



working in partnership with  and 

WISERMONEY

'Transitions' Project

Torrington Wellbeing and Community event

November 2nd 2021 3-7pm

Torrington Town Hall, Torrington



- “Really good to see the different organisations available to help the community.”
 - “Lots of information available.”

Our Aims:

- To give people the chance to find out more about their local community groups and services
- To share information about where to go for advice
- To inspire people to take up new opportunities and make new friends
- To give people the chance to talk to local council representatives
- To provide networking opportunities to local organisations and services

The event, supported by WDCVS and facilitated by our local community partners TTVS and Torrington 100, was held in the Torrington Town Hall with covid risk assessments in place. It is our seventh event since Jan 2018, and was the fourth community event we have organised as easing of Covid restrictions has allowed.

1. Changes to our approach

Torrington Town Hall is in the centre of the town, and our event took over the whole building. We advised on PPE choices and social distancing for both stallholders and the public.

Operating under the current covid regulations meant changing our format. As there are no mandatory rules, we suggested measures to both stallholders and the public, and asked them to exercise responsible choices, but could not insist. We also had to assess the safety of the space. The main entrance door to the building was kept open to ensure a flow of air through the space. We utilised the landing where there was a constant air movement. We put most stalls into the main hall of the building. This room had very high ceilings which helped to ventilate the space. Doors to other smaller rooms were kept open to maximise the flow of air. Refreshments were provided in disposable/recyclable cups and plates.

- o Covid risk assessment on venue/event
- o QR Code/Test and Trace procedures at entry
- o Hand gel throughout
- o Lateral flow tests suggested for stallholders
- o Limited refreshment provision
- o Community consultation taken by recorded interview and written response, but with scribes to limit physical contact

1. Summary figures

- 323 people were involved in the event including:
- 36 stalls
- 36 organisations represented
- 251 members of the public

2. Stallholder evaluation

We asked stallholders for their evaluation on the value of the event. Of the responses we received:

- 100% felt they had expanded on their knowledge of other services available, with 67% feeling they had learned a lot

- 94% felt encouraged to engage with other services as a result, with 56% feeling very positive and 41% feeling quite positive about doing so
- 89% felt they had useful exchanges with members of the public.

3. Public response

People felt Torrington to be a friendly place with a sense of community. Numerous people commented that people looked after one another and gave of their time and energy. The response to covid from the town was to pull together and make sure everyone was supported.

People felt that it was a busy place, with good facilities. Community events took place, and people were 'community-minded'. People appreciated the shops – especially the butchers and the bakers.

There was an observation that lots of local people lack skills in IT and are getting missed and becoming more isolated. Some people also noted how isolated older people especially had been through covid. One person commented that it was hard to get older people to come back into the community, and that there was continuing isolation as people had lost their social confidence.

Attendees at our event were very positive about what they took away from it:

- "I've met some really nice people!"
- "Anna from Wisermoney was brilliant! She's organised a LEAP assessment to help me with my flat, and given me details of how to check my ESA."
- "Loved meeting so many local people!"
- "Very impressed! Just how much is available for various needs and interests."
- "There is a W.I. in Torrington!"
- "I have taken contacts to come to our village and speak to our Ladies Group."
- "As Chair of Frithelstock Parish Council, I will arrange defibrillator training...and more!"
- "The U3A are an excellent organisation."
- "I've got a lot of mates with depression; I'll pass information on to them."

4. How well did it work?



Stallholder evaluation highlighted a number of positives from the event. Comments on the event included:

- "We have made contact with three or four organisations that we can work alongside of."
Royal Life Saving Soc.



- “It allowed us to not only advertise our facilities but promote our forward plans.” *Gt Torrington CDT*
- “We found a number of attendees who did not know of our services around Torrington.” *Ring and Ride*
- “As a result of this we are looking to set up a monthly film screening in conjunction with The Plough Arts Centre.” *TTVS*
- “Really well organised. Huge variety of stalls and organisations.” *Torrage*
- “It was very interesting to find out about all the services available, some of which may be of help to the age group we are involved with.” *Bickford Centre*

As an event to promote networking and awareness of other services, stallholders on the whole found a lot to discover and definite possibilities for future working. The variety of stallholders was commented on positively. Some people felt that there could have been more on offer for younger people. One comment touched on covid security, and the proximity of tables and quality of ventilation. Comments were made about the great atmosphere, and how the singing contributed to that; other responses were around the difficulty of having conversations in a noisy environment! I guess both are equally true! There was a lot of positive feedback about information being taken out to other places – especially neighbouring villages. At least one coherent plan for future working was hatched. Articles were also run in the local press:

[Fayre give groups chance to show what Great Torrington has to offer - Devon Live](#)

5. Participants

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| One Small Step | Friends of the Library |
| TTVS | Torrage |
| Learn Devon | Torrington Museum |
| Work Club | Torrige DC |
| Taw Valley Microgreens | Rosemoor RHS |
| Berry’s Solicitors | Royal Life Saving Society |
| Torrington WI | Wis£rmoney |
| Alzheimer’s Society | Devon Carers |
| The Filo Project | TK Play |
| Torrington CDT | The Bickford Centre |
| Methodist Church | Torrington Deanery |
| Ring and Ride | Organic Wholefood Buying Co-op |
| Petroc College | Torrington W.I. |

| Mary Crail Wellbeing | Pluss |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue | Devon Wildlife Trust |
| Rotary Club | Children's Hospice |
| CSW | North Devon Ramblers |
| Talkworks | Families In Grief |
| Parkinson's Support Group | |

6. Learning and thanks

We felt that we offered a wide range of stalls for people to peruse, which was a view supported by the public and stallholders alike. However, perhaps we need to ensure that there is a range of stalls that reach across the age range of the population to draw in a younger demographic. Given the popularity of the event, could it be worth managing it in two parts to facilitate this?

All people who attended engaged with stallholders, and information was being taken away to share with others. Stallholders felt that the atmosphere was lively and positive, and there was continual chatter as people networked with each other and shared their services with the public. A number of organisations explored future joint working partnerships. A number of people commented that they hoped this might be the first of many such events.

We were very grateful to the Great Torrington Town and Community Hall for agreeing to host our event and provide drinks, and for the effort they put in to making it run smoothly. We were also extremely appreciative of cakes from the WI, and pizzas from Sandford's Bakery. The Mariners Away shanty singers performed a couple of sets of songs for us, all of which helped to contribute to a great atmosphere. We felt satisfied that we had created an event that generated positive experiences for those that attended, and as such, fulfilled our aims.

"Well organised, with a good range of stallholders. Singers were great...Good atmosphere!"



For more information, please contact



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'Transitions' is a National Lottery funded project operating over West Devon and Torridge, now in its fifth year. It offers free debt and money advice to people who are isolated by circumstance or geography. It seeks to boost community resilience by hosting community wellbeing events across rural communities in partnership with West Devon CVS.