

Welcome



This month marks a personal milestone for me: two years since my first (official) step to becoming CEO at Exeter Community Initiatives.

In April 2024, we made a two year plan – to navigate change as a charity and to support my transition from Operations Manager to CEO. The responsibility of leading a charity with such a strong legacy, alongside the uncertainty ahead, was significant.

By holding my values and drawing on the strength, insight and support of trustees and colleagues, we have evolved together.

Today, there is greater openness, collaboration and shared ownership. We have more clarity, stability and trust than I could have imagined at the start. It has been the most challenging and rewarding chapter of my career – and it feels special to have truly earned the title of Chief Executive.

Ellie Taylor, Chief Executive

Annual Volunteer Fair Returns



We are pleased to announce we will be hosting the Exeter Volunteer Fair on Thursday 23 April 2026, 11am–2pm at Exeter Cathedral.

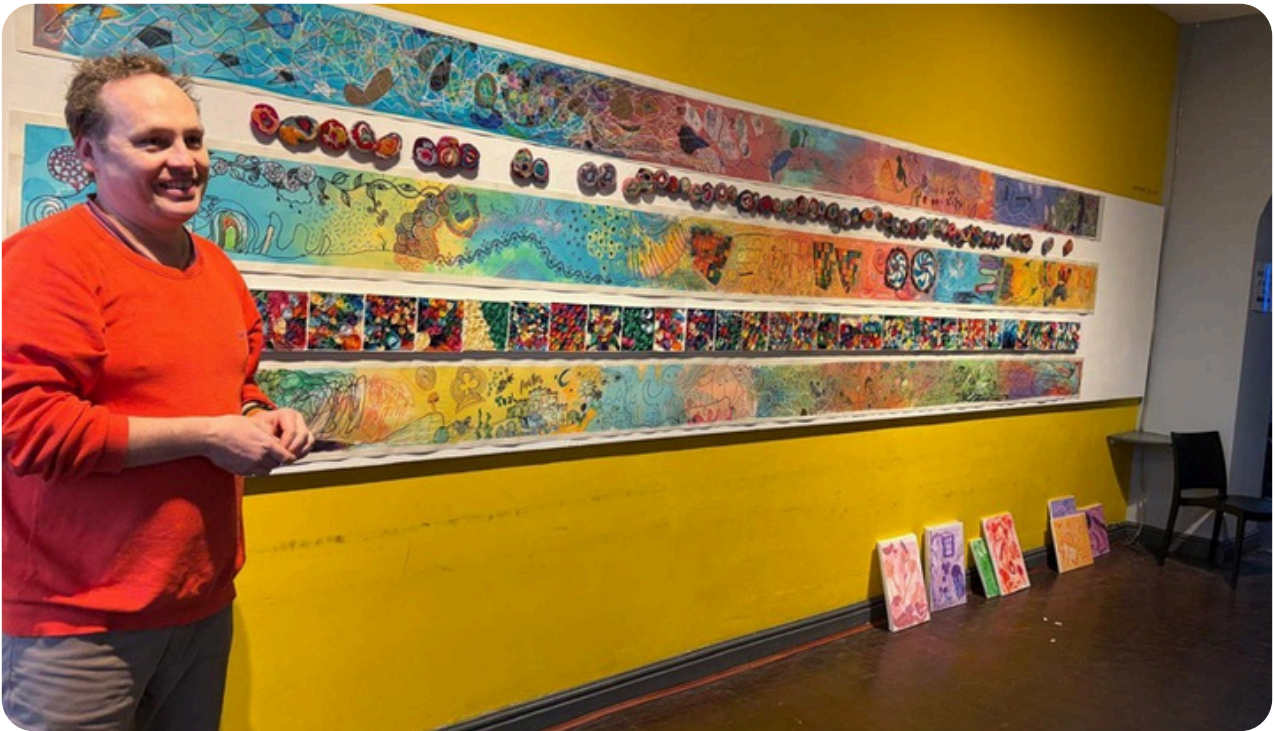
This free, drop-in event brings together 65 local charities and community organisations, offering hundreds of volunteering opportunities. Over 800 visitors are expected, making it Exeter's largest volunteering event.

The fair welcomes everyone—students, families, retirees, and individuals from all backgrounds—and helps match skills, interests, and availability with local causes. No prior experience is needed.

We are grateful to IT Champion, who has generously provided financial support to help run this iconic community event.

Visitor info: [Plan your visit here](#)

The Magic Carpet Art Trail is Live Across Exeter



This April, the Magic Carpet Art Trail brings a vibrant celebration of creativity to Exeter, showcasing the work of Magic Carpet artists across 18 independent venues throughout the city.

Visitors are invited to explore a diverse range of artwork in unique and welcoming spaces, making art accessible to all. Included within the trail are two exhibitions—For the Love of Colour—will be on display at the Walkway Gallery at Exeter Phoenix and the Creative Space at Exeter Central Library.

Use the official trail map ([download here](#)), to discover each location and uncover the artwork on display.

Follow us on social media [@Magiccarnetwellbeing](#) to hear the stories behind the art, and join the conversation using #MCArtTrail to share your experience.

We encourage everyone to share the trail with friends, family, and across social networks to help support the artists and ensure the Art Trail reaches as many people as possible this April. [For more info click here.](#)

Find out more about our Magic Carpet Project [here](#).

Transitions - Brand New Sleep Course



Join our brand-new Improve Your Sleep Course and discover simple, effective ways to enjoy better, more restful nights.

This new course has been developed from feedback from our community, who told us they wanted more support with sleep, relaxation, and managing daily routines.

Together, we'll explore calming bedtime routines, relaxation techniques, and everyday habits that support deeper sleep — helping you wake up feeling refreshed, energised, and ready for the day ahead.

Next course dates: Thursday 30th April, 7th and 14th May

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Location: The Mint Methodist Church Centre, Exeter EX4 3AT

[Book your place here.](#)

Spaces are limited — early booking is recommended.

Clearing clutter & getting organised

Date: Thurs 14th, 21st & 28th May

Times: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Location: Wall in the Hall, Old Heathcoat School Community Centre, King Street, Tiverton EX16 5JJ

Pound-stretching

Date: Wednesday 8th, 15th & 22nd July

Times: 1pm - 3pm

Location: Online via zoom

Connection Reflection

Dates: Weds 22nd, 29th April & 6th May

Time: 10.30am - 1pm

Location: St John's Court, St John's Rd, Exmouth EX8 4DD

[For more info and to book click here](#)
[or contact us](#)



Please note that booking is essential

 01392 205800

 transitions@eci.org.uk

Coming Together to Support Families

Our Family Resource Project was proud to take part in the Meeting of Minds in Cranbrook. The event brought together passionate speakers and dedicated professionals, all focused on one goal: better supporting families in our community.

"When organisations come together, share knowledge, and listen to one another, we create stronger networks that truly benefit the families who need it most," says Daisy Binnie, ECI Manager. Thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed to such an inspiring and meaningful day. We can't wait to see you all again!

[Want to find out more about Family Resource](#)



A Story of Neighbourly Connection



How One Email Sparked a Neighbourhood Movement.

After 18 years on the same street, one resident felt her community slipping away. A simple email to her Community Builder set a chain of events in motion — door knocking, small gatherings, and a WhatsApp group.

From a pub meet-up to street clean-ups and sunflower competitions, neighbours are now connecting, laughing, and working together.

It all started with a conversation — and now, the street is alive with community spirit.

[Click to read the full story and see how one idea is bringing a street to life.](#)

To Find your Community Builder [click here.](#)

Jelly - A Place for Every Family



Our Jelly Charity Shop provides a welcoming, inclusive space for volunteers and the local community. Families can find the items they need at affordable prices, while volunteers gain confidence, experience, and purpose. Our focus on pre-loved goods also supports sustainability.

Here are some lovely comments from people who love Jelly:

“Jelly is incredible, the kids and I love it!”

“I love this shop it’s an amazing place to exchange preloved kids stuff and let your kids play!”

“Great shop, helpful staff and everything goes to a great cause. Will be back to buy more!”

Want to support Jelly? Follow [@jellycharityshop](#)

How Can You Get Involved?

Great West Run

Hannah Hulin, our Magic Carpet Manager and Hannah Scott, our Fundraising & Engagement Coordinator have signed up for The Great West Run!

How can you support “The Hannah’s” and ECI?

Sponsor us! Help make their effort worthwhile and support vital projects across Exeter. [Donate here](#)

Volunteer on the day! Fancy a fun, high-energy way to support your community? Help hand out water to runners on Sunday 24th May — no running required! Express interest: info@eci.org.uk



Every bit helps — whether it’s a donation, a share, or cheering us on from the sidelines!

Could You Help Shape The Future of ECI?



Could you help shape the future of our charity — or know someone who could?

We’re currently recruiting new Trustees and are keen to diversify our board so it better reflects the communities we support. You don’t need previous trustee experience — just a passion for making a difference and a willingness to share your skills and perspective. Becoming a trustee is a flexible, voluntary role (around 2–3 hours per month) and a great way to support local people and communities across Exeter and Devon.

[Find out more and apply here](#)

Please share this with your networks, community groups, or anyone who might be interested — your support helps us reach more people and strengthen our board.

Thank You National Lottery Community Fund!



We're thrilled to share that our Magic Carpet project has been awarded £20,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund.

This funding win is a huge vote of confidence in our work and will allow Exeter Community Initiatives to expand Magic Carpet, bringing inclusive, accessible creative opportunities to adults with learning disabilities, additional needs, and mental health challenges across Exeter and the surrounding areas.

Looking To Make A Difference?

If you're a funder interested in supporting one of our amazing projects, discover the impact we're making and learn more about our work by exploring our latest [Impact Report](#).

Want To Partner With Us?

We're proud to work alongside local businesses, schools, churches, and community organisations that want to make a difference. Working together strengthens our city and shows your commitment to social impact.

Ways to collaborate:

- Corporate volunteering or team challenge days
- Workplace giving or match-funding
- Sponsoring a project or event
- Skills sharing (e.g. HR, marketing, IT, design)

Contact: fundraising@eci.org.uk to discuss partnership opportunities.

Help us raise awareness about the work we do:

Follow us on social media and share our posts. Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about ECI. Join our newsletter to stay informed and engaged. Every action counts.

Want to make a donation?

Click here

An icon showing a hand holding three stylized human figures, symbolizing support or donation.