

Fair Shares News

December 2018

GLOUCESTER

TWENTY YEARS OF FAIR SHARES!

Can you believe it's been twenty years already? When Fair Shares set up the first time bank in the UK everyone said it would never work – getting people to help each other out would never happen – “sharing supportive communities were a thing of the past”. But we proved them all wrong!

What we've always believed is that people are amazing, people are kind and people are always willing to help out given half a chance... and now you've proven it. Through Fair Shares we've connected participants across the county and just given people the chance to be good neighbours. You've shown that small acts of kindness can lead to lifelong friendships and caring communities that flourish.

What we know is that we are a success because of you. It's your strengths, skills and compassion that makes Fair Shares what it is. Every hour that you have given has made life for someone else slightly better (and quite often a lot better). So whether you've changed someone's lightbulb, taking someone shopping, or put up a garden shed, just know that together everyone is making a huge difference. This year in Gloucester we've done over 20,000 hours of activity and everyone should be really proud!



The first Team that set up Fair Shares



The launch of Gloucester timebank



Timebanking in prisons



Our first holiday to Bournemouth



Celebrating 10 years of Fair Shares!



Our first van



Sharing our work nationally



Organising community fun days



A recent act of kindness

FAIR SHARES CHRISTMAS PARTY

Wednesday 12th December 12-3pm
Chequers Bridge Community Centre

Come join us for lunch, cake and Christmas festivities. This is always a great opportunity for all of us to come together at the end of a busy year and share some happiness and stories of kindness.

Please let us know if you are coming or bringing friends so we can make sure we have enough food (or feel free to bring some food to share with others!)

01452 415900

gloucester@fairshares.org.uk

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TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Our trips have been very popular and we've had lots of suggestions for where people want to go next year. Everyone felt getting out and enjoying nature was really important and a chance to enjoy the beauty of our county. We're always open to new ideas as well if you have somewhere you'd like to go.

If you're interested in coming to any of the trips please contact the office to find out more information. We always try to keep all the costs as low as possible.



Batsford Arboretum



Black Country Museum



Swanage Railway



HELLO FROM EMMA

Hi my name is Emma and I'm working in the Gloucester Time bank, specifically focusing in the Podsmead and Tuffley areas. The work is being funded by the Gloucestershire Gateway Project, which links to the new Gloucester Motorway Services. They support a number of local charities and community projects and Fair Shares is one of them.

My initial focus is on helping people to get involved with traditional timebanking, which is all about swapping skills and helping others in your neighbourhood. Whilst this has huge practical benefits, underlying it are huge wellbeing benefits too, as it creates opportunities for people to make connections and build friendships.

For example, I recently met a lady who needs some help with her garden, and in return, she is making cakes for a local social group for older people. As I've got to know her more I've discovered that she can drive minibuses and loves animals, so now she is getting involved with Fair Shares more and is going to start volunteering at the City Farm.

We've also been working with some of the local sheltered housing schemes, taking residents on trips out and looking at ways to get them doing more activities and connecting with others in the local community.

I'm currently spending time meeting people in the local area and can often be found on Thursdays at the Podsmead Hub, and will be working alongside other community workers in the area. If you would be interested in getting involved with this work please contact me by email glostb@fairshares.org.uk or call the office on **01452 415900**.

TRIPS

Wednesday 23rd January National Museum of Wales

A day out to Cardiff and exploring the history of Wales (and it's free entry!)

Thursday 21st February Newark Park

A Beautiful National Trust property and the perfect place to see snowdrops.

Thursday 21st March Daffodils and Lunch

A gentle drive to Dymock to admire the daffodils

Wednesday 24th April Batsford Arboretum To view the Spring blossom

Thursday 9th May Bluebells

Visiting the Forest of Dean, stopping to see bluebells and grabbing lunch.

Wednesday 5th June St Fagans Museum

Wander around a large, living open-air museum chronicling the last 500 years of lifestyle, culture and architecture.

Wednesday 26th June Confetti Fields

Visit beautiful fields of multi-coloured flowers where they make natural petal confetti. Only open for a few weeks a year!

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FAIR SHARES YOUTH WORK

Our youth work is all about getting young people out into the community offering their time to support groups, projects and older members of our timebank who need some help. They get involved with lots of practical work such as painting, decorating, gardening and even planting trees at Gloucester Services!

The young people put a lot of effort in and work hard to help others in the community but they really enjoy it too. We worked with one particular group of students from Betaris Training and at their graduation ceremony one lad stood up and asked if he could say this ***"This course was a kind and welcoming course. With the acts of kindness it had us perform it helped us grow as people, intellectually and emotionally. We've all grown to be kinder, more compassionate and twice as caring, and over the year everybody has developed a whole new outlook."***



The highlight of the year for the youth project was a trip to Parliament. We had a guided tour and had a great opportunity to have a meeting with our MP Richard Graham in one of the committee rooms. We discussed all sorts of issues and it was a really eye opening and interesting experience. As one of our young people said ***"The trip was very informative and inspiring. Meeting with Richard Graham gave me lots of new ideas about apprenticeships and what employers might expect."***

We will be planning another trip to Parliament in the summer for all participants. If you are interested in coming along, please contact us.

FAREWELL TO SHELLEY AND LUCIA

Shelley worked for Fair Shares for 11 years and left in April this year. The way she developed her role was influenced by her nursing knowledge and experience as a support worker for people with learning disabilities, and she took on a particularly nurturing and supporting role at Fair Shares. She was also involved in the work we do in prisons, focusing on supporting female prisoners and their families. She was very popular with our participants and made a huge impact on Fair Shares and our work. Shelley has now gone back to pursue her nursing career and we wish her all the best.



Lucia was with Fair Shares for four years and started in the office doing administration before taking on the job of leading our prison work. Her work involved travelling up and down the south west, visiting and working with a number of prisons on a maths mentoring project. She successfully managed to bring timebanking into the prisons, and the hours donated by the prisoners have helped many people here locally to get a hand with everyday things like gardening and D.I.Y. For the prisoners it's a way of both improving and learning new skills, and to give back something to the community. Lucia worked her socks off and we will miss her lots. Lucia has just moved to France to live closer to her family and we wish her luck with her new adventures.

OUR REGULAR ACTIVITIES

LUNCH GROUP:

Mondays

1.30pm food is served, or you can come along from 11am and help out with the cooking.

There is no charge for the lunch but we always welcome donations. Mondays is also a great day if you just want to pop by to catch up with us and see how things are going.

ART GROUP:

Tuesdays

2pm-4.30pm. Learn some arts and crafts and take part with some of our larger projects.

ALLOTMENT PROJECT:

Thursdays

11am-3pm. At our allotment at the City Farm. Learn about food growing and gardening and help us create a beautiful shared space.

ARCHERY:

Thursdays

7.30pm. Try your hand with a bow and arrow!

WOODWORKING:

Mondays/Tuesdays/Fridays

11am - 3pm. Come and work with Jon, learn some new skills, or help out with some of the large pieces of work that he's building.

THE WOODWORK PROJECT

Our woodworking project has been slowly taking shape over the past few years but we've seen big changes to our workshop recently. With kind grants from Barnwood Trust and Screwfix we've been creating a mezzanine structure and improving the internal facilities.

We now have a new storage area and best of all – heating and dust extraction! The purpose of all this is of course to create a welcoming community workshop. We want it to be a place where people and groups can come to build and create exciting things, learn new skills and open up opportunities.

The workshop is currently open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays between 11 and 3pm, and also Monday to Thursday mornings for those wanting to learn wood turning. But we want to now see it used as much as it can be, so we want to hear your ideas.

We will be holding an open day on Monday the 4th of February to show off our new facilities and talk about what we're trying to do. If you're interested in woodwork or you're involved with groups that might want to use the workshop space please contact us and come along to the open day (We'll be providing lunch as well!)



THE GIANT BEE

This is a great example of what happens in the workshop. We worked alongside the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to create this giant bee sculpture for King's Square outside Debenhams. The Wildlife Trust wanted to promote Gloucester as a bee friendly city and for us it was an opportunity to show off our skills to a wider audience. Lots of people were involved with making of the bee, from young people just learning woodwork to Mich - a retired metal worker who made the amazing wings. Everyone is really proud with how it turned out!



UPCYCLING AT THE REDWELL CENTRE



We have been working with the Redwell Centre in Matson and Gloucester City Homes to run short upcycling courses, teaching people how to give a new lease of life to tired furniture. There has been lots of sanding, painting, distressing, stencilling and all sorts of other crazy things to transform some old furniture. For those with a little more imagination, there was the chance to become even more creative, like Alan who turned an old pallet into a wine rack.



Through these courses people have the opportunity to learn new techniques and skills and just have a go in a very hands on way. You don't need to have any previous experience – Our tutor Amanda can guide you right from the basics.



The course runs every Friday 11am-1pm at the Redwell Centre in Matson. If you'd like to take part or would like more information please give us a call.



GOING THE EXTRA MILE!

Are you looking to get back into work, or maybe you're interested in some training opportunities but not sure where to go? Then the GEM project could be for you. GEM (Going the Extra Mile) aims to engage with and support individuals who may have barriers to finding work and help them along their Journey.

Farhanah is the GEM worker based at Fair Shares and she can work alongside you to look at how you might be able to achieve your goals. She can help with advice on searching for jobs, interview practice, writing CVs... If you have some training needs GEM may be able to fund the training or even provide childcare if needed. She may be able to link you to a local employer for work experience if that's what you need. She can offer practical support and give you the confidence to move forward.

Farhanah works at Fair Shares but she is also part of a much bigger GEM team that work across the whole of Gloucestershire and have a whole range of skills and experiences. They have already helped hundreds of people back into training, work or even self-employment. **There is no cost to you, GEM provides this for free!**

If you'd like to find out more please call the office on 1452 415900 or you can email Farhanah directly on farhanah@fairshares.org.uk



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DO YOU HAVE GREEN FINGERS?



We have a great little allotment at the St James City farm that we have been slowly transforming into a community growing space. But we always need more people involved. Do you have some gardening skills and some time to give? Maybe you'd like to share your knowledge of growing vegetables, or maybe you want to learn. We're very keen on bringing everyone's ideas together to build something amazing together. We've already planted apple trees, built beds, made a picnic area, built a pizza oven and a rain shelter. But there's always more work to be done.

If you'd like to get involved or you have some ideas of what new exciting things we can do with the space, please contact us.

TIME TO MAKE A BUZZ

Over the summer we've been working with the Gloucester Services on the M5 helping them to look after some beehives. We've been training their staff and introducing them to the incredible world of bees and beekeeping. It's been great experience, learning about the life of bees and how to look after hives. We even had an emergency call from a lady in Hucclecote who had a swarm of bees outside her front door. We managed to save the swarm and rehouse them in a hive at the services. Of course after all the hard work at the end of the summer we were rewarded with the most beautiful natural fresh honey.

We'll be doing more beekeeping starting up again in the Spring. **If this is something you'd like to come and experience or if you've ever wanted to keep bees yourself and don't know where to start, give us a call.**



SHARING ACROSS THE EARTH



On a recent personal holiday to New Zealand we were lucky enough to attend a timebanking event in the Wellington Timebank. We talked about our work in Gloucester and shared stories. It was amazing to see another group on the other side of the world working to the same values and principles and sharing the same community spirit. **Timebanking spans the earth!**

FAIR SHARES AUCTION

Our trustees are planning to stage a charity auction in March. The aim will be to promote Fair Shares to a wider audience and to hopefully raise some funds for the charity. They've already had some great items and experiences donated to auction such as tickets to a Hollywood red-carpet premiere, a ride in an Austin 10 and even afternoon tea on the terrace at the Houses of Parliament. But we could always do with more things to auction. If you have any connections or ideas of experiences that people may like to bid on please contact us.

One idea we've had is to create some Fair Shares hampers that showcases the talents of our participants. So if you make a great chutney or delicious shortbread or can offer some other homemade items, please do get in touch.

WE'RE ALWAYS HERE!

Please always remember that the core of Fair Shares is about people helping people. It's about all of us in the community sharing skills, abilities and experiences with others. It's about how we can all grow stronger together by being good neighbours.

So if you need a hand with something or you want to get more involved and give your time, please get in touch:

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