



Annual Report 2016/17

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Welcome

Once again, it has been another highly successful and rewarding year for our Corporate Social Responsibility programme here at Devonshires. As you can see from this amazing report, staff have been involved in numerous fundraising events to support our three charities: Friends of the Elderly, Action for Kids and Theatre Royal Stratford East. This year's fundraising grand total, split between the three charities, came to an incredible £43,634. This includes the contribution from the Devonshires Foundation as we continue to match-fund sponsorship activities which our staff have participated in. And the number of such activities continues to grow as evidenced by the plethora of photos, reports and other information contained in this brochure. Lots of smiles and laughter here, not just from staff, but more importantly from the people, young and old, who are helped by the three fantastic organisations we support.

This is my last year as CSR Partner as I hand over the reins to my fellow partner, Donna McCarthy. Not a retirement I hasten to add, but a reshuffling of responsibilities which sees me take over as Staff Partner at Devonshires. Suffice to say, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as CSR Partner although I have to say the bulk of the work has been done by the Devonshires CSR Committee. They do a fantastic job encouraging staff to get out there and fundraise. Well done to them and please keep up the good work.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say how incredibly grateful we are to everyone who has given so generously to our fundraising activities.

Nick Billingham

What Corporate Social Responsibility means to Devonshires

Our CSR programme focuses on
four strands

Charitable Giving



Community

Environment



Workplace



The Devs' Singers

In December 2016 the Devs Singers hosted an evening of carol-singing at All Hallows-on-the Wall, a centrally located chapel on London Wall. To get in the festive spirit they served a selection of canapés, mince pies and mulled mine.

Guests from Action for Kids, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Friends of the Elderly were all in attendance. Devonshires staff were also encouraged to attend and bring along the kids, their partners, clients and friends.

Devs Singers' membership is open to all our staff members of all singing abilities.



Abseiling for Action for Kids

In September 2017 Action for Kids celebrated their 25th anniversary. To help them celebrate Devonshires' Ben Tucker (pictured top right) and Rennie Miller (pictured bottom right) agreed to complete a 262 foot abseil of The Arcelor Mittal Orbit Tower to raise funds for the charity.

Action For Kids helps empower disabled young people by providing employment and training opportunities, as well as specialist and life-changing equipment not available from the NHS, such as bikes and trikes.

In total more than £750 pounds was raised.



Employability Skills Session



Since our last annual report we have hosted two more successful Employability Skills Sessions at our London office. The most recent of these sessions took place in May 2017, with 15 local unemployed people in attendance.

The aim of our Employability Skills Sessions is to support participants successfully gain a job by equipping them with the essential skills required to obtain work. The sessions which are run by Devonshires volunteers cover key areas such as CV writing and interview skills. The sessions also provide a space where participants can engage in discussions about entry into and experiences in the workplace.

Following the sessions participants are given the opportunity to apply for a temporary role within our General Office Team. Following our May 2017 session, two participants were offered full-time employment.



The Great Devs' Bake Off

In October 2017 we hosted 'The Great Devs' Bake Off' and a bake sale to raise funds for our three chosen charities.

Each department nominated a team member to take part in the bake off and compete for the coveted title of 'Office Star Baker'. Those not taking part were encouraged to donate cakes for the bake sale.

Prizes were awarded on the day for the best looking, the best effort and star baker. Lee Russell from the Housing Management Team (pictured bottom left) won the competition with his impressive looking apple cake.

Overall more than £250 was raised for our chosen charities.



Sports at Devonshires

‘Old School’ Sports Day

Over the summer we held our third internal Sports Day at Clapham Common. The day saw four teams compete in eight ‘old school’ sports day games. Games included the egg and spoon race, the 3-legged race, tug of war, the wheelbarrow race, wellie toss, water relay, hula hoop race and the sack race.

London Triathlon

Devonshires Tri Stars (Jonathan Jarvis, Nicki Thompson and Carolyn Thomas) took part in the 2017 AJ Bell London Triathlon at London Excel on Saturday 22 July - completing the race in 3 hours and 30 minutes. They competed in the Olympic Team Relay which is a 1500m swim (Jonathan), 40km bike ride (Nicki) and 10km run (Carolyn). This year marked Nicki's 9th year taking part and Carolyn's 8th! More than £1000 was raised and donated to Friends of the Elderly.

5-a-side Football Tournament

On Thursday 19 October Devonshires held a 5-a-side football tournament at Power League Shoreditch. Nine teams from Devonshires, Home Group, L&Q, Martin Arnold, Poplar HARCA, Thames Valley Housing Association and Wandle Housing Association competed for the title of best 5-a-side team. The team from Martin Arnold claimed victory on the night, with Devonshires Orange coming in a close second. More than £250 was raised for our charity partners Friends of the Elderly, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Action for Kids. This amount was also matched by the Devonshires Foundation.





Cycling Challenge

In June Nick Billingham, Philip Barden and Robert Edge accepted the challenge to cycle 410 miles from Malin Head the most northern part of Ireland to Mizen Head in the south of the country, to raise money for our chosen charities.

Braving torrential downpours and 15-20 mph winds for much of the journey, the group completed the ride in 21 hours and 30 minutes. The fundraising target was to raise £10,000 and with the help of generous supporters, match-funding from the Devonshires Foundation and gift aid this amount was surpassed by some margin.

The group raised more than £16,000 for Friends of the Elderly, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Action for Kids.

Nick Billingham said: “We are very thankful for all the support that has been shown by our colleagues, friends and clients. Although great fun, we will leave it for at least another two years before we cook up another cycling event to beat even this adventure”.



Friends of the Elderly Summer Fete



In August the Friends of the Elderly care home in Staines hosted their annual summer fete for the residents and their families. A group from Devonshires volunteered to help set-up for the event, building marquees and hanging bunting. They also attended the fete to spend time with the residents and take part in the fun and frolics the fete had to bring.

Keeping the City Clean:

Our Environmental Achievements over the last 12 months

830

Trees saved

91

Tonnes of CO2
saved

100%
recycling
rate

Gold
Award
with Special
Commendation
from Clean City
Awards

Silver
Standard
certificate from
First Mile





Green Week

In May the CSR Environment Team hosted a 'green week' to raise awareness of current environmental issues and how we, as a firm and individuals, can reduce our carbon footprint and be more environmentally friendly.

Each day of green week focused on a particular environmental area including: Recycling, Electricity, Water, Biodiversity and Sustainability and Transport.



Devs' Mugs

To kick off Green Week staff members were given a Devonshires coffee mug to enjoy. Every day in the UK, up to 7 million coffee cups are thrown away, with less than 1% of these being recyclable.

Staff were encouraged to use their new cups when buying coffee to minimise waste.



The Plant of Good Hope

Until recently a 'Dracaena Fragrans' plant native to the tropical parts of Africa could be found withering away in our IT training room from lack of attention.

Ibolya Solyom, an amateur horticulturist and member of Devonshires CSR Environment Team, decided to make it her mission to save this plant from its imminent death.

Ibolya removed the dead leaves, re-potted the plant based on advice from several UK garden centres and relocated it to a more hospitable room for its growth.

Thanks to Ibolya's persistence this plant, now known as the 'fortune plant', has started to sprout bright green leaves!



Devs' Does Panto

Last Christmas Devonshires hosted its Christmas pantomime event at the Theatre Royal Stratford East, welcoming our charities to attend a Christmas party and see the theatre's production of Sinbad the Sailor.

A group of Devonshires staff attended the event helping set up rooms, put out food and hand out goody bags and ice creams at the panto show.

The Devonshires pantomime event is a highlight on our CSR calendar and the feedback from the charities and the volunteers who take part is extremely positive.

On 9 December 2017 we will again be hosting our Christmas Pantomime Event at the Theatre Royal Stratford East. We will be welcoming guests to attend a Christmas party and see the theatre's production of Rapunzel.





Christmas Collection for Changing Pathways

We were proud to continue our relationship with Changing Pathways, a charitable organisation providing a refuge for women who have been victims of domestic violence and their children. Staff acted as “Secret Santa” buying presents for the children residing in the refuge over the Christmas period. As always our staff dug deep and generously donated gifts for the mothers as well as donations of nearly new household items and books for day to day use in the Refuge and for families moving on. All Christmas presents and donations were very gratefully received.



Devonshires Decorate Moor House

In December 2016 Ben Tucker, Diarmaid O'Sullivan and Karen Cathcart volunteered to help put up Christmas decorations at Moor House residential care home in Surrey. To get into the festive spirit we also put on some Christmas drinks and mince pies.

Action For Kids Celebrate their 25th Anniversary

On Thursday 2 November 2017, Devonshires attended our nominated charity, Action For Kids' Gala Dinner at the Royal Horseguards Hotel.

The fundraising event celebrated 25 years of Action For Kids changing the lives of disabled children and young people. Guests included Ade Adepitan, cast members of TOWIE and Martine Wright, captain of the British sitting volleyball team.

Action For Kids would like to thank everyone at Devonshires for their support over the years and the difference we have made to their young people's lives.



What we raised in 2016 - 17



In the period of April 2016 – March 2017 we raised £43,634 for the three charities we support.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Devonshires Firm Donation | £30,000 |
| Amount raised by staff and partners | £13,634 |
| TOTAL | £43,634 |

Broken down, the total amount raised for each of our charities is:

| Charity | Total raised |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Friends of the Elderly | £14,303 |
| Action for Kids | £19,057 |
| Theatre Royal Stratford East | £10,275 |
| TOTAL | £43,634 |

We are very grateful to everyone at the firm and outside who either took part in our activities or donated to the cause.



"Big thank you to everyone for their support and hard work. It's great to see so many people from across the firm get involved! Well done!"

Gemma Leary, Friends of the Elderly

Founded in 1905, Friends of the Elderly are one of the UK's oldest charities supporting older people. Their vision is a society where all older people are treated with respect and have the opportunity to lead fulfilled lives. To achieve this, they provide support for all older people, particularly those in need due to mental or physical frailty, isolation or poverty.

LONDON TRIATHLON

22nd - 23rd July 2017

AJ BELL LONDON TRIATHLON Course Map

There are toilets throughout the venue accessible from the boulevard and numerous catering units for refreshments.

FULL COURSE MAP



Action For Kids



For 25 years Action For Kids has helped and empowered disabled children and young people and promoted an independent lifestyle by providing employment and training opportunities, as well as specialist and life-changing equipment not available from the NHS, such as bikes and trikes. Their mission is to create a world where everyone living with a disability gets to lead the life they choose.

Action For Kids has been a Devonshires charity partner since 2011 and to date more than £100,000 has been donated to support the purchase of bespoke mobility equipment for disabled children all around the UK and a range of education, training and employment projects for London's disabled youngsters.

Employees at Devonshires have abseiled, run marathons, taken on gruelling cycling challenges, sang at concerts and baked cakes to raise vital funds. In addition the pro bono support and volunteering that the firm provides offers great benefits to Action For Kids. Recently a group of young people with learning disabilities, including Down Syndrome and autism, visited Devonshires in Moorgate for some valuable CV writing and interview skills workshops. One of the highlights of the year is the annual 'Devonshires Does Panto' party at the Theatre Royal Stratford East. Disabled children and their families receive VIP treatment and an unforgettable day out.

"We can't thank everyone at Devonshires enough for choosing to support Action For Kids again. This extremely generous donation means that you have now raised over £100,000 to fund life-changing mobility equipment, education and training and supported employment for disabled children and young people. Everything you do is truly appreciated – the fundraising, the volunteering and the special days you provide make a big difference."

Lyn Prodger - Action For Kids



The Theatre Royal opened in 1884 and since then it has undergone many changes. In 1992 the beautiful Victorian-era auditorium was restored. The refurbishment project enabled the theatre to re-open in the Autumn of 2001 with both technical facilities and public areas fit for the 21st Century.

They produce approximately seven new shows a year, including a pantomime, plus one-off events. In 1999 they launched their Musical Theatre Initiative, with the vision to break new ground with musicals that bring contemporary and urban music into the mainstream of British theatre. The aim is to revitalise the musical form, to create work that is relevant to and informed by today's Britain and attract new diverse audiences.

Their youth arts and education work, new writing and audience outreach all form part of their holistic approach to developing new work and new audiences.

They are committed to developing new work that represents the aspirations and concerns of their diverse local community.




'We have loved working with Devonshires Solicitors over the last six years. We value this partnership enormously and, as a charity, their support enables us to continue our important work with young people and communities from east London.'

We are delighted to work with them again this year to host 'Devonshires Does Panto'. At this festive celebration, Friends of the Elderly and Action for Kids will join us for a Christmas party and special performance of our award-winning pantomime, Rapunzel.'

We would also like to thank Devonshires for supporting us this year through their staff cycle challenge; their ongoing support and involvement with our work is truly vital'.

Deborah Sawyerr, Executive Director, Theatre Royal Stratford East



We hope you have found this report informative and useful.

We are always looking for more ideas for our CSR activities from our clients and friends and are keen to work together with anyone who shares our values or wants to get involved.

To find out more, please contact:

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