



Our priorities for South Hams

Looking forward

South Hams Community Action (formerly South Hams CVS) has undergone a year of change, with not just a change of name but restructuring to meet both our organisation's needs and those of our voluntary sector. Our aim is to enable better health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents.

The voluntary sector (encompassing our small community groups in addition to larger charities/social enterprises) plays a huge role in the South Hams. Yet it is being asked to take on more, while its funding is being reduced.

South Hams Community Action has recently undertaken a survey of the voluntary sector in the South Hams. The 50 responses enabled us to gauge the needs of the voluntary sector.

Although many needs were identified depending on the size and location of the organisation, the following priorities emerged:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Funding and sustainability
- Governance
- Training.

Plans in progress

We have been working on the findings of the survey and we are currently developing the following:

- **Leadership Hub**—to support leadership in the voluntary sector by developing a peer support group.
- **District-wide Caring Alliance**—to bring together our caring organisations and share knowledge across the district. This has a different remit to the two local Caring Alliances already in place.
- **Fundraising Day**—this is being organised to offer advice on grant funders, trusts and evidencing impact and outcomes, alongside a workshop on writing funding applications. We are also developing a funding peer support network for our groups.
- **Governance**—we have recruited someone with the qualifications to offer advice and training around governance and legal structures.
- **Additional training**—we are looking to develop a training package on our website

which our voluntary sector can access, as the survey showed that attending training courses on specific days/times can be an issue. However, we will continue to support our sector with F2F and on-line training.

- **Fundraising support**—we have recently recruited to a fundraising post. This post will work on a one-to-one basis to build capacity in priority areas, while offering training, advice and support to our wider voluntary sector.

Community need and the voluntary sector

The Care Act asks social care to ensure that it considers what is available in the client's communities—including the voluntary sector—and also to have a consistent focus on prevention. However, with the eligibility criteria threshold being tightened, our voluntary sector is already struggling to meet demand in many areas.

This, combined with fragmented services and the rurality of South Hams, means that our voluntary sector needs to be strengthened with capacity built in areas where there is little voluntary sector provision for families living with dementia, our carers and our residents facing social isolation (including mental health and our young people). Transport is also a constant challenge.

South Hams Community Action wishes to invest in community builders who will have 'champion' remits around these particular areas.

However, we can do more to facilitate needs of our partners, voluntary sector and residents. Our social prescribing team is undertaking fantastic work – and they are able to identify specific gaps

and needs, which our community builder champions can take forward.

But we also need to consider how we will work with social care, the police (who currently refer socially isolated residents to social care), and other partners to better meet the needs of residents. To this end, a further role has been developed: Community Link Workers. These roles will work in a similar way to our social prescribers – but they will accept referrals from local agencies/groups and potentially friends and families, while working with our community groups to facilitate buddy and other schemes (and act as buddies where there is an identified need). They will also develop a peer-support network for socially isolated residents and help residents to develop beneficial IT skills.

Also, our voluntary sector is struggling with a lack of volunteers. Since Covid this picture has worsened and we are told by our VCSE that residents are happy to volunteer for ad-hoc events such as a fete, but are now less likely to undertake volunteering that needs a longer-term commitment and specific hours such as befriending.

We need to develop a volunteer recruitment role with a communications capability that can promote the benefits of volunteering and work to build capacity. We also need to consider other options for our voluntary and community groups around volunteering, and to help train and build sustainability in this sector.

Understandably, much of our work to meet the identified needs is dependent on South Hams Community Action obtaining funding to develop this provision. The support of the parish and town councils, alongside other agencies, is vital to enable us to make work with our voluntary sector to make a real difference to South Hams residents.





Governance and legal structures*

Information and advice
Training

** Hours as required*

Funding Manager

Fundraising information and advice
One-to-one support*
Training

**From early 2024*

Our current capacity

Social prescribing (GP referrals)

Six social prescribers :
Information and signposting
One-to-one support

Ukrainian support

Short-term project currently being undertaken with SHDC Homes for Ukraine team

Community development

Community Connector in Ivybridge.
Community Development Worker providing support and advice to our community groups

Additional roles needed to support our voluntary sector and residents

Community builders/ Champions

Geographic focus to build capacity in our voluntary sector
Plus champion roles:
Dementia
Carers
Reducing social isolation (inc. mental health and young people)

Volunteer recruitment/ Communications

Supporting our voluntary and community groups with their volunteer recruitment and communicating the need for volunteers through social/local media, events, etc.

Community Link Workers

Supporting residents on a one-to-one basis. Also developing buddy schemes to enable access to health and wellbeing activities. Helping residents with IT skills and developing peer-support groups.

South Hams Community & Voluntary Services

(now South Hams Community Action)

Annual Report

2022—2023





*Supporting voluntary organisations, community groups
and charities to flourish*

South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (SHCVS) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

Established in 1995 as a membership organisation, we have been serving voluntary and community organisations in the South Hams for over 25 years.

SHCVS is a core member of Devon Voluntary Action (DeVA), under whose umbrella we are also members of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Our purpose is to support and represent the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in the South Hams district, estimated to comprise around 800 organisations.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to be the leading organisation promoting, championing and supporting voluntary and community action in the South Hams, encouraging people to be involved with and using community services.

We will focus on providing training, development and volunteering support, information, networking opportunities,

facilitating collaboration, partnerships and enabling groups and communities to have a voice and influence, remaining relevant at all times.

Our Vision

Our Vision is for South Hams to be a place where voluntary and community action thrives and where voluntary and community organisations are dynamic, resilient, sustainable and inclusive, playing a central role in building strong cohesive communities, and improving the quality of life and environment for all.

Our Strategic Objectives

Our strategic objectives are that local voluntary and community organisations:

- are thriving and sustainable
- are safe and effective in meeting community needs
- are inclusive and reach out to diverse communities
- are collaborative and connected
- have the ability, confidence and opportunity to influence strategic priorities, policies and decision-making.



It is my pleasure to present to you our South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (SHCVS) Annual Report for the year 2022-2023.

During this year, the impact of the covid pandemic was still being felt, as well as the impact of the rise in the cost of living. It was another year where our support to community and voluntary groups, as well as our wellbeing support to individuals, was needed more than ever. The role of community and voluntary groups in our communities across South Hams District has also become increasingly important.

For SHCVS, it was a year of change. Jill Davies, who had been our Chief Officer for many years, and who had worked with SHCVS for more than 20 years, retired from her position in October 2022. We would like to thank her for all her work and commitment to our organisation. We were happy to recruit a new Chief Officer, Susannah Hunter, who started in October 2022, and during the year we were very happy to welcome three other new staff members and three new trustees. We also made changes to our structure, with the creation of a Communities Team and Health and Wellbeing Team, in order to be more efficient and effective in our work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the funders and partners of SHCVS: especially South Hams District Council for its ongoing support, all the town and parish councils which have supported us, South Hams Primary Care Network and Mewstone Primary Care Network, as well as Devon County Council, and other organisations such as Livewell Southwest and the National Lottery.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank the SHCVS staff team for all their tireless work and commitment, and the Board of Trustees for all their support to our organisation throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P.A. Elghady". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Penny Elghady
Chair of Trustees

Building our communities

Our Communities Team has worked tirelessly to support new, emerging and existing groups, organisations and charities to grow and flourish. Working extensively with partners throughout the South Hams, the team has promoted collaboration and effective joined-up working in support of our communities.

During this period the team has distributed over £12,000 in small grants in support of COMF (Covid Outbreak Management Fund) and cost of living grants to the organisations working with those most in need.

A range of training sessions have been organised to develop the sector. These include training on legal structures, grant funding, mental health awareness, recruiting volunteers, setting up a community group and an introduction to Devon Connect—our new platform to promote community groups and their activities, including their volunteering opportunities. The team also referred groups to training being undertaken by partner organisations, which included areas such as first-aid, bystander awareness and safeguarding.

Working with our Health and Wellbeing Team, and our partners, the Communities Team use their knowledge of the South Hams to build innovative solutions to tackle the unmet needs in our communities.

The work undertaken includes supporting our community transport schemes to find drivers and our caring organisations to recruit a range of volunteers, in particular befrienders.

The team also encouraged communities to review warm hub and food provision, in light of the cost of living crisis, and assisted with the development of three warm hubs during the winter. Ongoing support was also



given to a food waste reduction project in Ivybridge.

One-to-one support, information and signposting has been provided around grant funding, policies and legal structures.

The team has also publicised the needs of our voluntary and community groups in mailings, social media, the creation of posters and other publicity, and in articles in local newsletters and magazines.

Looking forward, plans are being developed to increase our voluntary sector capacity in areas such as reducing social isolation, to enhance the mental wellbeing of all age groups, and to support our carers and those living with dementia.

Community support

100

We provided more than 100 voluntary and community social enterprise (VCSE) organisations with development support and advice, which included volunteering, legal structures, governance and fundraising.

Over 70 groups were encouraged to promote over 150 activities and volunteering opportunities on Devon Connect.

150

6

We organised six training events on a range of subjects including community group funding, mental health awareness and Devon Connect training.

We wrote and disseminated around 15 articles in local newsletters and magazines regarding volunteering and the cost of living crisis. We also publicised volunteering opportunities through posters, a range of social media and sharing with partners.

15

250

Over 250 VCSE organisations received regular bulletins providing a wealth of information. We also undertook 180 social media posts to support and publicise our community groups.

More than 60 organisations benefitted from SHCVS networking opportunities.

60

Wellbeing works

Our Health and Wellbeing Team is made up of five Social Prescribers, a VCSE Hospital Discharge Coordinator and a Team Leader.

The value of this team was demonstrated when an overarching role of Health and Wellbeing Team Manager was developed in February 2023. This role was created to support the Social Prescribers and the new VCSE Home from Hospital Discharge Coordinator.

This team makes a real difference in our communities and to their many clients. Working closely with the South Hams and Mewstone Primary Care Networks, our Local Care Partnerships, and the wider voluntary sector, the team provides well-being support

to those who need it most. The Social Prescribers reduce demand on our GP surgeries and the VCSE Hospital Discharge Coordinator ensures that residents are discharged from hospital into a safe and supportive environment.

The Health and Wellbeing Team works closely with the Communities Team. Due to their work, the Health and Wellbeing Team is able to evidence gaps in provision, which is then disseminated to the Communities Team who can take forward the identified needs. This ensures that our teams are able to provide a more supportive environment to our voluntary sector and communities.

Social prescribing case study

Small steps bring real change

One of our Social Prescribers' clients was in her seventies. Although she was referred to the social prescriber with anxiety, it became apparent that she had a complex mental health history. This lady had moved to the South Hams to be closer to her family not long before the Covid lockdown. She had also received a cancer diagnosis, for which she was in remission.

However, recently she had spiralled into depression and anxiety. During the meetings with the social prescriber, counselling was discussed. The client knew about Talkworks and IHope, but this type of counselling did not work for her. Instead, the social prescriber recommended Southwest Counsellors and it was agreed that a referral would be made. The client found their style of counselling incredibly helpful and subsequently received a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and separation anxiety.

Subsequently, our Social Prescriber signposted her client to local coffee mornings, online classes and local art groups, but these were not taken up as she still needed to be a part of the community. So our Social Prescriber suggested trying the local pilates and yoga groups—and the client found yoga to be beneficial.

When our Social Prescriber spoke with her client about a nearby 'warm hub' project, the lady volunteered to help out. She now runs it and is looking to create a 'community hub'. This has been such a boost to her confidence and has given her a sense of purpose as she is helping the community. In addition, this client also now befriends a local resident.

At the point of discharge, the client explained that she was so grateful for our Social Prescriber keeping her on for longer. For her, the process of integrating into the local community had taken a long time and it had not been easy, but she had come such a long way in terms of her wellbeing. In turn she has benefitted her local community with her volunteering work.

Health and wellbeing

5

We have five Social Prescribers working in Chillington, Dartmouth, Kingsbridge, Modbury, Salcombe and Wembury & Yealm.

More than 217 people were supported to access community resources by SHCVS Social Prescribers with up to six sessions (and on occasions more) per client.

217

211

Our Social Prescribers signposted residents to 211 South Hams community and voluntary organisations.

Our Social Prescribers made direct referrals to 44 community and voluntary organisations in the South Hams, with over 100 referrals undertaken.

44

1

The VCSE Home from Hospital Discharge Coordinator role works to ensure that residents leaving hospital are discharged into a safe and supportive environment.



Our Ukrainian support

Photo: Providing a safe space for Ukrainian families with Artmoor Haven

Even before Ukrainian families were arriving in the district, SHCVS community workers were supporting the hosts and their future guests' needs.

Supported by funding from South Hams District Council, we provided leadership and partnered with a wide range of community groups, organisations and agencies to provide both direct and holistic support, information and advice to those displaced by the war.

In addition to signposting to advice and support services, our Communities Team and the Ivybridge Community Connector organised a

Ukrainian Independence Day celebration, festive events, art, wellbeing and emotional support activities.

The District Council also provided grant funding for community groups working with Ukrainian residents. SHCVS distributed the funding and liaised with the groups.

Currently, SHCVS is partnering with the District Council's Homes for Ukraine team on a consultation which will enable our Ukrainian residents to take a lead role in their wellbeing, and to participate more fully within our communities, while maintaining their own cultural identities.

Our Ukrainian support

33

Support group meetings were held in venues throughout Ivybridge and Ugborough. This included over 400 drinks and 200 meals served at the SoSocial support group, the Clay Factory and creative cafés.

A community job fayre was organised by our Community Connector. Over 50 Ukrainian people attended, meeting eight employers. Over 30 people signed up for job searches and three were given immediate interviews.

50

140

In August 2022 a Ukrainian Independence Day celebration was held involving music, songs, poetry and food. This was a celebration of community with local people joining Ukrainian families.

Ukrainian families were transported from all over South Hams for a cultural food and art share day. This was held in November 2022.

40

12

Funding enabled a Christmas gift sharing and carol singing party for 12 Ukrainian people in Kingsbridge. Our Community Connector supported this event.

15 community art days have been held in Ugborough with Ukrainian volunteers sharing folk craft, skills and art, and four community art workshops were run by local Ukrainian artists with our Community Connector.

19

**Our
voluntary sector
+
South Hams CVS
equals
community
action**



More recently, SHCVS has seen a number of changes within both our voluntary and paid leadership roles. This has enabled us to undertake a valuable period of internal review. As a result, we made a number of key changes to ensure that our processes are up-to-date and that we continue to be both efficient and effective in what we do.

We have invested in our team, reviewed and renewed contracts, increased our delivery hours across all our business areas and involved the whole organisation in the process to develop our next five-year strategy to be launched next year. We have also invested in our IT capability to ensure we remain a modern, resilient organisation—operating effectively and efficiently.

We have created a new Core Leadership Team, to ensure a clearer reporting structure, and to provide increased resilience to the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Trustees. To enable this we invested in our team to create new positions: a Communities Manager, a Health and Wellbeing Team Leader and an Office and Finance Manager.

These changes also represent increased capability and financial savings based on simplified and professionalised processes. Together they all ensure that, going forward, SHCVS is well placed to achieve our ambitions of developing, supporting and strengthening our VCSE in South Hams, promoting community action and making a real difference in our communities.

Our supporters

South Hams Community Action is always grateful to receive funding support to enable us to continue our work with community and voluntary groups to make our residents' lives better in the South Hams.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the groups and organisations which have supported us:

Bigbury Parish Council

Brixton FEOFEES Trust

Brixton Parish Council

CAP UK

Devon Carers

Devon County Council

Devon Voluntary Action

Harberton Parish Council

Holbeton Parish Council

Inner Compass

Ivybridge Town Council

Livewell Southwest

Mewstone PCN

Modbury Caring

Modbury Parish Council

Moorvision

Parish of Thurlestone Society

Red Earth Counselling

Refurnish Devon

Salcombe Town Council

Shiatsu for Change

South Brent Parish Council

South Hams District Council

South Hams PCN

Staverton Parish Council

The National Lottery

Ugborough Parish Council

University of Plymouth

Vocal Advocacy

Wembury Caring

Westbank

Yealmpton Parish Council

West Local Care Partnership

With thanks to South Hams District Council for hosting South Hams
Community Action, our new address is:

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Email: admin@southhamscvs.org.uk

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