

# Exeter Community Initiatives Annual Review 2009/10



## Highlights of the Year

- 4 new projects joined ECI: Community Hubs, Exeter Parenting Co-ordination, Harvest and Planet Rainbow
- We raised over £220,000 from Big Lottery to run Harvest Project over three years
- CARD PORCH provided mentor support to 21 clients & housing support to 61
- Flying Start provided direct family support to 106 children
- Beacon Heath residents enjoyed events such as 'Apple Day', environmental play and tree planting

**Registered Office:**  
**14 York Road**  
**Exeter EX4 6BA**

**info@eci.org.uk**  
**www.eci.org.uk**

**Charity No: 1026229**  
**Company No: 2844870**

## What is Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI)?

ECI supports the development of strong communities in the Exeter area where local people can fulfil their potential. We meet this aim through identifying and responding to unmet need; promoting, enabling and undertaking community development; working collaboratively to develop, support and run a wide range of projects; and challenging and addressing the causes of social exclusion.

## We ran the following projects in 2009/10:

- Beacon Heath Community Project - builds a stronger community through working with people of all ages, to develop a range of community arts and environmental activities
- CARD PORCH Project - provides mentoring and housing support for prolific and persistent offenders to reduce re-offending
- Exeter Parenting Co-ordination - enables families to thrive and develop through increasing their access to parenting programmes
- Flying Start Children's Centre - improves the quality of life and opportunities for children aged 0 to 5 in central Exeter through enabling the provision of a range of support services
- Homelessness Collaboration Project - facilitates organisations working with homeless people in Exeter to work collaboratively
- Planet Rainbow Project - supports Mixed Heritage and Black and Minority Ethnic families to promote positive identities and a sense of belonging
- STEP's Housing Project - aims to provide housing with support to move vulnerable people towards independent living
- Supporting Community Development in Exeter (SCDE) - supports stronger communities in areas experiencing disadvantage to develop local groups and enable their involvement in local decision-making

## New projects developed or facilitated in 2009/10

- Children's Centre Development - promotes locally-run, effective and responsive services for families with children aged 0 to 5
- Community Hubs - supports community buildings and local associations to be focal points for community activity
- Exeter eBiz - increases the skills of local volunteers through running a social business
- Harvest Project - increases skills and confidence through providing food growing activities
- Transitions - improves the mental health, well-being and skills of people making the transition to independent living through volunteers providing practical and emotional support

## Beacon Heath Community Project

## PROJECT WORK

**The Beacon Heath Community Project aims to build a stronger and more vibrant community through working with people of all ages, to develop a range of community arts and environmental activities.**

Our Community Worker, Eve Malster, has co-ordinated a range of public events throughout the year: those to celebrate the changing seasons or to raise awareness of the natural environment such as the Apple Day and Wassail; environmental play workshops for families; and informative sessions on specific subjects like tree-grafting and jam making.

Regular activities have also been established in response to interest expressed by community members: a craft group meets weekly and the ongoing 'social histories' work, involving young people making digital recordings of the life stories of older Beacon Heath residents, is being used by St James' School in their 'learning for life' curriculum.

We ran two training sessions in partnership with Exeter College in June and September to train local residents to become 'Street Reps': volunteers who advise and support other residents in their local area in growing food. Six reps successfully completed the courses, and their work will now be taken forward and supported by the Harvest Project (see separate section).



*"Lovely to see what's going on in the community... can't wait to get involved."*

(Local resident)

*Volunteer Pam Stevens at the May Day event. Pam sadly died suddenly in July. We feel honoured to have known such a generous and creative person*

Future plans for the project during 2010/11 include developing Do-It-Yourself (DIY) skills sharing as part of a wider skills survey of local people.

We are grateful to both Exeter City Council and the local County Councillor, Saxon Spence for financial support for project activities throughout the year. We would also like to thank all the volunteers and other community members who have contributed so much to the project during the year.

## Supporting Community Development in Exeter (SCDE)

**SCDE supports stronger communities in Exeter through working with areas experiencing disadvantage to help the development of local groups and enable their involvement in local decision-making.**

During the past year, our Community Development Manager, Carole Pilley, has supported 18 existing groups and one new group with issues ranging from applying for funding, through reviewing a constitution and roles of committee members, to help with running a community centre. The new group is called D'Arts

and brings together different organisations and groups working with people with learning disabilities. It developed as a response to the lack of suitable creative space for people with disabilities and enduring health problems in our community, and in the longer-term wants to develop an Arts Centre. We are supporting the group with setting up and finding initial funding.

*Carole also enabled the development of the new Exeter Community and Residents' Associations Network through undertaking initial research, and a launch event in October.*

# CARD PORCH Project

**The CARD PORCH (Closing A Revolving Door, Prolific Offender Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing) Project aims to promote effective resettlement for high risk and vulnerable offenders in order to reduce re-offending.**

The project supports prolific and other persistent offenders to access and be sustained in, suitable accommodation, together with focused mentoring support.

Sadly, after six years of providing mentoring support to 220 short-term offenders, we made the difficult decision to close the mentoring service of CARD PORCH in November 2009. Despite our best efforts we were not able to secure funding for the CARD part of the project in its current form. We extend our grateful thanks to CARD staff and the over 30 volunteer mentors who have been so committed to this work.

Despite the eventual closure of the service, it provided mentoring support to 21 clients during the first six months of the year through a combination of initial casework from the Mentor Co-ordinators, and then follow-up support from one of the volunteer mentors.

*The housing support element of the project has reverted to its original name of PORCH, and continues to provide accommodation and support to prolific and other persistent offenders in the Exeter, East and Mid Devon areas. During the year, 61 clients have been provided with housing support and 40 either found accommodation and/or have been supported in it. PORCH has also been successful in identifying and supporting private sector landlords who are willing to rent their properties out for use by our clients. Their commitment and generosity is crucial to our being able to meet the varied needs of offenders.*

We have extended the number of clients we are able to work with via a joint venture with two local charities, St Petrock's and Homemaker South West. This pilot project is known as the Inside Out Project. It has been operational since October 2009 and targets prisoners released from HMP Exeter with no statutory supervision, who have accommodation or tenancy problems. The added benefit of this pilot is that as well as supporting offenders

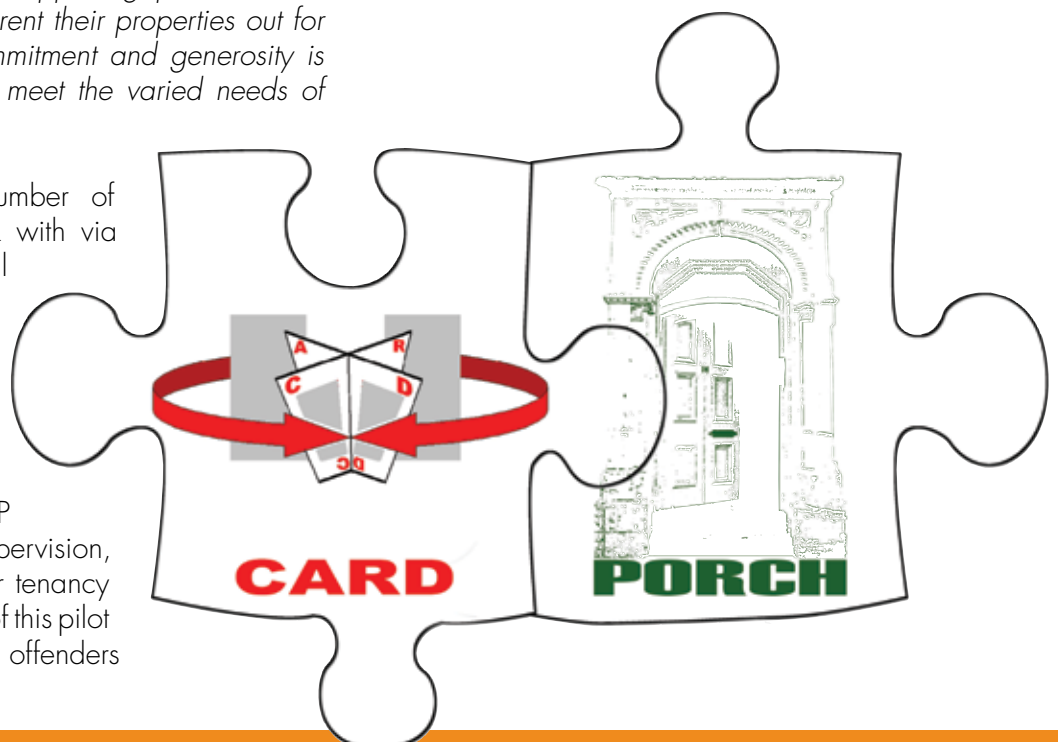
themselves, staff are also able to provide support to their families, both when they are in custody and on release.

*Exeter University completed their case study evaluation of the project. Their final report affirming the value of the support provided to offenders by both paid staff and mentors, including the flexible approach to service delivery and the personal interest taken in clients, which is particularly welcomed by them.*

In line with ECI's model of working to establish projects and then help them become independent of us, ECI Trustees have recently agreed to hand over PORCH to St Petrock's Centre during 2010/11, as we feel that PORCH's future will be best secured through being part of another local housing-related charity. We are currently working with St Petrock's to plan the transitional arrangements and PORCH will be handed over on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

*"I'm supported from a distance but really it's my time to stand on my own two feet with the knowledge that they're in the background if I need it."*

*"Apart from sorting out my landlord, they sorted me out with my debts because I got behind with my council tax"*  
(PORCH clients)



## Flying Start Children's Centre

**Flying Start Children's Centre aims to improve the quality of life and opportunities for children aged 0 to 5 in central Exeter, working with local families, groups and agencies to enable the provision of a range of support services, with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable families.**

All families go through difficult times when their child's needs may be difficult to meet, for example, following a family trauma. The children's centre aims to welcome all families, encourage peer support and community networks, and provide high quality assessments and support packages to individuals as requested by the family.

*'Not only have you been able to give us advice, but you facilitated us applying for a grant which is going to significantly improve the service we can offer.'*

(A group leader – local community group)

The centre serves 869 children across the catchment area. This year

we have welcomed over 250 children to groups and activities every quarter. We have also worked directly with 106 children through our Family Support Work process.

New developments this year included providing a play therapist to work with children who have experienced trauma, and taking part in the Government's 2gether Pilot, which aims to improve learning and development for families. We also ran our first Incredible Years parenting course, benefiting nine parents over a 14 week period. In February 2010 we launched a monthly 'Back to Work' club at St Sidwell's Centre, offering advice and support in partnership with employment and training agencies, at an informal, central location.

Our community outreach team provided support to 44 groups during the year on a range of issues ranging from planning activities and promotion, to funding advice. We also provided a small grants scheme offering grants of up to £1,000 and this made four grants totalling £2,250 for items such as play equipment and hire of meeting space.

In addition to these developments, we continue to run activities such as the Two Year-old Drop-in, Treasure Baskets (for babies who can sit up to learn through touch), Discovery Play (for babies on the move to learn through play), Baby Massage, Baby Start and our Young Parents' Group. The latter

*The Dads and Littl'uns Group has been supported to recruit more members*



*Teddy Bear's Picnic at Jubilee Court*

has gone from strength to strength with 13 young parents attending on a weekly basis.

*Our staff team is supported by 15 skilled and volunteers carrying out tasks ranging from helping on reception to providing activities with the Young Parents Group. 21 new volunteers were recruited during the year, and we are very grateful to all of them for their hard work and dedication.*

Over the following year we will continue to develop planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. Children's Centres became a statutory service in January 2010 and therefore are now subject to OFSTED inspections. This will replace the current Annual Conversation with Devon County Council which took place last November, and led to an overall grading of good, with four of seven service areas graded as outstanding.

We were also delighted to have our contract with Devon County Council extended for a further two years until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. We hope this outcome reflects our core value, to be child-focused, with the children we work with at the heart of every aspect of what we do.



## Exeter Parenting Co-ordination

**Exeter Parenting Co-ordination enables families to thrive and develop through increasing their access to parenting programmes. By working with managers and practitioners to deliver these programmes, the project helps families with children aged 8 to 13 years old who face challenging times to access the support they need.**

*"I can only delight in your choice of intelligent and engaging co-ordinator for the project and your consistent action to get the Strengthening Families expanded programme off the ground... your organisation is a marvel."*

(Local practitioner)

Following Matt Bell's initial development work on the project, Jane McArdle was appointed as Co-ordinator in March to continue its development and implementation.

Since Jane has been in post, five parenting programmes have been organised and we expect to be able to benefit 70 people through these programmes in the next few months.

Opportunities to increase the number of courses delivered will be identified across various local agencies, through further facilitator training and enabling more families to access the programme. Over the next six months, we will also develop and implement a plan that will either identify financial resources to secure the future of the project or enable the work to be taken forward by existing services.

## Planet Rainbow Project

**The Planet Rainbow Project aims to provide support and extend opportunities for Mixed Heritage and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families, children and young people living in Devon, in order to promote positive identities, a sense of belonging, and reduce social isolation. We seek to do this by working directly with children, young people and/or families, and through working in partnership with other groups, organisations or agencies.**

*We have also focused on trying to secure a future for Planet Rainbow such as undertaking research into needs amongst the community; linking with other organisations working in the field and applying for funding. Despite the initial funding from Devon County Council and Lloyds TSB Foundation, and contributions from two local Children's Centres to pay for services provided, we have not been able to secure any further on-going financial support. Sadly the Trustees have taken the difficult the decision to close the project at the end of September 2010.*

The Planet Rainbow Project was previously an independent organisation facing a very uncertain future. ECI took on the management of the project in October 2009, including the transfer of Parminder Southcott as the existing Project Co-ordinator. We also successfully identified funding which gave the project an extra year until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and recruited Ruth Flanagan to an additional part-time post.

Work this year has involved activities such as developing leaflets for schools and other agencies about 'supporting a positive sense of identity', cultural awareness training for professionals, and social and cultural activities for families. These have included a Winter Lights Festival celebration and a trip to Castle Drogo.

*Picnic at Castle Drogo*



## Partnership and Facilitation Work

### Homelessness Collaboration Project



**This project aims to ensure that agencies working with homeless and vulnerably housed people in Exeter can work collaboratively together for the benefit of this client group. ECI acts as an independent facilitator, helping member organisations to jointly identify ways to improve services and to progress agreed actions.**

The Soup Kitchens and Night Churches network that was established in 2008 continues to meet and has strengthened the relationships between church-based groups which provide soup kitchens/soup runs and other services such as sleeping bags, for homeless and vulnerably housed people. Regular participants at the network meetings also include the City Council Housing Needs Manager, the Manager of the Street Homeless Outreach Team, and the local police and community support officers. This enables the church groups to link into the wider services that exist in the local community.

Explorations into the feasibility of a complex needs centre which began last year, have concluded that such a move is not possible in the current political and economic climate. Instead of co-locating, organisations that provide services to clients with multiple and complex needs have now decided to continue exploring ways of working more closely together, such as joint initiatives, closer referral systems and shared information.

A sub-group of the collaboration was established during this year to progress agreed actions in relation to information sharing and to publicity and promotion of services across the city as a whole. The group has been planning an information event for organisations and the public to find out more about Exeter's services for the homeless, to be held in the Autumn of 2010.

## STEPS

**The STEPs Housing Project aims to provide housing with volunteer mentor support to move vulnerable people towards independent living.**

*STEPS had a great start to the year, with a jazz concert in May held at Exeter Cathedral raising over £1,500. However, since then it has been much more challenging: the economic situation has frozen many of the capital sources that could have been used to kick-start the project, and the planning issues were deemed to be too controversial on the site donated by Exeter City Council to enable development to take place. In January 2010 it was decided to take STEPs' work forward in a different way. The three original partner organisations (Exeter Community Initiatives – ECI, Shilhay Community, and Chapter 1) will focus more directly on their specific areas of expertise. ECI will focus on developing a volunteering/mentoring project ('Transitions') that will complement and provide support for people in supported accommodation, and will no longer be directly involved in the formal partnership to build, buy or renovate houses in Exeter. Shilhay Community and Chapter 1 will continue to seek capital funds for the development of new and existing housing for disadvantaged groups in the city.*



## Development work

### Children's Centre Development

**This project promotes locally-run, effective and responsive services for families with children aged 0 to 5 by developing the capacity of local organisations across Devon to deliver Children's Centres.**

Flying Start is one of only three centres in Devon run by local organisations, with the rest run by large national charities. By developing a partnership approach, we aim to increase the quality and local sensitivity of the services, and build the capacity of the local voluntary and community sector. In 2010/11, this includes working with a local partnership in Teignbridge to help them submit a bid to run the local centre.



### Harvest

**The Harvest Project aims to increase the skills, knowledge and community involvement of people experiencing disadvantage in Exeter by providing food growing activities.**

This year saw the successful development of the project. Following consultation with local partners and potential users, a business plan was completed and funding bids submitted.

News just before Christmas that we had been successful in raising over £220k over three years from the Big Lottery Local Food Fund was a real boost, and since then we have also raised funds from both the Devon County Councillors' Locality Budget and NHS Devon. Our Project Workers, Ellie Parker and Andi Tobe, both started work in April 2010.



### Community Hubs

**Community Hubs supports community buildings and local associations to be focal points for community activity.**

*In January 2010 we made a successful funding bid with the Community Council of Devon. This has enabled us to appoint a part-time Development Worker, supporting community centres, with additional hours funded by ECI to support those community associations without buildings.*

### Transitions

**The project aims to improve the mental health, wellbeing and skills of people in Exeter making the transition to independent living through volunteers providing practical and emotional support.**

The project will recruit, train and support people from the community to help people living in supported accommodation, with a range of needs from DIY skills or basic

financial advice to emotional support and a listening ear. Those leaving accommodation-based support are at a more stable point in their life, yet still require support to maintain this stability and smooth the transition to independence.

Next steps include development of the business plan and the submission of funding applications.

### Exeter eBiz

**This social enterprise aims to increase the confidence and skills of local volunteers, through running a social business selling items for others on eBay, in return for a donation to ECI (based on a percentage of the sale price).**

*To begin with, we aim to run a six-month pilot starting in October 2010 that will test the concept and keep the level of trading within the legal limitations of a charity.*

## Trustees

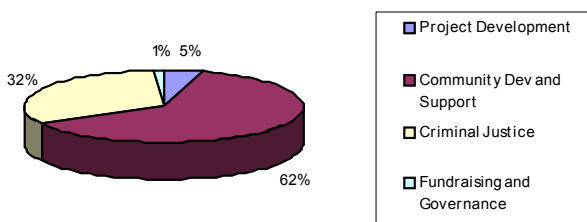
The following people served as Trustees and Company Directors (members of the ECI Council) during the year:

Heather Morgan	(Chair)
John Thorndyke	(Secretary & EPC*)
Jane Allen	(Treasurer)
Margaret Barnes	(CARD PORCH & BHCP* *)
Stewart Barr	(BHCP*)
Steve Barriball	
Pat Cusa	(Flying Start)
Martyn Goss	(Community Hubs)
Canon Tom Honey	(Harvest)
Ruth Saltmarsh	(CARD PORCH)
Marie Winckler	(EPC*)

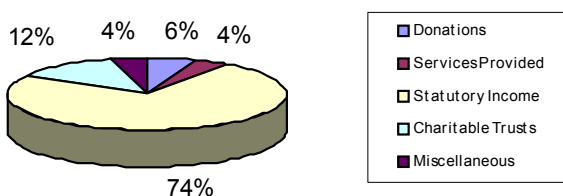
(\* Exeter Parenting Co-ordination)  
(\*\* Beacon Heath Community Project)

## Finances

**Total Expenditure of £583,742**



**Total Income £569,129**



A copy of our accounts is available from the ECI office

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Beacon Heath Community Project	07910 264862
Community Hubs	01392 205800
Exeter Parenting Co-ordination	01392 256246
Flying Start Children's Centre	01392 666224
Harvest Project	01392 661330
Homelessness Collaboration	01392 205801
PORCH Project (until 1st Oct 2010)	01392 205850
SCDE	01392 205807
New Developments	01392 205801
General Enquiries	01392 205800

## Thank You

Our funders during 2009/10 included:

- Big Lottery Local Food Fund
- Capacity Builders
- Chapter 1
- Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral
- Devon Community Foundation
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
- Devon and Cornwall Probation Area
- Devon County Council
- Execution Trust
- Exeter City Council
- Exeter Shillhay Community
- Hardship Fund
- Jamieson-Bystock Trust
- Lloyds TSB Foundation
- National Council for Social Concern
- NHS Devon
- Safer Devon Partnership (Home Office)
- Sir John & Lady Amory Charitable Trust
- Sunrise (Sidmouth) Trust
- Tudor Lankelly Chase

We would like to thank the many local people, churches and other organisations who support the Share Scheme and other aspects of our work.

## In-Kind Support

Devon Partnership Trust, The Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, Exeter College, Michelmores and Westcountry Payroll.

## Our Staff and Volunteers

The 48 volunteers and 26 paid staff without whom our work would not be possible.

## Local Groups and Organisations

The many local organisations with whom we have worked throughout the year.



**Exeter City Council** Grant Aided

