

# TQ6 Community Partnership

end-of-year report for the National Lottery

July 22-June 23

TQ6 Community Partnership is a partnership of local residents, local community groups and service providers /public services including police, housing trusts, fire service, health, schools, children's and youth services, local councillors and many more. It has been set up to provide a forum to work together

to find local solutions to issues and concerns identified by residents within the TQ6 area, with the aim to improve life and the local neighbourhood for all. It also aims to take a more joined up approach to working in our local area. And more importantly, support communities to take social action themselves.

**What does the Hub at the cafe mean to you?** *“There’s a free meal in winter. But it’s not about the food, it’s about the friendships.”*

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## Overview of the TQ6 year

At the start of the reporting year, the TQ6 Community Partnership had a coordinator. July 22 saw the co-ordinator leading the bid toward the Reach Project at the school. But this didn't happen. By September the coordinator had resigned.

This allowed the TQ6 Committee to reflect on what wasn't working very well and the problems that had occurred in the time of the employment of the coordinator. What was recognised was that residents were no longer at the centre of the partnership and the focus was to work with local residents and to engage, listen and respond to what their needs were and identify their priorities moving forward.

It was no longer considered that the co-ordinator was the answer to the progression of the TQ6 Community Partnership and the

money was repurposed for community activities and light touch administrative activities.

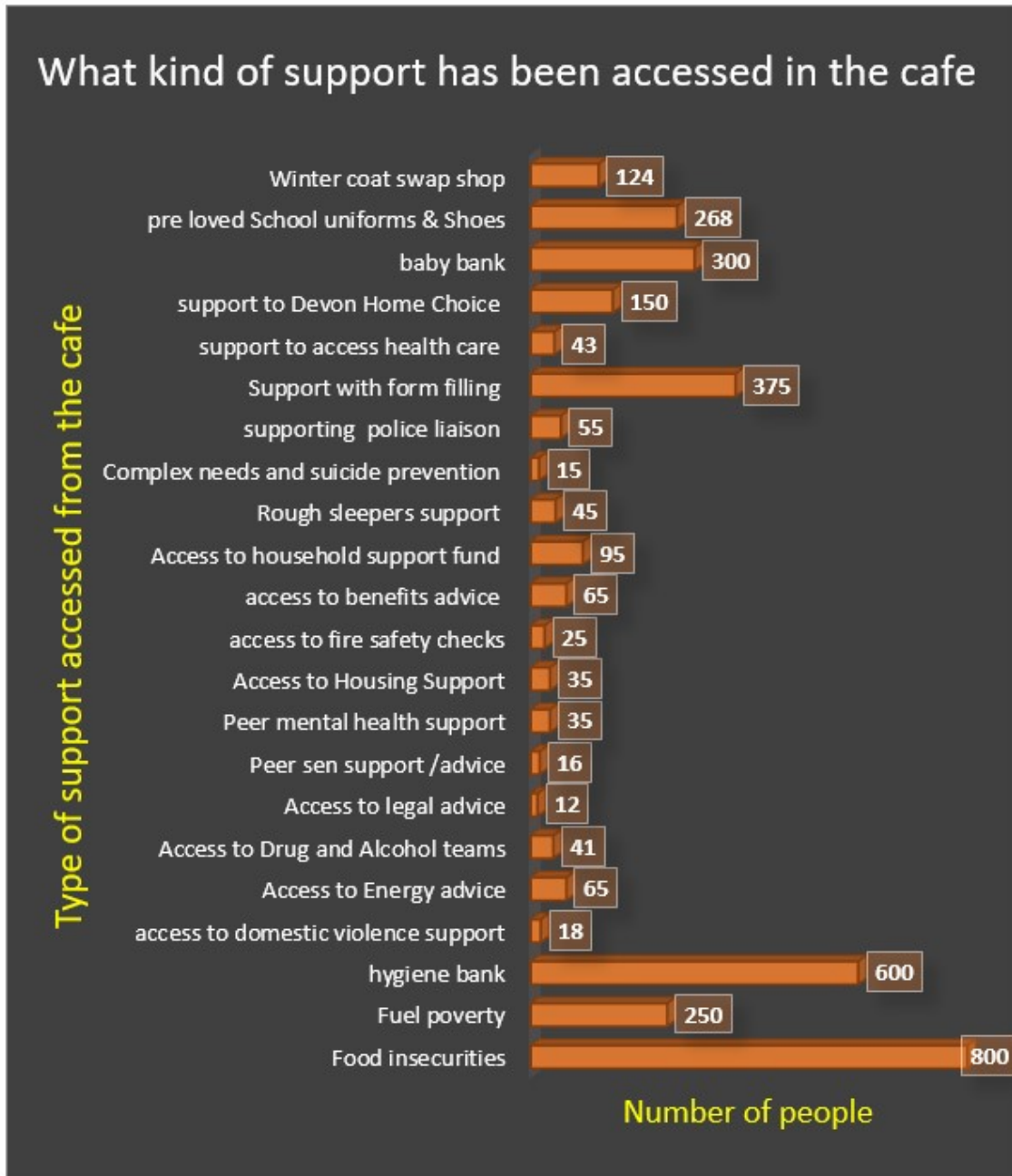
While the coordinator was driving a different path the community and the committee were already starting along a more engaged path.

What developed was a deeper time for listening to the community, developing relationships and trust with the community, and acting on the priorities of the community itself.

Listening was key. Alongside the daily listening, responding and interacting, the TQ6 Community Partnership held two community listening events, engaging members of all ages in activities, hearing what priorities are and sharing the Partnership's progress in addressing the community's priorities.

**What does the Hub at the cafe mean to you?**

*“Friendships, camaraderie, and it’s brilliant pets are allowed. It’s intergenerational and it’s definitely about community.”*





## Hub at the Cafe *An engine house of partnership*

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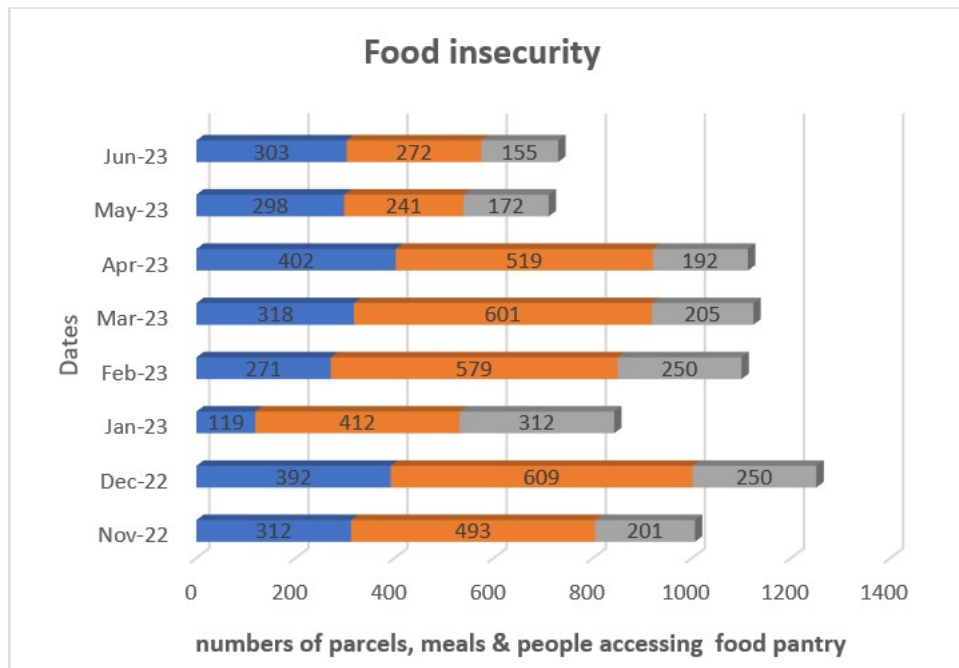
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Listening was key. Alongside the daily listening,



**The Hub at the Cafe provides food and companionship**

The result was coming in contact with more than 1,400 people and helping to bridge their relationship with services, each other and the TQ6 Community Partnership.

responding and interacting, the TQ6 Community Partnership held two community listening events, engaging members of all ages in activities, hearing what priorities are and sharing the Partnership’s progress in addressing the community’s priorities.

The committee/ project support team collectively decided to support paying the rent for the Dartmouth Community Café, situated in Dartmouth Market, the epicentre of connecting for the community supported by Dartmouth Community Chest.

**Hub at the Café: an engine house of partnership**

**Community cohesion**

Putting the community's identified priorities first. That became the re-focused dedication of the TQ6 Community Partnership. The way to do this was to focus on the community café Hub, and dig deep into supporting what works, support the community in solving problems and build relationships between services and the community.

Dartmouth Community Chest operates out of the community café and continues with its outreach both in Townstal, Dartmouth and the villages, with food parcels, deliveries and also with supporting collecting and redistributing furniture. These are the contact points into people's lives, where connections can be made and deeper understanding of issues and support gained. They also offer an opportunity for community cohesion. Working with Dartmouth Community Chest, with the Hub as a

focus, we've been able to support bringing local people together through events and activities. This has brought residents back into partnership meetings and they have collectively identified issues and solutions through working together.

Activities follow the local ebb and flow around need and support, following the seasonal nature of the town. This allows us to host both services and the community. The Hub acts as both an efficient space to deliver from and an attractive space to be in. The café Hub is a safe space to seek support or find refuge and comfort in. This has been especially important considering the impact the cost of living crisis has been having on members of the Townstal and Dartmouth community.

### **Food as a ruse**

The warm food in winter and the lunches in summer are a double whammy. They are an essential part of combating food insecurity and

*Covid vaccinations in the café have moved from 200-plus every two weeks, to now providing intermittent vaccines with 50-60 passing through*

impacts of the cost of living, but they also act as a ruse to find out what's underneath the problems people may be facing. Supporting food opens up the conversations and can help us to find the real support people are in need of. The café is also a discreet food pantry and hygiene bank. The footfall and activity is a welcoming blanket that wraps around what, for some, are trickier aspects to deal with.

The physical, welcoming space has also allowed more emphasis on the use of the café to support our community to create its own social and peer

*The Hub has facilitated opportunities for commissions to engage with people they wouldn't usually have the opportunity to speak to*

support groups as they identify their needs and wants. Having a dedicated space has meant we were able to put this into action and to try out new groups and give them the time to grow into what the community needs them to become.

### **Services and partners**

The café has supported the building of new relationships with some support services and to work with them bringing accessible support directly to our town.

Paying for the café rent has allowed the space to be used by public health teams as a vaccine clinic. Covid vaccinations in the café have moved from 200-plus every two weeks, to now providing intermittent vaccines with 50-60 passing through. Working together we have provided the space and also the support with refreshments and also getting the message out to our community.

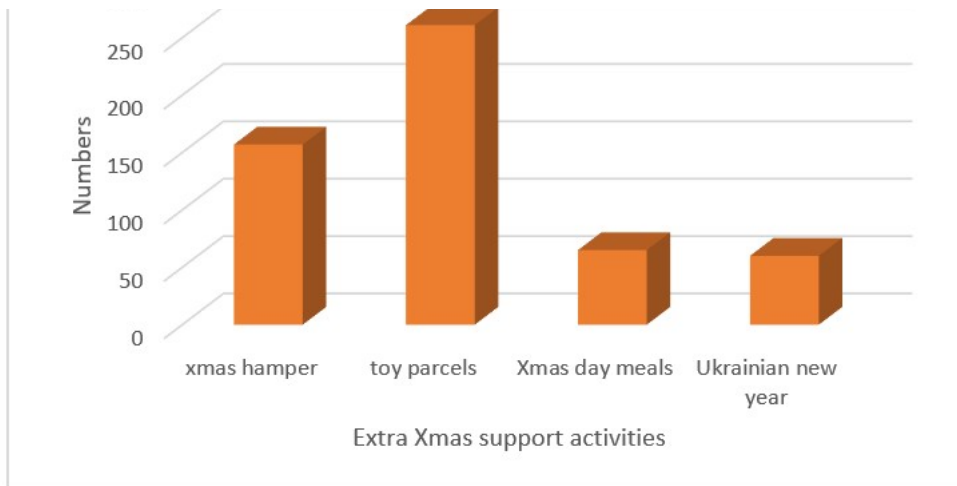
The sharing of knowledge is key. It had been thought that the low vaccine take up had been down to anti-vax attitudes, due to its location on the map of being near Totnes. The partnership was able to disseminate information and also share some know-how about the reality of rurally isolated communities trying to access health services.

The Public Health Teams have also brought an oral health clinic for local people; their focus is accessing those who don't reach out and may be isolated from services.

### **Connections with rural clusters**

**What does the Hub at the cafe mean to you?**

*"I would like to see more support from councillors. I think they should come to the café and see people."*



In turn, Public Health outreach teams have engaged with commissioners, sharing connections with our rural clusters. The partnership was able to develop conversations where those with the lived experience of rural Devon were able to share that with commissioners of statutory health services. It has led to a better understanding of rural communities and the barriers they face.

The Hub has facilitated opportunities for commissions to engage with people they wouldn't usually have the opportunity to speak to and better understand their service delivery and some of the challenges faced by the community in Townstal. The community has been invited into public health forums to express lived experience in a policy-making realm.

There is an interdependence between services and the Hub. For example, the Homeless Support Officer South Hams District Council asked the Hub to help establish support stations. During extreme weather homeless people are able to access important items. In hot weather, this is cold drinks and sunscreen. In winter, these are blankets and other items. She now has open access to the Hub to meet her clients as and when they are needed in a safe space that can also provide warmth and food.

Citizens Advice have supported 34 people through the café between July and Dec 22. The key issues experienced by residents in Dartmouth through outreach support is: 1. utilities and communications issues; 2. benefits and tax credits; 3. Debt; 4. consumer goods and services.



***The Hub at the Cafe in action - a regular has their hair done while police mingle***

The TQ6 Community Partnership have funded Citizens Advice sessions to be delivered once a week at the Health and Wellbeing Centre, starting May 22. So far, they are seeing 4 people a week. And they have yet to start advertising the venue. We realise this is the right neutrality of venue for this support. And we are happy to be funding this for 12 months.



### **Support and success**

In February, March and April, What's Your Problem has been delivering fortnightly legal support and help with Devon Home Choice, debt advice housing issues, domestic violence issues

*Together, has seen 41 people in the café. It is a safe space for them and their clients to come*

and lots of support with form-filling. They have delivered six sessions so far and have seen 18 people and are still providing ongoing support for 10 of them. Due to staffing issues we have had a gap, but we currently have a support advisor once every two weeks. And the legal teams will be back and operational as soon as they have recruited.

South Dartmoor Community Energy have been working out of the café. Support people with energy costs and savings. They have also been doing home visits offering direct, at-home support, enhanced engagement with more remote members of the community and freed up volunteers to provide the café's more fundamental offerings. They have been a great asset in the café and have been providing additional fuel poverty cost of living vouchers support to the community. Which has taken the weight of demand from Dartmouth Community Chest. We are awaiting a report of numbers from SDCE and will share as soon as available.

The Hub provides a space for the Drug and Alcohol Team, Together, who have seen 41 people in the café. It is a safe space for them and their clients to come, where they can have food and drink in a comfortable safe environment for conversations, support and no judgment. They will now be using this space on Thursdays: along with the Rough Sleeper and Vulnerability Officer and Together's Drug and Alcohol support worker, they are using the café as a dedicated space.

The local Fire Officer regularly attends to chat with people about fire safety in the home, their local issues, their issues and also offers free fire safety checks and fire alarms. This year, 25 connections have been made through the café and Dartmouth Community Chest.



***The local Fire Officer has made 25 connections through the Hub at the cafe***

After a recognised absence, the Police have re-entered the community environment. The Police have always been key collaborators of the TQ6 Partnership, and they are a welcome return often dropping by the café for a cup of tea and a chat with local people.

### **Let engagement rule**

LiveWest's community connector Charlotte hosts housing support drop in at the Hub once a week and does regular walk about and door knocking both in the sheltered housing in downtown Dartmouth and homes in Townstal. She is a key member of the project support team and supports all TQ6 Community partnership activities.

This year she has driven forward a community issue around access to play by focusing on park improvement through a process of collective action. Here is some more about it:

Britannia Avenue Play Park is situated at Townstal where there is a significant amount of social housing, including 349 LiveWest homes, mostly family accommodation. In addition, there are homes provided by the Social Housing Landlord Guinness Partnership, Westward Housing and Dartmouth United Charities.

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This park improvement project is about improving the quality of life for local people. It will benefit the community by:

- helping alleviate isolation by providing a recreational meeting point. This may well help community cohesion
- Offer opportunities for children to keep fit while at play
- Offer the chance for children to be creative in an external environment
- Access to the park is free.
- Opportunities to volunteer

The project involves: planting, which will include sensory aspects for all, also known to particularly benefit children and adults with additional needs (SEN); the creation of mounds and installation of a basket swing. Basket swings are more accessible to children with a variety of disabilities and additional needs, providing the chance for them to participate in play more fully.

The demand for the improved play park is evidenced through consultation carried out at the park which has helped shape the proposal.

There have been a number of engagement and listening events in Townstal and this has provided the opportunity to find out about local views of the park in question.

### **Listening Matters**

Examples include: 'Roots Solution Listening Matters' listening exercise with LiveWest customers. Out of 349 households, 125 were contacted. One of the top concerns expressed was connected to the local environment, which included the run-down park on Britannia Avenue/Davies Road.

Of great concern was the need for improved and more activities for children. This was echoed at a Community Natters event held in November 22 with a follow up in March 23. In excess of 80

people attended these listening events and again questions were asked about what might make life better in Townstal. Time and again the need for

*One of the local issues was the massive rise in service charges in the sheltered housing schemes leaving many anxious, unable to pay bills, scared of losing their home.*

improved and more provision for children was raised as a priority and the park was referenced during these events.

In addition, in 2022 Bike Workshops were held at the park and children were asked about the facilities at the park. Those who participated told us that the park needs new equipment and that it was run down.

One of the local issues was the massive rise in service charges in the sheltered housing schemes leaving many anxious, unable to pay bills, scared of losing their home. The café became a place for them to meet and talk about their issues. And with some help from TQ6 Partnership they were able to start some conversations with the housing provider. TQ6 paved the way for CA to take up the issue and give it a wider platform. We are unclear if there is a resolution yet, but we will continue to advocate on behalf of the community and support giving them a platform with any issues they may have.

South Hams vulnerability officer, Rachelle Underwood, works closely with the café and the TQ6 Community Partnership and is another key collaborator. She often attends and supports community events, and holds relationship-building with residents at the heart of the work she does.

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She is currently supporting the cost of living crisis and co-locates in the café when she can. Her relationships with the community is strong and she is a rapid responder to any issue, need or support raised through the café and also the café and Community Chest responds to any needs that she might have with a local person and support. (Food parcels, fuel top up, loneliness and isolation and bringing people into the café to connect with others and form friendships.)

### **Community café / community living room**

The fluid interdependence of people and services at the community café allows us to support the community better. And the atmosphere of it being a living room for all enhances those relationships, while providing vital interactions. Whether that's a warm space for locals with a hot meal and support from local agencies, or responding to the other needs of the community.

The Partnership responds to needs of parents, families and young people, and the demise of Youth Genesis has been felt. We'd like to thank them for their support in the past. Their absence has highlighted a gap in pastoral care in the Townstal and Dartmouth community, and their Burger Nights is a lost moment for pastoral care for young people, as well as understanding the issues, hopes and fears facing young people in the town.

### **New relationships, new activities**

As part of the response to the needs of young people, and a call from the community, the first girls football team was set up in the town. Called the Dartmouth Swifts - a name they chose themselves - the team has grown to a regular core of 25-30 girls aged 9-15. As well as providing the sport, friendship, activity and chance to connect outside school, the Swifts have kindled a relationship with Dartmouth AFC. The June Partnership Meeting was held at the football club, and it offers new chances to widen relationships

with different members of Townstal, and a new location for meetings and events. Through the seeds of funding a coach and an initial place to train, the TQ6 Partnership has supported new possibilities to emerge alongside weekly, healthy activities and engaging with young people. Looking forward to the next chapter...

### **Ebb and flow**

Following the ebb and flow of the annual movements, the café is open everyday but it is open for support and food on different days depending on the season. In winter, it's open Monday, Wednesday and Friday as a 'drop in' warm space with hot food, offering connection and friendship, all run by volunteers. During the summer months, these days are changed to Tuesday and Fridays.

In the evenings, it also hosts peer-led community groups covering SEN parent support and men's mental health. There are regular language lessons for Ukrainians, and other families. And there are other events that promote cohesion and our core ideals.

Local charities use the café to fundraise for projects. Local councillors have held clinics there to connect with the community and find out about any issues. There's a clothes swap 'bring a coat, take a coat' rail, with hats, scarves and boots. This is alongside pre-loved school uniforms.

Listening to the community is central to the TQ6 Partnership. Listening and providing support for groups and communities to generate their own solutions. The Hub is central, providing a welcoming, nurturing, agile and informative space, but also the confidence of having a base to be a beacon and from which to spread the work and share connections, information and support.

We are awaiting the South Dartmoor Community Energy report. We will forward this on as soon as it arrives.

## At a glance *activities at the Hub*

### Monday's

- Citizens Advice 10.30-2.30 (dismissed in Jan 2023, and further funded in a different location) and Housing hub with Live West with South West Water

### Tuesday's

- Parents peer support SENS group. A expert parent peer mentor is supporting them. They have called their group Fight Club

### Wednesday's

- every other week What's Your Problem (start date Jan).
- Menkinde, men's evening drop in group, also in early days and shaping well, a place for men to connect with each other

### Thursday's

- Evening English language course for Ukrainians

### Friday's

- outreach drug and alcohol together teams public health outreach, mental health\*.
- Vaccine centre (last one 31 May)
- \*mutuality – space of drug workers to meet, but fine balance to not becoming a dumping ground to not meet that responsibility.*

### October-April

Monday / Wednesday and Fridays

### May -September

Tuesday / Friday and Saturdays

With our 40 volunteers we are open door as a place for locals to connect and have a meal. We have also been hosting Ukraine nights for our new local Ukrainian residents to connect with each other.

### Support 'round the edges'

- There is a discreet community pantry which is accessed by approx 35-40 people a week. Delivering food parcels in Dartmouth and the villages. Food is donated, collected from supermarkets or bought (lots of shopping trips!) Dartmouth Community Chest work closely with Food in the Community around healthy perishables
- People are also supported with with gas/electric top up.
- Informal advocacy and support through our good responsive relations to key partners like South Hams, housing, police, fire, social services and GP surgery, and support advisors
- Work closely with South Hams – Rachel Underwood for housing issues and advice, often several situations each week.

Summer family activities in the summer in prtnership with LiveWest/ Bushcraft/ Outdoor swimming pool, as per last year. Plus supporting families to run their own summer outing and events

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## Family & Community Events *In the Hub and beyond*

### **Community Holiday, Activities and Food**

Back in 2021, together with Youth Genesis and Dartmouth Community Chest, the Partnership received Holiday Activities and Food funding via Devon County Council to ensure food and activities were available to families who may struggle during holiday time. Following bids went to outside organisations and were free only to those on free school meals.

We recognise that by using that as a measurement for Dartmouth, the real struggles of working families miss the criteria for help and support. So we ran events anyway under the title 'CHAF' Community Holiday, Activities and Food and we make sure no one is left behind.

With our partners, we had a pool day at the outdoor community pool, arts and craft days and a fun sports day at the rugby pitch. We work with around 80 local families.

### **In the bush**

As part of the 'CHAF' provision, we have been working with Mike Jackson from Dart Valley Bushcraft to have family days in the woods for our families, foraging, cooking, making things from items found in the woods. Local company Naked Burger supports with healthy, nutritious, local food

We have continued the community events through the seasonal milestones, what our community tells us is this is what makes them feel better, feel connected and feel part of a community. Halloween and Yule in the woods were both truly magical events. Again, the feedback from the community has been amazing. Between 30 and 60 families usually attend these events

### **Christmas with families**

There was a Christmas party with our SEN families, a community market with Santa's grotto, a community Christmas dinner, and a New Year's Eve party for our Ukrainian families. All, as ever, were well attended and well supported. Over 250 people took part in the events and double that amount of people donate toys, food and gifts

### **Skip days**

Working with LiveWest Housing, we supported the skip days for local people to get rid of rubbish, cutting down on fly tipping. These are historic events and a community-led idea that has been happening twice a year for over 10 years. There is no local recycling centre and the journey to the nearest one is a challenge if you don't have a car. This is always well attended with between 40-60 people on a first come, first served basis.

### **Jumble trail**

The Partnership supported a new idea from the community - the Townstal jumble trail, where locals could put items outside in their gardens to swap with each other, following a map around Townstal. 30 people put out stalls and it was a great post-Covid activity

### **Wedding reception**

The community café was used by a local couple for their wedding reception. It was a beautiful day.

## Community-led peer groups

One of the issues mentioned regularly was the lack of support for special educational needs. An amazing group of parents started a peer support group, which is known as SOS group (Supporting Our SEN) although its informal name is ‘Fight Club’ which is run from the community café every Tuesday evening.

This peer support group offers support, guidance, emotional support, friendship, listening ear and also a strong collective voice for both parents and children to better support each other and their children. Although the group meets weekly there is a 24/7 WhatsApp group for fun, laughs and people can reach out in moments of need.

The parents say it is great to feel “understood, included and great to have useful and practical help and guidance in such an unconditional and expert way”. The

children say the group makes them feel happy, have fun and to feel included. The group feels that the next step is having qualified SEN play workers for the children as well as possible social events for all, which is on the cards and being planned for later in the year.

A men’s support group was also something that our community asked for. A group of local men created Menkinde, a peer support group with activities. This group has a core of 10 men who regularly attend, bringing friendship and support for men to the heart of our community on their terms, as well as reducing mental distress and isolation. see appendix for a write up about Menkinde

**There are expressions of interest for TQ6 other peer-led groups. Watch this space for Year 4.**



*Daily activity in the Hub at the Cafe*



*The SEN group in action*

**What does the Hub at the cafe mean to you?** *"Downtown is an ideal spot, anyone can come in - local people and holiday makers. Living in Townstal, it makes us feel connected. Visiting the hub is the reason to get out of the house."*

## Peer-led SEN Group *sharing knowledge and fun*

The peer-led SEN Group has been a great success, not only for the atmosphere and environment it has created for both parents and children, but for the achievements and support it has provided.

1. Group applied for carer cards for all parents (15)
2. Researching and supporting play therapy options for families (learning and growing our own skills)
3. Sharing within the group and with our families the online resources, service information, learning materials and information for various kinds around SEN disabilities experienced by children within the group.
4. Supporting family with form filling and a support letter for housing to help successfully find new, appropriate and local housing for SEN family.
5. Advocating/ supporting family in SENCO meeting with school for transition between primary and secondary.
6. Families supported each other in filling in and PIP forms for their children's need - all 3 were successful.
8. Learnt about local discounts for local activities supporting SEN children - ie applied for and received concession cinema card for all our SEN group children.
9. Shared access and information for grants / funds for SEN children. Successful on all 5 grants for SEN learning aids (e- readers, special glasses aids, and funding specialist therapy counselling).
10. Spreading opportunities to learn together and better support our children through attending webinars on their children's SEN and EHCP for knowledge to empower families with information.
11. Signposting to different professions and organisations, sharing information that is usually hard to find.



**The Tuesday night SOS SEN Group**

12. 3 EHCP forms successfully reviewed and submitted - all had been 'stuck' with SENCO's

This group sprung up with local mums

expressing the lack of support for their SEN children and needing something to change. It started with 3 families.

There are now 15 families connected and 30 children. All supporting each other, parents and children growing in confidence and advocating / supporting with and for each other. The key to this group's success is the

informal, non-judgemental space in the café which has been the catalyst to get this group off the ground.

We now have 2 local play workers who have joined the team. In July (2023) the group along with other local parents will be attending a Playwork training taster session with further accredited learning in the coming year.

**SOS**  
**Supporting Our SEN**

**Peer on peer support group**

- \* Friendly advice and information
- \* Non judgemental support
- \* EHCP advice
- \* Information from people with lived experience
- \* Friendship
- \* Listening ear

Come in for a cuppa and chat.  
Children welcome

Every Tuesday 5:30pm - 7:30pm  
at the Community Cafe

CALL : 07496349234 unit 9, market square, Dartmouth, TQ6 9SE

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## Community voices shaping policy

- TQ6 and Dartmouth Community Chest team were invited to be part of policy discussions to shape the Core20plus connector roles for the NHS and continue to amplify community voices in decision making.

- TQ6 and Dartmouth Community Chest team sit on the National Institute of Health Research Inequalities Consortium PICE group at national level. Following seven national projects through project lifespan ensuring they are keeping the community

engagement and public involvement at the heart of the work.

- TQ6 and Dartmouth Community Chest team, along with other C2 Community Partners are expert tutors for the Master's in Public Health programme @ Exeter University

- TQ6 is part of the C2 National Network of Connected Communities for sharing, learning, supporting and enabling with other communities across the country.

### *Community Partners in Research*

1. University of Exeter/Plymouth: South West Palliative and End of Life Care Research Partnership, hosting and being participants along with community members in a focus group (report available )

2. University of Exeter/ Bangor/Nuffield Foundation: The role of communities and connections in social welfare law ( <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/social-welfare-law-advice-community-connectedness-equality-and-well-being>)  
Dartmouth is one of 4 UK areas taking part in this study which seeks to better understand the relationship between communities and access to support (Social welfare law includes welfare benefits, debt, employment, housing, immigration, education, and community care)

3. Ongoing work with C2 Connecting Communities and Exeter University exploring new ways to measure community work through the use of social networks. Ongoing data collection of the social networks within the community we work with and evidencing the links between wellbeing and connectedness around the work of Community Chest.





## Townstal Community Natters

Listening events are an excellent way to see what's happening in communities, what current local problems are and using partnership to find solutions together. Based on fun and food it supports better working relationships locally.

The TQ6 Community Partnership has reinstated listening events. We always do this on a Saturday, bringing the community together along with those hardy services who will work outside the box. We all shared the joys and the issues of 'what's it like to live in Townstal?'

85 people attended the first Community Natter, which took place in November. It was co-hosted by the TQ6 Community Partnership, alongside Dartmouth Community Chest, Devon Public Health, Livewest and South Hams Council and C2 Connecting Communities.

Alongside the warm food, events, children's arts and crafts, circus skills, building relationships with services, partners and providing hot, nutritious food with the Naked Burger team.

The results offer an insight into the

community's problem priorities and a mandate for the partnership focus.

The November get together was followed up by a 'Springs Up' event, which fed back to the community and further built on the conversations and insights from the first.

### What We Love

The beauty of the place, our Townstal community.

### What Needs to Improve

1. Access to a dentist (especially for children)
2. Activities for children and young people
3. Access to affordable childcare
4. Better solutions to local public transport
5. Improving parks and spaces
6. More community events
7. Proper mental health services



# TQ6 Community Partnership Meeting

Wednesday 26 April

Townstal Baptist Church 5.30pm

**\*\* Hub@Cafe**

The winter warm space and hot meal provision is coming to an end, although café is still open. Now the cracks are showing in support services particularly mental health and addiction issues.

We’ve learnt a lot about building resilience in ourselves and we do have good partners. Ben at South Dartmoor Community Energy, for example, topping up energy cards and with South Hams offering slow cookers and throws. But there’s inconsistency in support and what happens when the funding runs out?

Ben of South Dartmoor Community Energy has working with Dawn and Rachel, helping people with pre-payment meters (time consuming and not straightforward), help people out of fuel debt, and LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership)

**\*\* Mental health support and Visible policing**

Perpetrators know there is no police around. People aren’t reporting crimes because they have no faith in them. The town council has been putting pressure on, and has threatened to refuse to pay. The Police were normally around the Partnership - the Police started it, and the PCSO is really important. Crime and anti-social behaviour is here, and the volunteers are expected to take on that pressure, facing threats of violence, while keeping people safe. That’s a massive responsibility to take on. They are expected to act as professionals but without any of the support of professionals. And people are ‘dumped’ at the cafe and volunteers are just expected to get on with it.

**\*\* Dartmouth Community Chest**

Now the summer season has began, the café times are changing: for May only (because of the bank holidays, the opening days will be Tuesdays and Fridays. We will see how it goes and keep you posted with changes).

First Saturday in the month it’s open for the community market.

Local groups use the space, SEN, Mankinde (both peer support), English lessons for Ukrainian families and often hosting local fundraisers, community events. The

community fridge is accessible on open days and food parcels available 7 days - contact Dawn. Still collecting and redistributing white goods and furniture.

**\*\* Thank you for coming (and reading!)**

The next TQ6 Community Partnership will take place in the second half of June. Date, time and venue, tbc

Charlotte from LiveWest will continue to attend the community café - Tuesdays going forward, each week.

Dates to remember: 14 May, Dartmouth Swifts Fundraiser at Dartmouth AFC

Calls to action: Spread the word, let’s widen the Partnership and reinforce connections with BRNC to come and be part of the events we are hosting together.

Drop us a line: tq6communitypartnership@gmail.com (mailto:tq6communitypartnership@gmail.com)

**\*\* Welcome**

Thanks to all residents and service partners for coming. It’s important for partners to take the issues and activities forward. We will work together and find solutions

The lack of partnership meetings is because we have been busy with national lottery bid and bringing the local community back to the centre and ensuring resident led action is what drives the partnership and great to see so many residents round the table.

**\*\* Dartmouth Swifts**

A few years ago, local girls identified that lack of dedicated girls football so delighted to share the news. The Dartmouth Swifts is the girls football team that began 6 weeks ago with funding from TQ6 to support a lead coach and initially the venue hire. Now at Dartmouth AFC with regular numbers approaching 30. The girls came up with the name, designed the badge and the kit. TQ6 has funded training shirts. Sponsors found for kit and track suits. A connection is growing between Kingsbridge and Malborough. Thanks to Mike Jackson for turning words into action.

Date for diary:

\*\* Fundraiser 14 May, at Dartmouth AFC \*\*

**\*\* SEN peer support group**

Tuesday evenings at the Hub. Parents share info in a non judgemental space. There’s signposting and help, with filling out forms, for example. It’s parents helping parents. A place of understanding and support and the children, who lead their entertainment, like their own Dartmouth’s Got Talent.

Increase the confidence of the parents being able to support each other with forms and learning processes and procedures like EHCPs and better understanding through access to information and training. Parents are the best advocates for their children. If anyone wants to know more contact Jenna on 17867 520846

**\*\* Children’s Centre**

Update from Mick Roberts that the service continues to be targeted for families and is assessed only by referrals. But there are events and activities, including weigh-ins and baby massage. People can refer themselves with a phone call in the first instance. Suggestion to circulate the events to TQ6 who can share with interested parents.

**\*\* LiveWest**

Update from LiveWest that it will continue its provision of community development.

There is controversy around rent and service charge increases. LiveWest is trying to mitigate them, but the charges remain. There’s been a 7 per cent increase in rent and in some areas the service charge has gone from £12-15 a week to £mid-80s, in the highest example.

It was suggested South Hams Council could help with a discretionary payment.

Much of the increase in the schemes worst affected comes from antiquated and inefficient energy systems for the service and there are potential ways to reduce the charges with more energy efficiency, which is being explored. The legality of the increase was raised, along with other questions of what’s covered in the service charge, plus how best to support those faced with the increases.

Some residents are in effect served with 3 energy bills: the service charge; a bill for energy from the housing association and one their own for their domestic supply.

It was suggested by Energy expert that LiveWest look to their energy supplies and the fluidity of energy prices.

To be discussed further..

**\*\* Listening Events**

The TQ6 Community Partnership has held two listening events recently. What emerged was the top community identified priorities

1. Access to (children’s) dentist
2. Activities for children and young people (Charlotte from LiveWest is pursuing improvements to play park)
3. Affordable childcare
4. Better solutions to local transport

More community events will to be organised for school holiday times with ongoing CHAFF (Community Holiday Activities and Fun and Food)

**Read the June minutes on the TQ6 Hub site**

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## What's happening next

### *Hard-won optimism and increased activity are the key ingredients as the TQ6 Community Partnership reflects on Year 3 and moves into Year 4*

Hard-won optimism and increased activity are the key ingredients as the TQ6 Community Partnership reflects on Year 3 and moves into Year 4

There is a continued sense of energy and action in the TQ6 Partnership. Residents are increasingly being heard, through daily interactions, key listening, family natter events, peer-led groups and by sharing an interest to take more supportive roles on the committee. These are fragile, nurturing relationships on both sides, where there needs a sensitive understanding of roles and responsibility. In the right environment, they are flourishing.

Partnership meetings have been rekindled, community natters are energetic, events are well-attended by supportive partners wanting to work in a different way. A way that involves better and direct ways of engaging with communities and brings residents on board. And the relationship-building between services and communities

who are in the space is working well.

The partnership will continue to work with Dartmouth Community Chest to provide a safe haven for locals, particularly noticeable at local festival time: musical festival, food festival, regatta, when they feel the need for a place of their own in the town. This is combined with the other work the Cafè/Hub does, supporting the community with a free space, refreshments, and access to support.

Having a consistent, dedicated space brings lots of more complex local needs into view. There have been at least 60 cases of complex mental health needs, talk of taking action, self-neglect, and abuse of drugs and alcohol. There have been 10 extreme cases of suicide attempts / suicide prevention, suicide talk, psychotic episode. Language of threatening extreme action is often a cry for help, but certain services won't come into the town at the weekend. The Partnership will support those within it who face these challenges through creating a safe and effective environment.

The Partnership will continue to help 'spot and sort' opportunities that the community has identified. We are currently in the process of organising Play Worker Training for interested members of the community, as this was identified as something that was needed, and a barrier for parents and families. The added skills and resources to the town is something that can bring both support and potentially extended employment benefits for those involved.

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*There is also a challenge to those who don't understand the shared way of working that allows communities to be in control. We need to work with Partners who understand that, and understand how to widen what the Partnership does without diluting the values of working this unique way.*

The spirit, interest, activity and energy is there in the community. The SEN Group and Menkinde both demonstrate that. Allowing the space for peer support to grow is also vital and fruitful. And the early support to set up the Dartmouth Swifts sees how with targeted and light touch intervention, activities can grow. All three examples touch on mental health, and grow networks and community.

We've talked about the ebb and flow in the town and the seasonal challenges. That shifting landscape is also present within partners. Youth Genesis no longer exists, seeing a gap emerge in engagement with young people that was already an issue. Partners disengage, the school no longer engages with the Partnership. There is also a challenge to those who don't understand the shared way of working that allows

communities to be in control. We need to work with Partners who understand that, and understand how to widen what the Partnership does without diluting the values of working this unique way.

After a long absence, the police have returned to the partnership and connected with us all at the partnership meeting this June. They support partnership working with the community and relationships are building. This marks an optimistic upturn as police have always been key collaborators in this town.

The Hub is the heart of TQ6 Community Partnership activity. It feeds, nurtures, nourishes the Townstal and Dartmouth Communities. It thrives on interdependency in a shared space and helps bond the relationship with partners. There continue to be challenges, but we are stronger to face them and develop opportunities to overcome them. Year 4 is a year of hard-won optimism and activity.

## What's good about living in Townstal?'

*It was unanimous. The people are happy, kind, always open to others, and comforting. The Springs Up! community event.*

The young people were sharing their answers to the question: 'What's good about living in Townstal?'

And they opened that up to the other people in the room.

Next door, other young people and children were enjoying circus skills and Easter-themed craft work.

The whole crowd had been fed by Naked Burger's hand-made burgers, and Dawn Shepherd of Dartmouth Community Chest ensured everyone was catered and cared for.

On the question of what's good about living in Townstal, the overall response centred on the strength of the community.

The tables had sheets of info about the cost of living, and the raffle included an energy-saving slow cooker plus drying balls, alongside the Easter goodies. South Hams South Council provided the info and the energy-saving prizes.

Springs Up! was to provide feedback from the November event. Clive Bowers, soon not to be of Public Health Devon, explained how the system had failed to provide the community with a dentist, and new solutions would be found.



There has not been a girls' football team in Dartmouth for 70 years. Mike Jackson of Dart Valley Bushcraft School is taking the new girls' soccer team, the Swifts. T

The Play Park at Britannia Avenue is owned by Live West, explained Charlotte Holdsworth, of Live West who shared the processes she was going through to raise the funds to improve it, and asked for input about what shape those improvements should take.

One of the mums of the SEN Group, talked about what the group does to support parents, including chatting and form filling, and allowing the youngsters to have some creative space. It's not built around disability, she said.

The TQ6 Community Partnership is working together, and the generations that are coming up are having a voice together, said Clive.

As the event drew to a close, another young person was asked their opinion about the day. It hit the nail on the head.

"Exciting and fun," he said.

***Read the full article on the TQ6 Hub site***

## Girls football with Dartmouth Swifts

*In front of over 100 supporters, the girls played out a fantastic match sporting their new home and away strips which were kindly donated by Cafe Alf' Resco and Sophie Cowling Rae.*



Another success story is the development of the Dartmouth Swifts Girls Football. With support from the TQ6 Partnership, a coach agreed to take on football training. Started with booked space at the leisure centre, a regular core of 29 girls aged 12-15 attend the training. Links have been made with the local club, and other girls teams in the area. Further Football Coaching training has been provided and competitive games are planned in the coming season. There are hopes to get to international games and have inspirational visitors.



**[Read the full report on the TQ6 Hub site](#)**

## Menkinde: a place to be someone

*Graham Webb describes Menkinde the group where men hang out, laugh and share good times*

There's just one rule for Menkinde, the men's group that operates out of the Dartmouth Community Cafe. And with such a straightforward way to take part, it has inspired cookery, film nights, two overnight bushcraft excursions and plenty more, with a whole host of events to come.

The group, which has a core of 10 people, is a relaxed and flexible environment that responds to suggestions of things to do together.

"You can just turn up. You don't have to sign up to attend a certain number of sessions or visits – you just come out as and when you want," says Graham Webb, who kick-started the get-togethers, and has found others in the group taking on more of the hosting roles.

The ethos is that people can do whatever they like. They can sit on their phone quietly in the corner; they can join in a discussion or they can take part in other ways. They've made food and drinks together; they've interacted and they've chilled out, relaxed and enjoyed other people's company. And the one rule: no alcohol.

"When the World Cup was on, some people felt uncomfortable watching it in a large crowd, and they didn't want to sit at home watching it. Everybody laughs, and that's always a good medicine for anything," says Graham. "People just feel comfortable and safe."

Graham shares what his late wife would say: "When people come to the cafe, they're

allowed to be someone." It's a strong message, with an almost tangible sense of, well, wellness.

Another pastime Graham shared with his wife Jayne, who was an integral part of the community support in Dartmouth and Townstal, was re-watching favourite films from their teens. It's something Menkinde has taken up.



Because of the relaxed nature of the club, if somebody has issues, they might come up during conversation. They don't make a point of 'issues'. Companionship is a big part of the group's success. One of the events the group has taken part in is ManCamp at Dart Valley Bushcraft School. It sounds like mindfulness on steroids.

It might only be a year old, but the men's group feels like it's got roots, says Graham. Roots and shoots.

***Read the full article on the TQ6 Hub site***