

Fair Shares

community time banks

Share Your Isolation Stories

We know life has been very different, very weird and, for many, very difficult. I think almost all of us have had moments of highs and lows and unexpected surprises. We've also had to think differently and take on some of life's challenges from a different angle.

Would you like to share one of your stories of something that's happened to you during isolation? It can be a moment of happiness, sadness, surprise – maybe a family member or friend has done something unexpected to help you get through the day.

One of my favourite stories was how a mother brought her kids to the grandmother's house on mother's day. They couldn't physically be together, but the mum and kids had a picnic in the front garden and the grandmother could watch and talk through the window. Not ideal but still a lovely moment.

If you have a story you'd like to share, please email Reyaz on gloucester@fairshares.org.uk or call and speak to him on 01452 415 900.

Emma's Culinary Challenges



Since Covid-19 hit it has been very strange for all of us at Fair Shares. The once bustling workshop has been silent. The hall at The Friendship Café, where we hold our group activities has been empty of people. There's been no art group, no allotment group, no pool club and no Monday lunch group.



The hall has been transformed into a food bank. We've had masses of food donated to us from Morrisons, Sainsbury's and also from people from the community kindly donating tins, dried goods, hygiene products and fresh fruit and veg. Some of the food we give out to people who need it, and other food we use in the kitchens to cook meals.

Personally, my role has taken quite a transformation and I have suddenly

become a caterer! Every Tuesday I spend the day sweating in the kitchen, producing 50 or so meals that we have been delivering to those who could do with a hot dinner. I've had to quickly learn how to cook on a large scale, and I'm telling you, it's hard work!

I've made pasta bakes, chillis, curries, macaroni cheese and let's try not to remember the disastrous Spanish tortilla. Although it's been tiring it's also felt great to be able to do something practical at this tricky time. Something which you know makes a positive difference to people's lives.



We've had an amazing group of volunteers who have been arriving to help portion out and deliver the food everyday. I don't know what we would do without them. It's so humbling to see how many people have offered to help others, even when times are hard for themselves too. What a lovely community we have and this crisis seems to have brought out the best in us.

Well done guys!

Cuppa and Chat



For many of you your involvement with Fair Shares recently has been remote, either watching Amanda's creative craft video's, or Jon and Rachel's 'How to...' video's. We hope you've enjoyed watching and hopefully had a go at some of them.

Fair Shares is not yet able to re-open all our activities yet and it may take a little while though we are taking steps to open some activities. The allotment is the first to start and we are monitoring how that goes. Yours, ours and the general public's safety is the over-riding concern and we will be listening carefully to all the Government advice and guidance. No doubt many of you are missing friends and having a bit of a meet up.

We can't do that in person so we thought we might offer an online 'cuppa and chat' session once a fortnight on a Wednesday morning. You could join either visually by or just audio but it would mean having access to wi-fi or mobile connectivity. If that's not going to work for you but you have a different suggestion then do say.

If you are interested then contact sue@fairshare.org.uk and we'll send out a Zoom link. We'll also be posting details about it on our Facebook page. The first session will be on Wednesday 10th June - if you have suggestions for themes for any of the sessions then feel free to share your ideas.

Whether you're in Gloucester, Stroud or anywhere else we'd love you to join us!

Down at the Allotment



Since starting on the allotment in January, there has been lots of change, not least in the amazing weather we've been having compared to a cold wet start to the season. This is a busy time in the gardening year as all the seeds sown have come up and are being transplanted out to grow-on.



The tantalising tastes of the first harvests are now upon us and we've already had a bumper crop of lettuce, bags of which went out with some food hampers and some early strawberries. Broad and runner beans, onions, courgettes, sweetcorn, tomatoes and potatoes, amongst others, are all growing well but we'll be waiting a bit longer before we can eat these!

As we start to come out of lock down, we are looking carefully at how we can safely support participants and visitors to return to the allotment. This may mean, in the short-term, some changes to how things were previously working such as limiting numbers on site to ensure safe working distances, shorter sessions and access only when Rachel the Project Worker is on site. This will help us for example, make sure tools are cleaned after use and there is access to hand-washing facilities / alcohol gel. If you have any concerns or questions, then please do ask.

But looking towards the future, the allotment is continuing to develop into a thriving location with so much potential and opportunity to get involved. We've had a great response to our offers of surplus plants with both experienced and even more excitingly, new gardeners taking on vegetable and herb seedlings to grow themselves.



We are starting to see more flowers appear which provide beautiful bursts of colour throughout and we have a patch of sunflowers growing which will hopefully add a sizzling display of yellow later on! These all help attract the bees and other beneficial insects such as ladybirds that can be seen exploring all over the allotment.

We are looking forward to when we can welcome people again to enjoy the space and to re-start some of our ideas such as gardening based workshops and activities plus getting the pizza oven roaring to cook and share food and discussions – keep an eye on our up-dates!

If you have any ideas, questions or are interested in getting involved with the allotment then please contact Rachel on 07365 623 462 or by e-mail - allotment@fairshares.org.uk.



We took a break from all the hustle and bustle and had a sit down with Gary, a Fair Shares regular and one of the volunteers delivering our weekday lunches.

To get the ball rolling we asked him what he'd been up prior to helping us, and why he decided to give us a hand.

"I was staying at home - I handled it well for a little while, but I live on my own. Not being able to see anybody or talk to anybody was sending me up the wall, really."

"I decided to come and help Fair Shares out, and to do anything that I could. And that was mainly to help me as well."

What exactly have you been doing with us?

"I've been coming in to help bag up the food for people, and then actually going out on deliveries and delivering it to people. One is a sweet old lady, she's about 90 and she's very very pleased to have what we give her."

"I get immense pleasure out of actually helping other people and it's a two way street really. They're helping me with my mental health, and I'm helping them get something nutritious everyday."

What do you think about the situation of COVID-19 in Gloucester?

"I think Gloucester's doing really well - there're lots of different agencies doing things exactly like us, which is good."

"I think even when people start going back to work or start getting back to the new norm I think there's going to be a hell of a lot more that people will need to do for each other. People who have lost jobs, on low income. I think things will get worse - but that's why we need each other and our communities."

Thanks to Gary for the interview, and for all the assistance he gives us!

Getting Back to Work with GEM



BARTON AND TREDWORTH RESIDENTS

Have you been out of work for a long time and don't know what to do? Are you finding it hard to apply for jobs because you have a disability or barriers? We can help you at the GEM project – Going the Extra Mile

Applying for Jobs

Create or update your CV

Interview skills/practice

Mock interviews with feedback

Applying for *FREE courses online

Setting up your own business

***Funding available – please enquire for eligibility**

Contact Farhanah on 07446405639 or email

farhanah@fairshares.org.uk

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GEM is also still running GEMonline, with lots of weekly activities you can join. Click below to see what their most recent timetable looks like!

Activities Timetable

Annual General Meeting

We would like to invite you to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held on **Monday 27 July at 4.00pm**.


The AGM is an opportunity to share information about activities last financial year and how we spent our money. Our financial year is from April 2019 to March 2020. This meeting is an opportunity to 'meet' and talk to Trustees and the CEO about how the organisation is run and to offer any suggestions of what could be done better or differently or to let us have your new ideas.

This year we will be holding a virtual AGM using Zoom video conferencing as we cannot physically meet. If you would like to 'join us' (from the safety of your home) then let us know. You can **email sue@fairshares.org.uk** or **text / phone 07720 638 404**.

If you're not familiar with Zoom don't worry - we can help you. But you will need a smart phone, tablet or PC with an internet connection or data allowance. We anticipate the meeting lasting for about an hour or so.

We do hope some of you can join us.

*Sue
Fair Shares Company Secretary.*

If any of the above interested you then  us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter and see what else has been going on.



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