

Community Builders

Bringing residents together, grow ideas and make the community a better place to live.

The Community Builder Team has continued to grow in strength, embedding themselves in neighbourhoods across the city, particularly in areas with lower health outcomes. Their work centres on building relationships, supporting residents, and creating stronger, connected communities. Over the year, they've had thousands of conversations, sparked hundreds of new ideas, and enabled countless opportunities for people to come together. Resident-led action — from greening neighbourhoods and free libraries to community newsletters — demonstrates the lasting impact of this approach. Feedback highlights how builders help people feel more connected, supported, and inspired to take positive action in their neighbourhoods.

“

Through Community Builders, I felt truly seen and heard—our neighbourhood is now more connected than ever.

”

Impact

- 577 new ideas and 853 ongoing ideas, with 391 turned into action
- 1,036 connections and networks created
- 287 events attended and 397 groups supported
- 483 meetings attended, strengthening collaboration and local partnerships
- 84 funding applications supported across communities
- 3,490 hours of community building delivered by the team

Residents are becoming more connected, confident, and empowered to take action in their communities, leading to greener, more inclusive neighbourhoods with stronger networks and improved wellbeing. Even a modest preventative impact—if just 5% of residents avoided worsening loneliness or mental health challenges—could save the public sector ≈£645,800 annually, highlighting how local empowerment delivers lasting social and economic benefits.

Salwa's Story

For Salwa, a PhD student and mother of three, isolation was a daily reality after moving from Saudi Arabia to Exeter. Far from family and unsure of her English, she felt disconnected despite her love for the city.

That changed when she met one of our Community Builders at St Sidwell's. A simple welcome in her own language gave her the confidence to share her passions — crafts, cooking, and dancing — and her wish to improve her English. She also introduced the builder to a WhatsApp group of international students facing similar challenges.

Together, they launched a weekly Conversation Café, first at the mosque and later at St Sidwell's, supported by wellbeing funding.

The café quickly became more than language practice. It created a space for connection, trust, and belonging. The WhatsApp group also flourished, helping people share opportunities and support each other.

Salwa's story shows the power of listening, welcoming, and building on people's strengths.



Proudly delivered by



Funded by