


Impact Report

January 2021 - January 2022

A photograph of a workshop session with an orange overlay. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a striped shirt, is seen from the back, gesturing with her right hand. In the background, two other people are visible: a woman with long dark hair and a man with a beard wearing a white t-shirt. A table in the foreground is covered with various paint cans and containers. The text is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

“Fabulous sessions - great instruction, good knowledge of instructors - helpful and fun! Loved learning these new skills, loved being part of of the group. Thank you so much!!!”

Workshop participant

Contents

Introduction	1
Business model	2
Community projects	3
Commissions	5
Impact	6
KPIs	8
The team	9
Get in touch	10

Introduction

Co Create is a fast-growing social enterprise which uses craft skills to bring people together to build relationships, learn skills and gain confidence.

Co Create was incorporated as a Community Interest Company in January 2021 and is led by founding director John Marker, an experienced carpenter with a passion for community spirit. Co Create was established in response to the falling levels of wellbeing¹, reduced capacity of third sector services², and evidence that activity-based interventions have a high success rate³. Our primary goal is to **reduce the likelihood of social isolation and loneliness** in Exeter and beyond.

In our first year we have converted the first storey of a commercial property in central Exeter into a well-equipped maker workshop that serves Devon residents who are taking responsibility for their wellbeing and who have been referred by other third sector organisation, e.g. social prescription.

As a young organisation our methodology is fast evolving, but our three core aims are to create opportunities for people to get together (free and paid), raise participant confidence and esteem, and share skills that enable participants to be more independent (and in some cases, more employable). As we grow and learn more about the needs of our local community, we will develop our offer to best support those we can.

Our first year was a whirlwind of activity; building a workshop, recruiting a team, trialling courses, making friends, creating a website, meeting hundreds of people and listening to their ideas and needs. In total, we have delivered over 5000 hours of social impact this year (hours of time that participants and volunteers have spent with us).

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202021-wellbeing-and-loneliness/wellbeing-and-loneliness-community-life-survey-202021>

²<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/2202/pdf/>

³Collier, A. F., Wayment, H. A., & Wolf, M. (2020). Do-it-Yourself Activities and Subjective Well-Being. In International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology (Vol. 5, Issue 3, pp. 231–248). Springer Science and Business Media LLC. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-020-00035-7>

Business model

Co Create is a not-for-profit organisation. Our priority is to offer courses which are freely available to those who will most benefit from them. We call this strand of our business **Community**. In order to fund **Community** projects, we have 4 other strands to our business;

Courses

Paid courses we offer to the general public, which are structurally similar to our **Community** projects.

Commissions

Work we offer to other community groups, businesses and other organisations using in-house expertise. Where possible we tie these in with **Community** projects.

Counter

Items we sell. These may be made on our **Courses** or **Community** projects.

Collections

A low-cost timber collection service offered to local businesses and individuals. This will also give us timber and unwanted goods to use and up-cycle as part of our **Community** projects and sell on our **Counter**. This strand is currently in development.



Refugee allotment project

Note

This impact report will focus solely on our **Community** projects, and **Commissions** which enable us to raise capital and build our networks. The other strands of our business will be developed in 2022.

Community Projects

March 2021

- Delivery of an online woodwork course over 4 weeks during a national lockdown in which 12 participants learned to build their own insect hotels using materials and tools dropped off to them. Funded by National Lottery.

June 2021

- We collaborate with Refugee Devon and the St Thomas community garden volunteers to tidy an allotment, build 2 raised beds and a composter from unused pallets collected from a local business. Funded by Exeter City Council.

- We deliver a pilot project of 'Remade', an up-cycling course for 'inactive' adults. This was funded and supported by European Social Fund via Exeter Community Initiatives.

- We run a community day out building bird and bug boxes for (and funded by) Wonford Planters, attended by 40 participants.

July 2021

- We work with 50 Pennsylvania residents to build 6 picnic benches (including 2 disabled access benches) for (and funded by) the Sylvania Community Store, attended by approx 50 participants per day (3 day project)



Building picnic benches with Pennsylvania residents

September 2021

- Delivery of Remade Course #1 over 10 weekly sessions. Funded by European Social Fund via Exeter Community Initiatives.

- Delivery of a 6 week course for people recently released from prison to gain confidence and skills through learning woodworking skills to enable reintegration back into a community setting and live a crime free life). Funded by Shaw Trust.

- Delivery of a 6 session course for Exwick and St. Lloyes residents to build their own 'Little Free Library' (LINK) . Funded by National Lottery.

October 2021

We launch free weekly woodwork drop in sessions (two sessions per day - approx 8-10 participants per session) for people of all skills levels and needs. Between Oct-Dec 2021, we see approx 100 individual participants. Participants are from the general public and referred by Well-being Exeter, GP Social Prescription and other health and care agencies. Funded by Wood For Good CIC & Recovery Devon. This is an ongoing project (funded up to June 2022 by Wood For Good and Exeter City Council).

December 2021

Delivery of a community engagement day for (and funded by) Wonford Planters, building raised beds and wooden log reindeers (sourced from a local sawmill) with the local community (approx 30 participants).



Designing and making a laptop stand at a drop-in session

Commissions

June 2021

- Building planters and benches for St Sidwells Methodist Church.

July 2021

- Building wheeled planters for the Mint Methodist Church and the Fore Street Flea.
- Working with Exeter YMCA to build a community garden and purpose built shed.

October 2021

- Fitting out St Petroc's circular fashion on Paris Street in Exeter.

November 2021

- Designing and building 20 portable market stalls for Eastgate Market (a market for independent traders and local makers).

December 2021

- Building a Santa's Lodge for InExeter, installed in Princesshay Shopping Centre.



Working with volunteers to build planters for the Fore Street Flea Market



St Petroc's circular fashion shop, built with volunteers

Impact

The data shown on the next page was taken from our participants between March 2021 and January 2022. In our first year we were keen to measure our impact broadly in order to determine where our strengths and weaknesses may lie. We are heartened to see that all statements have had overwhelming agreement.

We are particularly interested in closing the gap between the self reported learning of new skills (89% participants) and increase of well-being (78%). This will be reflected in our future offers, where we will look to celebrate the learning process more and ask participants how learning can best result in well-being.

Our goal for 2022 is to measure our success using 3 KPI's (see page 8) and commission an external evaluation of our impact and outputs. We will also look to monitor more closely our participant demographic data in order to understand which local communities we are serving most. Whilst we have noticed a diverse range of participant ages and backgrounds, we have noticed a particularly high number of females take interest in our offer, which indicates an unmet need in Exeter for female-friendly courses around traditionally male activities such as DIY. This will be something we explore in more detail in 2022, namely with our Women In The Workshop project (see website).

“These sessions have helped me feel less isolated and have enabled me to meet new people. By going in the morning it has meant that I started my day well when otherwise I struggle to find the motivation to get out of bed. Seeing other people’s projects has given me inspiration. I have built my confidence in using woodworking tools and about different woods. I started with simple projects and hope to move onto more complicated ones.” Workshop participant

“Really enjoyable, just what I needed. It improved my overall confidence not just in woodwork. It relit my enthusiasm and thoughts for the future, thanks you so much!” Workshop participant

“Was the first time I’ve done something like this and it’s definitely encouraged me to come to more like this. I’ve enjoyed this so much and am happy with what I’ve made and everyone was so friendly.” Workshop participant

I gained confidence using tools.

89% Agree



I felt included.

81% Agree



I learnt new skills.

81% Agree



I experienced improved wellbeing.

78% Agree



I felt able to talk through new ideas.

78% Agree



I achieved my goals.

74% Agree



KPIs

As we move forward we will measure our impact through three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These will be examined through feedback forms and conversations with participants and other stakeholders.

Our offer	Intended outcome	KPI
Workshops with an emphasis on social interaction.	Improving well-being and reduced risk of social isolation.	Self reported increase of social connection, well-being and/or decreased sense of isolation.
Practical learning opportunities for all skill levels.	Increased self-confidence and esteem.	Self reported openness to new learning and socialising opportunities.
Access to high quality resources (tools & tutors).	Developed skill sets and pride in skills.	Self reported skill development and sense of skills being useful to self and others.

The team

John Marker *founding director*

John is the Founding Director of Co Create Exeter. John has over 15 years of carpentry and construction experience, and loves sharing his skills with others. He founded Co Create because of a desire to use creativity and woodwork as a medium for community and recovery.

Tony Dale *community champion*

As someone who is passionate about community and reducing social isolation, Tony has a central role in this team. He was previously involved with Wood For Good Exeter, before it merged with Co Create.

Mia Wilmott *engagement coordinator*

Like everyone in the Co Create team, Mia's role is diverse. She is involved with facilitating courses, managing projects and coordinating our online activity.

Ben Marker *commissions assistant*

Ben works on many of the commissions that come through our studio. Having worked with John for a number of years they make a strong team.

Hugh McCann *non-executive director*

Hugh is an arts producer with an interest in the role that creativity plays in well-being. Hugh plays a key role in our fundraising efforts and business development.

Ben Harris *non-executive director*

Hannah Scott *workshop lead*

Fiona Rourke *workshop lead*

Volunteers *Dan, Lauren, Hannah, Josh*

Get in touch

Visit us

178-179 Sidwell Street, EX4 6RD, Exeter
Please check if we are open before arriving

Email

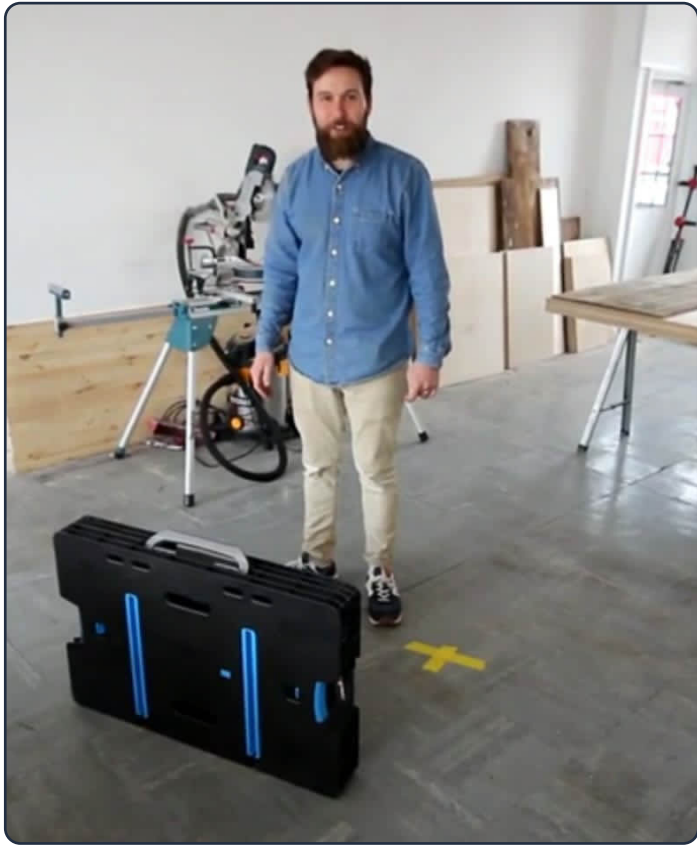
hello@cocreateexeter.co.uk

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Website

cocreateexeter.co.uk



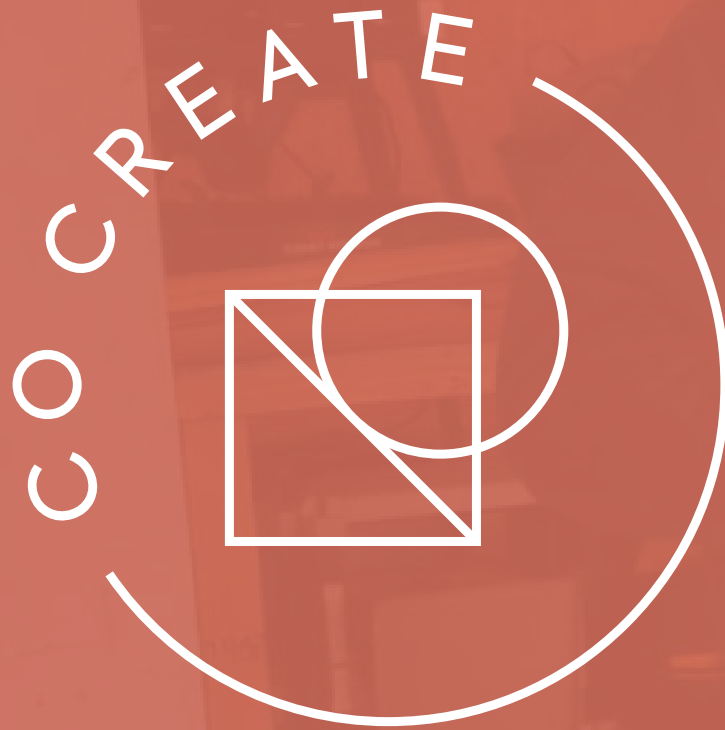
Day 1: a toolbox, an empty room & an idea



Day 200-and-something: a hive of activity



Building picnic benches with the Pennsylvania community for their new community store



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