

Welcome



It is a joy to write this introduction as we head into summer and reflect on an exciting and jam-packed spring. There were many highlights for us, including our fabulous Magic Carpet Art Trail, our amazing fundraisers who ran The Great West Run for ECI, opening our new, exciting project and premises, Custard Town, and delivering the powerful mini-project, Common Ground.

Visit our news page if you missed any of these stories!

As we head into summer we are busily planning some events to engage our community and thank our supporters so please look out for invitations from us!

As always, we remain extremely grateful for to you for supporting ECI, and in turn, our communities. Thanks for reading.

Ellie Taylor, Chief Executive

Custard Town is Officially Open



We're excited to announce the opening of Custard Town, the newest project from Exeter Community Initiatives. Located on Level One of Guildhall Shopping Centre, Custard Town is a safe, inclusive, and interactive play space for children aged 0–6, designed to spark imagination, encourage sensory exploration, and create opportunities for families to connect. Custard Town builds on the legacy of Little Exeter, recognising the important role that affordable community play spaces have in supporting children's early development, wellbeing and reducing social isolation for families.

As a charity committed to strengthening communities, ECI wanted to ensure Exeter continued to have a welcoming place where children can play, and parents and carers can build friendships and support networks.

[Custard Town Continued](#)

Thank You to the Lord Mayor of Exeter



Our play space was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Exeter, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for families in the city. Custard Town features a variety of themed play areas, including a teddy bears' picnic, a mess-free art studio, sensory experiences, imaginative role play, and Custard Town's very own disco. Families can also enjoy the on-site café with cakes from The Exploding Bakery and affordable refreshments available throughout their visit.

Custard Town is open seven days a week, offering morning and afternoon sessions, as well as dedicated SEN sessions to ensure the space is welcoming and accessible for as many families as possible.

Bookings are now live! While walk-ins are welcome when sessions aren't full, we recommend booking online in advance to secure your place and avoid disappointment. [Click here to book.](#)

Every visit supports Exeter Community Initiatives' mission to help local children and families thrive, and we're incredibly proud to bring this exciting new community space to the heart of Exeter.

We look forward to welcoming you to Custard Town soon!

👉 Find out more [here](#) and follow us [@custardtwn](#)

Transitions - Giving Back Gaining More



Volunteering is often about making a difference in someone else's life, but sometimes the impact is just as profound for the volunteer.

One of our Transitions Project volunteers reflects on how joining ECI to develop coaching skills became an experience of personal growth, inspiration and belonging.

"I joined ECI's Transitions Project to build my coaching skills, but I've gained so much more than I ever expected. Working with my client has been both humbling and inspiring, and there are many days when I feel I've received more than I've given.

"I've volunteered with several organisations over the years, but I've never experienced the level of training, encouragement, and ongoing support that ECI provides. Sarah and Pete have been amazing, and I always feel valued and respected as a volunteer. The regular opportunities to meet with other volunteers have also helped me feel part of the wider ECI community. For me, ECI is an organisation that truly lives its values. It's a privilege to be part of the team, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to make a difference while continuing to learn and grow."

👉 [Want this to be you? Click here.](#)

For more info on our courses [book click here](#) or [contact us](#)



Please note that booking is essential

📞 01392 205800

transitions@eci.org.uk

Watch this space – Jelly Football Kit Sale & Meet the Players!



Something exciting is coming to Jelly for Exeter City fans! We're planning a Football Kit Sale, with a fantastic selection of last season Exeter City shirts available to browse and buy. We're also hoping to welcome a couple of Exeter City players along for a meet and greet, giving supporters the chance to say hello and grab a photo.

We're aiming for early September, so keep an eye out for the confirmed date and more details coming soon.

Whether you're a lifelong Grecian, a collector, or just love a bargain, you won't want to miss it!

👉 Want to be the first to know? Follow [@jellycharityshop](#)

Common Ground Brings People Together Through Creativity



This spring, our Common Ground Project used creativity to improve well-being and strengthen community connections across Exeter.

Working with Wellbeing Exeter, CoLab, Inclusive Exeter and Magic Carpet we delivered four free artist-led workshops where 14 participants explored clay, collage, fabric art and cardboard relief. Together they created 43 artworks, later exhibited at Exeter Central Library as part of the Magic Carpet April Art Trail.

The workshops became much more than creative sessions. They provided a welcoming space where people could relax, build confidence and make new connections. One participant attended all four workshops after initially signing up for just one, while another met a neighbour she had lived near for five years but had never met.

Community Builder Maisaa Sweid said: "The sessions support not only creativity and wellbeing, but also practical support, relationship-building, and community resilience. Many individuals in the community are experiencing isolation, and spaces like Common Ground offer an accessible and meaningful way to reconnect."

The project shows how creativity can reduce loneliness, build confidence and bring communities together.

👉 [Read more here](#)

Coming Together to Support Families

Daisy Binnie of our Family Resource team was a Keynote Speaker at Devon's Attendance Conference at Sandy Park in June. Daisy and Mags from Parental Minds presented the findings of the Attendance and Wellbeing Project to school staff and leaders with the aim of sharing ways to support children and young people to access their education. We are proud to play a role in helping schools create supportive environments where every child has the opportunity to engage, learn and thrive.

👉 [Read more about their work here](#)



Could You Be on Team ECI Next Year?



A huge congratulations to the Hannah's and Cara, who successfully completed this year's Great West Run in support of Exeter Community Initiatives!

Together, they raised an incredible £2,555 to help fund our work supporting local people, families and communities across Exeter. From training runs to race day itself, their commitment, determination and fundraising efforts have been truly inspiring.

We would also like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated, shared their fundraising pages and cheered them on along the way. Your support has helped make a real difference.

Feeling inspired? Could you run with us next year? Whether you're a seasoned runner or taking on your first challenge, we'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch to find out how you can join Team ECI and help raise funds for your local community. Info@eci.org.uk

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

Thank You Clare Milne



We're delighted to share that Magic Carpet has been awarded £15,000 from the Clare Milne Trust. This generous funding will help us continue delivering creative arts sessions for adults with disabilities, providing opportunities to build confidence, improve wellbeing, develop new skills and form meaningful friendships in a safe and supportive environment.

A heartfelt thank you to the Clare Milne Trust for their generosity and for helping us continue making a positive difference through creativity.

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 @exetercommunity and share our posts. Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about ECI.

Want to make a donation?
Click here