



Community

Introduction from Mike Shore-Nye

As a new term begins, we wanted to share some updates on community projects and initiatives that we think will be of interest to the wider Exeter community, as well as share updates on our preparations for term one.

I hope you are encouraged to read about the variety of environmental projects described in this edition of the Community Newsletter, with a positive summary of this year's highly successful 'Repair Cafe' on Streatham Campus to the introduction of a new 'Recycling Week' at the start of term one this year, designed to boost awareness of recycling and re-use initiatives that students can engage in. The planned Recycling Week has been supported by a range of community partners, including members of our Community Panel.

This edition of newsletter also describes our current search for two new Community Panel members. The University's Community Panel provides an interesting opportunity for local people help to shape the University's community engagement activity. If you are interested (or know someone who might be) please read the full article for further details.

We also understand that residents will be keen to know how we are preparing for the busy start of term and a new community of students. As always, we are committed to responding swiftly to any concerns around noise or anti-social behaviour and encouraging students to get to know their neighbours. We hope that many of you will get to know your student neighbours as the new term gets underway.

We will be in regular communication with new and returning students in the build-up to the new term, emphasising the need to socialise safely and responsibly.

And finally, I can confirm that, as they do each year, our Estate Patrol team, Welcome Team volunteers and Community Engagement team will be working in tandem with our colleagues in the Police and City Council, encouraging good citizenship and resolving problems as promptly as we can.

Mike Shore-Nye

Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary

A Year of Repair: Building a Community Through the Repair Café

The University's Repair Café has completed its first full academic year, and the impact has been remarkable. Across four events, around 250 people attended, bringing everything from clothing and electronics to lamps and household items for repair.

Together, volunteers helped prevent 573kg of material from entering waste streams, supporting the University's commitment to a more circular economy. Clothing was the most common repair category, highlighting the important role repair can play in reducing textile waste.

Beyond the environmental benefits, the Repair Café has become a valuable community space where students, staff and local residents can meet, share skills and learn from one another. Participants have praised the opportunity to learn new repair techniques, save money, and extend the life of much-loved items.

A huge thank you to the volunteers whose expertise makes these events possible. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back when the Repair Café returns in October! Email repaircafe@exeter.ac.uk if you have any questions, and check out our blog here:

sites.exeter.ac.uk/sustainabilityspace



Community Partners

In upcoming editions of the Community Newsletter, we will be highlighting the work of specific community partners that the University works with to enhance community engagement. The first of these community partners is Natalie Smith.

Meet Community Builder Natalie Smith

Natalie Smith is the Community Builder for St James, working as part of the Wellbeing Exeter partnership to help strengthen local connections and support residents in bringing their ideas to life. Her role involves listening to local people, encouraging community action, and helping neighbours create projects that make St James an even better place to live.

Since joining the team, Natalie has worked alongside residents' associations, volunteers and community groups to organise litter picks, establish Little Free Libraries, support local events, and encourage people to get involved in neighbourhood activities. By connecting individuals with local organisations and opportunities, she helps reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and build a stronger sense of community.

Whether someone wants to improve a local green space, start a community group or simply meet new people, she is on hand to offer advice, encouragement, and practical support to help turn those ideas into reality.



Natalie is also a valued member of the University's Community Panel.

To contact Natalie with any questions about her role, or possible opportunities, email: natalie.smith@eci.org.uk



Research Focus: Digital Detox

From 1 September 2026, schools in England are expected to operate as mobile phone-free environments. Pupils should not have access to their phones during lessons, breaktimes, lunchtime or between lessons.

Researchers from the University of Exeter and Exeter College had been exploring the impact of the College's Digital Detox initiative, prior to this announcement, which introduced classroom phone restrictions in selected faculties. Early findings suggest the scheme has helped many students improve their concentration, participation, and engagement in lessons, with foundation-level learners reporting particular benefits.

Students also described calmer, more collaborative classroom environments. The research highlights that while phone restrictions can support learning, successful implementation depends on recognising that some students rely on phones for practical and educational purposes. The project is continuing as researchers and the College work together to refine the approach and contribute to wider discussions about phone use in education.

For more detail on this research, contact Dr George Tarling: g.tarling3@exeter.ac.uk



Volunteering Focus: Free Legal Support Through the University of Exeter Community Law Clinic

The University of Exeter Community Law Clinic is helping to improve access to justice by providing free legal advice to people across Exeter and the surrounding area. Staffed by law students working under the supervision of experienced solicitors and barristers, the clinic offers practical support while giving students valuable real-world legal experience.

The clinic assists individuals who may be unable to afford legal advice or who are not eligible for legal aid. Advice is available on a range of civil legal issues, including employment, housing, consumer disputes, family matters, and money claims. Every case is carefully supervised to ensure clients receive high-quality guidance.

For students, volunteering at the clinic is an opportunity to develop professional skills, gain practical experience and make a meaningful contribution to the local community. For clients, it offers access to trusted legal information and support that can make a significant difference during challenging times.

The Community Law Clinic reflects the University's commitment to public service and community engagement. By combining education with social responsibility, it helps address unmet legal needs while preparing the next generation of legal professionals.

Anyone wishing to find out more about the clinic or enquire about its services can contact the team at a2jclinic@exeter.ac.uk or visit the University of Exeter's Community Law Clinic webpages.

The Community Panel – seeking new membership

NEW

The University of Exeter Community Panel is helping to embed the broader community voice in the University's Civic Engagement activities. The Panel comprises local residents who help the University to identify local issues, challenges and opportunities and provides a community perspective on a range of university plans and activities. The Panel also offers objective opinions on ideas, initiatives and partnerships and helps us set priorities for, and review Community Fund applications. Formed in 2022, following an open invitation to residents across the city, the Panel is Chaired by the University's Senior Vice President, Registrar and Secretary Mike Shore-Nye, and meets three times a year.

We are currently seeking two new members to join the Panel. We are keen to include representation from across the city, and from communities who are currently underrepresented on the Panel.

Find out more about our Civic University Agreements here: exeter.ac.uk/about/regionalengagement/civic-agreements

Please register your interest by completing and submitting this form **The University of Exeter Community Panel: forms.cloud.microsoft/e/qBqfVM4a5c** before Friday 25 September 2026.

Apply to the University of Exeter Community Fund

Do you have an idea that could bring students and local residents together? The University of Exeter's Community Fund is open for applications all year round, offering grants of up to £300 to support projects that strengthen links between the University and the local community. There are no application deadlines, so you can apply at any time. Current funding themes are:

- increasing biodiversity and enhancing green space
- reducing waste on campus and in the city

- supporting ideas and solutions that help address the climate crisis.
- social events that promote student engagement with the city.

Whether you are a community group, charity, or student society, why not turn your idea into reality? Please share a brief outline of initial ideas and proposals via our Community Engagement Team before formally applying: communityengagement@exeter.ac.uk



Term dates 2026-27

Autumn Term 2026

Monday 21 September – Friday 11 December

Spring Term 2027

Monday 4 January – Friday 26 March

Summer Term 2027

Monday 26 April – Friday 11 June

Resident Liaison Group

The Resident Liaison Group meets twice a year with resident group leaders, councillors and other community partners to discuss a range of community topics and queries.

To find out more about the format of these meetings, please contact Community Liaison Manager, Rory Cunningham:
r.j.cunningham@exeter.ac.uk

Key links and contacts

Police Emergency: 999

Police Non-Emergency: 101

The City Council's Environmental Health Team: exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city

Estate Patrol

01392 723999 e.patrol@exeter.ac.uk

The University's Estate Patrol team can sometimes assist with noise disturbances from student premises after 10pm (if direct contact is not possible). Please note that Estate Patrol cannot investigate disturbances in parks and other public spaces. These concerns need to be passed to the police for investigation.

Noise concerns can also be reported to the council if direct contact with tenants is not possible: exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/anti-social-behaviour/noise-complaints

General daytime queries

For general daytime queries relating to students living and socialising in the community please contact our Community Engagement Team: communityengagement@exeter.ac.uk / 01392 723721.

The Community Engagement Team provide peer-support to students living in private housing. They also conduct follow up visits to any student addresses that Estate Patrol interact with out-of-hours, and can speak with student households regarding waste management and storage.

PC Richard Jephcott

PC Richard Jephcott is our acting Neighbourhood Beat Manager (NBM) for the University, Duryard, St James, Pennsylvania and Stoke Hill. You can contact him by emailing exeterneighbourhood@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk or call 101 and ask for PC Richard Jephcott – 17186.