

# THE RESTARTER

A monthly update from  
Suffolk Community Restart



Time for a round-up of the stories, the celebrations and the successes which encapsulate the progress being made by Suffolk's many voluntary organisations in getting back up and running post-lockdown.

Please keep sharing your news with us, by using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

## DOOR REOPENS ON SOCIAL SHED

**July marked the reopening of Debenham Shed, part of the UK Men's Shed Association.**

This successful nationwide concept has been helping encourage guys up and down the country to come together in a social manner, typically while engaging in activities like repairs, and hobbies most associated with being inside a garden shed.

Contrary to popular belief, women are welcome too, and the informal environment is ideal for getting people to share in conversation, and experiences – perfect for reducing the risk of isolation and loneliness.

Debenham Shed is based in a 40ft shipping container in the village's Low Road, and the charity has received a Restart grant of £2,500, helping it to purchase PPE equipment, garden tools and more.

Douglas Tatem, fundraiser, said: "We're delighted to have been able to formally reopen our Debenham Shed and are so grateful to all those from within the community who turned out to show their support and to welcome us back.

"It's been a challenging time for so many over the last year, and we know that the nature of Men's Sheds is that they provide an incredibly powerful asset in the lives of those who attend."

He added: "We feel very fortunate to have been in receipt of a Community Restart grant, enabling us to get back up and running quickly and safely."

The opening event also saw the attendance of representatives from the East of England Co-op, who had generously provided food for the occasion.

Commenting on the reopening, Alan Page, from UK Men's Shed Association, said: "It's such a happy occasion to see another shed welcoming back the community after many months of disruption or closure throughout the pandemic.

"As a nationwide network, we recognise what a part we play in the mental and emotional wellbeing of those who visit regularly, and we know that the concept helps us prevent isolation and loneliness.

"I wish the Debenham team every success for the summer and beyond."

Jonny Wood, for Community Action Suffolk's 'Restart' team, added: "The Shed is exactly the kind of initiative we look to support through the Restart programme.

"It's bringing something excellent to the community by way of a sociable opportunity, and by awarding the team a grant, we've enabled people to access this facility much more quickly and safely than might otherwise have been possible.

"We're excited to see how the group progresses in the year ahead."

**For information about the Debenham Shed, you can talk to Jonny directly by calling 01473 345400.**



Our very own Jonny Wood, a CAS Community Restart Officer who works closely with Men's Sheds across Norfolk and Suffolk, recently had his moment in the spotlight as part of the annual 'ShedFest', hosted by UK Men's Shed Association.

Jonny's '15 minutes of fame' came in a panel discussion entitled 'What is a Men's Shed and how do they work?', a session aimed at both individuals and organisations who may not yet be involved with Men's Sheds but would like to know more!

As for how well he got on....you can judge for yourselves by checking out the YouTube video.

[CLICK HERE](#)

For those who would like to see the full variety of the ShedFest sessions, they can all be revisited by going to [menssheds.org.uk/shedfest-2021](https://menssheds.org.uk/shedfest-2021)

## FACT!

To date, Suffolk Community Restart has awarded grants to 134 organisations

## HEY BUDDY! THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

**Nicky Russell, a Buddy-Up Officer from Community Action Suffolk, has been visiting some Suffolk residents who are reaping the benefit from the Buddy-Up initiative.**

“I recently joined volunteer Chris Lawson for afternoon tea with 2 lovely companions! Chris, a retired headteacher has been phoning Doreen and Patricia for nearly a year to provide support and companionship during a long period of shielding- even making calls on Christmas Day but last week she did the most important job of all which was enabling Doreen to feel safe and comfortable in a community venue.

Despite regular chats, the ladies had never met in person and were very excited about the opportunity for a proper face to face conversation and despite some nervousness about venturing out, Chris was a reassuring presence.

Chris, as a Buddy has spent time getting to know Doreen and Patricia and is now keen to support them to re-engage with the local community. Doreen, previously very proactive in her rural community, told us that she used to organise dances for the village and has had a full and active life but that many of the groups she previously relied upon have closed permanently. Chris, knowing Doreen well, plans to help her to find new groups and build links that will be meaningful and rewarding for a happy and fulfilling future.

Buddy Up is more than traditional 1:1 befriending; the Buddies are pro-active in linking people back into their local communities through groups, activities and use ‘Community Circles’ based training to really get to know what matters to the person they are linked to. Working together to plan activities, the Buddy will use their local knowledge to support their linked friend to move forward feeling empowered and positive about the future.”



### FACT!

To date, Suffolk Community Restart has awarded grants for such things as PPE equipment, volunteer training, telephone systems, children’s thermometers, gazebos, contactless payment machines and a kitchen refurbishment.

## NICE TO SEE YOU... IN REAL LIFE

**It’s been an awful long time since so many of the county’s voluntary groups, clubs and organisations were last able to be sitting alongside one another, sharing in laughter, exchanging stories or getting stuck into sport and play.**



For that reason, it feels all the more special that our ‘in person’ Restart events have been taking place across Suffolk over recent weeks.

We’ve been out and about in village halls and community buildings, presenting the stories of how different networks and groups have managed to get themselves back up and running since the most recent lockdown.

To date, we’ve been in locations such as Kessingland, Bucklesham, Wickhambrook and Ipswich.

At each one, we’ve heard from volunteers, project leaders and venue hosts, all explaining how they’ve benefited from the Restart support, and giving tips for getting up to speed post-pandemic.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR LATEST LIVE EVENTS](#)

## GET IN TOUCH

We’re always keen to hear from anyone who wants to find out more about Suffolk Community Restart, or who is keen to share their story about putting their Restart grant to good use. [Click here to get in contact.](#)