

# Our year | 2015



**CCS**  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR SOMERSET  
SUPPORTING ACTION  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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## Supporting action in rural communities

CCS aims to strengthen Somerset's communities, innovate and encourage enterprise, support and serve people and tackle disadvantage.



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## Giving more locally



“CCS strives to look ahead, not to shy away from change, and to continually adjust ways of working so that it maximizes benefits for the communities of Somerset.”

CCS is 90 years old this year! Back in 1926 there wouldn't have been a furore over who was getting superfast Broadband and when, no Localism Act and certainly no Pokémon Go!

However, some of the same issues were facing rural communities then just as they are now; how to protect the beauty of our countryside whilst ensuring that those who live and work there have the same opportunity and access to basic services as our urban counterparts.

These challenges remain and CCS strives to look ahead, not to shy away from change, and to continually adjust ways of working so that it maximizes benefits for the communities of Somerset.

The last financial year has been tough; huge effort has been expended in helping the growing numbers of older people needing support, and finding the funding for communities and groups to do what they need to have

become increasingly difficult. From support for developing a neighbourhood plan, capacity building a grass roots charity or helping people to get digital. So what is over the horizon and coming our way? We will need to work even more closely with community groups and town and parish councils to help them adapt to the growing void left by the withdrawal of some County Council services.

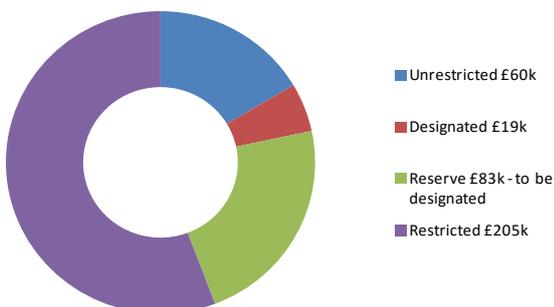
As always, the thorny issue of funding our work means that the managers and staff will have to continue their excellent collective work. We must tread that careful balance of meeting the need, but matching the resource and the income to keep CCS at the top of its game as an efficient and effective charity and the best solution enabler for rural Somerset.

Keeley Rudd CEO for CCS

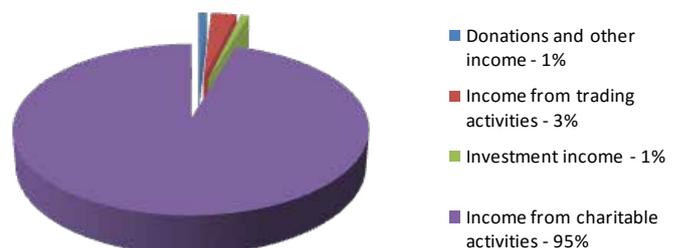
## The difference we make...

In 2015 CCS increased its income by 30.7% which has increased our unrestricted income by 8% but our expenditure has only increased by 6.5%. CCS's dedication to working to provide best value for money ensures that the funds we raise are spent on those most in need. Unrestricted income is used to provide the essential back office HR, management, financial and governance functions which ensures CCS is a well run charity. Restricted funds (income from charitable activities) are used to provide the extensive range of personalised support and services we offer.

Fund Balances 31/3/2016



2015/16 Income



## Rural Broadband - Encouraging your community to get online

 Broadband is an essential part of life for all communities, businesses and individuals. Lack of access to broadband leads to increased exclusion, socially, financially and is exacerbated due to the decline of and remoteness from local services in most rural communities.

With the introduction of the Transparency Code, a must for Parish Council's to adhere to, an increase in individuals registering online to receive benefits, and personal health care budgets, there is an added pressure on communities to provide digital services to ensure their rural residents are not excluded.

CCS delivered **6 FREE** Get Up To Speed Digital Villages Training Sessions to communities across Somerset to demonstrate different aspects of digital technology which can support communities.

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**CCS trained:**  
**73 Parishes**  
**133 Individuals**

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The training introduced communities to free of charge programs and applications to support residents, suggested community WiFi hotspots and provided a guide on delivering this. Top tips for saving time, and money and also demonstrated how communities can deliver an inclusive digital community.



West Monkton Parish Council said:

“As a result of digital training with CCS I felt confident ... I am now able to get the Village News onto the parish website as a 'small PDF' ... I can do the task myself rather than asking the web-master to do it (incurring a charge). My ability to use the website to comply with recent Transparency legislation has been increased. I have also used the scheduling tool and gone on to Mail Chimp to create regular news reports. I would say it has helped me to increase the profile of the Parish Council in the community, which is important as we are working on a Neighbourhood Plan.”

## It's all about the money, money, money ...with our Funding Portal



The charitable sector means business these days. It has to. A growing number of groups, communities and organisations have to fight for grants, donations and support, often from the same sources.

To help alleviate this situation CCS launched a brand new **FREE** funding portal in 2015 which has enabled communities to



search thousands of local, regional and national grant opportunities for their project.

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**Since launching there have been 3,475 visits to the portal**

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We also offer additional services; community consultation, feasibility studies and application support, to help maximise your opportunity to obtain the funding needed for you project.

Visit: [www.somersetccc.org.uk/funding](http://www.somersetccc.org.uk/funding)



In the last 12 months Somerset

Village Agents have supported over 1000 clients

It has been an exciting year for the Somerset Village Agent Project, which has again expanded geographically in the scope of our work. We are now involved with two pilot projects following the social prescribing model.

The first pilot is working in the North Sedgemoor area taking referrals from GP's, where we have two Village Agents and one Community Agent. The pilot involves us in patients care plans. Patients are supported to improve their confidence, knowledge, skills and ownership of their health.

An example of this would be connecting patients to groups where they could access peer support to better manage their conditions. We aim to reduce the number of times people are going to see their



Making the difference in your community

GP, by helping them access support within their community, attending a luncheon club or coffee morning with a client until they are confident enough to attend themselves.

The second pilot involves a similar model where we take referrals from social workers at the newly established Adult Social Care Hubs in Minehead and Wellington. Our Village Agents are supporting individuals to connect with their peers in their local area to help them manage their own health conditions and any associated problems, and therefore become more independent.

This pilot commenced in November 2015 and has developed significantly. Adult Social Care have selected West Somerset as an

innovation site where they are testing new ways of working.

Our Village Agent has been key to these developments and is now viewed as a team member by the Adult Social Care team attending peer group meetings and having an input on how the service is shaped. This is helping Adult Social Care workers come up with community based solutions for clients that are dealt with quickly and effectively.

All other Village Agents have continued supporting residents with a range of issues in their local areas with everything from dealing with scams, coffee mornings, community transport schemes, grants for assistance, loneliness, grab rails and everything in between.

TOP AREAS OF SUPPORT

1,058	50	53	77	82
Clients	Relationships	Housing	Benefits	Transport
8	94	96	118	346
New Groups	Flood	Other	Safety	Health & Social Care

## Keeping Somerset Cosy



Village Agents provided winter blankets across the county in time for the colder weather.

With a successful application to the Somerset Community Foundation we secured £500 from the Keeping Warm fund from Public Health to spend on 50 cosy blankets purchased from Poundstretcher in Taunton.

Audrey Mansfield, the Village Agent who made the successful application, said: "The feedback has been really great and I know that all recipients were extremely grateful for the thought as well as the actual item."

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"That is wonderful. Just what I need."

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Another CCS Village Agent said of her client: "She was completely overwhelmed and burst into tears... The blanket was just what was needed and I very much doubt she has been given a gift in years."



- **Surviving Winter grants**, money donated to Somerset Community Foundation and redistributed via our agents.

" You knew things were bad when you sit on the sofa and its damp to the touch! "

I took a referral from Adult Social Care for a lady who lives in a housing association property and could not afford to heat her home. The property is heated by oil and the tank had run dry. I knew things were bad when I sat on the sofa and it was damp to the touch and she told me she was boiling the kettle for all her hot water. The entire property was very cold, the lady was wearing lots of layers and the only heat source was from a small expensive electric heater. She had just recently had an amputation, so her mobility was restricted and it was dangerous for her to be carrying a kettle when she was at greater risk of falling after her operation. The cold room was not helping her recover and she was very worried and stressed - causing her household waste to remain at the back of the property and not be collected. The situation was escalating and potentially becoming dangerous for her.

The lack of oil prompted a further issue; when the oil runs out it needs the system to be completely flushed before it may be used which is an additional cost that she could not afford. The situation was sending the lady into debt and with the rising costs of her electricity bills she was struggling to see any way out.

The surviving winter grant was the starting point for support, which then opened the door to supporting her improve her quality of life.

**Village Agents distributed**

**£4,725**

**to those in most in need across Somerset**

## Community Buildings - build communities



England's 10,000 village halls are at the heart of rural community life – providing a hub for social activities, classes and services such as post offices, doctors' surgeries and shops.

Somerset's Village Halls boast some of the most fantastic innovative, dynamic volunteers which keep them running for the future generations.

CCS's unique specialist support service in 2015 has supported it's members to continue their great work.

To keep our halls up to date:

- We have distributed **14** Community Buildings Newsletters/Bulletins
- We supported **118** community buildings across Somerset
- We also held two networking training events where representatives from over **54** halls with **87** committee members attended.

Our training events covered;

- Community Cinema
- Saving Energy,
- Insurance
- Community Resilience
- and Food Allergy Advice.



CCS awarded trophies and certificates to 23 Village Halls to celebrate achieving the Hallmark Quality standards at the October annual Community Buildings training event at Edington Village Hall.

21 achieved Hallmark One - focuses on management and administration  
 14 achieved Hallmark Two - focuses on health, safety, security and licences  
 9 achieved Hallmark Three - focuses on community and social awareness, communications, forward planning and development.

### Top Topics of support



### Saving Somerset ££s on heating oil

The domestic heating oil market is complex and many people find it hard to get a competitive price. Research shows 36% of homes in rural areas are off the gas grid, so many households rely on heating oil.

We enable people to get Oil for less with the Somerset Community Oil Scheme, a bulk buying purchase where your orders are gathered, and negotiated to get the best price possible.

With over 450 members the scheme has made a real difference.

“ I have recently used the Somerset Oil Scheme which has been a really worthwhile experience. Not only have I saved £150 on filling my oil tank, but the process of registering was very easy and all the staff were very helpful and guided us through every step of the process. ”

Start saving and visit:

In total we have saved our members over £200,000

[www.somersetccc.org.uk/oil](http://www.somersetccc.org.uk/oil)



## Steps to Success- Making your project happen

 Starting on a project to benefit your community, perhaps setting up a community shop, refurbishing your village hall or conducting a Housing Needs Survey can perhaps be a bit daunting and it can be hard to know where to start. CCS can help you along the way, to give you the best chance of success.

### Community Consultation

When planning a community project it's essential you have a very clear idea of the

needs of your community. Community Consultation is a highly valuable process through which the collective voice of a community can be heard. Good community consultation will inform, guide and ensure the success of any project and open the door to funding opportunities.

We can assist with surveys for community buildings, wider Community Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Housing Needs. In 2015 CCS worked with Pitminster Community Hall and Pavilion where **71% of the community responded in the survey.**

 We've been trying to build a community pavilion and hall for 12 years. There is no large space where people can gather for events and we want to change that. We applied for a Big Lottery grant before but we were unsuccessful, and CCS has been helping us with our application this time around. They have been so supportive and they also helped us to carry out a large community survey in the area to find out what people want.

 Duncan Meikle, Pitminster & Angersleigh PFA

"CCS has consistently provided valuable advice and support, to sustain and improve our village shop over a number of years. Most recently CCS signposted us to potential sources of grant funding, assisted with the preparation of grant applications and helped us to identify ways of improving the shop and the services it provides to the local community. Our first successful grant application paid for a new, quieter and more efficient chiller unit for the shop, reducing running costs, and other applications in the pipeline are expected to enable us to make further long term investment. The support of CCS has been crucial in keeping our shop open and helping to make it more sustainable".

Charles St George, Chair, Stawley Community Association.

### Funding Bids

 If you know what your community needs and wants you can start to bid for funds to fulfil these requirements. CCS can work with you to identify the rights funds to apply for and complete good quality applications to be able to put your plans into action. We have delivered our funding advice service to 57 communities in all parts of Somerset, both urban and rural.

In this year we have assisted with both funding and enterprise advice including Creech St Michael, Pitminster, Kingston St Mary, Batcombe, Hatch Beauchamp, Cutcombe, West Quantoxhead, Watchfield, Williton, and Neroche amongst many others. This direct support has helped to secure **£37,552** in grant funding.

## Current CCS Staff

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