



## Annual Report 2022/2023

Supporting the voluntary  
and community sector in  
Torridge

[www.torridgecvcs.org.uk](http://www.torridgecvcs.org.uk)





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1st April 22 – 31st March 23

# A YEAR IN THE LIFE

# TTVS projects

Volunteer Centre Torrington



We have contacted our Young Carers **887** times

citizens advice **38** C.A.B referrals

**66** Total Referrals

**775** Hours of support delivered every **4** weeks

**Help at Home**  
Your life, your way

Total number of clients **110**

**18** Home support workers

NOW EXPANDED INTO BARNSTAPLE & BRAUNTON AREAS

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## Financial Inclusion

TOTAL AWARDED BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY = **£761,579.84!**



**2772** Interventions

People Assessed = **307**

**482** Applications

**Tai Chi** **41** Sessions

**Total Attendees = 452**

TorrAGE Ageing Well

Memory Lane  
Dementia Cafés

**BIDEFORD**

**NORTHAM**  
**10** Sessions

**9** Sessions

Attendances = **211** **62** Attendances



## A message from our CEO - Simone Thompson

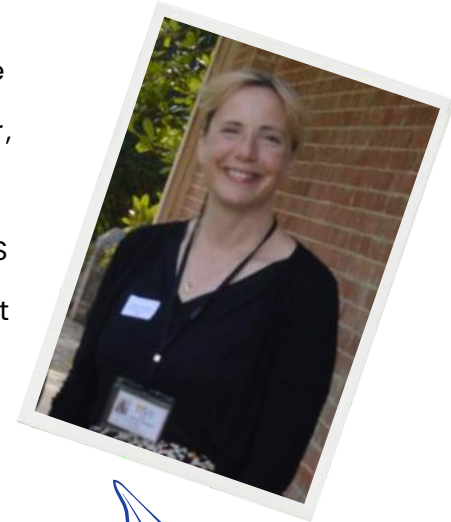
Well, what a year this has proved to be! We thought that the pandemic was in our rear view mirror and then we encountered the cost of living crisis. The communities we support have been hit hard... again and they have done what they always do, pull together, and come back stronger.

That is one of the reasons why applying for the role of Chief Executive Officer was a no brainer. Along with the fact that the TTVS team are one of the most passionate and kind spirited set of individuals I have had the pleasure to work with. I have been in post since October and am privileged to have picked up the reins of a well-established charity, that exists to support the community and people of Torridge.

2022/23 has seen its fair share of challenges and we have responded in the best way possible. We have supported more; we have delivered innovative solutions, and all done in the most professional and empathetic manner. There have been so many highlights that I think I could write a book!

Our project staff have worked hard. There have been unprecedented levels of referrals into Young Carers Connected, Financial Inclusion and Help at Home. We are so proud to have supported many young carers. In turn their families have been supported through our successful partnership with Citizens Advice Torridge North West and Mid Devon.

We have seen a 34% increase in referrals into our Financial Inclusion project which in turn has awarded over £750,000 back to our community.





Our Help at Home service grows from strength to strength. We provide several different services to help older people stay independent and safe in their own homes. This year, working in partnership with One Northern Devon, we were able to take this hugely successful service across the bridge into North Devon. No mean feat and testament to the hard work of the Help at Home team.

We have been truly touched by the level of support from existing funders such as The National Lottery and Nationwide Building Society. Both organisations reached out and helped us fund this exponential surge in activity. I would also like to say a very big thank you to other funders who help keep the lights switched on, the local and district councils, Bideford Bridge Trust, One Northern Devon and Aviva Community Fund to name but a few!

2022/23 was the year of digital for us and the community! We partnered with Cosmic, a well-established organisation that delivers a wide range of digital solutions to the community. Through this partnership, we were able to deliver thousands of hours of digital training, hundreds of hours of digital leadership and through our grants programme, we invested £10,000s back into the community.

Our Volunteer Hub continues to flourish and we are seeing a revival in volunteering. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator welcomes new and existing volunteers, supporting people from all walks of life. We run a number of volunteer led projects, supporting people who live alone and are being discharged from hospital through to a respite sitting service for carers.

As you can see our community and the people that live in it mean everything to us. We have a team of Community Developers who work across Bideford, Great Torrington, Holsworthy and their surrounds. Many community projects have been delivered, coffee and cake vouchers supporting both vulnerable people and local businesses in Bideford, Cost of Living Fayre in Great Torrington and the launch of a community fridge in Holsworthy. Wonderful examples of communities being stronger together.

TTVS is all about putting people at the heart and I couldn't be prouder of the work that's been done and what the future will hold. Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report and we look forward to you being on the journey with us.





# Our Vision, Mission & Values

## Our Vision:

A healthy, connected and happy community with opportunities to exchange ideas/knowledge, learn from and empower one another.

## Our Mission:

In a world of disconnection, we want to create happy, prosperous, healthy communities living, supporting, growing social and as one. – creating social and community value, better quality of life.

## Our Values:

We champion equality - we believe that everyone deserves equality. Working towards a fairer future for all, we won't stand still. By making an impact on causes big and small, we want to improve the quality of life across the region.

We connect people - at the heart of voluntary and community action for 30 years, our roots are in Torridge. We work collectively and inclusively to connect, grow and strengthen our society. We are warm and approachable, and we create opportunities to exchange ideas, learn from and empower one another.

We inspire change - we are courageous, resourceful and determined, we will challenge unfairness and ask difficult questions. Working effectively and accountably to instill confidence. We aim to become stronger and more sustainable to inspire positive and lasting change throughout our community.

We amplify voices - from individuals to organisations, we believe everyone has a right to be heard. Trusted to listen, understand and advocate. We're open and honest, we stick by people and give our support to ensure their voices are heard.

We support action - we understand from our own experiences the challenges people face. We truly value people and we won't judge or dictate. Leading independently and side by side with our communities and partners, we share our resources, skills and expertise to enable people to take meaningful action.

## SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING AND THE COMMUNITY



Our Volunteer Centre in Bideford offers support, training and guidance to the amazing people who offer their time to support their community. We also offer support to existing and developing community groups in Torrridge providing governance advice, funding advice and much more.

This year we celebrated our amazing Board of Trustees during Trustees Week... the ultimate volunteer!

We celebrate Volunteers Week every June. This year we asked local groups and projects to nominate their volunteers via our Facebook page who were all entered into a prize draw to win a meal voucher which was kindly donated by The Pier House. Then in September we held a beautiful awards ceremony at Tapeley Park, Mayor Jude Gubb presented certificates to all nominated volunteers who were treated to a buffet and bubbles on the lawn of this beautiful house, a lovely way to say Thank You. Our Volunteer Centre is finally coming to life after Covid saw it closed for many months, we are pleased to say that, as well as being the go to place for those who want to volunteer, the community is now using our space for meetings and training sessions.

As well as being the heart of volunteering for Torrridge, TTVS work within our community to support voluntary and community groups. We have had a busy year getting out and about letting the community know what we do:

Bideford Water Festival 2022

The North Devon Show

Green Lanes with Age Concern

Great Torrington Cost of Living Fayre.

Holsworthy Community Wellbeing Event

It's great to get out and meet people whilst raising awareness for all the amazing work we do and the support we can provide.





## SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is at the heart of everything we do and we can't reflect on 2022/23 without paying tribute to the greatest ambassador of volunteering our late Queen.

*"I often draw strength from meeting ordinary people doing extraordinary things: volunteers, carers, community organisers and good neighbours; unsung heroes whose quiet dedication makes them special. They are an inspiration to those who know them."*





## MEMORY CAFES

Our Memory Cafes are a space for those living with dementia and other forms of memory loss and their carers to spend time with others away from their daily routine.

We serve tea, coffee and other goodies and provide activities and entertainment tailored to suit our attendees' needs.

This year we treated our attendees to a seated exercise class, various crafting activities, bingo, live music and much more...

And of course we couldn't let the jubilee pass without a bumper celebration. We had the Mish Mash singers, balloon crowns, cream tea and even some beautiful horses visited dressed to impress and took advantage of the many carrots on offer, it was an amazing celebration of our late Queen.

Our Memory Café really brings people together. Earlier in the year a new lady attended the café, she was slightly nervous and unsure suddenly she spotted "her best friend". They had lost contact as they lived a little distance from each other and getting around had become more difficult. They immediately hugged and held hands which they did for the entire duration of the café. She said "I'm never letting her go again".



## TAI CHI



Ian Godfrey began running our Tai Chi classes as a volunteer in 2015. Over the years he has supported hundreds of people to access Tai Chi, to feel the benefits and to enjoy an hour with friends. It is testament to Ian that many of those who go along to the class have been with us since the beginning and continue to support Ian and TTVS. What wonderful, loyal and supportive clients we have.

On Tuesday 23rd January 2023 Simone Thompson, recently appointed CEO, presented Ian with a token of TTVS appreciation, a bangle made from Cornish tin, in recognition of his support for TTVS and volunteering.

Run every Tuesday by our volunteer instructor Ian at the Northam Community hall, this year has seen the attendee numbers return to pre-pandemic levels, with an average weekly attendance of over 20.

*"I do this because I enjoy seeing people being happy, making progress, finding that Tai Chi helps to ease and improve mobility. I say that Tai Chi is 'Moving Medication'"*

Ian Godfrey Tai Chi Instructor



## SUPPORTING PEOPLE - Our Projects

The following pages give details of all our projects.

We are so proud of the support we provide to the vulnerable people in our community.

A big thank you to all our funders, without their generosity we couldn't do what we do.





# FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Financial Inclusion is one of our flagship projects, helping people of pension age and over to stay safe, warm and secure in their own homes. Each year up to £3.5bn of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit goes unclaimed by older people in the UK, an average of £230 for every person aged 65+. Torridge has one of the highest levels of social deprivation in the UK (source - Government Social Deprivation Index 2019) and a rapidly aging population (source- UK Census 2021). We estimate there is £4.5m in unclaimed pension credit and housing benefit in Torridge (based on 19,312 eligible people).

The impact of this project is astounding, through the hard work and dedication of the team, we have delivered over £700,000 of benefits/grants back into the pockets of people living in Bideford and its surrounds, an increase of 34% on the year before. The people we support sometimes find themselves in the very real situation of choosing between heating and eating, and most recently heating or breathing due to the condition of their home.

This year alone the equivalent of £761,579.84 was awarded to our vulnerable clients.

*"I recommend to everyone! The Financial Inclusion project has changed my life in so many ways. Thank you"*

**NOW EXPANDED INTO BARNSTAPLE & BRAUNTON AREAS**

## Financial Inclusion

**TOTAL AWARDED BACK TO**

**OUR COMMUNITY = £761,579.84!**

**2772 Interventions**

**People Assessed = 307**

**482 Applications**





## YOUNG CARERS CONNECTED



We know that young carers face a number of challenges and that is why we were delighted to receive funding from The National Lottery to fund a 3 year programme supporting young carers and their families. We support the families through a successful partnership with Citizens Advice Torridge, North, West and Mid Devon (CATNWMD).

The last year has been incredibly busy as we see the impact of the cost of living crisis. We provided 1:1 support for 56 young carers who faced a range of problems, dealing with anxiety, problems with schoolwork as well as navigating caring for someone with a life limiting illness.

CATNWMD have supported 32 families with a range of different complex needs. Of these 32 families, 84 issues were explored, and £11,063 income was gained. The top 3 issues were benefits & tax credits, debt, and utilities.

As well as 1:1 support and through the generosity of others, we provide much needed respite and some amazing activities...Canoeing with Exeter Canoe Club, a guided tour of SS Freshspring in Bideford, a week long fully funded NCS programme at Skern Lodge... AND A SKYDIVE (for the very brave) that both young carers and the team did to raise money!



66 Referrals

887 Individual contacts made with clients

56 Young Carers received 1:1 support



## SUPPORTING RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING

Dementia/Mental health affects a person's day-to-day life and they may need to adapt how they do things. Our support helps people maintain a sense of normality for as long as possible. The Forget-Me-Not Friends Café is an essential date in the Holsworthy and Winkleigh calendar, with over 25 attendees each week

The cafes offer a friendly, supportive environment for people living with dementia and their carers to enjoy a variety of entertainments. The confidence gained by mixing with people in similar circumstances is invaluable and offers so much more than just 'getting out of the house'.

The community is fully involved in the design, development and delivery of these activities and the board is comprised of community members. The community networks also identify people living with dementia/mental health and their carers who may be isolated/in need of support and/or companionship. We deliver monthly sessions at the local medical centre to help people with long-term conditions who need support with their mental health, are lonely or isolated.

GPs tell us that our groups are crucial to providing a place where patients can socialise and access.



*"Through the Forget Me Not Friends group, I have been able to get advice and guidance regarding my husbands further decline with Dementia, the support I received has been invaluable for me to carry on caring at home for him, it has also allowed us to have more precious time together. We have been married 50 years, and it feels every day I lose a little bit more of him.*

*Thank you for all your support, it has made a huge difference to our lives"*





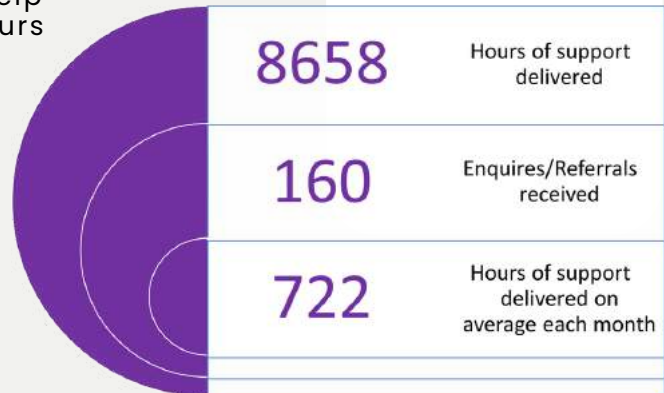
## HELP AT HOME

Whatever a person needs to keep them independent in their own home, we are here for them. Help at Home offers a unique and flexible service putting the individual in control, enabling them to choose a service that is bespoke and tailored to their needs on every visit. We compliment care agencies, taking pressure off the sector and are able to provide the following:

- Cleaning, laundry, ironing, changing bed linen, decluttering and other household chores
- Assistance with paperwork & appointments
- Respite for carers
- Shopping /errands /accompanied outings
- Arranging other services required, such as organising reliable tradesman
- Meal preparation
- Signposting to other organisations
- Befriending
- Light gardening & dog walking

This year has been another incredible year for the Help at Home service, we have delivered thousands of hours of support which has meant we have kept people warm, safe and secure in their own homes.

The success of the service across Torridge gave us the template to secure funding for expansion into North Devon. Working in partnership with One Northern Devon and their Community Flow Team, we are able to help even more people.



## SUPPORTING THE SECTOR

As a community-based charity, we work and provide facilities where our community needs us the most. We run a successful Volunteer Hub based in Bridgeland Street and we work across Bideford and the wider area of Torrridge.

Our Volunteer Hub is a vibrant community space where people and community groups can meet. We have a Volunteer Co-ordinator who is our main welcome point and on hand to help with general/volunteering enquiries. We also have a member of the team available to handle any specialist enquiries such as setting up a charity through to finding funding and payroll. In addition to this, we provide much needed support for people who come into the Hub looking for support from one of our projects. We give them the safe space and chance to speak to a member of the team.

Over the last year, we have seen a significant increase in people wishing to talk about volunteering, starting community groups or needing help from one of our projects. We see around 40 people visiting our Volunteer Hub each month.

And it's not just potential volunteers that we are hosting! We are delighted to have shared our space with several different groups, 361 Energy, Wiser Money, Sunrise Diversity and Bideford Job Club. We want to make the community feel that they have a welcoming space to work in.

The Volunteer Hub has also been used to run several community events, celebrating key historical events such as the King's Coronation or showcasing the talent of our volunteers during Volunteer Week. The Volunteer Hub also gives us the perfect place to communicate, connect and celebrate, something we are very keen to do!





## SUPPORTING THE SECTOR – GROUP DEVELOPMENT

As an infrastructure organisation, we take no greater pride than in supporting and empowering our local community. Group Development is a cornerstone of our organisation and the role can range from helping with legal structures through to finding funding. Kerry is our Group Development Officer and joined TTVS in February 2023.

Kerry has packed a lot into her first couple of months being part of our team. She has worked with a wide range of local community groups, Penguin Sports, Zita Char Yoga and Ace Hold the Space.

Over the last 6 months, Kerry has built a strong relationship with Bideford Job Club and we have seen a number of new people come to volunteer. In her spare time! Kerry has been working on finding funding opportunities for local groups such as Harbour, Shamwick Rovers FC and East The Water Community Pantry.

*We have seen an increasing pressure on local mental health support services which has left a major gap for people who need it most. One of these clients expressed their dissatisfaction on social media, Kerry picked up on this. The client wanted a gardening project to be part of wider mental health support but faced a number of barriers*

*Stepping into the gap, an allotment plot was sourced, TTVS paid the annual fee, and created a group. This group is now known as Torridge Growing Together, both sustainable and expanding. They are promoting physical activity in the community encouraging mental health well-being and the produce is given freely to the local food hubs.*



**Torridge**  
District Council





SUPPORTING OUR PARTNERS  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS



onenortherndevon



On behalf of the One Communities and a continued partnership with One Northern Devon, we employ Community Developers to support the towns of Bideford, Great Torrington and Holsworthy and their surrounds. The role of the Community Developer is to be a catalyst in our communities, helping galvanise activity and support to make our communities safer, happier and healthier.

Working with a number of organisations across each unique community, this year the team have been focusing on supporting communities with the impact of the cost of living crisis. We have seen some amazing work and some of the projects have included:

- Cost of living crisis drop in centres with partner organisations such as 361 Energy and Wiser Money.
- Attending various community events and fayres including Holsworthy Community Wellbeing Fayre and Great Torrington Cost of Living Community Fayre.
- Working in partnership with LiveWest, Dartmoor Academy Trust, a community fridge and food hub were opened in very quick succession in Holsworthy.
- Secured funding from The Bideford Bridge Trust for a Coffee and Cake scheme supported by local cafes. This gave people struggling with money a chance to stop, have a break and support local business at the same time.

## SETTLE AT HOME

TTVS are proud to be one of many organisations helping deliver new services led by The Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon), in collaboration with One Northern Devon's 'One Communities', to help patients being discharged from hospital.

Settle at Home is a volunteer led project. Trained volunteers provide up to 3 visits following hospital discharge when that patient has no one around them to provide simple support at home, such as:

- Ensure heating on
- Prepare light snack / fluids
- Shopping Collection
- Prescription collection



## TIME 4 YOU

Time For You is a sitting service designed to give carers a worry-free break from their caring role.

Led by Devon Carers who are working with TTVS to deliver a low-cost sitting service. TTVS recruit and train volunteers to spend time with the person and provide companionship whilst the carer takes some time away from their role. Volunteers will provide companionship for an agreed number of sitting hours.

## INVESTING IN DIGITAL

We were delighted to deliver a Devon wide digital training programme in conjunction with Cosmic, a leading digital organisation that specialises in supporting communities.



This training programme was part of the Community Renewal Fund and focused on digitally upskilling charities, community groups and small businesses. Especially West Devon and Torridge as recognised areas of deprivation.

Velocity started in January 2022 and ran until November 2022 and was available to any business or charity, large or small. 460 attendees participated in either:

- Digital Leadership courses – offering leaders the opportunity to look at their digital offering for the organisation they run.
  - 12-week Collaboration course – working across different communities and geographical areas to build a team of Digital Champions.
  - Online digital workshops including Using Microsoft Office, Understanding Social Media and more!

The team reached out to over 1,100 organisations; 178 organisations signed up. A fantastic achievement and a real opportunity to invest in our community, be it a micro business, a micro charity or somebody a little bigger!

Alongside the courses, we gave organisations the opportunity to have an in depth chat with digital specialists, understand what they needed to do to improve their digital capability and capacity. We launched a grant programme offered grants of up to £2,000 to make their digital wishes come true.

***“...By the end of the programme, I had a good understanding of Digital and the ability to ensure our Trust fully embeds this technology in our future operations.”***

**- John Puddy, Chairman SS Freshspring**



Building strong, sustainable VCSEs through Innovation



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## INVESTING IN US

- Every year we are blown away by the generosity of funders and donors, we have been delighted to have received funding to help navigate the cost-of-living crisis. A big thank you to The National Lottery for continuing to support us and helping us to support.
- Nationwide Building Society have been huge supporters of our Financial Inclusion project alongside The Edward Gostling Foundation. The Aviva Community Fund has helped us raise thousands, supporting younger and older people impacted by the cost of living crisis.
- We wouldn't be here today without local funders, thank you to Bideford Town Council, Northam Town Council and Torrridge District Council. Bideford Bridge Trust remain a big supporter and long may these local relationships last!
- Last but not least, thank you to all donors/supporters. From the £5 put into a donation pot through to people selling cakes, riding bikes and much more. We are here because of you.

## INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

- We know that times have been and continue to be tough. Working in partnership with DeVA (Devon Voluntary Action) and One Devon, we were able to distribute £18,000 to support local community groups who have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. We were able to expand food pantries help people heat their homes and offer slow cooking lessons.
- We value nothing more than working in partnership. Over the last year, we have had continued support from One Northern Devon and been part of an exciting project working with Cosmic, delivering digital training and tech to community groups across Devon.
- We have set up a very successful partnership with Citizens Advice North West and Mid Devon, delivering whole family support to our young carers and their families. As part of this, we worked alongside Unite – Carers in Mid Devon to deliver support across Mid Devon, thank you.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR – Shirley Law



Another Annual Report – it comes around so quickly these days! What a year it has been! TTVS lost its lovely Darran, but welcomed the equally lovely Simone – it was and is a great pleasure to work with them.

TTVS has expanded over the year, thanks to the tireless work of staff, both paid and voluntary, and funding has been won which gives us both the stable base on which to expand our services. Everyone has contributed to this – we have a track record with which we can prove our ability to deliver what we promise and the back room staff is just as important as the front.

The changes forced upon us by Covid have shown us that other ways of working are possible and indeed, some of these have become embodied in our working life.

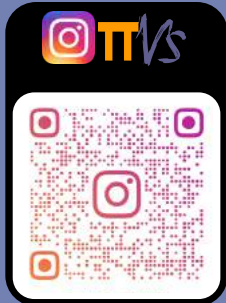
I would like to thank my fellow Trustees – they have all contributed freely their time and expertise. I would particularly like to thank Nick, our very capable Vice Chair – he has spent vast amounts of time reviewing and updating policies and reordering them into a much better system than ever before.

Well – you have got to me, and I am confident that you have read the rest of the report and you have seen just how much and how varied the work has been, well done to all our staff and volunteers and a big thank you.

TTVS has grown in both size and confidence over the past few years and we are looking forward to the next year, which I hope will be just as good.



# OUR YEAR ON SOCIAL MEDIA



ASDA. TTvs. AFFINITY BEVON. ASDA. TTvs.

**MERKEL'S PINK**

**FREE FAMILY FUN DAY SUNDAY**

ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS... WE'VE HAD IT SOUNDING LIKE THIS!

**LEAVE HUSBAND**

**FREE FAMILY FUN DAY SUNDAY**

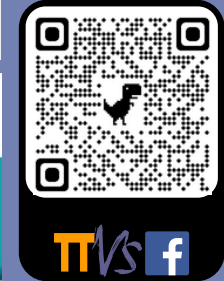
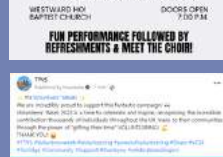
ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS... WE'VE HAD IT SOUNDING LIKE THIS!

**LEAVE HUSBAND**

**FREE FAMILY FUN DAY SUNDAY**

ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS... WE'VE HAD IT SOUNDING LIKE THIS!

**LEAVE HUSBAND**



TTV