



Fair Shares
community time banks

2024/25
Annual Report

TRUSTEES

The Trustees present their report and accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charitable company's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice, "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005.



ALISON CATHLES

Co-Chair



JULIE CIGMAN

Co-Chair



JIM LEWIS

Trustee



PAT GIFFORD

Trustee



MAUREEN SMITH

Trustee



ROBERT PALMER

Trustee
(Appointed 25th
November 2024)



CATHERINE STEELE

Trustee
(Appointed 19th
May 2025)

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year we've continued to grow and evolve, providing a wide range of opportunities for people to connect, share skills, and support one another. Through our group activities such as our art group, allotment, wood workshop, lunch club, and collective trips, we have created spaces where people feel valued, heard, and included.

This year we have seen how these activities not only provide practical help—such as home repairs, creative expression, and access to fresh food—but also foster deep social connections and a sense of belonging.

Participants have always shaped the way we work, influencing everything from the projects we undertake to the ways we engage with the wider community.

This report reflects on the impact of our work over the past year, sharing the voices of those involved, highlighting key achievements, and exploring how we are strengthening local connections. Through small, everyday exchanges of time and support, we are building a stronger, more connected community—one where everyone has something to offer and everyone belongs.

WHAT WE DO

At Fair Shares we use time banking to encourage participants to share their time, knowledge and skills to build stronger communities, and connections within our communities. We were established in 1998 as the UK's first time bank and have pioneered the timebanking movement in the country.

Timebanking is a two-way sharing system that values people for the time they give and receive and the contribution they make to the community. We support people to help each other directly, share experiences, and make friends. This approach fosters mutual support, where everyone, regardless of background, age, health, or ability, has something to offer and is equally valued.

Time banking exchanges can happen individually, in groups, or at a community level. We find that participants benefit in particular from improved confidence, more and deeper social connections, and feeling part of a safe supportive environment.

HOW IT WORKS



Our work builds connections between people, places and communities. Our projects work in conjunction with each other whilst individuals across our projects support one another through 1:1 exchanges of help, support, and friendship.

FOR EXAMPLE: The Wood Workshop makes planters and other items for the Allotments in Stroud and Gloucester, Greening Barton Street and for the wider community → the Allotment grows food in these planters for the Lunch Club → Our Lunch Club is attended by people across our projects and from the local community → Participants supporting the Lunch Club cater for and host the lunch for the whole community → Participants across projects join on our trips → The Art Group makes items for the allotment and various Fair Shares events, and for the wider community. All participants from Stroud and Gloucester are able to go on our group holiday. Through these activities participants get to know each other, become friends, and support each other.

OUR OUTCOMES

- People are more confident in themselves and their abilities
- People build skills
- People are more hopeful for the future
- Communities work together to improve their local area
- People feel more connected through being involved in community activity
- People feel able to ask for help when they need it
- People recognise the difference they can make to their community
- People feel valued
- People feel happier
- People take pride in their local area
- People feel part of a support network and are less isolated
- People feel more able to offer help to others

OUR IMPACT IN 2024/5

34,580

hours of timebanking delivered
by participants across Gloucester
and Stroud

133

people joined our Gloucester
Christmas Party

1594

People were involved in Fair
Shares this year

100%

felt an increased sense of
belonging



307

Regular participants were
involved in Fair Shares activities

6.9%

increase in core participant
numbers from last year

**"BEST THING ABOUT FAIR
SHARES IS THE SENSE OF
COMMUNITY - IT'S LIKE A
CUSHION YOU CAN FALL
BACK ON."**

WHAT DOES TIMEBANKING MEAN TO YOU?

It means community.
If you can, spend time, enjoy,
engage and help people. It is
many things and to me it's
home.

It's a way of life.

Putting
something in and
if I need to can get
something out,
regardless of how
much is needed.

Helping myself
through helping
others.

Working together and
supporting others.

Knowing I could use
[the time bank] if I needed to.

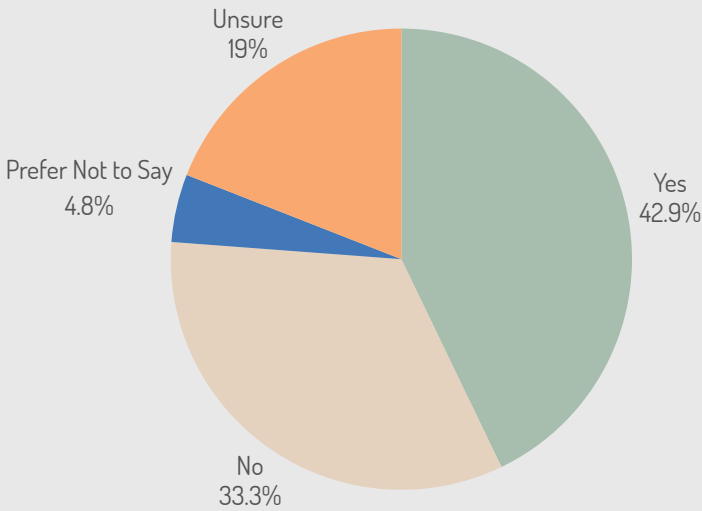
I love the idea that a
solicitor can be equal
to a cleaner.

Putting in time and effort for
other people. If I need a little
job done, I can ask and not
feel that I'm just take, take,
take.

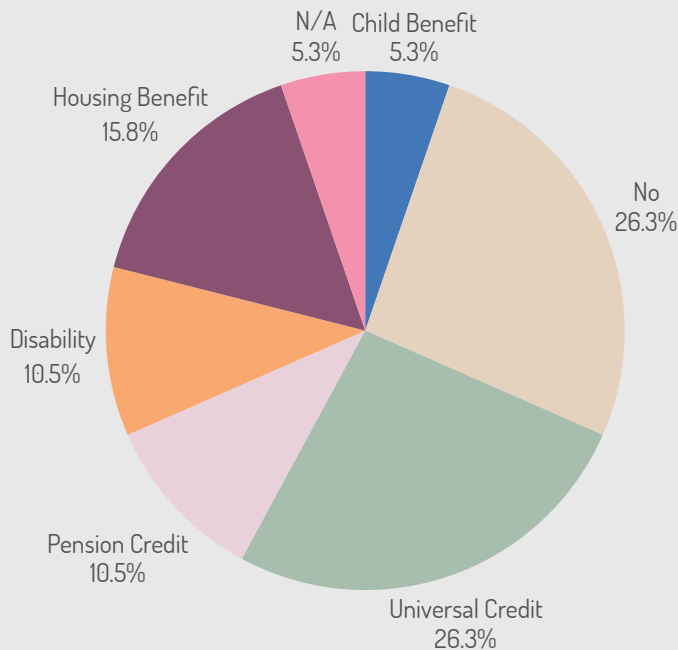
I can give my time to
help with a project or
someone. I can ask
for help if I need it
later.

OUR COMMUNITY IN 2024/5

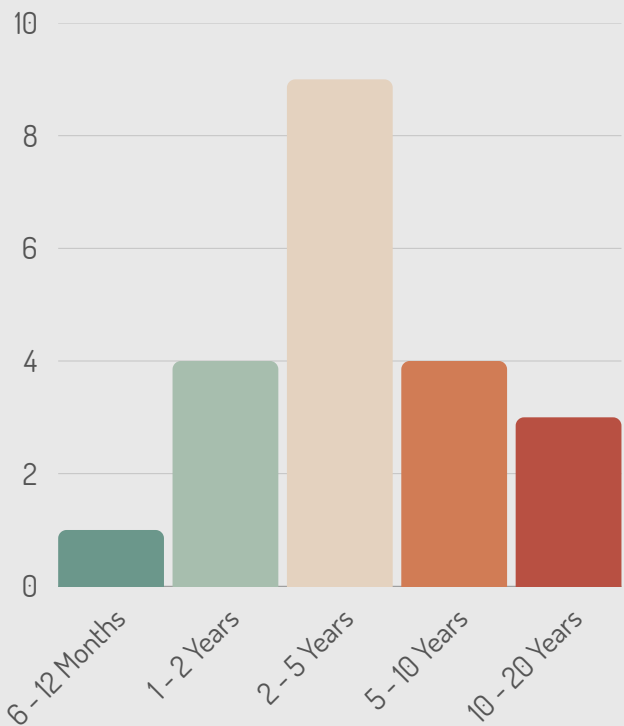
HAS THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS AFFECTED YOU?



WHAT BENEFITS DO YOU RECEIVE?



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A PART OF FAIR SHARES?





WHAT IS THE ALLOTMENT?

The Fair Shares Community Allotment continues to be a thriving and welcoming space for people of all backgrounds, providing opportunities for:

- Growing vegetables, salads, fruits, flowers, and trees
- Social gatherings and community-building
- Food-based activities and shared meals
- DIY and creative projects

Despite the challenges of changing weather patterns, almost all available growing space was successfully utilised, and produce was shared within the local community.

WHY DID PEOPLE COME ALONG?

- To improve their physical and mental health
- Social contact
- Gain knowledge of growing food
- To access free, locally grown food
- Feeling part of a community
- Sense of purpose
- Access free activities for families

"THEY ALWAYS ASK WHEN THE NEXT SESSION IS AND ENJOY SHARING WHAT THEY'VE DONE."



ALLOTMENT PARTICIPANTS IN 2024/25

29 → **32%**

Regular participants

increase from 2023

840

sessions at the allotment

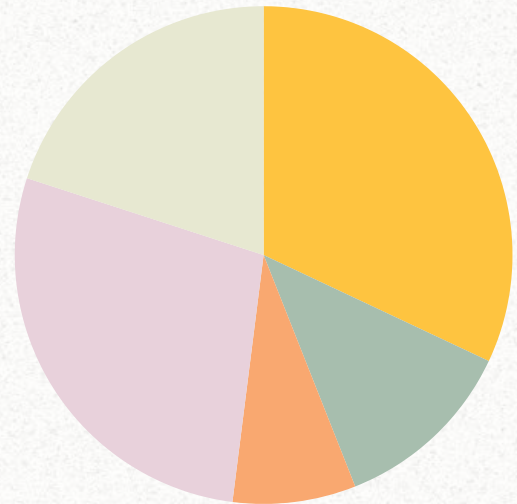
1,185

Total Participants

Gender



34.5% female, 65.5% male



- ESL - 8%
- Seeking Asylum - 32%
- Granted Asylum - 12%
- Physical Challenges - 20%
- Mental Health Challenges - 28%

AD HOC VISITORS

We had 356 adults, 26 young people (14 - 18), and 179 children (under 14). Visitors came for various reasons, such as:

- Exploring the site
- Trying produce or collecting seeds/plants
- Seeking gardening advice
- Enjoying a calm and safe space
- Meeting the animals
- Social interaction or networking

“I LIVE NEARBY AND I JUST WANTED TO SAY I’VE WATCHED THIS PLACE BE TRANSFORMED OVER THE PAST YEARS. IT USED TO BE OVERGROWN AND NOW IT LOOKS WONDERFUL. WELL DONE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED”

VISITORS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SCHOOLS

Sessions were planned in collaboration with teachers, with the environment and resources managed by Fair Shares.

- **St James School (Key Stage 2)**
 - **Two sessions with 13 children**
 - Designed and created plaques for local planters maintained by Fair Shares and the community
- **Tredworth Infants (Key Stage 1)**
 - All pupils attended in small groups over the summer term.
 - 168 children engaged in activities such as bug hunts, habitat building, sowing, plant care, harvesting, and produce tasting
 - Teachers observed enthusiastic engagement and positive responses after sessions
- **Hatherley Infants (Key Stage 1)**
 - Supported a weekend workday with parents, staff, and pupils to tidy the school's pond and nature space
 - Follow-up session with 24 reception pupils, focusing on bug hunting and seed sowing

EXTERNAL GROUPS

- **Stroud Lodge Group - attend weekly**
 - 6 residents (all male, aged 30s-70s) from a residential unit for adults with learning disabilities
 - Attended 102 sessions in total, supported by two staff per session
 - The manager reports that the group look forward to attending and regularly talk about their experiences at the allotment
- **St James Church Youth Group (secondary school age)**
 - Two food-based sessions (May & July)
 - 12 young people attended
- **B&Q Team Day**
 - Donated materials/resources and helped with site projects
- **Police Cadets**
 - 11 cadets + 2 staff attended a gardening day in July
- **Cook, Speak, Eat Group**
 - Hosted a cooking session for 9 adults, 3 children
- **Friendship Café**
 - Hosted 4 sessions in August & October, co-facilitated with Fair Shares:
 - 20 children (pizza making in August)
 - 20 children (BBQ vegetarian cooking in October)
 - Allotment produce was harvested and used in the sessions
- **Harbour House (Gloucestershire College)**
 - 5-6 students with severe/multiple learning and physical disabilities
 - Attended 5 sessions, accompanied by 1:1 staff support



EVENTS WE HAVE RUN

The allotment hosted free, drop-in activity sessions for families throughout the year.

Additionally, 7 food and craft sessions were run for young people (14-16), funded by the Million Hours programme in collaboration with a partner charity.

- **Making a Bird Feeder Session** – 40 attendees
- **Messy Craft Session** – 80 attendees
- **Seed Swap & Coffee Morning** – 18 attendees
- **Willow & Crafting Activity** – 30 attendees
- **Craft Activity Session** – 33 attendees
- **Allotment Open Morning, Plant Swap & Social** – 20 attendees
- **Summer Craft Activity Session** – 45 attendees
- **Summer Nature Craft Session** – 38 attendees
- **Pumpkin Carving Session** – 40+ attendees
- **Soup & Sparklers Evening** – 35+ attendees
- **Pebble Painting Session** – 10 attendees
- **Willow Lantern Session** – 2 attendees
- **Young People's Food & Craft Sessions**



MOST SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF THE YEAR

- Continuing to support participants to attend, feel welcome, valued, and included
- Sharing grown produce with different parts of the community
- Strengthening community relationships and being responsive to community needs
- Supporting external groups to access and utilise the space
- Providing regular, free, accessible activity sessions throughout the year
- Expanding opportunities for young people.
- Maintaining an open and inclusive environment

LOOKING AHEAD

- Improve planting, growing, and harvesting techniques
- Build links with other community growing spaces for skill-sharing and resource-sharing
- Develop a zero-dig project with learning opportunities for participants
- Continue partnerships with schools, community groups, and charities
- Expand co-working opportunities with Fair Shares DIY Time Broker
- Increase biodiversity, adding more habitats and insect-friendly plants
- Continue offering drop-in activity sessions throughout the year



WHAT IS THE WOOD WORKSHOP?

The Gloucester woodworking project, running since 2016, transformed an old storage shed into a fully equipped workshop. Over the years, equipment has been donated by various community groups and individuals.

Jon, a skilled and experienced participant, is now employed as the Workshop Manager, overseeing activities and the items produced.

The workshop provides a well-equipped space where people can learn woodworking skills, create items for themselves and others, and contribute to projects that enhance the local community.



We run various woodworking sessions, offering both individual workspaces and opportunities for group projects. Our Wood Workshop is open on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 11 AM to 4 PM. On Wednesdays (11 AM – 3 PM), the workshop is available for local young people through alternative education providers and further education programs.

Across the year participants created a diverse range of items, including: Wheelchair-accessible planters, a guitar stand, tables, multiple skipping rope handles, planters for a local theatre in Gloucester, a wooden cross for a participant's grave, large-scale community projects including a compost toilet built by young participants for a partner charity.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Our youth groups have used their growing woodworking skills to support local charities, including:

- Building a polytunnel
- Creating a composting toilet
- Paving and painting fences
- Moving mulch for a community garden

WHY DID PEOPLE COME ALONG?



- Interest in woodworking
- A safe place to go
- Improved physical and mental well-being
- Social interaction
- Engagement with local community
- Sense of purpose
- Learning or refining skills
- Pride and accomplishment in doing something meaningful

WORKSHOP STATS IN 2024/25

47 → **+12%**
from last year

Regular participants

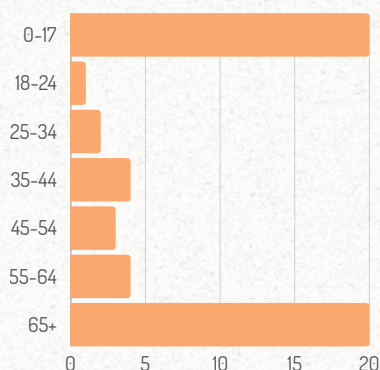
74

Total annual participants



of participants have additional support, educational, or health needs

Age range



2,466

total annual attendances

Gender



19% female, 81% male

WHO ATTENDS OUR WORKSHOP?

A diverse community attends our wood workshop, ranging in age from **12 to 80+**. Participants include:

- Retirees
- Job seekers
- Employed individuals
- Students in further and alternative education
- People who are **NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)**
- Individuals facing **mental health challenges and/or physical disabilities**

Attendance Changes in 2024/25

This year, we've seen increased interest from organizations supporting young people, particularly those with **SEN/SEND needs** and from alternative education providers.

Regular visiting groups include:

- **Peak Academy** (3-4 students, 33 weeks)
- **Harbour House** (13 total, including carers, 7 visits)
- **Bridge Training** (9 students, attending weekly throughout the school year)

WHAT ISSUES ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS FACING?

- Disability
- Physical & mental health challenges
- NEET
- Social isolation
- Poverty

PARTICIPANTS REPORT FEELING...

- More connected to their community
- Less isolated
- More confident in their skills
- A sense of achievement in creating something tangible

WHAT DID WE LEARN IN 2024/25?

One of our most successful projects was the Greening Barton Street initiative. Young participants built, transported, and installed planters to revitalize the local area. As they installed their work, they received positive feedback from the community, making them feel valued.



WHAT WORKED WELL?

- Engaging young people in hands-on woodworking projects boosted confidence and skills
- Participants saw tangible impacts of their work in the community
- Weekly collaboration with three education providers (two alternative education programs and one college for SEND students) provided:
 - New skill development
 - Increased confidence
 - A sense of value and purpose

MOST SUCCESSFUL ASPECT OF THE YEAR

The continued steady growth of the wood workshop is its greatest success.

- Increased participation
- Continued positive feedback from our participants
- Meaningful contributions to the community

“The workshop’s success is that nothing has dramatically changed—it’s proof that it works!”

"IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D BEEN PROPERLY THANKED BY AN ADULT FOR SOMETHING I HAD DONE."

"I FEEL A SENSE OF PRIDE AND SATISFACTION IN GETTING THE JOB DONE."

LOOKING AHEAD

- We are exploring ways to record our participants' activities and progress across all work, along with their increased community connections. In 2025, this will allow us to better measure the success of our work and record how people often initially engage slowly with one part of Fair Shares, and then progress across projects, and into activities with the wider community
- We want to offer more opportunities for youth projects to allow participants to create items for organisations that can't afford them, fostering pride and purpose in young people
- Exploring new collaborations with organisations like the Wildlife Trust for large-scale projects

WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

Courses, exercise, keep fit, physio.
To promote well-being eg chair exercises, more coffee mornings.
First Aid, Counselling, listening skills, inter-faith communication.

A music hub/group.

Would love a library of stuff. I have a cupboard full of DIY tools that are rarely used. Would be great to be able to share tools etc.

Yoga and dance classes.

Maybe a cookery class.

Model making, learning how to cook, broaden horizons.

More publicity for timebanking as a resource - needs to be brought to people's attention. I like the community aspect.

I made some stuff I really like which can sell. Also others in the workshop too. If there was a charity event we could sell what we made, it would be great. Perhaps partly to cover the cost of materials and the rest goes to Fair Shares. We could do this in the hall at christmas with each person having a stall.

More social community events.

Creative writing and drama.



WHAT IS THE LUNCH CLUB?

Our weekly lunch club brings people together, providing a consistent and welcoming space for social connection. Running every Monday for approximately 51 weeks a year, it offers a comforting environment where participants can check in with each other over a free, hot meal.

‘MARY’

We first met Mary during COVID. She faces complex life challenges, including financial difficulties and mental health struggles. Due to her behavior, she had been turned away from several community organisations.

When she first attended, Mary was often in crisis mode—frantic, paranoid, and overwhelmed with personal issues involving police matters, theft, and abusive relationships. Despite this, we welcomed her unconditionally.

For the first few years, she would arrive late, sit apart from others, and avoid interaction. She primarily came for food, eating quickly and requesting multiple servings. However, our open-door policy fosters an accepting culture, and over time, Mary began to relax.

Now, she arrives early, sits with others at the main table, and even helps set up for lunch. She has transitioned from attending purely for food to actively engaging in the social aspects of the club. Her transformation highlights the importance of providing a welcoming and non-judgmental space.



WHY PARTICIPANTS COME

- Financial Support
- Social Contact - meeting old friends and making new ones
- Engaging Conversation
- Feeling part of a community
- Helping out and gaining a sense of pride
- Access to a hot meal

CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPANTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| • Financial | • Disabled |
| • Loneliness & Depression | • Poor Physical Health |
| • Anxiety | • Seeking Asylum |



WHO ATTENDS OUR LUNCH GROUP?

A diverse group of participants, including:

- Single individuals and families
- Long-term Gloucester residents and recent arrivals
- Older people, children, and those with English as a second language
- People attending with carers, family carers, or independently
- Young people with SEND needs
- Participants with disabilities
- Weekly attendees and more transient visitors

Changes in Attendance

Attendance has remained consistent, with a continued mix of participants.

Regular Visiting Groups & Schools

- Jamats Academy – Life skills, creative, and social activities for young adults (16+) with special needs
- Gloucester College's Harbour House Group – Post-16 SEND provision for students with severe learning difficulties
- Stroud Lodge – Supports individuals with learning difficulties, autism, and complex needs



'JIM'

Jim is a quiet, elderly man who lives alone and has health conditions, including prostate cancer. He previously had little social contact and used to attend lunch alone.

Over time, fellow participants took him under their wing. One now gives him a lift each week, and when Jim was unwell, they delivered a meal to his home.

He has contributed to the time bank by researching family history and creating ancestry charts for others—something he is passionate about but previously had no outlet for.

In 2024, he joined a Fair Shares trip—the first time he had been on an outing in years. While on the trip, he received upsetting news about a diabetes diagnosis. Surrounded by new friends, he found comfort and support that he wouldn't have had if he had been at home alone.



LUNCH CLUB IN 2024/25

49 Regular participants

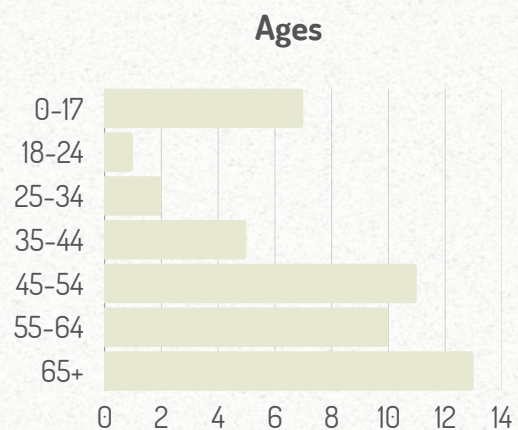
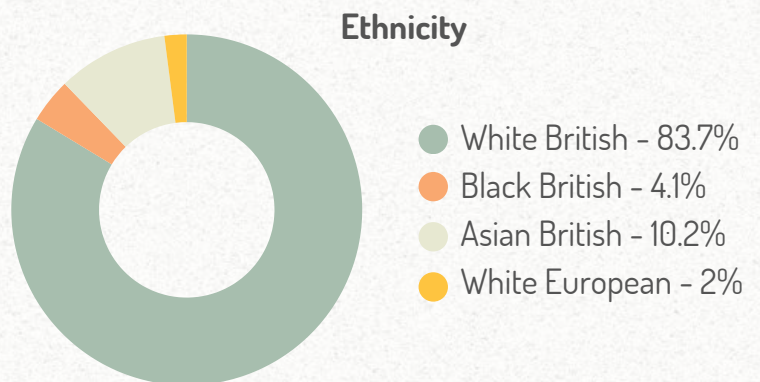
67 Total annual participants



Mental health /learning disability /physical disability



51 % male, 49% female



WHAT WORKED WELL THIS YEAR?

- Providing a consistent, welcoming space has helped participants integrate at their own pace
- Supporting food security by redistributing surplus food through our networks, including Hobbs House Bakery
- Introducing workshops during and after lunch was highly successful
- Inviting Age UK to share advice with participants.
- Hosting NHS health checks, including blood pressure monitoring
- In October, we collaborated with Counterpoints, Gloucester Guildhall, and artist Dana Olărescu on a series exploring radical hospitality. Participants engaged in discussions and knowledge-sharing
- In June 2025 Gloucester hosted a community-created raft installation for Refugee Week, inspired by conversations Fair Shares participants contributed to

LOOKING FORWARD

- **Cooking sessions:** Participants have expressed interest in learning how to cook, and we will explore incorporating this into the lunch club
- **Interactive learning:** We will develop new opportunities for participants to engage in learning sessions based on their interests
- **Timebanking Wall of Exchange:** We are experimenting with an exchange board where participants can offer and request help, with a weekly display during lunch
- **Stronger partnerships:** We will continue working with external organisations, education providers, and charities by inviting the community to attend lunch
- **Maintaining inclusivity:** We will ensure the environment remains welcoming and inclusive, allowing participants to grow socially and personally



WHAT IS THE ART GROUP?

The Art Group provides a welcoming and inclusive space where participants can explore a wide range of artistic processes, materials, and techniques. Our activities include: plaster casting, mosaic work, willow weaving, jewellery making, clay work, repurposing and upcycling materials, drawing and painting techniques (oil, watercolour, acrylic), and mixed media projects.

Each session encourages creative exploration, skill development, and social connection in a supportive environment.

"Every week, I see the joy that comes from sharing skills, being friendly, and offering help. People become deeply absorbed in their work, learning new skills, and laughing together. Most contribute in some way, whether by washing up, opening the door, or listening to someone." – **Amanda, art tutor.**



IMPACTS AND BENEFITS

Attending the Art Group has had a profoundly positive impact on participants' lives, bringing benefits such as:

- Increased confidence and self-expression
- Social interaction and friendship
- A sense of purpose and contribution
- Improved mental well-being
- New skills and creative development
- Opportunities to help others

"FRIENDSHIP, CONCENTRATION-IT GIVES ME SOMETHING ELSE TO DO WITH MY HANDS OTHER THAN SMOKING!"

WHY DID PEOPLE COME ALONG?

Participants have shared a variety of reasons for coming to the group:

"I find it therapeutic, relaxing, and social—learning different techniques and about one another." – Gill

"It's good for the soul—you can forget all your cares and worries." – Jill

"Helping to put things out and put things away helps with organisation and shows respect."

The group fosters a strong sense of contribution, with members assisting with setup, making tea, cleaning, and sharing skills.

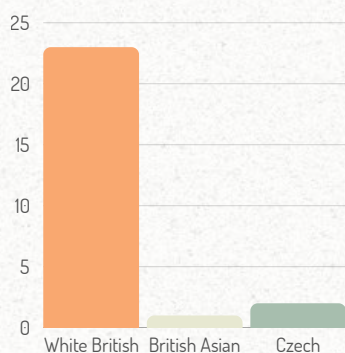
ART GROUP IN 2024/25

12 ~ 16

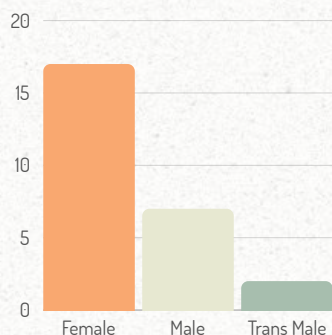
Core weekly participants (varies)

30

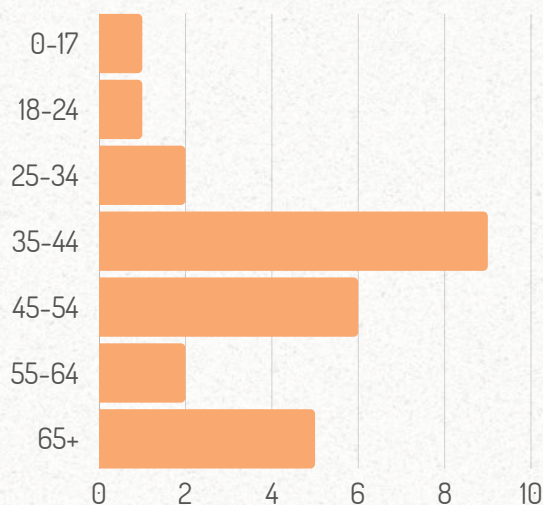
approx. individuals over the year



Ethnicity



Gender



Age range (approx)

WHO ATTENDS OUR ART GROUP?

A significant number of our participants attend for mental health support, with the group helping to prevent social isolation. Many have been attending for years and see the group as an extended family.

Changes in Attendance This Year

While last year had some personal challenges—including a car accident and surgery—the group has continued to thrive.

Attendance fluctuates slightly due to:

- Participants taking up volunteering or education opportunities
- Caring responsibilities and health challenges

We have recently welcomed two new participants, who have been warmly embraced by the group.

Regular Visiting Groups or Schools

We currently do not have regular external groups attending, but this remains a possibility for the future.

HEALTH ISSUES

Our group includes individuals with a range of health conditions and disabilities, such as; anxiety & depression (some severe), Down's syndrome, Autism and learning difficulties, life-threatening illnesses, Bipolar Disorder (with caring responsibilities), neuropathy, memory issues, balance struggles, visual impairment, eating disorders, and auditory hallucinations.

WHAT ISSUES ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS FACING?

- Physical & mental health conditions
- Social Anxiety & Isolation
- Bereavement
- Caring Responsibilities
- Poverty & Financial Difficulties

For some the group provides a vital space for respite, support, and self-expression.

WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING THE YEAR?

Participants value both personal growth and the supportive community the group provides.

"PAINTING OR DRAWING, ACHIEVING A NEW GOAL EACH TIME AND SEEING MY PROGRESS."

"PRODUCING SOMETHING FROM MY OWN IMAGINATION. WHEN IT'S COMPLETE, THERE'S A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT!"

"IT GIVES STRUCTURE TO MY WEEK. THERE AREN'T MANY PLACES LIKE THIS. I LIKE THE WORK I'M DOING."

"IT GETS ME OUT OF THE HOUSE."

MOST SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF THE YEAR

- **Skill progression:** Many have improved in areas such as resin work, jewellery making, mixed media, metal and wire work, painting techniques, sewing, and sand casting
- **Peer mentoring:** Three members are now actively supporting others through mentoring and skill-sharing
- **End-of-year celebration:** Our first art group celebration was a success, with everyone contributing to its organisation

WHAT WORKED WELL?

- A culture of sharing, respect, and helpfulness
- Peer mentoring, with three participants actively sharing skills
- Balancing personal creativity with group skill-sharing

LOOKING AHEAD

- **Collaborative Projects:** We are planning a community mosaic, using this as an opportunity for teamwork, skill-sharing, and collective creativity
- **New Artistic Techniques:** To maintain engagement and excitement, we will explore new art forms and materials beyond our current activities
- **Woodworking Collaboration:** We plan to work with the wood workshop to explore artisanal skills and expand our creative projects
- **Budget and Materials:** Securing a clear budget will allow us to expand our creative projects and access new materials, benefiting both individual participants and the wider community

HOW CAN FAIR SHARES IMPROVE?

Can't be any better.

No, I think it's good as it is. Maybe better advertising as people need to find out about FS because of what it does for people.

Get more funding and do more.

Nothing I can think of as it's perfect. It's running so well.

Leaflets or a notice board to advertise upcoming trips.

Just keep on doing what we've always been doing!

Getting a better mini bus! It broke down on a trip.

You all do so much, maybe more funding would help with Fair Shares.

Make it better known - but don't change the ethos!



WHAT IS OUR YOUTH TIME BANK?

Our Youth time bank engages with young people 14 years old and above, predominantly in a group setting, but also in a mentoring capacity. Our youth work is primarily based in Gloucester, but we work with schools across Gloucestershire.

"I HAVE GAINED AN UNDERSTANDING OF WOODWORK SKILLS AND TEAMWORK SKILLS.

I HAVE ALSO HAD FUN DOING TASKS SUCH AS CARRYING STUFF AND BUILDING STUFF. I ALSO ENJOY SPENDING TIME OUT OF THE HOUSE."

- YOUNG PARTICIPANT

This year our youth work was focused on fostering meaningful engagement between young people with disabilities and their local community through activities enabled by us.

We worked together with education providers such as Gloucester College, Harbour House, Peak Academy, and Bridge Training to support their young people in building confidence, independence, and social connections. We accomplished this by having them build benches for Saul Junction, planters for The Nelson Trust, help improve facilities at the City Farm, help at our allotment, take part in community lunches, and participate in tutor-led art activities at JOLT and gym sessions at GL1.

One student with autism had not eaten outside of their home for over 13 years. They started to come along to our lunch club and allotment, taking part in the social side but not eating. Over the course of the year and with support from their tutor and the welcoming, open environment of our lunch club, they felt comfortable enough to eat. The student's family commented on the positive impact it has had on their home life - providing a powerful reminder of the importance of community gatherings and spaces where people can feel they belong.



YOUTH TIME BANK IN 2024/25

51 Regular participants

188 sessions across the year

NOTICABLE IMPACT

Student 'A', who attended Gloucester College, struggled with social anxiety and was on the autistic spectrum. They regularly attended our weekly creative workshops held at JOLT, leading to their general school attendance improving and also them becoming more socially engaged.

Thanks to their increased confidence they moved into mainstream education, fundraised for a local charity, and became involved in community gardening projects as well as making plans to attend university. These are all things they previously would have felt uncomfortable doing, if not for the lasting impact left by the sessions they enjoyed.

Students from Harbour House came to a variety of our activities. For many of them, this was their first experience of working on real-world projects, and the confidence gained from helping build benches for local spaces and then seeing them in place has encouraged them to seek out similar opportunities and feel more connected to their local community.

One Harbour House student initially struggled with communication, but after attending our allotment started to become vocal about their favourite parts of the garden and even took charge of watering plants on their own initiative.

WHY DID PEOPLE COME ALONG?

- **Learn practical skills** – building planters, benches, fitness
- **Increase social connections** – taking part in group activities which require communication and teamwork
- **Increase confidence** – by taking ownership of tasks, seeing their finished work in public
- **Improve mental health** – creative activities, social activities
- **Increase sense of inclusion** – through regular engagement with their local community



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT THIS YEAR? WHAT WILL WE DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT YEAR?

Partnership Working – Finding ways for young people to engage with multiple aspects of their local community, through partnership work with other organisations, has helped create a sense of belonging and provided a wider view of society, allowing the young people to see multiple future career paths.

Mentoring – While acknowledging the important of group activities, we would like to try and focus on individual mentoring in the upcoming year so we can better support the young person's unique interests and circumstances.



OUR 1:1 EXCHANGES

We supported a wide range of 1:1 time bank exchanges in 2024/25, working with the community in exchanging skills, time, and support. These have included:

- Practical Support: Building bird cages, dismantling sheds, fixing greenhouses, and home repairs
- Transport Assistance: Providing lifts to doctors' appointments, shops, and social activities
- Everyday Help: Doing shopping, running errands, and assisting with household tasks
- Personal & Community Projects: Researching and creating family trees, sharing knowledge, sharing companionship and skill-building

WHO TAKES PART?

Our broad and diverse range of participants. Many connections form naturally through group activities, where conversations spark offers of help and opportunities for exchange.

EXAMPLE OF TIMEBANKING IN ACTION

Gill's Kitchen Repair: During a lunch club conversation, Gill shared concerns about her deteriorating kitchen. This led to Fair Shares staff looking to find appropriate participants to fix it. Gill had been on a Fair Shares trip to Bournemouth, and met Malcolm's wife. Malcolm, a former painter, later helped paint Gill's kitchen. The timebroker connected Malcolm and Gill, and suggested that Malcolm's wife attend whilst he was painting the kitchen, giving her a chance to reconnect with Gill while the work was being done.

MAKING CONNECTIONS, FEELING VALUED, USING SKILLS, FEELING NEEDED

At the heart of timebanking is the principle of creating a web of connections—where every action, no matter how small, has the potential to ripple out and form meaningful networks of support and opportunity. It's not just about the one-on-one exchanges that happen between participants; it's about creating an interconnected system that brings people together, not only within the time bank, but with other groups, organisations, and services within the wider community.

A core principle of timebanking is that we don't work in isolation. Every individual we support is connected to a larger network of resources, knowledge, and opportunities. We don't just offer help; we open doors for our participants to connect with other groups and services, strengthening the web of support that exists within Gloucestershire and beyond. This is a vital part of our work and a key way in which we foster long-term, sustainable relationships.

MANDY

THE POWER OF 1:1 TIMEBANKING

Mandy joined Fair Shares eight years ago after undergoing a triple bypass operation. Initially, she sought help with her garden, and we quickly found a participant to assist her. However, as we got to know Mandy, we discovered she had so much more to offer.

A former city bus driver, Mandy soon started driving our minibus for outings, supporting both Fair Shares and other community groups. She also had a talent for baking, often making cakes and pies to share. Her skills extended beyond the kitchen—she participated in an employment programme exploring a jam-making enterprise. Through small but meaningful connections, Mandy became deeply woven into the fabric of the time bank, giving and receiving in ways that enriched both her life and those around her.



As her health declined, Mandy lost her driving licence, but the community rallied around her. A fellow participant ensured she could still attend by offering lifts. When she received a terminal cancer diagnosis Fair Shares participants came together to raise funds, allowing Mandy and her family to enjoy a final holiday by the sea. Through our community links, we partnered with another organisation to secure a mobility scooter for her, ensuring she could continue attending our lunches and social activities.

Even in her final months, Mandy remained an active part of the community. She took a day trip to Clevedon with her granddaughter and joined a Fair Shares group on an outing to St Fagans. As she became weaker, another participant, Belinda, visited her every other day—first at home, then at the hospice. In Mandy's last moments, Belinda, and her daughter, Kerry, were by her side.

After her passing, Kerry shared that Mandy had lived a lonely life for a long time, but Fair Shares had become her family. Her story is a testament to the profound impact of timebanking—not just as a system of exchanging skills and support, but as a way of building deep, meaningful relationships.

Timebanking is often described in simple terms—giving and receiving hours, exchanging skills—but at its core, it is about connection, care, and community. The true value lies in the acknowledgment that every person matters, that they are seen, valued, and loved. Mandy's journey with Fair Shares exemplifies the sustainability of these relationships, where small acts of generosity ripple outwards, forging lifelong bonds.

Her life, and the way the community came together for her, reminds us that timebanking is about more than transactions—it's about people giving the most valuable thing they have: their time, attention, and love.

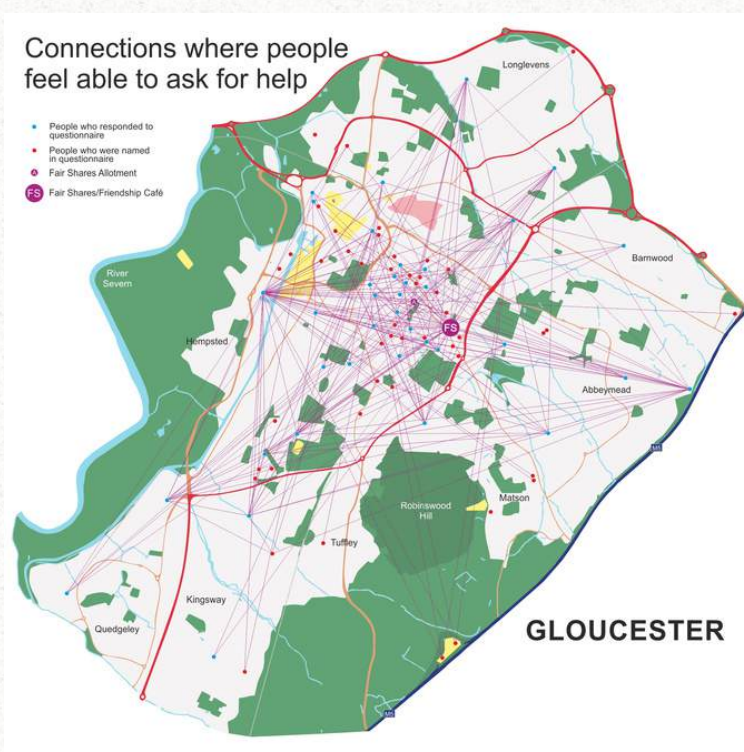
WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING THE YEAR?

This year we've reinforced the core values and principles that have always guided our work—what we are doing works. Despite the challenges, we remain consistently surprised by just how important this work is to the people we serve. Our key takeaway: small, meaningful changes add up over time.

An example that stands out is a lady who initially joined us due to food insecurity. A mother of four dealing with depression, she took part for two years and, over time, began to experience significant personal change. After facing housing issues, she was rehoused to a better situation for her family. Most recently, she got on a bus for the first time in five years to attend our lunch, knowing it was a safe space for her. Her journey highlights the power of small, consistent support and how it can lead to big transformations.

Feedback from our participants continues to affirm our impact. One of the most repeated sentiments is: "It's the people!" – this emphasises the importance of the supportive relationships we nurture within the Fair Shares community.

We took these observations further by surveying 37 participants about their social connections within Fair Shares. Participants listed between 6 and 47 contacts, with an average of 17. When asked about their ability to rely on others for help, they reported between 2 and 34 people they could turn to, with an average of 10.81. This highlights the vast network of mutual support that our community fosters



Participants frequently mentioned the social side of Fair Shares and expressed feeling part of something larger: "The friendships and the social side," and "New people I never would have crossed paths with." These connections are pivotal, and participants often noted feeling valued and supported, with comments like: "There is no judgement," and "The help goes both ways – nobody is better than anybody else."

The World Health Organisation's 2023 report on loneliness underscores the critical need for social connections, equating loneliness to the health risks of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The research further reinforces that even brief interactions, like a casual chat, can positively impact well-being, creating "weak ties" that are immensely beneficial to health.

In 2024/25, we've learned that even though the definitions of friendship can vary, the mutual support at the core of Fair Shares is what truly makes a difference. Participants, whether or not they consider someone a "friend," feel comfortable asking for help. Fair Shares is about an environment where help goes both ways—where all individuals feel connected and part of a community that values them.

Lastly, many participants shared how their well-being has improved, expressing sentiments like: "I feel like I've got some pride in Gloucester, that's down to being in Fair Shares," and "Fair Shares has brought us all together." These reflections underscore the significance of social connections in fostering a sense of belonging and improved health—showing that our work, while simple, is transformative.

1:1 EXCHANGES IN 2024/25

34,580

Total hours banked across Fair Shares

17

new contacts made on average through Fair Shares per participant

11

average number of people met through Fair Shares participants say they can rely on for help

100%

of participants surveyed said they felt part of their community



LOOKING FORWARD

- **Give it more time:** Set aside more time to explore the impact of what we're doing and the connections we're building
- **Explore more:** Find new ways to connect with participants and strengthen the relationships that have started
- **Encourage more chats:** Create more chances for people to talk, share, and support each other
- **Keep growing timebanking:** Make sure everyone has the chance to both give and receive help through timebanking
- **Check in and adapt:** Take time to see what's working, and change things if needed to make a bigger impact
- **Focus on long-term change:** Think about how small actions can lead to big, lasting changes for people over time
- **Get more local:** Work more closely with local groups and projects to offer even more ways for people to get involved
- **Provide safe spaces:** Continue to provide space and opportunity for people to talk about their needs and dreams, helping them find own space for action and be heard



WHAT IS 'GREENING BARTON STREET'?

'Greening Barton Street' is dedicated to enhancing local public spaces through gardening and environmental projects whilst fostering community engagement.

Our activities include:

- Maintaining and refreshing public planters
- Installing new planters (2 added in 2024/25)
- Sharing plants and donations with other green spaces
- Commissioning and providing public artwork
- Creating low-key social events at the allotment for community interaction
- Providing a platform for local people to share opinions on public space developments

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

Greening Barton Street provides significant benefits to participants and the wider community, including:

- A sense of purpose and contribution
- Increased confidence and social connections
- Improved mental well-being
- A more attractive and well-maintained public space
- Encouraging local ownership and responsibility for shared spaces



"I FEEL LIKE I'VE GOT SOME PRIDE IN GLOUCESTER, THAT'S DOWN TO BEING IN FAIR SHARES."

"IT'S A CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW PEOPLE WHILE DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY."

WHO ATTENDS OUR SESSIONS?

The group includes individuals from diverse backgrounds, ages, genders and religious faiths, who share an interest in improving and maintaining their local area. Many participants face barriers such as work commitments, caring responsibilities, or physical and mental health challenges, which limit their availability for regular sessions.

Regular attendees include:

- 8 attend regularly in person
- An online group of 22 members allow local people to stay engaged, communicate and share ideas despite not always being able to attend in person

Additional participants:

- 6 asylum seekers
- 3 school groups
- 10 police cadets with learning disabilities
- 2 young people from alternative education provision

We have also begun building relationships with three individuals who regularly use public spaces but are often excluded from mainstream community involvement.

Collaborations

We work with various organisations to support and expand our impact, including:

- City and County Councils
- Neighbourhood Police Team
- Nelson Trust
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
- Project Grow

Additionally, 12 local businesses support us by providing water for our planters, and we purchase refreshments and catering from local businesses for small events. We show appreciation through gifts of cake and cards at the end of the growing season.

A key partnership in 2024/25 has been with B&Q Gloucester, which has strengthened over the year and led to a community volunteering day at the allotment.

WHY DID PEOPLE COME ALONG?

- Community Pride
- Social Connection & Confidence Building
- Positive Change



WHAT ISSUES ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS FACING?

- Caring Responsibilities
- Mental Health Conditions
- Social Isolation - particularly those new to the area
- Mobility Issues
- Asylum-seeking status & Related Challenges

BARTON STREET IN 2024/25

8

Weekly participants

50

Total annual participants
(approx)

HEALTH DIFFICULTIES INCLUDE...

- Anxiety & Depression
- Arthritis
- ADHD
- Undisclosed additional conditions

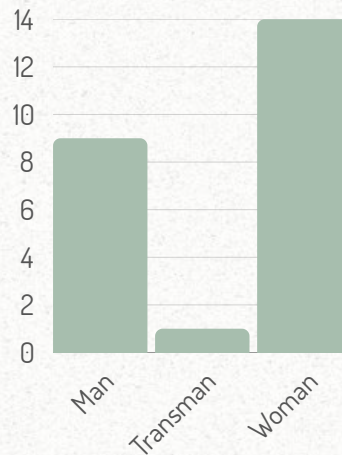
BEST ASPECT OF THE YEAR

- Installing brand-new planters on Barton Street

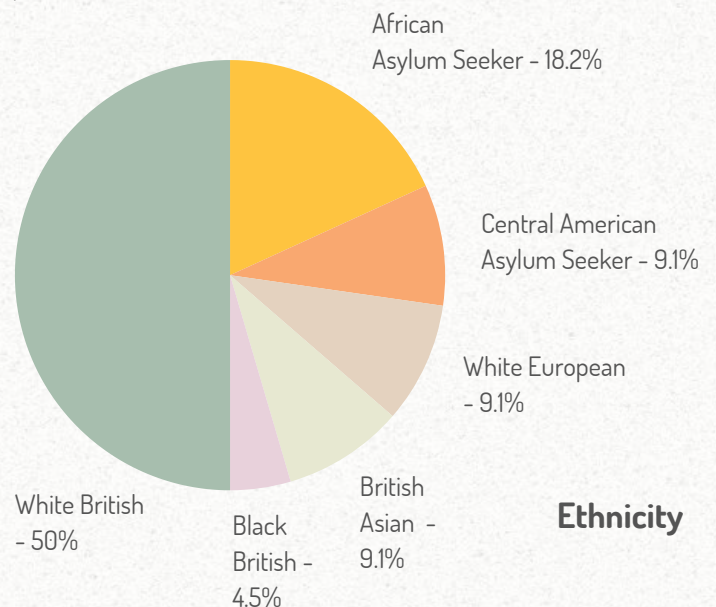
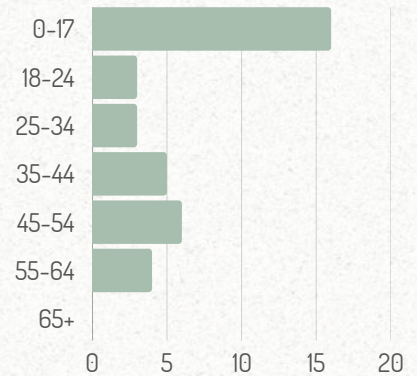
WHAT WORKED WELL?

- Strengthening connections with local businesses and agencies
- Regularly refreshing and maintaining public planters with donated plants
- Building trust with marginalised individuals who use public spaces, leading to a shared sense of responsibility and care
- Keeping participants engaged via the WhatsApp group, even if they can't attend in person
- Maintaining consistency despite fluctuations in morale

Gender



Age range (approx)



LOOKING AHEAD

- **Community Engagement:** Expanding outreach to local residents who are not yet involved in the project
- **Public Art & Green Spaces:** Enhancing spaces with more community-led artwork and planting initiatives
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Continuing to develop collaborations with businesses and organisations to support sustainability

WHAT IS OUR STROUD TIME BANK?

Our Stroud Time Bank has continued to build links across Stroud, Stonehouse, and Nailsworth, facilitating cross organisation work and supporting participants in multiple ways.

Our work in Stroud continues to have a focus on the older generation, with our two key projects – our Gentle Walks and Chance to Chat – both supporting those of an older generation.

We also work closely with other organisations such as All Pulling Together (APT), whose allotment we took our young people along to so they could help build a shed.

Chris, our Stroud timebroker, also helped keep Nailsworth Alzheimer's Cafe open. When its lead organiser retired it was at risk of closing after 20+ years of operating, but Chris stepped in to help coordinate activities and speakers until someone else could step in. Thanks to his support over 40 people could keep meeting monthly, with the cafe acting as a vital source of peer support.

CHANCE TO CHAT

This year we relaunched our Chance to Chat postcards and memory boxes in Stroud's new library, where they are available as well as in the Stonehouse library and Museum in the Park.

These memory boxes contain nostalgic items that can spark conversation. They've been taken to care homes and schools, helping carers find new ways of connecting with those they support.





102 GENTLE WALKS, COFFEE MORNINGS, AND MEMORY BOX SESSIONS FACILITATE ACROSS THE YEAR

GENTLE WALKS

Our gentle walks have continued, supported by participants in Stroud, Stonehouse, and Nailsworth.

We took part in the annual Stonehouse Walking Festival, with St Cyrs Church kindly providing tea and cake. We were joined by mobility scooter users and some walking aid users. Boatmobility also offered a boat ride afterwards.

Our gentle walks offer a chance for those feeling isolated or vulnerable to get together and share practical advice and build social links that allow them to support one another.

"MUM REALLY LIKES [THE WALKS], AND BECAUSE THE GROUP IS A RELAXED GROUP, WITH NO BOOKING INVOLVED, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT SOMEONE'S LIKE WHEN THEY WAKE UP.

IT'S DIFFERENT TO OTHER GROUPS AND YOU DON'T HAVE THE PRESSURE."

- GENTLE WALK ATTENDEE

OUR PARTNERS

ACROSS THE PAST YEAR WE'VE WORKED WITH NUMEROUS PARTNERS ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE...

Active Impact	Jolt
All Pulling Together (APT)	Longfield Community Hospice
Barnwood Trust	Mudwalls Farms Ltd
Building Connections	Museum in the Park
Cotswold Boatmobility	Nailsworth Alzheimer's Cafe
Creative Sustainability	Nelson Trust
Dementia Action Alliance	NHS Dementia Training & Education Team
Friendship Cafe	Nourishing Gloucester Project
FVAF	Stonehouse Fig Tree Memory Group
Gloucester City Council	Stroud District & Town Councils
Gloucester College	The Appleby Centre
Gloucester Gateway Trust (GGT)	The Hotspots Network
Gloucester Services	The Venture
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	Top of Town Community Hub
Gloucestershire Library Services	Whitehill & Ruscombe Community Hub
Healthy Communities Together	Wynn's Cafe, Stonehouse
Hobbs House Bakery	Young Gloucestershire
Housing 21	

WE'D ALSO LIKE TO GIVE A HUGE THANKS TO ALL OF OUR STAFF, TRUSTEES, PARTICIPANTS, AND THE COMMUNITY - WITHOUT WHOM NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE!

OUR FUNDERS

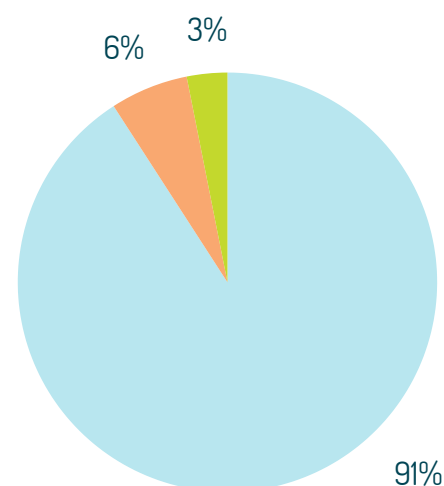
WE'D LIKE TO GIVE A HUGE THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO FUNDED OUR ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR.



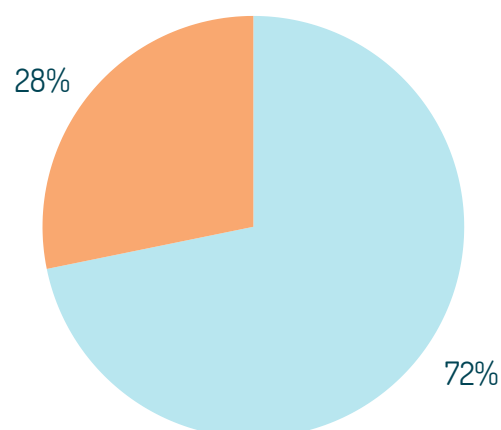
FINANCIALS

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 - 2025
Income	£17,380	£232,563	£249,943
Expenditure	£2,858	£246,948	£249,806

Income Source	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 - 2025
Grants & Donations	£10,670	£216,452	£227,122
Charitable Activities	£0	£15,019	£15,019
Trading Activities	£6,710	£1,092	£7,802
Total Income	£17,380	£232,563	£249,943



Expenditure	2024 - 2025
Staff Costs	£179,350
Other Charitable Costs	£70,456
Total Expenditure	£249,806



Fair Shares
community time banks

T: 01452 415 900
E: time@fairshares.org.uk

www.fairshares.org.uk

Chequers Bridge Centre | Painswick Road | Gloucester | GL4 6PR