PR - Charity Retail Association Awards

**Devon Air Ambulance scoops Prestigious Retail Award for their Barnstaple Community Hub**

*The North Devon charity shop has won ‘The WOW! Factor’ category at this year’s Charity Retail Association awards for Best Shop Interior.*

The Charity Retail Association represents the interests of charity shops and charity retailers across the UK and this annual award ceremony celebrates the innovation and achievements of charity retailers across the country including Devon Air Ambulance (DAA) which was shortlisted for three awards:

* Vanessa Hawken - Retail Employee of the Year
* Clive Burke - Volunteer of the Year
* Barnstaple Community Hub – The WOW! Factor Award for Best Shop Interior

Pete Vallance, Head of Business Development at Devon Air Ambulance, proudly accepted the award for the Best Shop Interior on Thursday 27 June and said:

*‘This award was voted for by the attendees of the event so to be chosen as Best Shop Interior by our peers and suppliers in the charity retail industry is truly an honour. It is a testament to the work that goes on behind the scenes in not just running a charity shop but setting one up with sustainability and luxury retail experience in mind.*

*One of the fundamental goals of the Barnstaple Community Hub and many of our refits looking ahead, is to reuse and recycle as much as we possibly can. When you walk into our North Devon shop, whatever preconceived notions you have about traditional charity shops will be completely turned around and this award demonstrates that.’*

**Bringing new life to a fantastic space in North Devon**

The Barnstaple setting is not only a unique and innovative charity shop, it is also a vibrant Community Hub for local people to gather as well as to shop. The aim behind DAA’s award-winning community hub is to foster a sense of belonging in a space dedicated to local people, where they can come together to connect and to support one another.

In addition to this innovative community and fundraising hub, the centrepiece is a large workspace with seating for ten, set up in memory of Avril Kingdom a much-loved former Devon Air Ambulance employee.

Local community groups are invited to meet up here, either to enjoy their own interests and crafts such as a *knit and natter*, or to support the charity by mending donations in need of repair. Community groups are invited to make good use of this space and can contact Shop Manager Kevin Brown at k.brown@daat.org for more information.

The Barnstaple shop is designed with sustainability and creativity in mind, even the shop furniture was sourced second hand. The till point creates a focal point in the store with a donation station and branded messaging built into the wooden countertop and as you enter the fitting rooms, you find yourself enjoying the view from the helicopter cockpit.

Devon Air Ambulance helps save lives at the scene. Its specialist doctors and paramedics provide crucial, time-critical care to patients suffering from serious illness or injury. The charity serves Devon and neighboring counties by air and by road, with the aim of reaching every patient within 15-20 minutes.

The charity depends on voluntary donations to continue its lifesaving service. If you wish to support their vital work, donate here: [www.daat.org](http://www.daat.org)

**Notes to editor**

* Avril worked for the charity for 17 years as Manager of the charity’s original Barnstaple shop across the road from the new Community Hub. Sadly, Avril passed away in early 2023. She was well-known within the Barnstaple community for her networking with traders and different local groups while tirelessly raising the profile of Devon Air Ambulance within North Devon.
* Devon Air Ambulance Community Hub can be found at **60 Boutport St, Barnstaple, EX31 1SH**
* The shop also houses spaces for the charity’s rapid response Critical Care Car at the unit’s rear, allowing the DAA clinical crew to use this as a base for their operations, enabling them to be dispatched quickly in an emergency.
* As with many of the Devon Air Ambulance charity shops, positioned at the front of the building there is also an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) available for community use 24/7 should anyone need to use it to assist someone in Cardiac Arrest.
* DAA’s Barnstaple Community Hub opened on Saturday 15 July 2023