



# Exeter Community Initiatives

Grant aided by



Newsletter

Summer 2007

## 'ORGANISATIONAL FOOTPRINTS'

One of our supporters, Nick Day, was so moved by Carole Pilley's article in the Spring 2007 Newsletter that he felt compelled to write a contribution to this edition.

"As a freelance consultant it has constantly struck me over the years that the web of inter-connectedness between people, their intentions and actions that Carole speaks about is at the heart of sustainable communities" he says.

Nick believes that the analogy of leaving footprints - as outlines that reflect pressure, energy and movement, and show a direction of travel - can also be applied to organisations and their impact. It is easy to get pre-occupied with targets and indicators as ways of measurement for our organisations. Perhaps a study of the organisational footprints we leave, or even seek to create on the road ahead, would be a better and more sustainable way of measuring what we do? Targets and indicators, while measuring activity, are dry and detached; footprints belong to humans, seeking to carve a future for themselves from the environment as they journey ahead.

Nick suggests that perhaps we could start reflecting in a different way on some of the projects that have been spearheaded over the years, a way that looks at the organisational footprints that have been put down and left, and reflect on the behaviours and stories behind them. Would this reflection give us any clues about new and more effective methods of

project and organisational development that might make better use of resources?

Nick would be interested in exploring these ideas further, perhaps through a discussion group hosted by ECI, if there was enough interest. He can be contacted on [nickday@ndassociates.demon.co.uk](mailto:nickday@ndassociates.demon.co.uk), and would be happy to supply you with the full text of the letter he sent to us.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

ECI has won a bid in with Exeter CVS, to provide part of Exeter City Council's Neighbourhood Engagement Pilot Project

The staff team for the recently named 'Flying Start' Children's Centre started work on 8<sup>th</sup> May

63 different groups have used St Sidwells Centre, with a total of 3106 user sessions taking place over the last quarter

The Homelessness Collaboration project is helping 7 homelessness organisations work more closely together. A survey of homeless people's views about the services available to them is under way.

CARD project was awarded the Approved Provider Standard by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF)

74 volunteers have devoted time to the Exwick Community Project

PORCH has now supported 45 prolific offenders of whom 23 have been found accommodation and/or supported in it

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

### Research starts on Time Bank

Initial investigations have been made this quarter into the possibilities of building on the work of the (now ceased) Wonford Time Bank project and expanding it to include other disadvantaged areas of the city.

We have been in contact with a couple of local projects with a view to learning more about their schemes, how they operate and what has worked for them. These include a project for older people in Torridge and one in Bath, both of which are keen to share their experiences and knowledge. This information will help to inform the possible development of an Exeter Time Bank project.

### Homelessness Collaboration

The Project Development Team has continued to work with the frontline homelessness organisations and Exeter City Council to facilitate closer working and cooperation.

In particular a Service Audit has now been undertaken that sets out exactly what services, activities and facilities are provided by each organisation. Further work will be done which looks at how homeless people are referred from one organisation to another.

Work is now also well underway regarding an audit of homeless people in the city, in the form of a survey. The survey aims to question up to 250 people to gauge their views about the existing services provided in the city, together with finding out how they feel these services should be provided in the future.



*The Flying Start Children's Centre Team*

### EATS Project (Exeter Accredited Tenants' Scheme)

Whilst we believe that providing tenancy training to help people access and sustain accommodation to be a positive intervention in preventing repeat homelessness, we have been unable to attract further funding for the EATS project. ECI has therefore decided to draw up an exit strategy that looks at how the work of the project can be continued in other ways. Key partners will be consulted and encouraged to make use of the learning that has come out of our development work and the pilot courses run so far. We continue to receive support from our steering group members and the wider community.

### Housing Project

A partnership is now emerging with Exeter Shilhay Community, with which it is hoped significant progress will now happen over the next 12 months

The project aims to find a new model for providing low-cost housing. We have been researching an interesting project that has been running for nearly 7 years in the North West of England, which may give some idea of the possibilities there could be here in Exeter.

## EXISTING PROJECTS

### Flying Start Children's Centre

The Children's Centre team are now in post. The team comprises Bilquis Memon (Community Development Worker), who has a background in education and mediation; Sonia Worthington (Family Support Worker), has 10 years experience of working with children under the age of 8 and their families; Helen Murphy (Administrator), also works part-time for WorkWAYS, a service providing employment advice and support to people with mental health problems; and Gentian Curle (Manager), whose background is in social work.

The centre is a 'virtual centre' with an office base at St Sidwell's Community Centre and links across the city with services for children under the age of five. We cover the wards of St James, St David's, Newtown, and Duryard. Our role is to promote opportunities for children in Central Exeter.

### **CARD Project (Close a Revolving Door)**

29 offenders have already been supported in the year since 1<sup>st</sup> April, with a steady increase in both the current number of matches and the average length of them. This is good news in putting CARD in a strong position as we move into an important phase of fundraising for the year 2007/8.

Our links with Eastwood Park prison are steadily developing and we are now part of the network of agencies involved in the future shape of the prison's offender management unit.



*A CARD team member with MBF certificate*

CARD has been assessed by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) and awarded the Approved Provider Standard, a nationally recognised standard of competence.

### **Exwick Community Project**

The key focus of the project's work this quarter has been to support the development of Exwick Community Association (ECA) as they took on responsibility for the management of the long-awaited new community centre which finally opened in December 2006. A website booking form has been set up so everyone can book the centre through [www.exwick.com](http://www.exwick.com).

ECA is still very much in its infancy and more trustees are needed for the centre to run effectively. Another trustee has stepped forward bringing the total to 4 and more people have joined the various committees.

The funding for this project will end in August 2007 but ECI will continue to advocate for the needs of this community as part of its wider community development work.

### **PORCH Project (Prolific Offenders' Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing)**

Over the past few months PORCH has continued to establish close links with the Prolific and Priority Offender Unit and with accommodation providers to extend the amount and range of accommodation options available. We plan to open a house in Tiverton in partnership with the Amber Project that will provide a further 6 bed spaces for offenders.

PORCH's impact is being measured through an external evaluation by a team from the University of Plymouth. An interim evaluation report has been produced which can be seen on ECI's website ([www.eci.org.uk](http://www.eci.org.uk))

*'I have never come across something like PORCH... I couldn't thank them enough... if I'm in trouble they help me...quickly and productively... it's made a difference on my life'. (A PORCH user)*

### **SCDE (Supporting Community Development in Exeter)**

Since the last Newsletter, we have been successful in tendering, in partnership with Exeter CVS, to provide the Capacity Building element of the Exeter City Council's Neighbourhood Engagement Pilot Project.

The Pilots will be in the Clyst Heath/Kings Heath; Exwick; Newtown/Polsloe and St. David's areas of the city, and will work with existing community groups and interested citizens to develop Local Partnership forums. The initial focus of our work will be to publicise the project and we will be attending a number of local events over the summer. These are:

- Newtown /Polsloe at the Family Fun Day at Belmont Park 12 – 4pm Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> June
- Clyst Heath Community Primary School Summer Fayre Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 5-7pm
- St. David's Parish Church Summer Fete Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 12 – 2pm
- 'Newtown Celebrates Summer' Belmont Park Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July 12 – 4pm
- Exwick – Fun Day Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July 1-4pm

If you live in one of the designated areas and would like to know more please either come along to one of the events or contact our office.

Another significant new development this quarter is the receipt of funding from Neighbourhood Learning in Disadvantaged Communities (NLDC) to help groups work with the 'Open Hearts Open Minds' Social Inclusion Self Assessment Handbook materials in ways that suited them. This has resulted in the development of a website [www.openheartsoopenminds.org.uk](http://www.openheartsoopenminds.org.uk) which includes sample materials to introduce groups to the exercises from the handbook, and the opportunity for people to subscribe to the site to receive regular newsletters with current stories about Social Inclusion. Check out the website for more information.

**'Ujima' Project (supports Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Exeter)**

This quarter Ricky has been working alongside the Devon Racial Equality Council, Living Options Devon and Diane Lawrence in bringing together a group for disabled Black and Ethnic Minority people. The recruitment campaign proved very fruitful and now there is a group meeting monthly at the St Sidwells Centre. The West of England School for the Deaf will also be forming their own group that will liaise with the BME Disability Group.

The Devon Faiths Forum has settled on a constitution to be signed off at the inaugural meeting to be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The Forum has also set plans in motion for having an interactive web site and DVD which will be available to schools and other organisations later this year. The Ujima project has helped with both developments and for the inclusion of the forum in the Exeter Respect Festival.

The first 'Cultural Champions' class has graduated and members are now ready to speak about cultural issues in a variety of venues including schools, colleges, and community groups. This is a Global Centre project which Ujima has been supporting by forming links between them and Exeter College.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

|                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>St Sidwell's Centre</b>      | <b>01392 666222</b> |
| <b>CARD Project</b>             | <b>01392 256246</b> |
| <b>Children's Centre</b>        | <b>01392 666224</b> |
| <b>Exwick Community Project</b> | <b>01392 410709</b> |
| <b>SCDE/Ujima Project</b>       | <b>01392 205807</b> |
| <b>PORCH Project</b>            | <b>01392 205850</b> |
| <b>New Developments</b>         | <b>01392 205801</b> |
| <b>General Enquiries</b>        | <b>01392 205800</b> |

**St Sidwell's Centre**

As we work towards independence from ECI the tasks are coming thick and fast: a Needs Analysis has been completed, with the results being fed into the Strategic Plan, which will soon be circulated to stakeholders and other interested parties for comment.

The heartwarming comments we have received have been excellent for morale and highlight the exceptional work that has been achieved by the team and volunteers of St Sidwell's.



*Users of St Sidwells' Internet Cafe*

One comment was as follows: "great café with excellent and affordable internet facilities and very helpful staff. The centre has a very good atmosphere and I will tell my friends."

On a daily operation note, the activities occurring at the centre are as popular as ever and provide a wide variety of activities for the local community. Centre users include Connexions, NHS baby clinic, BME Disability Rights group and Exeter College has returned to provide ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.

Although there has been a slight decrease in evening and weekend activities it is still an improvement on previous periods. We have had 14 new groups/activities, with 289 user group sessions providing 3106 user sessions with and total of 63 different user groups during this period.

Finally, a warm welcome to our new caretaker, Paul McCue who will begin work with us on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

Registered Office: 14 York Road, Exeter EX4 6BA  
 E-mail: [info@eci.org.uk](mailto:info@eci.org.uk) Web-Site: [www.eci.org.uk](http://www.eci.org.uk)  
 Charity No: 1026229 Company No: 2844870



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