

Welcome



Welcome to our 30th anniversary issue! I'm sad to say, I'm stepping down as Chief Executive so this is my last column. Carole Pilley will take over in the interim and I've no doubt she will do a fantastic job! ECI's services are more in demand than ever as people struggle with the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, we've launched a 30th anniversary fundraising appeal. Every little really does help, so please do consider giving anything you can afford. Turn to the centre pages to read how your generosity has helped people in Exeter and across Devon. Thanks for your support during my time at ECI and here's to the next 30 years!

Katie Holland
Chief Executive

Charity celebrates 30th birthday!



Exeter Community Initiatives celebrated its 30th anniversary in July. Thanks to funding from local government, charitable trusts, businesses and kind donations from the public, we've helped more than 50,000 people via projects such as Bike Bank, Community Builders, Exeter Connect, Family

Resource, Jelly, Transitions and Remade. To mark this milestone we ran a 30-day celebration on social media. BBC Spotlight covered our story and we were also on the front page of our local paper, the Express and Echo! Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last three decades!

Help skydiving trustee raise £1000!



Trustee, Caroline Lake, is skydiving from 15,000 ft to raise money for ECI! The dive was planned for 14 July but was rescheduled due to inclement weather. We'll let you know when a new dive date is confirmed. In the meantime, please help Caroline reach her £1,000 target by donating at: <https://localgiving.org/fundraising/fallingfromtheskyforECI/>

Nigel's story



Nigel had been suffering from psychosis, delusions and paranoia for two years during Covid. As a result his marriage ended and his feelings of isolation and loneliness worsened.

Nigel's GP referred him to ECI's Transitions project which provides workshops on the practical and emotional challenges people encounter on a daily basis such as managing anxiety, budgeting and decluttering.

“

Nigel said: “ECI's Transitions project lifted me out of the doldrums. It's given me purpose and meaning - something I haven't had for almost three years. I'll definitely recommend Transitions to other people. The workshops offer a step-by-step guide to getting well again.”

Nigel has now met a new partner and volunteers at Transitions as helper to the workshop facilitators. He is studying for his one-to-one coaching certificate and hopes to secure paid employment as a life coach or wellbeing tutor.

Zoe's story



Zoe had been suffering from severe anxiety, depression and agoraphobia, to the point she was unable to leave her home.

After several months, Zoe decided she had to get out, despite her anxiety. She recalled shopping at Jelly, ECI's children's charity shop, when her son was little so she decided to enquire about volunteering opportunities.

Since volunteering at Jelly, Zoe's anxiety and self-confidence have vastly improved. She now answers the phone and speaks to strangers without panicking or crying. She's also gained valuable retail skills such as cashing up, stock control, merchandising and window displays.

“

Zoe said: “Working at Jelly has truly changed my life. If it wasn't for ECI and the support I've received from my partner, I'd be in a completely different place now.”

Zoe is going from strength to strength. She is now not only a Jelly volunteer but also employed as paid cover staff.



Supporting more than 50,000 people since 1993

Wendy's story



Wendy had lived at Faraday House, Exeter for 13 years. For a while she had been feeling isolated. "I'd suffered with anxiety and depression for many years", explains Wendy. "I felt no sense of community. I felt I was simply eking out my life, waiting to die."

Wendy got in touch with Jayne, her local Community Builder. Mentored and managed by ECI in partnership with Wellbeing Exeter, Community Builders bring people together, improve their wellbeing and make the community a better place to live.



Wendy said: "It's no exaggeration to say Jayne changed my life and gave me my old self back by inspiring me to take these social events on and encourage other residents to get involved."

Jayne talked to Wendy about organising fun social activities in the community room to encourage residents to get to know one another and develop a real sense of community. Wendy has since organised bingo, quizzes, darts matches, Christmas and Coronation parties and a group outing to the Goldies 'Sing and Smile' at the Guildhall.

Ron's story



Aged 50, Ron had spent much of his life in prison but had always had an interest in bikes. On his release, he was reminded about ECI's Bike Bank project which provides meaningful activity and back to work skills through learning bike mechanics and repair, supporting positive mental health and reducing social isolation. Being really keen to start making positive changes, he decided to sign up to Bike Bank.



Ron said: "I thought I knew everything about bicycles, however, I soon realised that I didn't. I learned loads at Bike Bank which I still use today and will for the rest of my life, which is so helpful as I am a keen cyclist."

Ron is now adjusting to living independently in his own flat, cycles daily and is keeping himself busy while spreading the word about ECI's Bike Bank project.



Read more case studies at www.eci.org.uk



Get Involved!



Volunteer

Join our team of volunteers.



One-Off Donation

By cheque to 'Exeter Community Initiatives' or online.



Friend of ECI

Through our scheme you can make a regular longer term donation.



Leave a Gift in your Will

Make a lasting impact or remember a loved one.



Newsletter

Sign up for newsletter updates.

Boston charity pot



A big Exeter Community Initiatives thank you to Boston Tea Party – now the proud owners of one of our orange charity collection pots! When you next grab a coffee at Boston, we'd be really grateful for any loose change you can pop into our pot. Every donation goes towards supporting people in Exeter and across Devon when it matters most.

30th anniversary fundraising appeal launched



Exeter Community Initiatives has launched a fundraising appeal to mark its 30th anniversary. Since 1993, we've supported more than 50,000 people in Exeter and across Devon. Today our services are needed more than ever as people struggle with the cost-of-living crisis. Your donation is vital to ensure that we can be here for the people in Exeter and across Devon for years to come. We appreciate times are tight for everyone, but every little really does help, so please do consider giving anything you can afford. To donate, please visit: <https://localgiving.org/appeal/ECI30A/> or scan the QR code below.

📍 Exeter Community Initiatives, 148 -149 Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AN

☎ 01392 205800

✉ info@eci.org.uk

🌐 www.eci.org.uk



Donate



Registered Charity Number: 1026229
Registered Company Number: 2844870 (England)