

Community Panel Meeting

10th February 2026 5.30 to 7.30 pm

Bill Douglas Museum, Exeter

Pre-meeting tour of Tour of the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, led by curator Phil Wickham.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed All.

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

Actions	Status
LA to add Use of the Innovation Hub Space as an agenda item to the next meeting	Complete
LA to invite the Sustainable Living Assistant to the next meeting	Attending next meeting
LA to share details on the Repair Café, as well as recycling resources	Complete

3. Special Collections at the University

- Presentation from University Special Collections team with a focus on availability to the public their use in outreach and civic engagement
- Details of upcoming events linked to the Cinema and Special Collections:
 - Special Collections website includes digital maps from past local mapping project
 - Family fun day taking place in Bill Douglas Cinema Museum on Monday 16th February
 - Current bid for Heritage Lottery funding to better support engagement with communities
 - Ongoing opportunities for collaboration with colleges, charities, and more.
 - Possible opportunities for special collections volunteers again this summer and next winter.
- Staff in Special Collections are working with an academic and students to turn disaster preparedness training into a roleplay game that can be used for ongoing, low-cost heritage risk management training. -preparedness training into a role-play game that can be used for ongoing, low-cost heritage risk-management training.

4. Update on CUA Delivery Progress

Lindsey provided a brief overview of some of the highlights since the last meeting:

Mission 1: Support the positive transformation of the city through sustainable and inclusive growth

- The GWR-funded Exeter Green Circle project improved walking links between Exeter's train stations and the Green Circle trail through a partnership involving ECC, DCC, the University, and organisations such as Devon Wildlife Trust.

- The University and City Council are collaborating to bring the [City Nature Challenge](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026-exeter) to Exeter for the first time in April 2026, encouraging residents to record local wildlife using the iNaturalist app. <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026-exeter>.
- Exeter City Council is leading a bid for [Nature Towns and Cities](#) accreditation, with the University and partners including DWT, RHS, InExeter, and the Met Office supporting efforts to embed nature, green infrastructure, and heritage in local decision making.

Mission 2: Build a City of Aspiration and Opportunity

- The University is supporting Exeter College to expand its Digital Detox pilot, with three School of Education academics collaborating with college staff and students to design and evaluate a programme promoting healthier screen-time habits among young people.
- Academics from the School of Education are working with Exeter College, with support from Devon County Council, to establish an exam centre for Electively Home Educated students.

Mission 3: Enhance the Health and Wellbeing of our citizens

- The University is working closely with the city's Live and Move Programme to help reduce health inequalities and support more active everyday lifestyles, including through student involvement.
- A Health Data Science MSc student is currently analysing data from the recent Active Lives Survey, and the team is exploring the option of appointing a paid student intern to further support the programme.

Mission 4: Support an ambitious Culture and Tourism offer

- Exeter city centre has been awarded [Purple Flag accreditation](#), recognising towns and cities which offer a safe, well-managed and vibrant evening and night-time economy
- Exeter City Council has submitted an expression of interest to become City of Culture 2029 - in light of this, and changes in Exeter Innovation teams and priorities, we are planning to hold partner workshops to help update the ambitions in this Mission to better support culture and tourism in the city

Discussion

- Attendees expressed interest in the Live and Move Programme, while noting persistent challenges in engaging new and underrepresented communities and emphasising the need for improved transport infrastructure to support active lifestyles.
- There was broad agreement that meaningful, on-the-ground consultation is essential as the Exeter CUA cultural mission is updated, especially given limited cultural capacity within the University.
- The discussion broadened to wider citizen priorities—such as climate change, flooding, homelessness, and transport connectivity—which some felt should take precedence over cultural initiatives.
- Concerns about student car ownership were raised in relation to Net Zero ambitions, with suggestions ranging from better data collection and stricter parking permit policies to larger scale-scale transport solutions like a workplace parking levy.
- Existing restrictions and communications around student car use were noted, along with the role of the CUA Sustainable Transport Group, which meets quarterly and aims to support active and sustainable transport of partner organisations' staff and students.

5. Sustainability update

Update on the Community Student Challenge

- Updates were shared from the Community Student Challenge, including work by the Sustainability Comms and Engagement Intern to improve student messaging on recycling and waste, and Guild led initiatives such as a zero-waste pop-up and sustainability fair
- The rollout of food waste-waste bins across Exeter and the need for stronger communication within student accommodation was noted. There was interest in supporting a Recycling Awareness Week, noting the breadth of existing resources available. Ideas included involving Denis the Dustcart, showcasing the University's annual sustainability report, and inviting ECC recycling team to run a pop-up at a future repair café.
- Attendees highlighted upcoming engagement activities, including a June tabletop event where students can share food with local residents.
- A visit to the Exeter Energy Recovery Facility has been planned for Community Engagement Officers and other students. Panel members showed interest in attending a tour for community representatives / builders / connectors.

6. Update from Panel on ideas and initiatives

- This year's **Fun A Day** has received over 100 registrations from across Devon, with participants aged 5–82 and an exhibition planned for 22–23 March.
- **Friends of Hoopern Valley** recently held a well-attended litter pick, noting reduced litter but access issues due to flooding. It was reported that ECC had accidentally removed bins from the valley. The City Nature Challenge will involve student activities such as a bat walk in the Valley. The FoHV are struggling to recruit new members- the AGM was poorly attended, and current student volunteers will soon be graduating. The University will help promote membership and involvement, supported by testimonials from current student committee members.
- The **Exeter Stories** podcast has released all 12 episodes of its first series, attracting over 1,000 listeners and being adapted into a three-part BBC feature. Work has begun on series two, featuring local organisations such as RideOn, Exeter Seedbank, Theatre Alibi and the Comedy Festival. PB has been offered a stand at the Respect Festival in June for live interviews.
- At **St Sidwell's Community Centre**, the community builder is working to increase student involvement through pop-ups, conversation cafés, gardening, and café activities, with many asylum seekers already engaged. Opportunities for student volunteering in ESOL classes and wellbeing drop-ins are being explored.

7. Update from Community Liaison Manager

- Two Community Fund applications have been shared with the Panel and both have been approved.
- Attendees were encouraged to continue promoting the fund, which still has money available and no fixed deadline.

8. Use of the Innovation Hub Space

- Members suggested using the Innovation Hub as a central, accessible venue for a wellbeing pop-up that could act as a listening post for new students, offering signposting, sharing volunteering opportunities, and strengthening connections between students and the wider Exeter community.
- There was also interest in using the space to support local antiracism initiatives, including bystander awareness training and broader campaigns supporting students to report hate crimes. -racism initiatives, including bystander-awareness training and broader campaigns

AOB

- Next meeting - May 2026
- Suggested focus on sustainability and racism issues.

Actions:

- LA to get in touch with UoE Estates and ask them to follow up on removal of litter bins in the Lower Hoopern Valley.
- AL / SF to send LA some blurb on FoHV and student testimonials to share in the staff bulletin and promote volunteering opportunity to new student cohort via community magazine
- LA to invite the Sustainability Living Assistant and Sustainable Transport Manager to the next meeting.
- LA to raise Recycling Awareness Week idea and waste / recycling communications with sustainability and community liaison teams.
- LA to explore potential for panel members to join a tour of the reclamation facility
- LA to arrange a meeting with Community Builders to explore ideas about using Innovation Hub for a wellbeing pop-up.
- WP to share details on Nottingham workplace car parking levy