

Axminster Division Report 12th June 2023

This month's Division members report gives you just a few indicators about the many and diverse projects that Devon County Council (DCC) is involved in, where it isn't just about potholes and where we really are trying to catch up after a generally awful 'winter' of rain, followed by a short freeze, which did the majority of the damage, and more recently clearing up after flood damage in places close to Home, including East Devon's Newton Poppleford!

Devon receives Fast Followers funding

A share of £6 million of funding has been awarded to DCC to accelerate the transition to Net Zero. Devon County Council (DCC) is one of 21 local authorities across the UK to receive the Fast Followers funding from Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). See <https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/news/fast-followers-accelerate-towards-net-zero/> and <https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/programme/net-zero-living/>

We've been awarded a total of £300,000 over two years to attract more "green finance" into the county to help deliver actions identified in the Devon Carbon Plan.

The funding will help harness new investment opportunities to support innovative activity which will enable Net Zero commitments to be delivered in the county.

DCC has a good track record of delivering Net Zero projects, with grant schemes such as its Green Innovation Fund and Natural Capital Challenge Fund investing in start-ups and low carbon businesses. Fast Followers is part of Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme, designed to help places and businesses across the UK to accelerate the delivery of the transition to Net Zero. Innovate UK's vision for Fast Followers is that the UK will prosper from being the fastest transitioning economy to Net Zero. Innovation is key to achieving this goal and Fast Followers represents grass roots investment in Net Zero innovation.

Pick up a bargain; 'Recycled Cycles' on offer at recycling centres!

Fully serviced, reconditioned bikes are on sale at many of Devon's recycling centres from this week.

With some brands of bike as much as 20 per cent more expensive than a year ago, it offers those who want to saddle up a chance to do so at an affordable price.

A specially trained team at SUEZ, who run the recycling centres on Devon County Council's (DCC) behalf, will repair the bikes from their new 'Re-Cycle Hub' at the Brunel Road facility in Newton Abbot.

They will repair old bikes, no longer wanted by Devon residents, and give them a new lease of life.

They will then sell them through the network of reuse shops in Devon's recycling centres. Each bike will be serviced and include a warranty.

Each year an estimated 10,000 bikes come through the recycling centres in Devon as residents outgrow them, break them or get frustrated that they're taking up valuable space in the garage.

The team at the Re-Cycle Hub will repair and service as many of these bikes as possible by using the various parts and spares from other bikes entering the waste stream, which then reduces the need for them to be disposed of entirely.

Not only is reuse and repair great for the planet by diverting waste away from disposal and avoiding raw materials to produce new products, but it also means that these pre-loved bikes can be rehomed at affordable prices and offer members of the public a chance to access an enjoyable activity without costing the earth.

So, if you're thinking of getting fit, the kids have outgrown their bikes, or you're on the search for a sustainable travel option then come along to the reuse shops and see what we've got in stock.

Successful scheme supports disabled people into employment and training

More than 200 people with disabilities have been helped into education, employment, training, or given one-to-one support through a project led by Learn Devon, see <https://www.learndevon.co.uk/>

Over the past year, Devon County Council's adult education provider, Learn Devon, has worked in partnership with the Council's Reaching for Independence teams and Employer Hub, to run the innovative "Ability not Disability" (AnD) programme.

This initiative has been providing support and advice to help people with disabilities into employment. It was one of 13 projects in the county to receive a share of UK Community Renewal Funding.

The scheme has been helping disabled people to develop their skills and gain experience in a variety of businesses.

As part of the programme, Learn Devon partnered with the Reaching for Independence team to offer a “Job Guarantee” scheme, helping match a number of disabled people with potential employers to provide them with three months paid work and training. Crucial to the success of this scheme was the direct support

provided to individuals to apply for and gain employment while working with employers to understand their needs.

Businesses were supported, via the County Council’s Employer Hub, as they took on their new employees and made their workplaces more accessible. They were also assisted in applying for the Disability Confident Award to demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Over the course of the project, more than 25 people from across Devon have benefitted from a supported work placement, with many of them being offered full-time positions afterwards.

Co-working collaboration for Devon’s Women in Business

Members of the Devon Work Hub network recently joined forces to host a co-working day for women.

For the past three years the Devon Business and IP Centre (BIPC) has run a Women in Business Course, see <https://bipc.librariesunlimited.org.uk/women-in-business/> designed to help women to start and grow businesses. The free 12-week course is delivered by Devon-based businesswomen for Devon-based businesswomen and its possible to take the course online at a time to suit those taking it.

It offers a mixture of core business skills, digital skills, how-to guides for finding resources, and mind set and coaching skills. The aim is to provide everything women need to feel confident and competent in starting and running their own business.