

# Community Panel Meeting

16<sup>th</sup> October 2025 6.00 to 8.00 pm  
Innovation Hub, Dix's Field, Exeter

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the 2 new members who joined for the first time following recent recruitment through local community newsletters and social media.

## 2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

Action	Status
REM to pass on Ted Wragg contact details to Panel Members if requested	Completed
REM to arrange another meeting to progress plans for the Community Student Challenge	Completed
REM to introduce CLM to InExeter for potential collaboration on working spaces list	Completed
Panel members to let the REM know if they wish to remain on the panel	Completed

## 3. Update on CUA Delivery Progress

Chris Evans provided an overview of the CUA for the benefit of the new members

- The CUA is evidence-based and was developed following widespread consultation
- The Board brings together the senior representatives from the partners, ensuring we are making transformational change together
- The Community Panel provides external perspective and insight on CUA activities and engagement

Chris & 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 funding for the Innovation Hub has been extended for a further 18 months. We are currently looking at how we will use the space as the funding restrictions have changed
- The inaugural Exeter Climate Forum in July was a huge success, and brought together world-leading climate researchers, businesses, policymakers and young people, to engage with the priorities for COP30. This will now become an annual, pre-COP taster event
- A new, free 'positive tipping points' toolkit has been launched by University's Green Futures Network. It is research-based and is designed to help policymakers, businesses, and communities use a tipping points framework in systems such as energy, food and local communities [Positive Tipping Points Toolkit](#)
- The Heads of Finance of the CUA partners are looking at ways we can do things in a more joined-up way

### **Mission 2: Build a City of Aspiration and Opportunity**

- Exeter College has been chosen as one of ten Construction Technical Excellence Colleges by the Department for Education. This will enable the College to expand its green skills provision.
- We've been doing a lot of work around skills escalators - tools which map out the provision available for a particular sector, and help to identify gaps and where there is a need to develop new provision
  - New Green Skills Escalator
  - Data Analytics Skills Escalator has been updated
  - We're exploring the need for a Health Skills Escalator
- Researchers from the Graduate School of Education and Exeter College are working together to establish an exam centre for Electively Home Educated students.

### **Mission 3: Enhance the Health and Wellbeing of our citizens**

- This mission includes partnership work on large infrastructure partnership bids, as well as more grassroots research projects with One Eastern Devon - a partnership of NHS and voluntary sector organisations which is tackling health inequalities.
- Exeter College and UoE are looking at how to grow nursing apprenticeships and progression routes.
- The University's Children & Young People's Wellbeing Network is holding an external stakeholder day in CoLab in October, to explore potential collaborative research opportunities.
- A group of academics from the Graduate School of Education are working with Exeter College to support their Digital Detox Programme.

### **Mission 4: Support an ambitious Culture and Tourism offer**

- The first ever June Boom was a great success and helped co-ordinate cultural events and join up planning, marketing and communication with partners across the city.
- An infographic detailing initiatives in the city targeting Anti Social Behaviour, has been created by the Regional Engagement Team for the Community Exeter Safety Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Sub-Group.
- As Creative Arc draws to a close, it will include a final round of 9 commissioned cultural partnership projects with a focus on the city centre.
- Recruitment of volunteers to the Exeter Heritage Partnership (EHP) continues and there are plans to set up EHP as a standalone entity (possibly a Charity) by year end.

Lindsey showed a new film and infographic that have recently been created to celebrate 4 years since the Exeter CUA was signed: [Exeter University Agreement V3 on Vimeo](#)

#### **4. Exeter Arts and Culture at the University of Exeter**

##### **Sarah Campbell, Associate Director for Arts & Culture, gave an overview of her work**

Exeter Arts & Culture is a small but dynamic team with a remit across Devon. Their strategy supports interdisciplinary research, especially between arts and sciences, fostering creativity and collaboration. Sarah highlighted the following:

- The University's long-standing partnership with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, recommending the Exeter Community Family Orchestra, led by Emma Welton
- Northcott Theatre: Offers extensive programming for young people (ages 5–19), holiday theatre weeks, dance groups, choirs, and volunteering opportunities.
- Bill Douglas Cinema Museum: Curated by Phil Wickham, this museum celebrates the history of cinema-going with rare artifacts like magic lanterns, flip books, and zoetropes.

- Great Hall: Hosts comedy nights, performances, and events in partnership with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.
- The Live@Exeter website is a useful resource for discovering cultural happenings <https://liveevents.exeter.ac.uk/whats-on/>
- Trails & Outdoor Art
  - **Sculpture Walk:** A popular downloadable guide to outdoor sculptures near campus, now expanded to include the Botanical Garden.
  - **Accessible Art:** Collaborations with InFocus have led to tactile versions of the sculpture trail for visually impaired visitors.
  - **Nature Trails:** New resources like the “Queer Nature Trail” and “Water Walk” explore plant history and natural features across campus, including ponds, creeks, and fountains.
  - **Tree Trail:** Developed by the grounds team, this offers a unique way to explore both the Streatham and the St Luke’s campuses.
- Creative Arc supports deeply rooted community research projects. Though funding is winding down, the Creative Arc website remains a valuable resource for discovering artists and cultural movements.
- The university’s current arts and culture strategy runs from 2022 to 2027, with an annual report designed to be visually engaging and accessible. There are three strategic strands:
  - Learning & Development
  - Promoting and Championing
  - Networking & Brokering.
- Sarah encouraged everyone to sign up for the monthly newsletter (released the first Thursday of each month) to stay informed and invited submissions from the community to help promote local arts and culture events.

## 5. Feedback from student / community challenge Event

- A Community Student Challenge Event was recently held in the Lower Hoopern Valley to explore ways in which students and communities can work together to tackle sustainability challenges.
- This event was the result of an idea that originated from a previous community panel meeting and was organised jointly with the Guild, with support from Community Panel Members, and also aimed to nurture integration and wellbeing amongst our student and local communities.
- 12 different organisations attended the event, including Inclusive Exeter, Community builders, Friends of Hoopern Valley, Exeter City Council Recycling, Devon Wildlife Trust, the Scrapstore, Exeter Seedbank, and Student societies with an interest in sustainability
- The event captured a lot of thoughts and ideas about potential projects we could take forward. There was a lot of enthusiasm for increasing recycling rates on and off campus
- We will work closely with the Sustainable Living Assistant who will take lots of these ideas forward E.g. a recycling awareness week.
- The panel suggested we could highlight the detrimental effects of not recycling
- Rory highlighted the need to communicate to the landlords and letting agents

## 6. Repair Café

- A new Repair Café is opening on campus with a launch event on Tuesday 25 November in the Digital Maker Space.
- The café is open to all, and the organisers are looking for repairers and helpers, but community members are also welcome to just turn up to meet people and get something fixed or pick up some handy skills.

- **Details Here:** <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/sustainability/whatwearedoing/waste-recycling/repaircafe/>
- **Register your interest Here:** [Repair Café Planning - Record of Interested People \(Repairers/Volunteers/Visitors\)](#)

## 7. Update from Panel on ideas and initiatives

### Friends of the Hoopern Valley Association

- Stephen updated the Panel on the evolving relationship between the University of Exeter and the local community, sparked by the university's decision to open up the Hoopern Valley as a public resource.
- Launched in November 2024 with a mission to foster mutual support between students, staff, and residents.
- The board is intentionally split 50/50 between students and community members to encourage shared ownership and dialogue.
- The group now has 130 people on its mailing list and 27 paid members (£5/year), helping fund free public events.
- Events & Activities
  - **Annual Litter Pick:** First held in February with 30 participants including students, residents, and councillors. It ended with a social gathering over tea and biscuits.
  - **Insect Safari:** Led by Clive Betts and university beekeeper Zoe Mac, this educational walk explored insect life in the valley and was a big success.
  - **Upcoming Ideas:**
    - Bat walks and bird walks
    - Scavenger hunt with Exeter Student Volunteers
    - Talks on **urban biodiversity** at the Phoenix Arts Centre
    - Monthly inclusive **meditative walks** in partnership with the university chaplaincy
- The group aligns with the university's mission to enhance biodiversity in the valley and beyond. They aim to inspire residents to adopt more wildlife-friendly gardening practices, extending the ecological impact of the valley into surrounding neighbourhoods.

### Exeter Stories Podcasts

- Paul explained how the idea for the Exeter Stories Podcast series originally sprang from this group
- The focus is on the many brilliant things that are happening in the city that usually go under the radar, and shines a light on the positive things that people do, for very little gain
- The series was launched 2 weeks ago with the release of the first 3 interviews - Fiona Carden (CoLab), Emma Dunne (Devon and Exeter Institute) and Cameron Mills (the Rock Project)
- The first series comprises 12 interviews and the feedback so far has been brilliant
- Paul is already planning the second series and has a shortlist of over 60 interviewees.
- Exeter Stories is available on all the main podcast providers, including Spotify / Apple etc
- To date, there have been 193 listeners and 13 subscribers, and Paul is in discussion with the BBC about putting the series on the radio

## 8. Update from Community Liaison Manager: Applications / ideas for the Community Fund

- Rory briefly explained the Community fund to the new members, and that panel helps assess applications and to set the themes
- One new application has been received under the theme of social events. The application which was shared with the panel ahead of the meeting, seeks funding for a Neurodivergent community accessible open mic night in Exeter City Centre

- The panel all agreed to fund
- Lou noted that the proposal aligns well with Autistic Voices in Devon (AVID)

9. AOB

No AOB

Next meeting – February 2026

Actions:

- LA to Add Use of the Innovation Hub Space as an agenda item to the next meeting
- LA to invite the Sustainable Living Assistant to the next meeting
- LA to share details on the Repair Café, as well as recycling resources