tuesday 4.30 – 6.30pm at the café, for play and food and connection. In addition there are now coffee morning session on Tuesday morning which are parent focussed and gives different times to remove accessibility barriers for some.

The group has grown and over 30 plus families have connected in.

MENKINDE

A men's group that meets every Wednesday in the café, offering kindness, connections and support to anyone who may be struggling, all around activities and fun. With around 15 people attending the group, they create a safe space to chat, share, of load and support each other. They also meet outside the group with activities this year such as Menkinde in the woods and a fishing trip.

Mental Health Support Group

With about 40 people having been through this group since it was started, it now has developed further with new peer support worker bringing her years of skills with her to support people on their own journey to health through listening, sharing, new skills. We have seen some transformation changes in people's health and positivity, deprescribing and getting involved in community life.

Bereavement Group

Started by a young father who lost his wife, he saw a need for a group that provided not only emotional support and shared experiences but also the practicalities of what to do. This happens every Saturday morning and about 6 people attend, it early days but possible with the having a space.

CHAF Community Holiday Activities and Fun

For the 6 weeks of summer the community has since 2016 recognised the need to support holiday food poverty for local families. As the government launched its HAF programme we were initially funded and gradually as the free school meals criteria made delivery not targeted to local needs, we developed our own which supports the local community, where we know that the working poor are the ones who slip through cracks.

Every week, working with TQ6 Community Partnership we have a celebratory summer day, activities, fun and food and no referrals or criteria or barriers.

We have had swimming pool days with the outdoor swimming pool, picnics in the woods, bushcraft days, fun day at the football club and arts and craft extravaganzas.

None of this could happen without the kindness and support of our wonderful community, the great people we are lucky enough to work with and the local supermarkets and businesses who always support us in everything we do.

It's been a tough another year for many of us, we have lost good friends and family, and seen our community struggle with very difficult situations. We hope 2024 will be kinder to us all and we look forward to new opportunities to grow and support our community.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: ALASTAIR HOOPER . Date: 10.6.2024

Name: ALASTAIR HOOPER

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): SELF-EMPLOYED BOOKKEEPER

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DARTMOUTH
TQ6 9TD.

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	PETTY CASH	213	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	213	-	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

Agreement Error

OK

OK


	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	LINDA GARTON GUY MARTIN	10/6/24 10/6/24