NEWSLETTER

February 2026



MESSAGE FROM KATHERYN, OUR CHIEF OFFICER

Welcome to our Winter edition newsletter. As we look back over the past twelve months, we reflect on all we have achieved together at Involve. One of the real highlights has been launching our Big Lottery Communities that Can project, which is already inspiring residents to support one another, share skills, and build strong, meaningful networks. By boosting confidence and encouraging connection, the project is helping to reduce isolation and strengthen the everyday bonds that make our communities feel vibrant and empowered. Our Vintage Farmers project has also been a shining success. By bringing retired farming residents together, it has created a warm and welcoming space for people to reconnect, reminisce, and feel truly valued. The project has supported wellbeing, sparked new friendships, and celebrated the rich agricultural heritage that shapes Mid Devon's identity. We're thrilled that it's now being rolled out nationally through the Farming Community Network. A huge thankyou to Tamlyn Fraiquin for her passion and dedication in getting the project off the ground in Crediton. As we step into 2026 at a time when our support is needed ever more, we're looking forward to a year of new partnerships and fresh opportunities for people across Mid Devon while also feeling the impact of reduced funding for services. Read on to discover more and ways you can be involved.

OUR MISSION

To empower people and communities through practical support, advice and connection - building resilience and wellbeing across Mid Devon.

OUR VISION

A thriving, inclusive Mid Devon where every community group has the support it needs, everyone feels they belong and can make a positive impact.

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NEWS

STAFF UPDATE

Before Christmas we celebrated our annual Involve Christmas party – a chance to have fun, socialise and celebrate all the brilliant things our team has achieved over the past year. What with a Shelfie quiz, Break the Ice Bingo and Pass the Parcel with a difference there was a lot of laughter.

As a relatively small charity with a big impact, our work can be incredibly meaningful, but it also places staff in a uniquely demanding environment. Taking time out for enjoyment and laughter is both relaxing and beneficial. In this issue we have included an article about the pressures of being part of a community charity and how community members can be supportive.

Once again our team has expanded and we wish to welcome:

Alice Dillaway - our new Tiverton Community Builder and Communities that Can Project Assistant.

Kath Bowen - who has joined us after a long career with DEFRA as our Crediton Community Builder.

Simone Phillips - who has taken on the role of Community Volunteer Service Lead.

Hayley Denham - with 30 years of experience, she is our new Communities that Can Project Manager.

Zoe Flockhart who is moving on from her Wellbeing Coordinator role and is now our HOPE Coordinator.



We are delighted to have attracted such amazing and talented people to join our team at Involve. Every member of our team plays an important role in creating positive change for the people and communities we serve. Together, we build stronger, fairer communities where everyone has the chance to thrive and we look forward to another impactful and rewarding year ahead at Involve.

At the same time upsetting changes are taking place at Involve and we are having to say goodbye to some amazing and dedicated staff members who fulfil a much needed service through events beyond our control - read Laura's heart felt piece below.

INVOLVE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



We will be holding our Annual General Meeting in Cullompton at the end of March. The meeting will highlight our impact during the last financial year of 2024-25. It will include presentations covering our main projects including 'Communities that Can', Devon People First, Culm Valley Wellbeing and the Cullompton Youth Club. This will be followed with time to network and meet our staff and trustees. If you are interested in joining us for the AGM please contact Jane at:

admin@involve-middevon.org.uk

NEW PROJECTS

MID DEVON VOLUNTEER HUB



Volunteering in Mid Devon is entering an exciting new chapter as Involve expands its support for volunteers, community groups and local organisations. At the heart of this growth is our brand-new Volunteer Hub in Tiverton — a supportive friendly space where people can discover opportunities, build confidence and get ongoing support. We're also aiming to introduce peer support, training and confidence-building opportunities to help volunteers grow and feel mentored in their roles.

The Hub will help organisations too, by promoting opportunities, connecting them with volunteers and offering practical resources through our membership scheme. There's even a pathway for those wanting to work towards the recognised Quality Assurance Mark for good volunteering practice.

Support from the Hub is open to all, while Involve's membership scheme provides added benefits for organisations that want to save time, build strong foundations and access practical, ready-to-use resources. In the months ahead, you'll see us out and about across Mid Devon with pop-ups, wellbeing events and activities led by our Communities that Can team. March brings the launch of Tiverton's Communities that Can project and our Volunteer Hub celebration, with more highlights to follow including Volunteers' Week and the Mid Devon Show.

We've also launched new social media channels to share stories, opportunities and updates, and we're planning a future Involve Conference to celebrate the incredible contribution of volunteers across the area. These developments are all about opening doors, removing barriers and helping our communities thrive. We're excited to continue this journey with you and look forward to sharing more as things develop.

For more information and to get involved contact Simone at:
volunteerservicelead@involve-middevon.org.uk

CANCER SCREENING AWARENESS PROJECT

January marks the start of a new project for us, raising awareness in our community about gynaecological, lung, breast, and skin cancer, with a focus on both prevention and recognising symptoms. Alongside this, we'll also be promoting the importance of screening for breast, bowel, and cervical cancers.

Cancer doesn't just affect individuals; it impacts families, friends, and entire communities. That's why, over the next year, we at Involve will be hosting events and working to spread awareness throughout our local area. Many of the activities we already organise support better health and wellbeing, so we'll be linking this project closely with our existing work.

We're looking forward to a busy year of event planning, and if raising awareness means even one person recognises symptoms early or attends a screening appointment as a result, all the hard work will be more than worth it.
For more information and to get involved please contact Carla at:
CullomptonCB@involve-middevon.org.uk

UPDATES FROM THE VCSE SECTOR

TORBAY, PLYMOUTH AND DEVON VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (TPD VCSE) ASSEMBLY

The TPD VCSE Assembly was formed in 2022 and is an open, inclusive network for anyone in the VCSE sector across Torbay, Plymouth and Devon. It brings together people and organisations to share insight, experience and innovation, and to contribute to strategic partnerships, co-design, policy development and shared decision-making. The Assembly connects infrastructure bodies, county-wide organisations, small community groups and user-led organisations, Healthwatch and others from every part of Devon, working across all areas of need including health, social care, debt, poverty and support for all ages. It runs regular newsletters and monthly meetings. If you would like more information, please email: **info@tpdassembly.org.**

SOUTH WEST SECURE DATA ENVIRONMENT

The South West Secure Data Environment (SDE) is encouraging organisations that hold health and social care data in the South West to share more of their data, to drive ground-breaking research and innovation to improve patient outcomes.

New £1m fund to accelerate research access to health and care data in the South West.

MYWAY SERVICE

Launched across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay from September 2025, this service brings together advice, practical help, digital tools and face-to-face support to create a flexible early-help system for emotional wellbeing and mental health.

It is designed primarily for children and young people aged 11–18, with additional support available for SEND young people and care leavers. The model places a strong emphasis on the Getting Advice and Getting Help elements of the THRIVE Framework, giving young people genuine choice in how they access support. Multiple pathways and entry points ensure they can receive help in the way that best suits their individual needs.

Delivery partners include Young Devon (lead), Kooth, Encompass South West, Space Youth Services, Plymouth City Council Youth Service and Akumen (evaluation). The service is funded by NHS Devon. Demand is already very high, and some parts of the offer may have waiting times. To help address this, immediate digital support options have been built into the model.

For more information go to: **https://www.youngdevon.org/myway**

PROSPER BUSINESS SUPPORT

Free Support for Entrepreneurs and Businesses in East Devon, Mid Devon, and Exeter



Looking to grow your business or get your start-up off the ground? The Prosper Business Support programme offers free expert guidance for entrepreneurs and trading businesses across East Devon, Mid Devon, and Exeter. Whether you're looking to boost productivity, embrace sustainability, or break into new markets, this programme has everything you need to thrive. The Prosper Business Support project, led by Business Information Point (BIP) and Cosmic, provides hands-on support through one-on-one sessions, workshops, and a self-learning platform—all at no cost to you available to businesses and entrepreneurs based in East Devon, Mid Devon, and Exeter. Whether you're a pre-start business looking for guidance or a trading business ready to scale up, this programme offers tailored, hands-on support to help you grow.

For more information go to:
https://www.cosmic.org.uk/digital-skills/free-digital-skills-training/prosper-free-business-support-devon

COMMUNITIES
that can

CTC PROJECT UPDATE

As part of our Communities that Can project, our Community Builders based in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton have been working hard to meet stakeholders, listen to local people and plan events and groups that respond to community need.

There have been some staffing changes along the way, but we are now pleased to have a Community Builder in each of the three main towns in Mid Devon. We have also recently begun recruiting for a Rural Community Builder, which will help us reach and make a difference in even more of our local communities.

Now over six months into the project, we've been incredibly busy and are starting to feel the real difference this work is making. You can read an update on what each of our Community Builders has been working on below.

With some exciting changes ahead including the addition of our new Project Manager and Volunteer Lead, we're looking forward to using the next six months to build even further on the foundations we've already laid.

Proudly funded by:

COMMUNITY FUND









COMMUNITIES
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COMMUNITY UPDATE - CREDITON

What an amazing end to the year it's been with the Involve team! Our Cancer Support Group has been thriving, meeting monthly to share, connect, and support one another in a warm and welcoming space. December was extra special as we welcomed Emma Ellis from FORCE Cancer Charity to the group. Over the past few months, members have enjoyed creative and mindful activities like silver ring making, sculpture, and pot painting, strengthening friendships and sparking joy. We've also offered three gentle yoga courses focused on relaxation and meditation - what a wonderful way to recharge!



The group has shared fantastic ideas for what they like to do next, and we'll be seeking funding to bring these plans to life.

We're thrilled about what's ahead for Crediton this year! One of our big goals is to launch a "Have a Go Cycling Group" - a fun and welcoming way to encourage everyone to get active and rediscover the joy of cycling.

We're also planning a Health and Wellbeing Event for the town, bringing people together to share ideas, resources, and inspiration for living well.

And most importantly, we want to hear from Crediton residents so please do contact Kath with your ideas and suggestions at: CreditonCB@involve-middevon.org.uk



Cookery Hub Success with QECC Students

In November, we reopened the Cookery Hub doors to welcome QECC students for four hands-on cookery sessions led by Mr. Wilf Richer. Twelve students enjoyed preparing dishes such as chicken curry, lasagne, pizza, and cottage pie and took home a delicious supper after each class! Thanks to the generous support of Crediton Lions, who went shopping for the ingredients and gifted each student a casserole dish and pizza tray so families can recreate these recipes at home. We're delighted to have partnered with QECC and look forward to our next block of workshops starting in January, this time for adults—sign-ups are already looking fantastic!

Proudly funded by The Community Fund

COMMUNITIES
that can

COMMUNITY UPDATE - CULLOMPTON

Our Community Builder, Carla, has been very busy in and around Cullompton and activities have been growing.
Our new Friendship Bench is a place where people can sit, chat, and connect during walks especially the Walk and Talk sessions we have previously established in Cullompton. The bench has now been sourced with thanks to Noah's Ark Pre School. This project is now on hold until the weather warms up when we will get together with a team of volunteers to work on the bench to make it look bright and colourful. This will then be gifted to the town and conversation between bench users is encouraged. We will be looking to get an engraved plaque on the bench to explain the Friendship Bench initiative.



We are in the early stages of planning an informal cancer support group for those in the Cullompton area who are affected by cancer. Please contact Carla for more information.



We held 5 Cookery Hub sessions towards the end of 2025, a collaboration with the Walronds and the Keystone Project. We cooked meals on a budget with members of the community, learning new skills and making friends. We received fantastic feedback from these sessions and more were requested! New sessions started on Monday 5th January 2026, running for 6 weeks. There are now a handful of spaces if you or someone you know would like to take part. Please contact Carla if you would like more information.

Meanwhile, plans for a Community Fridge are progressing, with just a location left to be secured. Carla is also planning a health and wellbeing event and a stall at the Mid Devon Show. We await the outcome of funding bids which, if successful, will open doors to even more exciting plans for Cullompton. Watch this space...

To receive the Cullompton Community Builder Newsletter, join Community Wellbeing Alliance meetings or other activities email Carla at: CullomptonCB@involve-middevon.org.uk

COMMUNITIES
that can

COMMUNITY UPDATE - TIVERTON



It's been a busy few months in Tiverton and there's a real buzz in the wake of festivities happening in and around town and of course, some fantastic news for many in EX16 6 who won the Postcode lottery! Our new Tiverton Community Builder, Alice, has enjoyed meeting with community champions such as Jason Lejeune, with the Town Council and Space to better understand potential areas of need and she has lots more meetings lined up.

You'll be able to find her and share your thoughts on what's great or what the challenges are in Tiverton at her **Listening Events** in different venues around Tiverton. She'll also be chairing the towns' **Community Wellbeing Alliance**; creating a space for organisations to come together and network, receive updates and be part of Involves' developing activities.

Aside from this, Alice is working with local social prescribers to create an ongoing support group for anyone affected by cancer.
Contact Alice at: TivertonCB@involve-middevon.org.uk

VINTAGE FARMERS PROJECT UPDATE





"Farming can be very lonely and it gets worse when you retire. I think these monthly meetings are so helpful!"

The Crediton and District Vintage Farmers group has had another fantastic year, continuing to grow in energy and numbers. Throughout 2025, members gathered on the last Wednesday of each month, usually at Homeleigh Garden Centre in Crediton, with occasional meetings at Bow Garden Centre and Thorverton Farm Shop. Attendance has remained wonderfully strong, always topping 40—though it does mean we're often hunting for extra chairs! July saw a record 59 Farmers joining us.

The group is warmly and expertly led by Emma and Kath from Involve, alongside Richard Sampson from the Farming Community Network, with invaluable monthly support from Hazel Every, Community Champion at Morrisons. A real highlight of the year was September's Late Summer Party, generously hosted by Mole Avon in Crediton. More than 60 Farmers enjoyed a fascinating talk on the company's history from David Horton, Head of Agriculture, followed by a superb complimentary buffet and drinks.

Looking ahead, we're delighted to introduce a second monthly meeting from January, giving members even more choice and flexibility.

RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT NETWORK PROJECT

Involve are very happy to support the Farming Communities and Mental Health Research Project. We are working with Devon Community Foundation, Health Innovation South West and University of Exeter (to name just a few!) to explore opportunities from our work to reach and engage with under-represented communities across Mid Devon. We are also working in collaboration with Imagine If, an organisation dedicated to creating collaborative communities across Devon and Cornwall.

Our role in the work is:

- To utilise and develop links with farming communities and networks to increase awareness and engagement with health research, particularly research related to mental health.



Our objective is to Increase participation

- To encourage and support farmers, young farmers, and individuals related to farming communities to participate in health research, particularly research related to mental health.

The project will continue until the end of March. During this time, we will review our approach and reflect on both the process and the outcomes of recruitment efforts. The insights gained will inform future outreach initiatives and strengthen our engagement with underrepresented groups

Why people should get involved in research

It's important for all sections of society to be represented in health research.
By taking part individuals help us to:

Shape the future of healthcare – participation helps develop better treatments and improve patient care.

Make a real impact – contribute to discoveries that can save lives and advance medical knowledge.

Represent their community – ensure research reflects diverse experiences and needs.

Empower themselves – learn more about health and be part of informed decision-making.

Leave a legacy – their involvement today can benefit generations to come.

For more information and to get involved contact: **Kath Bowen, Crediton Community Builder** at: **CreditonCB@involve-middevon.org.uk**

THE HIDDEN IMPACT OF WORKING FOR A COMMUNITY CHARITY

A look behind the scenes at the people who keep local support services running



Our community charities are often described as the “heartbeat” of a neighbourhood—and for good reason. They provide food, advice, transport, companionship, crisis support, and countless other services that many residents rely on every day. But behind every project, event, and emergency response are staff members working tirelessly to keep things moving. Their work is rewarding, but it also comes with challenges that are important for the community to understand.

A job driven by purpose

Staff in local charities often speak about the deep sense of meaning they find in their work. Whether they’re helping someone through a difficult moment or celebrating a small victory with a service user, it is rewarding. Many say this sense of purpose is what motivates them through long days and busy periods. Whether they’re helping someone through a difficult moment or celebrating a small victory with a service user, the impact is immediate and personal. One Involve team member shares, “You see the difference you make in someone’s day, sometimes in just a few minutes. That’s what keeps you going.”

Working in a community charity means forming relationships with people from all walks of life. Staff become trusted faces—people residents turn to for support, advice, or simply a friendly chat. These connections strengthen the fabric of the community and help create a sense of belonging for everyone involved.

Like many community organisations, Involve operates with limited resources and a growing demand for support. Staff juggle multiple roles, respond to complex situations, and often go the extra mile. This can lead to heavy workloads, emotional strain, and difficulty switching off at the end of the day. Supporting people in crisis—whether due to financial hardship, loneliness, or health issues—can take a toll over time. As one colleague put it, “It’s incredibly rewarding, but it can be emotionally tough too.”

Growing skills and resilience

Despite the challenges, charity staff develop an impressive range of skills. From crisis management to event planning, safeguarding to fundraising, their roles require adaptability and creativity. Many staff members say the experience has helped them grow personally as well as professionally, building resilience and empathy that stays with them for life.

How the community can help

There are simple ways residents can support the people who support them:

- Volunteering time, even occasionally
- Donating items or funds when possible
- Sharing positive feedback or stories of impact
- Being patient and understanding during busy periods

These gestures go a long way in helping staff feel valued and supported.

Our local charities do extraordinary work—but so do the people behind them. Recognising their efforts and understanding the pressures they face helps us build a stronger, more compassionate community for everyone.

DEVON PEOPLE FIRST

CO-PRODUCTION

Co-production is a way of working whereby decision makers, people who use services and service providers work together from the very beginning of a project right through to the end to create a service or project which works for everybody.

Co-production starts from the idea that no one person or group of people is more important than anyone else within the group; everyone has skills, abilities and time to contribute; everyone has a voice and decisions are made through consensus.

Equality, Diversity, Accessibility and Reciprocity

Co-production should be inclusive and diverse. Everything needs to be accessible to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. Every member should get something back for putting something in. These are the key principles of co-production.

Method

Employing Co-production as a guide there are:

- No formalities i.e. having a chairperson or a facilitator; the group facilitates through consensus.
- No agendas; the agenda is created as the project or idea progresses.
- No minutes, but the group can agree on someone taking and writing up notes or decisions.
- Ground rules from the beginning to be agreed by all.

Any group needs to develop relationships and some time at the start of meetings needs to be allocated for this.

Benefits of shared decision making are:

- Empowering staff
- Reduces pressure on management
- Improves teamwork
- Enhances communication
- Drives action
- Promotes inclusivity and increases satisfaction



Devon People First have always worked co-productively although in the beginning we didn't know there was a term for it. All the work we do whether projects, presentations, training or peer support is decided by our members, volunteers and staff working equally together. Everyone has a voice and is heard.

We always consult our members and volunteers to gain their views, for example, developing our new website. We are guided by their opinions and ideas. As a result the site is easy to navigate and understand. Having completed training on co-production, the first thing our volunteers wanted to do was set up their own Co-Production Working Group - "The Jargon Busters". In just over a year they have co-produced two videos; one detailing how co-production has helped them in their everyday lives, the second about encouraging more people with learning disabilities to join the Devon Learning Disability Partnership Board, the Adult Health and Social Care Group and the Jargon Busters to to influence decisions on improving services for people with learning disabilities. This year they are making a third video and easy read guidelines on reasonable adjustments in the workplace and what this means. Everyone at Devon People First is equal! We recommend co-production training offered by our Devon Co-Production Working Group.

To find out more contact Lloyd at: lloyd@involve-middevon.org.uk

CULLOMPTON YOUTH CLUB

WHY YOUTH VOICES MATTER

For a community to truly thrive, every generation must have a seat at the table. Within society, the perspective of our younger residents is often the missing piece of the community landscape. To build a town that works for everyone, we must connect the fresh ideas of the next generation with the decision-making power of today.

Cullompton Youth Club is working with young people to develop their new initiative, Cullompton Youth Action; an opportunity for young people in Cullompton to discuss and become active on the issues that are important to them, both in Cullompton and the wider world. Young people are already busy developing their first project, free access to water bottle refill in Cullompton.

Empowering youth should not be just an optional gesture; it is an essential strategy for progress. When we amplify youth voices, we foster a more inclusive and resilient society, building a bridge between tradition and innovation. By creating space for young people to speak, and truly listening when they do, we build a more equitable society.



Young people are at the heart of our communities, and supporting their growth is essential to the future of our parish and town councils. By offering welcoming spaces, helpful services, and clear information, councils can make a real difference in the lives of millions of young people.

By shining a light on the ways councils can champion youth development, we can raise awareness of the challenges young people face and help create positive change in every community.

At Cullompton Youth Club, we are an inclusive space where youth voices matter. We look forward to 2026 and working with young people to act on the issues that are important to them. A new Devon youth directory is also being piloted by Devon Connect with direct input from young people. See Devon Connect below for more information.

Cullompton Youth Club is managed and delivered by Involve Voluntary Action in Mid Devon.

Sessions run term time at John Tallack Youth and Community Centre:
Juniors (for young people in years 7 & 8) Mondays 6.30pm - 8.30pm
Seniors (for young people in year 9 to 18 years) Wednesdays 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Sophia Roper is our Senior Community Youth Worker (Cullompton)
For more information contact Sophia at: sophia@involve-middevon.org.uk

THE CLOSURE OF CULM VALLEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

REFLECTING ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN CULLOMPTON BY LAURA MCDONAGH, WELLBEING LEAD

Due to changes in 2026 in the way funding is allocated, the Culm Valley Health and Wellbeing service is coming to an end at the end of March. This marks the closure of a service that has supported thousands of people across our community, offering connection, compassion, and practical help at times when it was most needed.

You have been a lifeline and my future hope.

My journey with the service began in May 2021, when I joined Involve as a Wellbeing Coordinator. I worked alongside Ruth, who was employed by the PCN and widely regarded as the 'original' social prescriber having worked in the role, or similar roles, for many years. From day one, I was in awe of the impact social prescribing could have. I saw first-hand how giving someone a safe space to talk, and gently encouraging them to connect with social activities, could restore a sense of purpose and belonging.

A moment that has stayed with me was attending my first community group with a client. It was a felting session, and I made a small rainbow heart that I later turned into a keyring. I still carry it as a reminder of the power of community.

In April 2023, Zoe joined the team, followed by Lauriel in September, while Ruth shifted her focus to health coaching. I also became team leader as referrals increased and awareness of the service grew. Around this time, we adopted the JOY app, a purpose-built social prescribing case management system which made recording case notes, referrals, and contacts far more efficient.

According to JOY, the service has received nearly 3,000 referrals and made over 20,000 client contacts in the past three years—clear evidence of both need and impact. Behind these numbers are people whose needs couldn't be met through traditional medical routes. Many were repeatedly visiting their GP due to loneliness, social isolation, or unresolved non-medical issues. Others were pre-diabetic and needed personalised support to make sustainable lifestyle changes. We have also supported individuals in mental health crisis who might otherwise have presented at A&E. Early intervention allows us to offer calm, consistent support before situations escalate. Through personalised, relationship-based care, we help people regain confidence, build resilience, and access the right support at the right time.

By July 2025, Julia joined as a health coach, completing the team. Together, we made real progress in reducing the substantial waiting list working closely with community builders, residents, and volunteers and have received excellent feedback from clients and colleagues. Even as the service closes, we are midway through two HOPE courses, with an online course planned for our final month.

If it wasn't for the help you provided me on an ongoing basis, I probably wouldn't be here anymore. This service has saved me from myself time and time again.

So, what does the future look like without social prescribing? Honestly, I'm not sure. In an ideal world, this service would continue. After speaking with Dr Michael Dixon, who created the social prescribing model, I remain hopeful that Cullompton will rebuild a service in the future. He is engaging with key decision-makers at a national level, which gives us some cause for optimism.



From left to right: *Zoe Flockhart, Wellbeing Coordinator, Laura McDonagh, Wellbeing Lead, Julia Robson, Health Coach.*

For now, however, support will look very different. Clients experiencing social isolation, mental health challenges, or financial difficulties will have little choice but to return to their GP for help. This is particularly concerning given that over 73% of our referrals involved mental health support. While Involve will continue to do what it can, the loss of this service will undoubtedly be felt across the community.

The service has not only changed lives, but also significantly relieved pressure on already stretched GP practices, nursing teams, and emergency services. Social prescribing and health coaching bridge a vital gap in care—one that is difficult to replace.

Laura McDonagh, Wellbeing Lead

Summary statement from Anthony O'Brien, Clinical Director for Culm Valley PCN

Culm Valley Primary Care Network (PCN) is a group of five Mid Devon GP practices funded by NHS England to employ additional staff who enhance our healthcare provision.
Since 2021, we have partnered with Involve to provide Social Prescribers who support patients with needs beyond standard General Practice - such as housing applications, signposting to community groups, and navigating social services. Involve has been an invaluable part of our patient support. Their dedicated team has consistently delivered an excellent service, including running HOPE (Help Overcoming Problems Effectively) courses with strong outcomes and feedback.

Unfortunately, changes to NHS England's funding model have forced us to make difficult choices about which services we can sustain. New government contractual requirements around GP access have required a full review of our finances and clinical skill mix. As a result, the PCN Board has had to prioritise direct clinical resources, meaning we can no longer fund the Social Prescribing service.

This decision reflects national funding constraints, not the quality of Involve's work. Over the past five years, many patients have been guided through challenging circumstances and complex social care systems. Our GPs can all attest to the significant benefits of having such expert support available.

FUNDING & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

WELLBEING IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR CONFERENCE 2026

Voluntary and community organisations are navigating a particularly challenging period, marked by rising demand, financial strain and growing pressure on the people who keep services running. Staff and volunteers are facing increasing workloads, leaving many struggling to maintain balance and wellbeing. Recent findings from the VCSE Observatory show concerning trends across the sector:

- For paid staff, 1 in 3 report increases in cost-of-living struggles, working outside normal hours, exhaustion/burnout, and requests for support
- 40% of small organisations saw a rise in volunteers working beyond agreed hours in the past year

Find out about the **Wellbeing in the Voluntary Sector Conference 2026** to explore how you can build healthier, more supportive working environments for staff and volunteers.

Find out more here: https://www.governmentevents.co.uk/event/voluntary-sector-fundraising-conference/

NEXTENERGY SOLAR IMPACT FUND



Not-for-profit organisations in South West England can apply for funding from the NextEnergy Solar Impact Fund. The funding is intended for activities that will have positive social, economic and/or environmental impacts on the area. There is a particular focus on education, training and skills. The programme objectives are Support climate change mitigation, Promote general skills development, Improve local education, Improve mental health and wellbeing for grants up to £3,000.

More info: https://www.bizgive.app/public/nextenergy-sw-england-wales-northern-ireland-solar-impact-fund

KING CHARLES III CHARITABLE FUND

Awards small grants of up to £3,000 a year for up to three years to community-based organisations. Each year there are three application rounds for the small grants programme, each focusing on different funding themes. Applications open in January for organisations with projects that fit with the Social Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing themes.

.**Apply here: https://www.kccf.org.uk/small-grants/**

THE SIR JULES THORN CHARITABLE TRUST

The Trust provides support for projects that improve health and care for people living with serious long-term or life-limiting conditions including funding for medical research and innovative work to improve service provision as well as grants for charities that provide practical and emotional support for people living with ill health or disability. Grants up to £5,000 are offered to help smaller registered charities that work exclusively to provide health and care services for people with physical or mental ill health, people living with a disability, and their families and carers.

For more information and to apply: https://julesthorntrust.org.uk/programmes/ann-rylands-small-donations/

FUNDING & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

THE IBRAHIM FOUNDATION

The Ibrahim Foundation's grant programme aims to fund projects that help transform communities and strengthen social infrastructure. Rather than limiting to strict themes, the Foundation supports initiatives where small amounts of funding can make a significant impact — particularly those that enhance community leadership, environmental stewardship, organisational resilience, or human services for families and disadvantaged groups.

Eligibility

- Registered charities and non-profit organisations that operate in the UK and demonstrate credible programmes.
- Smaller local groups and community initiatives may apply if they are aligned with the Foundation's objectives and can show impact.

Grants are typically £500–£10,000, with larger awards (up to £50,000) for extraordinary projects.

Find out more: https://fundin.ai/ibrahim-foundation/

GREEN HALL FOUNDATION

The objective of the Green Hall Foundation is to sustainably improve lives among the sick, the elderly, the disabled and the disadvantaged particularly in the UK. Preference is given to appeals where the Foundation can meet a significant proportion of the funding required and to appeals where permanent equipment or building is required as opposed to funding salaries or the charity running costs.



Only UK registered charities can apply. The Trustees meet in May and November. Each May meeting will be open to Charities in all income brackets and each November meeting will only be open to Charities with an annual income of £250,000 or less. The Trustees prefer to issue grants to projects that will benefit a number of beneficiaries rather than just a few. Typical size of grant is in the region of £1,000 to £10,000.

Go to: https://www.anotherwaywf.org/



DEVON VOLUNTARY ACTION

Devon Voluntary Action was created in 2013 by six local CVS charities and has been supporting Devon's voluntary and community sector ever since.

Driven by a passion for positive social change, DeVA helps individuals, community groups and social enterprises gain the skills, connections and resources they need to strengthen their communities.

With a deep understanding of Devon's voluntary sector, DeVA offers tailored support that empowers people and organisations to grow, collaborate and thrive.

For more information on how DeVA can support your organisation go to the website at: **https://devonva.org/**

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

JOIN US AT INVOLVE!

There are so many lovely ways to get *involved* with Involve Voluntary Action. You can volunteer, join a local project, or share a skill — and our team is always here to help you find something that feels like a great fit. Don't forget to sign up for our Involve newsletter and our Community Builder updates to stay in the loop with what's happening across Mid Devon.

If you would like to join our quarterly Community Wellbeing Alliance meetings in Crediton, Cullompton or Tiverton do get in touch. You can also explore opportunities on our website, follow us on Facebook for the latest news, and create a profile on Devon Connect to link up with local groups and activities.

However you choose to take part, you'll be joining a welcoming community making a real difference close to home.



Sign up for our regular online news at our website:
https://involve-middevon.org.uk/

Find us on Facebook at:
https://www.facebook.com/InvolveDevon/

Go to Devon Connect at **https://devonconnect.org/** to create your free profile and connect with other organisations or search for or create your own events, activities, volunteer and job opportunities.

Contact Jane at: **admin@involve-middevon.org.uk** if you would like to receive our quarterly newsletter or find out about our upcoming Involve membership scheme.

Involve – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon
Empowering Communities.
Supporting Voluntary Action.
Strengthening Mid Devon.

www.involve-middevon.org.uk

01884 210933

@InvolveDevon

Coggan's Well House (CHAT),
Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6LU

Registered Charity No. 1177169

INVOLVE
VOLUNTARY ACTION IN MID DEVON

Newsletter compiled by Katheryn Hope Jan 2026. While every effort is made to ensure all details in this newsletter are correct, Involve does not accept legal responsibility for the accuracy of information quoted. Reference to any products or services, hypertext links to third parties or other information does not constitute endorsement, sponsorship or recommendation by Involve.