



**Connecting people,
communities and
opportunities**



**Wellbeing Exeter
Evaluation & Impact Report**

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

35%

of adult referrals to Community Connectors were unable to work due to sickness or disability



53%

OF ADULTS REFERRED TO COMMUNITY CONNECTORS LIVE ALONE



127

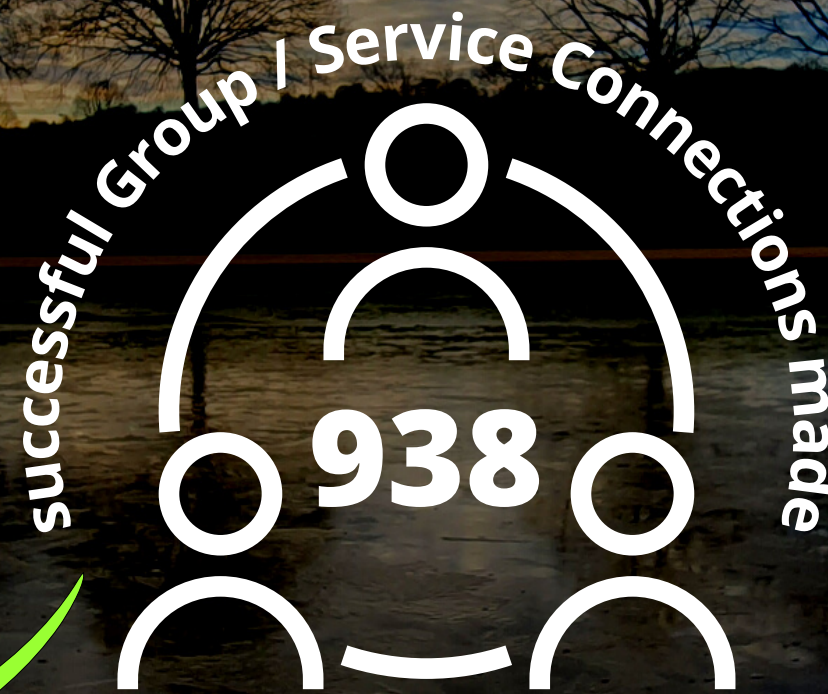
Residents were supported by Community Builders to turn their ideas into a reality



21%



OF ADULTS WERE UNPAID CARERS



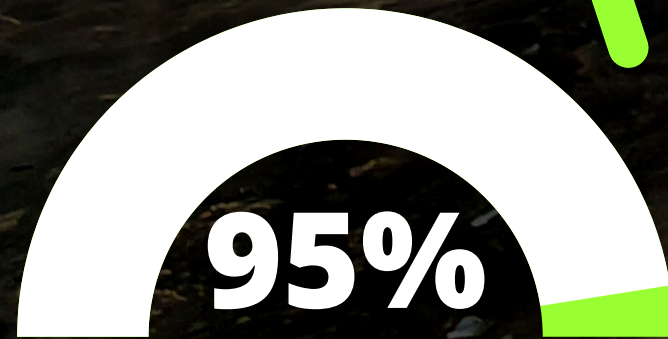
560



Events or Activities involved the Community Builders

369 different groups / organisations

of which **95%** were into the Community or Voluntary Sector



579

Residents took **ACTION** in their Community

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW



This report aims to capture and share some of the key elements of the Wellbeing Exeter programme during the period April 2021 to March 2022. It draws on work across the partnership, reflecting the vast and diverse contributions of the Community Builders, Community Physical Activity Organisers and Community Connectors, alongside the Coordination team who support the nine delivery partners to collaborate, communicate, develop and share insight. The Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences has continued to impact on the people and communities we work alongside and the entire programme team have continued to navigate these impacts and the ways they carry out their roles.

With the **Single Point of Referral embedded in the Coordination Team**, and implementation of an internal communications framework, we are more able to observe, learn and respond to what people are telling us about their lives, both in terms of adapting what we offer but also sharing and influencing our wider networks.

By **understanding the emerging issues** around loss, bereavement and anxieties about returning to social settings, for example, we have reflected on and developed how we can support people to connect in ways that they feel comfortable with and can act as a first step in moving out of the isolation that has become entrenched for some as result of the pandemic.

In another area of the partnership, the long-term perspective on community life that the **Community Builders offer, has put them in an excellent position to observe the changes the pandemic has produced at a local level**, and to help us understand what the longer-term impact of this period might be for the way neighbours connect and take action together.

We have seen the ongoing effects of the pandemic on health and social care services, and with ongoing **changes within primary care** and their new networks, it has been necessary to continuously reflect and adjust what we do to ensure we are responding to this everchanging context. This year has seen a **significant expansion of referral routes**, to best reach people who could benefit from our offer, and continue to contribute to the prevention agenda.

Despite these challenges, the importance of community life and social connections for health and wellbeing has remained at the core of the partnership, working alongside people to discover and develop opportunities and ideas on how to live and feel better and get connected to what matters to them.

New Developments:

Alongside the core offer of the programme, new developments during this year have included:

- A pivoting of the work of the **Young People's Community Connectors** away from Primary Care to focus on working with secondary schools and Exeter College, ensuring that what we can offer is made available to young people at the right time.
- Working with a new delivery partner, **Inclusive Exeter**, and funder, **NHS Charities Together**, to develop a **bespoke Community Connector offer to work with people from culturally diverse backgrounds**. This was in recognition that our existing referral routes didn't always reach these communities effectively, but also existing health and wellbeing inequalities had been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.



- Our focus, as part of **Live & Move**, on supporting people and communities to make **physical activity part of their daily lives** have stepped up as Covid-19 restrictions have lifted and there have been more opportunities to engage and connect with people out and about in Exeter's community and green spaces. We are learning more and more about how we can connect people to opportunities to be more active, in ways which work for them, and facilitate and support physical activity ideas to get off the ground, grow and keep going.

Comparison Figures: Community Connecting

2018-2019

Referrals: 887
Connections made: 511

2019-2020

Referrals: 816
Connections made: 1244

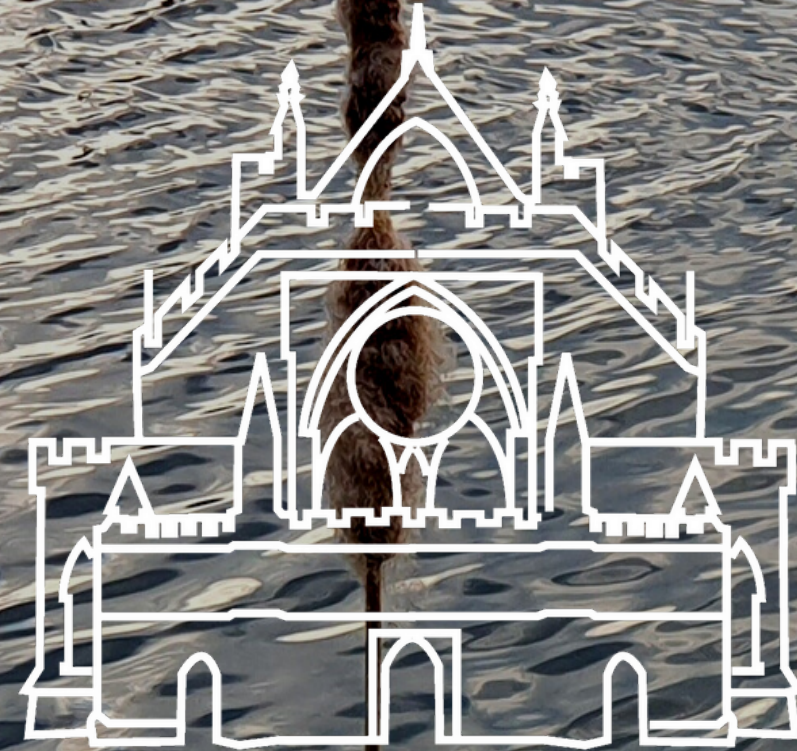
2020-2021

Referrals: 568
Connections made: 1095

2021-2022

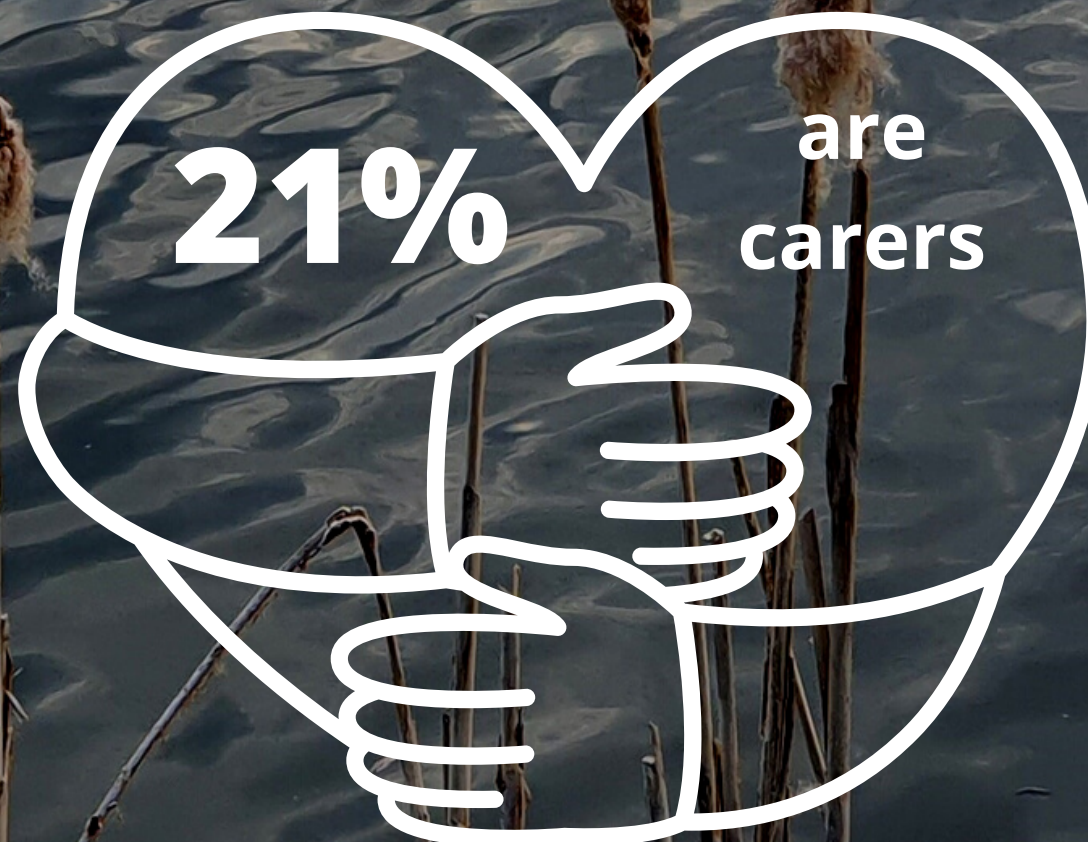
Referrals: 910
Connections made: 938

ADULT COMMUNITY CONNECTING



7%
from a non-white British background

38%
rent from Housing Authority or Local Authority



STORY OF ADULT COMMUNITY CONNECTING

Needs: Prince was referred to Wellbeing Exeter by a Health and Wellbeing Coach, who made specific reference to his social isolation and loneliness. They also suggested he may benefit from increasing his physical activity.

Active Listening: Prince explained to his Community Connector that before the first national lockdown, he had been married and employed. His marriage ended shortly afterwards and he subsequently left his job due to the additional pressure it was placing him under. He found himself socially isolated after these significant life changes. He didn't feel he was able to build meaningful connections and had lost confidence due to experiencing racism. He had stopped doing activities he had previously enjoyed such as like cycling, going to the gym, and gardening, and he found himself feeling depressed.

Explore & Connect: Prince agreed with his Community Connector's suggestion that it could be a good idea to find community gardens where Prince could participate and meet new people in the process. Together they attended a couple of events at the University's community garden, but Prince didn't find it very accessible and it wasn't well attended. It was agreed that a walking group could offer a suitable alternative activity. A multicultural walking group is running in the community and Prince is really keen to engage with this and meet new people. In the meantime, the Community Connector has arranged for Prince to have a free month's pass for Exeter Leisure, to give him the opportunity to try out the facilities that are available to him. Prince recognises that if he feels healthier physically, this will have an impact on his mental wellbeing. The Connector will accompany Prince to the introductory session with the intention of making this a positive and welcoming experience.

Outcomes & Sustainable Connections: Prince, his Community Connector and his local Community Builder have met for a coffee to discuss local opportunities and he is now on the mailing list to receive their regular newsletter. Prince has now started to exercise regularly and is enjoying moving around the city while he does so. The Community Connector will continue to support him until he has reached the goals he has set for himself around his social connections and wellbeing.

SNAPSHOT OF A MALE ADULT'S JOURNEY:

53 year old male who is isolated, lonely and has long term mental health issues. Recently bereaved of a family member who was a great support. Connector signposted him to Andy's Man Club, Wood For Good and the Beacon Centre Wellbeing Group.



Wood for Good



IMPACT ON ADULTS

Meeting Expectations:

78% hoped to gain information about available resources and opportunities through us:

92%

had achieved this after working with a Community Connector

Give:

31%

now do something nice for someone else weekly, compared with **20%** prior to working with a Connector

Attending Groups:

28%

now attend a weekly local group, compared with **16%** at the start

Take Notice:

52%

now pay attention to how they were feeling, compared with only **38%** at the start

Chatting to Someone:

30%

now chat to someone in the community most days, compared to **20%** prior to working with a Connector

Feeling Optimistic:

30%

said they rarely felt optimistic about the future. This had dropped to **16%** after working with a Connector

New Skills:

27%

said they rarely worked on a skill or project. This dropped to **18%** after working with a Community Connector

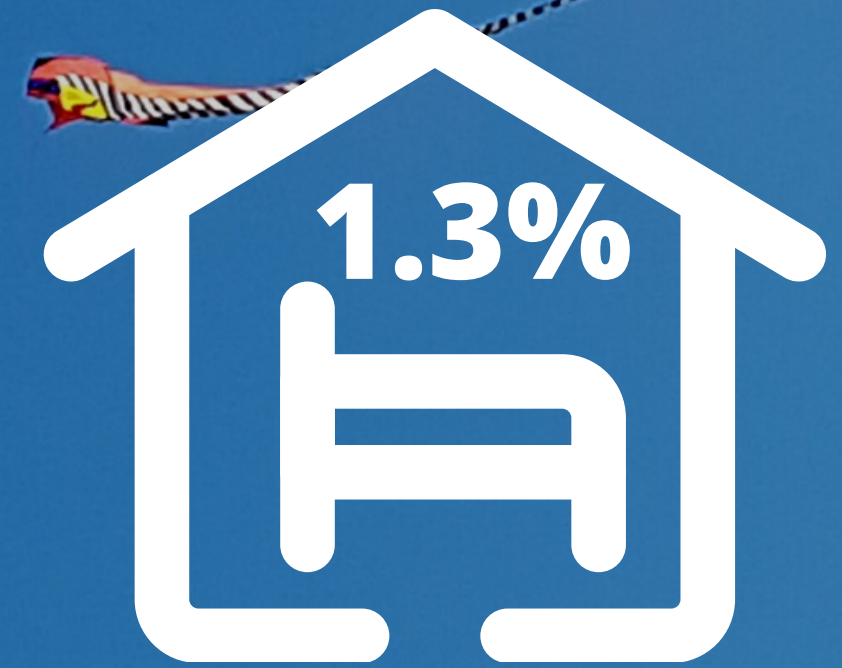
Volunteering:

69%

said they never volunteered. This had dropped to **41%** after working with us

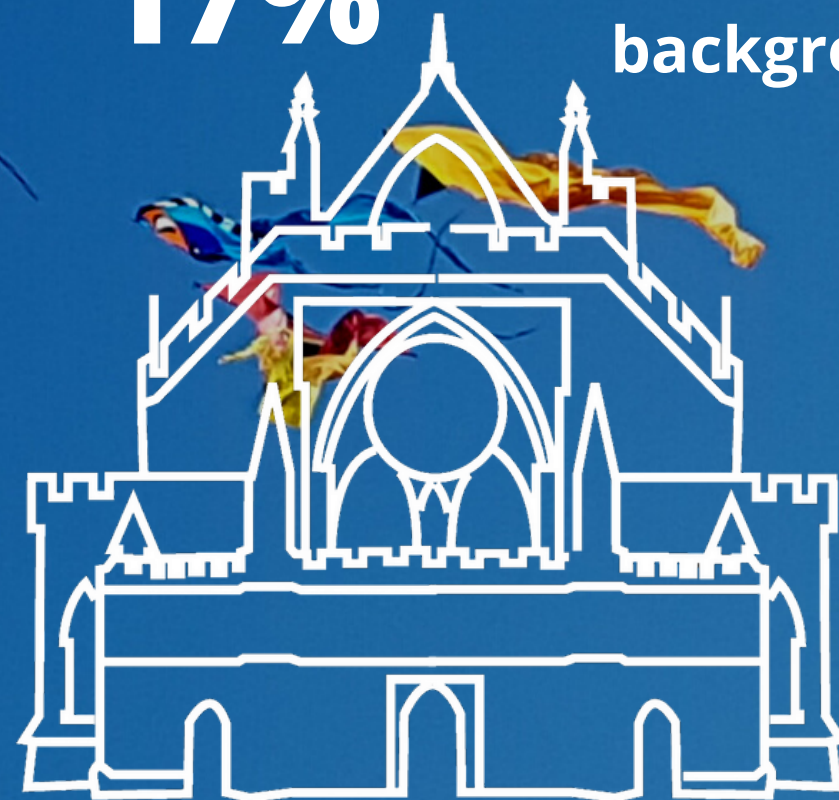
YOUNG PEOPLE COMMUNITY CONNECTING

WHATS NEW: Young People Connectors have been developing a Youth Voice Group, offering positive activities and slowly building up a core group of young people to contribute their ideas and thoughts on the Young People Community Connector offer



live in supported accommodation

17% from a non-white British background



97% were in education, employment or training



3%



live with a non-family member (including in care or with a foster family)

STORY OF YOUNG PEOPLE COMMUNITY CONNECTING

Needs: A young female (16) was referred due to experiencing anxiety and panic attacks at school.

Active Listening: Following a couple of initial phone conversations, the young person, accompanied by her mother, met the Connector at a local youth centre. The meeting was a chance for the young person to talk about her current situation from her own perspective, allowing her to reflect on the difficulties she experienced at the time.

Explore & Connect: Together, the young person and the Connector started to explore possible options in order to practically support her situation. This ongoing process continued over 5 months through further meeting at the school. Among other things, the Connector discussed a variety of anxiety coping strategies. This gave her good insights into the concept of “fight, flight or freeze” and how to learn new ways to relate to difficult emotions.

As a result of several in-depth conversations about her anxieties around busy social settings, the Connector advocated for her to be able to use an “exit card” at school, allowing her to take time out when she experienced increased anxiety levels within the classroom. This was successfully put into place shortly after by the school’s wellbeing lead and had a positive impact on the young person’s wellbeing at school.

Outcomes & Sustainable Connections: The young person and the Connector also agreed that a counselling referral to Young Devon would be a beneficial step for her to learn new ways of managing difficult feelings within a 1-2-1 counselling environment. Once the young person started accessing CBT counselling, the Connector assisted her in finding a part time job and discovering new local activities such as a music making group as well as a roller derby and women’s rugby team. Towards the end of her work with the Connector the young person seemed much better prepared to deal with difficulties and she expressed that things were ‘looking pretty positive’.

SNAPSHOT OF A YOUNG PERSON'S JOURNEY:

Teenager struggling with mental health and has problems with self-esteem and confidence. Keen to get out and explore new things but lacks the confidence to do so. The Young People Connector signposted them to The Mix (support for under 25s) and Young Minds for mental health.



IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Meeting Expectations:
44% hoped to be introduced to groups (social, support, activity etc) through us:
32% had achieved this after working with a Connector

Attending Groups:
31% now attend a weekly local group, compared with **14%** at the start

Keep Learning:
49% said they rarely tried something new. This had dropped to **9%** after working with a Community Connector

New Skills:
30% said they now worked on a new skill or project weekly, compared to **12%** at the start

Take Notice:
39% said they now paid attention to how they were feeling weekly, compared to **12%** at the start

Volunteering:
74% said they **never volunteered**. This had dropped to **52%** after working with a Wellbeing Exeter Connector

Give:
24% now do something nice for someone else weekly, compared with **12%** prior to working with a Connector

Feeling Optimistic:
54% said they now often feel optimistic about the future compared to **24%** at the start

FAMILY COMMUNITY CONNECTING



Rent from Housing Authority or Local Authority



are carers for children with additional needs

11%
Unemployed



11% from a non-white British background



STORY OF FAMILY COMMUNITY CONNECTING

Needs: Sarah's family were referred to Wellbeing Exeter following a challenging few years in which they had experienced several significant losses, including bereavement, relocation and loss of a family network. Due to public health restrictions during that time, no member of the family had been able to develop social connections in the way they would ordinarily have expected to. The impact of this strain was being felt throughout the household, with sibling rivalry causing tensions and Sarah being unable to work due to stress of managing her family's needs.

Active Listening: During the initial meetings with her Family Connector, Sarah identified her priority was to better acquaint herself with Exeter, so that she had a sense of what resources were available.

Explore & Connect: She subsequently met with her Connector to take walks and visit local cafes. During these meetings, she spoke about activities that her daughter would enjoy trying out which included horse riding. The Family Connector was able to introduce her to a local riding school and they visited together to learn more about the opportunities there. The Connector was also able to share resources with Sarah that would enable her to support her daughter's mental health and wellbeing.

Outcomes & Sustainable Connections: Sarah's developing confidence about prioritising her needs led her to seek private counselling so she could better support her own wellbeing. A significant link was made when the Family Connector facilitated a meeting between Sarah and her local Community Builder. Through this connection, Sarah was able to meet with others in her community and together they planned and held a street party to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Sarah has subsequently developed closer connections with some of her neighbours, with some now regarded as friends. Sarah's involvement with Wellbeing Exeter came to a natural end when she recognised her own confidence had increased and her social network had developed. She told her Family Connector she had "...really appreciated the space to be listened to in a non-judgmental way... and focus purely on me and what was important".

SNAPSHOT OF A FAMILY'S JOURNEY:

Mum of two who fled domestic violence, dealing with anxiety, debt and a court case. Family Connector signposted them to Devon County Council's Goodie Box, Pluss Positive People and Victim Care Devon & Cornwall.



IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Connecting:

83% wanted the chance to talk to someone and be listened to through us:

92%

had achieved this after working Community Connector

Relationships:

55%

said their family now had positive and supportive relationships in the local community, compared to **33%** at the start

Time Together:

28%

said they now spent time together doing something they enjoyed most days, compared to **18%** at the start

Being Active:

25%

said they now go for a walk, bike ride, play sport or do some other form of physical activity most days, compared to **14%** at the start

Feeling Optimistic:

31%

said were now often feeling optimistic about the future, compared to **10%** at the start

Take Notice:

64%

said that most days they paid attention to how they were feeling, compared to **40%** at the start

Thinking Clearly:

46%

now said that some of the time they had been thinking clearly, compared to **24%** at the start

New Skills:

17%

said they now tried something new weekly, compared to **4%** at the start

COMMUNITY BUILDERS



Call to
Action

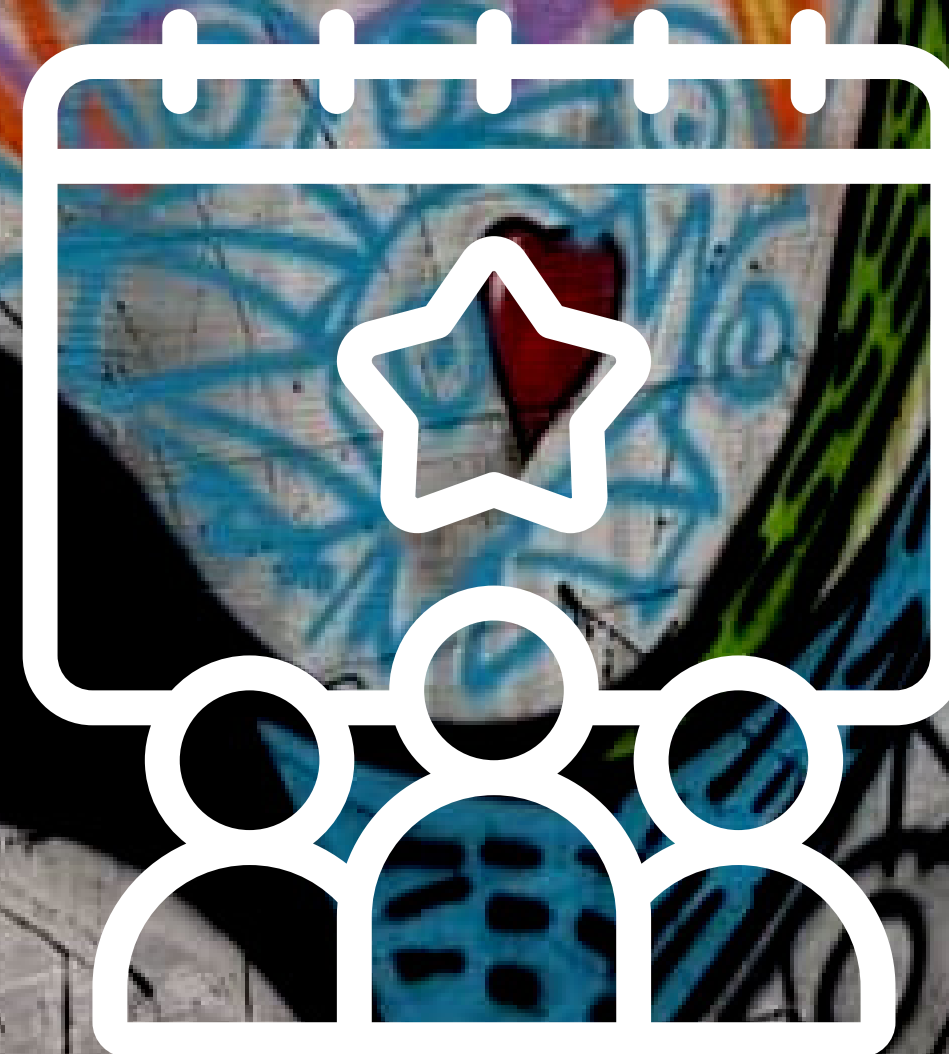
579

Residents moved
into action



560

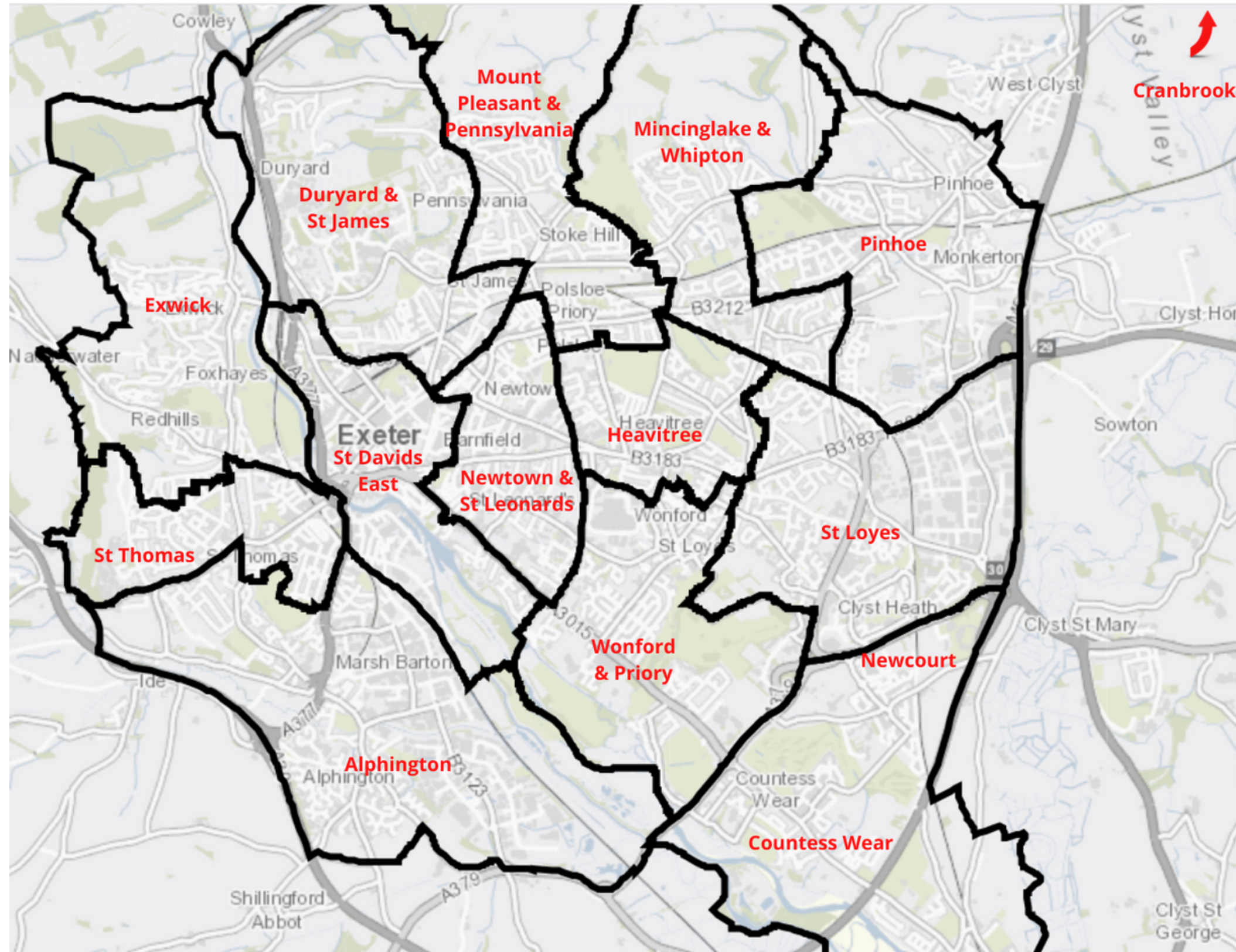
Events / activities
attended and hosted by
Builders



127

Resident ideas into action - new
groups / events / initiatives

COMMUNITY BUILDERS



Community Builders support people in their local neighbourhoods to grow their own ideas and try new things that bring people together, improve their wellbeing and make the community a better place to live. This can include connecting people and opportunities together, creating new networks, encouraging and supporting local people to take action on things that matter to them, creating spaces that allow people to come together, get to know each other, build trust and share skills. There is a team of 12 Community Builders working across all 13 Exeter wards. They have also been Community Building in Cranbrook since April 2021.



RESIDENT TESTIMONIAL

"I would like to say a big thank you to Rachel for making the Natter Club possible. She has done so much running around to help me out and thanks to Rachel we now have a venue, a lovely poster and hopefully a club we can build on to stop everyone's loneliness and give us a lot of smiley times and laughter. Thank you from all our natterers and for helping us all getting this fun fun fun time started"

COMMUNITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ORGANISERS (CPAOS)

27  **organisations
worked with**



31
**referrals including from
Community Builders
and Community
Connectors to CPAOs**



133
**events (such
as walks or
bike rides)
organised and
led**



COMMUNITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ORGANISERS



Since lockdown has eased, and groups have started up again, the CPAO's have been able to attend more groups/café's and meet different people. The challenge is that there are still people who are very anxious about coming out again and are suffering from loneliness. As this has happened, we had to remap our areas to include new and existing groups, pre Covid. We have managed to get back into the community and act as an ear for local people to tell us what they want and have a conversation around being more active.

We have built up great connections with the Community Builders in their patches to further enhance the work that we are both doing. Working in partnership with them means that we can reach more people at events such as the pop ups that we do locally.

The referrals from the Connectors have been slow and steady, so each CPAO has only had a handful of people to work with 1 to 1. The PCN Health & Wellbeing coaches have started to make referrals so it looks likely to pick up again.

The walking and cycling groups across the City still have a great uptake, attended weekly by each CPAO. For this to be more sustainable, we are working on having more volunteers trained up as walk leaders, so there's not as much pressure on delivery time.

We are actively having conversations with groups about how we can make sure they are more inclusive for everyone to join in with, this then widens the offer for people locally.



JOINT WORKING BETWEEN WELLBEING EXETER ROLES

Here are a few examples of how the different roles (Connectors, Builders & CPAOs) work so well together:

Connector & CPAO:

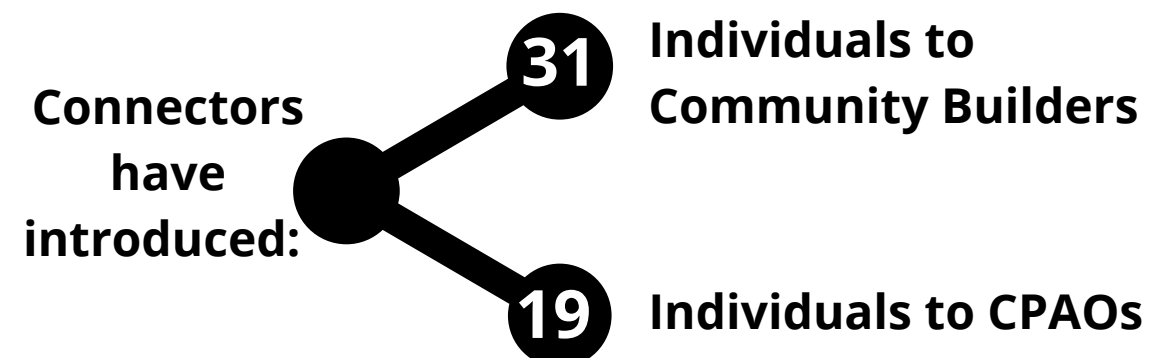
- Carer of her grandchildren, Linda wondered what the future held for her when they left home
- Linda wanted informal connections back in her life. 'I don't even know what I like anymore'. After some exploration with a Connector, she wanted to pursue walking
- Linda was then connected to her local CPAO who introduced her to some local walks, which she now regularly engages with.
- She is now keen to take a next step in adult education & DIY skills.
- In the space of a few weeks, she made significant progression and she values her new 'me' time.

CPAO & Builder (Exwick):

- A number of local residents flagged with the Builder low cost, gentle exercise, like yoga was needed.
- A local resident had an enterprise and was keen to apply for funding.
- The Builder linked in the local CPAO as it seemed the natural next step.
- The CPAO was enthusiastic and used his Live & Move links to seek funding.
- 6 Yoga session (outdoors when weather permitted) was launched and it then was passed over to the community to continue.

Builder (Duryard/St James) & Connector:

- Builder and Connector met to explore building bridges between local people who speak English as a second language and English speakers.
- A suggestion from local resident was a Multicultural English Café, a WhatsApp group was set up to converse with 30 other women from the Middle East.
- A weekly café was born hosted at the Mosque led by two local English volunteers who talk about different topics.



"I feel much better and more confident with speaking English now and know about local groups"