



2023-24

Fair Shares Annual Report

Fair Shares
community time banks

WHATS THE BEST THING ABOUT FAIR SHARES IN 2023 - 24?

Family! It's always been friendly and accepting of you, no matter who you are. Or basically what your past is or what your future is, it doesn't matter. Everybody's welcome and it gives you an outlet.

The company and the people here.

It's getting to know new people.

The best thing for me is helping other people actually helps me. It keeps me on an even keel!

The workshop. The chance to be creative. The friendship I've made here. Lifelong friends. Just a really supportive group of people.

The friendship. The people are so lovely and getting together with everybody and helping and doing things. This is what I do and I enjoy. And especially for here, because they've all looked after me personally since my husband died.

I came here and I've been so welcome. It's wonderful!

Feels like I've become part of the community.

I've lived in Tredworth 20 some years, and it's only really recently through going to the allotment and coming here to the Friendship Cafe that I feel that I now know people in my community, that I'm actually part of and I can wander around and meet people that I actually know.

So I think that's really nice because, yeah, I think that's what Fair Shares is - it's a community.

People appreciating the food that we cook and just being with other people really.

The best thing for me is it's helped with my mental health by coming down and meeting people, meeting new people that I never would have crossed paths with.



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REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

This past year has been one of fresh beginnings and continued long-standing successes. As we reflect on the year ending 31 March 2024, we are incredibly proud of what Fair Shares has accomplished. This year, we marked 25 years of fostering stronger, more connected communities across Gloucestershire through the power of Time Banking. From humble beginnings in 1998 as the UK's first Time Bank, we've grown into a thriving community, engaging people from all walks of life to share skills, build friendships, and create lasting change.

This year has been particularly special. We celebrated our 25th anniversary with over 120 participants attending, a testament to the ongoing strength of our mission. Some of the people who came along have been involved with Fair Shares since the very beginning! Together this year, we delivered an incredible 31,427 hours of Time Banking activities, touching the lives of 1,447 individuals and making a real difference in their everyday lives. We're especially proud of the growth in our core programs; our 1:1 time banking exchanges, alongside our group activities—the Gentle Walks, allotments in Stroud and Gloucester and growing projects, lunch club, wood workshop, activities with older people, youth projects, and art group—have all continued to evolve and enrich the community.

Our impact is clear: a 100% increase in community involvement among participants, 90% of whom reported greater confidence. From the thousands of meals served to the invaluable connections made through 1:1 exchanges, art groups, and gentle walks, together we've helped combat loneliness, build skills, and nurture friendships.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our founding values of reciprocity, co-production, and social capital. Our community is our greatest asset, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you—our supporters, participants, and partners.

Here's to another year of sharing time, kindness, and making a difference together!

Katie Adkins – CEO, Alison Cathles and Julie Cigman – Co-Chairs



TRUSTEES & PATRONS

The Trustees present their report and accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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



MARTIN SIMON

Patron



**SIR JONATHON
PORRITT CBE**

Patron

WHAT IS TIMEBANKING?

Timebanking is a system of two-way community participation that values the time people give and receive, and the contribution they make to others in practical or emotional ways. We support people to help each other, share experiences and make friends. We encourage everyone to work together to build supportive, sustainable and resilient communities.

WHAT WE DO

At Fair Shares we use time banking to encourage participants to share their time, knowledge and skills to build stronger communities. This can be on a one-to-one basis, as part of a group, or individually. By bringing people together we hope to reduce social isolation, build confidence, and recognise and value their skills and talents, working together to improve our local communities.

OUR TIME BANKING AIMS



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



FAIR SHARES 25TH BIRTHDAY

To celebrate 25 years of Fair Shares, we hosted a fantastic gathering, bringing together participants and supporters who've been part of our journey throughout the years.

The event was heartwarming and joyous. We had stalls showcasing the work of our wood workshop, art group, and Stroud Timebank, highlighting their history and activities. We were also joined by Martin Simon, the founder of Fair Shares, who shared some stories from its inception.

A highlight of the event was the premiere of a new video, featuring participants sharing what they love most about Fair Shares. We also revisited some older videos, including past projects like Life Histories. It was wonderful to see so many people turn out for the event and to hear the stories shared around the tables.



A few weeks later our Stroud Timebank had a smaller birthday celebration, kindly hosted by APT. It was a lovely, cozy gathering with snacks, memories, and even some reconnecting with old friends, as well as planning future get-togethers.

A big thank you to all our participants, staff, trustees, and friends—past and present—who joined us and contributed your stories.

Your support has helped shape and continue to grow Fair Shares into the thriving community it is today. Here's to many more years of building and flourishing together!



31,427

hours of timebanking delivered
by participants across Gloucester
and Stroud

579

hours of timebanking activity
weekly, on average

1447

People were involved in Fair
Shares this year

287

Regular participants were
involved in Fair Shares activities

100%

of people asked are more
involved in their community
since joining Fair Shares

90%

feel more confident since joining
Fair Shares

100%

feel supported by others and
able to ask or offer help to others

92%

have made new friends

OUR IMPACT IN 2023-24



**"IT'S MEETING
NEW PEOPLE ALL
THE TIME AND
HELPING THEM IF
THEY NEED IT"**



WHAT IS THE ALLOTMENT?

Our allotment is a hands-on, therapeutic way to get back to nature. It's more than just food growing though; it's a community space at the City Farm for people to come and be involved in growing and social activity.



WHY DID PEOPLE COME?

- 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

"IT'S SO LOVELY HERE, TO HAVE THIS SPACE IN THE CITY."



Participants come with all levels of skills and abilities and get involved in different ways.

We have experienced people who guide others, some attend to learn. Individuals of mixed ages and abilities attend, from infants to the elderly, many with mental and physical health needs, a diverse range of languages and cultures.

"This year our allotment has continued to be a thriving and busy place with its regular participants, returning visitors, and new faces. It has been a good growing year with almost all the available growing space being utilised with vegetables, salads, fruits, flowers, and trees."

Rachel, Allotment Time Broker



ALLOTMENT IN 2023 - 24

"COMING TO THE ALLOTMENT
GIVES ME A SENSE OF PURPOSE
AND BELONGING"

22

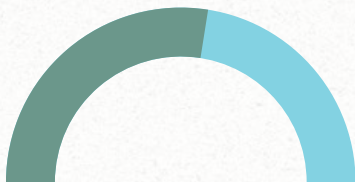
Core participants

1065

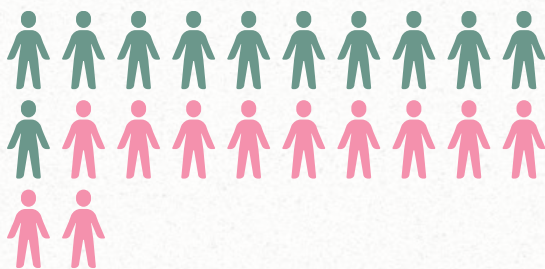
other visitors came to our allotment in
2023, including outside partnerships



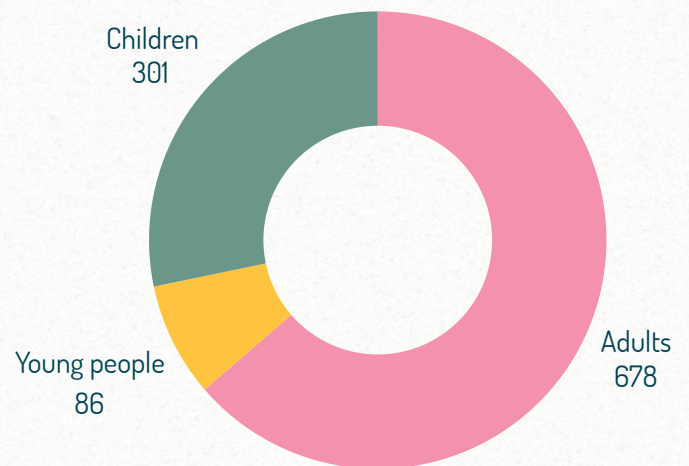
have mental health or physical
health issues



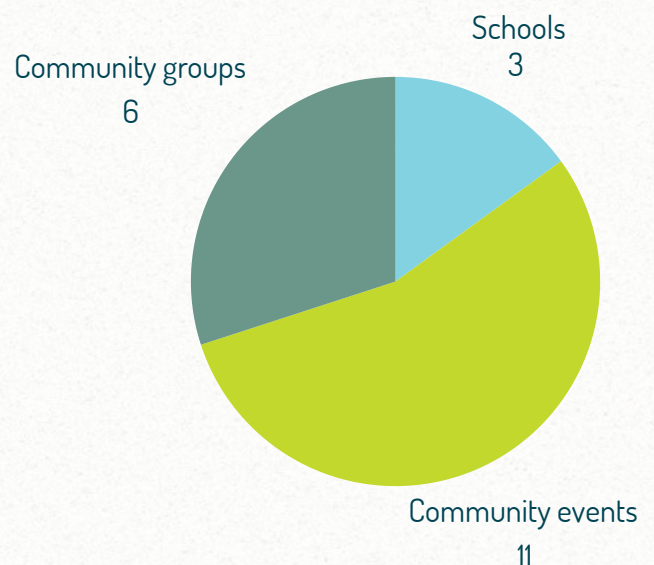
55% female, 45% male



50% speak English as a second language,
31% are seeking asylum



We worked in partnership with



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

Varied activities available for all – having a mix of projects on the go has allowed the space to constantly evolve. This has allowed individuals to feel involved, contribute, share and learn skills.

The social element of the project is very important to many, both regulars and visitors, and will continue to be another main consideration in planning over the year. Feedback has been that the allotment has provided a “haven”, “quiet space”, “somewhere where I can engage with nature”, “a place where I can meet friendly people”, “[a place] to get advice and plants to help me get started in my own garden” and “I love when we have food here (pizza / BBQ sessions) and chat to others”.

Family events and activities (nature, art, craft, gardening based) work well and are consistently popular. These are free, often drop in, and we look to make them accessible and welcoming to all. We will continue to offer these particularly during school holidays.

We work well when working in partnership – both those within Fair Shares (e.g. when our Lunch Club was held at the allotment / Jon’s workshop skills with youth groups working on site) and external groups (e.g. ‘Cook, Speak, Eat’, Friendship Café Women’s Group) use the allotment space, especially as relationships have developed and lead to successfully utilising the site in times when it would otherwise not be being used.

We want to continue to explore and strengthen links with other projects that share similar values (nature / growing / food) to provide a stronger network. We want to develop a potential ‘hub’ for fresh local produce as its location is central / accessible to many on foot / public transport and has become more widely known.

Utilise our produce – This coming year, we’re going to shift slightly in what we grow to enable our Lunch Club to utilise more of the produce and also to grow food staples that have proven to be popular within the community and have previously grown well to maximise what can be shared.

Increase the wildlife / nature potential of the site. This is an important element to the project and offers opportunities to improve the biodiversity of the wider area / educational and skill / knowledge sharing and fits in with improving the environmental impact of the project.

Increase access and engagement. After experimenting with Saturday openings in December 2023, we want to begin to open on a regular basis e.g. monthly. This would enable more local people and families to become involved with the allotment and our time bank as a whole. We’d like to use this time to build on past attempts to hold some small educational ‘how to workshops’ to help build community skills in growing.

To continue to build the good relationships with the local schools – each relationship has developed slightly differently and we’ve been able to respond to the different needs / aims of the schools. From Tredworth Infants bringing children each week to learn about the allotment during the summer term, to Al-Ashraf using the space over a number of weeks with reception children around growing, to supporting Widden School develop their own growing space, and St James’s Eco Warriors bringing their ideas and contributing to the improving the visual appearance of their local community with art. All the schools above now help promote our activities with their parents and families too.





WHAT IS THE WOOD WORKSHOP?

The Gloucester woodworking project has been running since 2016 at Chequers Bridge Centre. We converted an old storage shed into a fully equipped workshop. Equipment was donated by different groups and individuals in the community.

Jon, our skilled and experienced participant, is now employed as Workshop Manager handling the activities and items made within it. It provides an equipped space with expertise for people to come and learn woodwork skills, make items for themselves, for others, and take part in projects making items to improve their local community.



"Throughout 2023 our workshop made park benches, a shed, garden benches, planters, and bird houses for various local community groups.

The key benefit is socialising and making friends. One participant said "it's my happy place", and another said it helped her cope with the loss of her father." **Jon, Workshop Time Broker**

WHAT MADE PEOPLE COME?



- An interest in woodwork
- To help their physical and mental health
- Social contact
- Feeling part of a community
- Sense of purpose
- To learn new skills or develop existing ones

Q. WHATS THE BEST BIT?

A. "THE WORKSHOP. THE CHANCE TO BE CREATIVE. THE FRIENDSHIP I'VE MADE HERE. LIFELONG FRIENDS. JUST A REALLY SUPPORTIVE GROUP OF PEOPLE."



WOOD WORKSHOP IN 2023 - 24

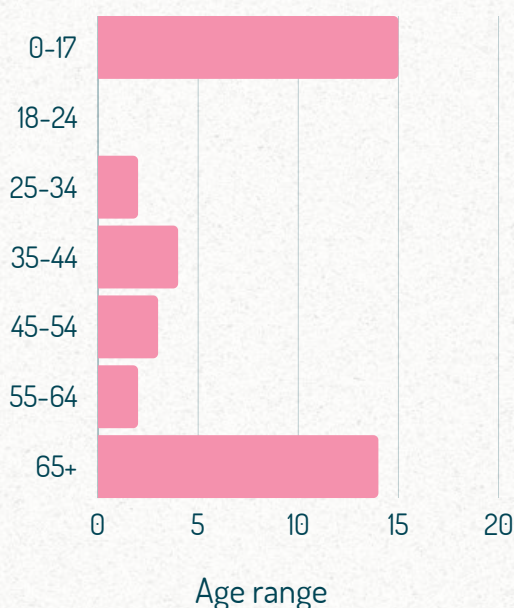
42 Regular participants



have mental health or physical health issues



19% female, 81% male



WHAT ISSUES ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS FACING?

- Social isolation
- Physical /mental health issues
- Seeking asylum
- NEET

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT IN 2023? WHAT WILL WE DO DIFFERENTLY IN 2024?

The social element is very important to our participants –
As with all our work, our participants appreciate the opportunity to meet and get to know others at their own pace whilst undertaking practical activities

Demand is increasing – To fulfil this demand, we are in the process of developing our procedures and protocols to make this happen easily – We are developing our registration processes and workshop organisation as we speak, as well as seeking funding to expand our services

We want more community building projects – Activities such as building a large shed for the allotment, planters, and garden benches for the community have been appreciated by participants. It has provided opportunities for individuals to work together and practice their skills whilst learning new ones. People have reported gaining a sense of satisfaction in seeing their work making a difference to the area they live in.

Partnership working – Using our skills and facilities to support local partners is mutually beneficial. In 2024 we will continue to find opportunities to work with local partners, educational facilities, businesses and community groups, using our skills and resources to make items for them, whilst supporting our participants in being involved in these opportunities.



WHAT IS THE LUNCH CLUB?

The lunch group provides an open setting every Monday for people to come together around a community lunch. It offers a great start to the week where we can all check in with each other and discuss opportunities that might be coming up in the week.

“For some people the actual food is vital as many are struggling financially. For others it is about isolation and loneliness and gives them the chance to get out and meet others in a very low pressure situation.

The lunch isn't targeted at any particular demographic or looking to solve any particular issue. It is an open lunch where we welcome anyone and everyone and so we find that people come along for all sorts of different reasons and benefit in all sorts of different ways. Any leftover food is distributed out through participants to others who may be stuck at home and struggling. It's a real mixture of people of all ages and backgrounds.”



“The common element for many is a chance to meet people and talk to others. That can be for a number of other reasons – disability, mental health, social anxiety. For some people it definitely is about having a good hot meal (and they will often also take another one home to have later). For others it's just about being part of a nice friendly community activity.

Participants are involved in all aspects of the lunch – preparing, cooking, setting up tables and chairs, putting out plates and cutlery, serving food, and welcoming new people. I try to identify people's skill sets and give them jobs that we know they will do well or enjoy – i.e I'll ask someone like Andy to sit next to someone who might be new and nervous, knowing he'll be able to chat to them and put them at ease. Participants will also bring in things to share with others – eg Belinda loves baking and often brings in delicious cakes.”





“The most important part of the lunches though is to connect people, and this is done in a slow gentle way over time.

Firstly it's about staff getting to know everyone and learning more about them, but also about the participants getting to know each other – layering on top of that opportunities where people can support each other. eg when Mandy was unwell and wasn't able to drive we arranged for her to be able to give Helen a call (who lives nearby) and Helen would give Mandy a lift when needed.

These connections are also about supporting people emotionally. Gill doesn't just drop a meal off to Mike when he's too unwell to come join us. She takes time to talk to him to check how he is – she'll then sometimes come back to us and let us know how things are, or if we need to do a follow up check.

Monday mornings are also just a great time to have a presence and connect with lots of different people while we're cooking. For example Paul and David will come and have a conversation with us every week and have a great catchup but often they'll be too busy later on with other things to actually join us during lunch.”



WHAT MADE PEOPLE COME?



- Financial reasons
- Social contact
- Conversation
- Feeling part of a community
- Wanting to help



“We mostly have individual participants or members of the community come to lunch. Rachel will come from the allotment and anyone who's there will come along. Stroud Lodge – a group of adults from a residential home with learning disabilities – help at the allotment on Mondays and join for lunch. Recently a group from Gloucester College have been joining us, aged 16 – 19 with around 5 staff and 7 students with complex needs / severe learning disabilities. They've been joining us for lunch as well as helping to put chairs in and out and things like that.

Lunch numbers can vary – but over the last year we've had between 25 and 40 people each week. Any excess food is distributed out.”

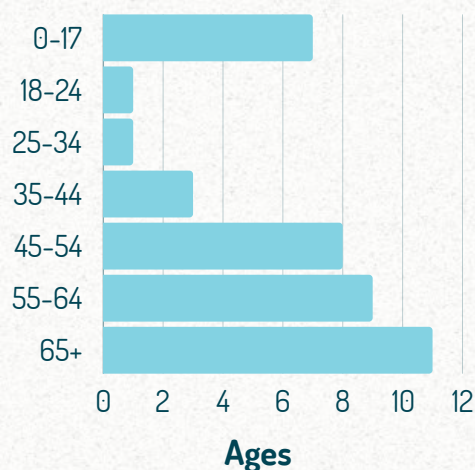
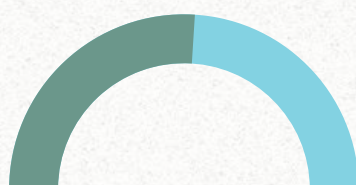
Reyaz, Gloucester Time Broker

LUNCH CLUB IN 2023 - 24

48 Regular participants



Mental health / learning disability
/physical disability



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

Our person-centered approach is working - As we get to know individuals better, this informs how we work together. We work with people slowly, at their pace, whilst discovering their areas of interest and strengths. We are then able to support their progression into other Timebanking activities as their confidence grows.

Giving space for conversation is the best starting point - We've refined our approach over the years and 2023 has evidenced that our methods work in supporting people that would otherwise be some of the most isolated in our local area. Providing space for conversation during our activities, like with our lunch club, may sound like a small step but it's a crucial first step for many - one that can begin a long term journey into becoming involved in and feeling part of the community.

Next year, we want to find ways to encourage more people to become involved in supporting the running of our lunch club - We will work with individuals to find small but crucial tasks suitable for them to enable them to be part of delivering our lunch club, being part of a growing group making it happen.

Next year, we want to find other ways to support people in food insecurity - We are exploring funding opportunities to work with and strengthen local networks to highlight and redistribute surplus food to those we know are in need.

DUNCAN

Duncan is 70 years old and has been part of Fair Shares for over 11 years. He first joined through a referral from the probation service, with whom we were working closely with.

Duncan wasn't local to Gloucester. He did have a wealth of skills but no social connections and although outwardly showed a lot of confidence was struggling with self esteem. Duncan was very sure that Gloucester would only be a temporary place and that he would either go back to Yorkshire or that he would move elsewhere.

"Basically when I first came here I had been trying to get a job and I couldn't get a job. So I was told by a friend about volunteer work, So I thought I'd have a look at it. She told me where you were and I came on a Tuesday and basically the art club were making things for the City Farm and I ended up doing a lot on the fret saw - we were making names for famous people in Gloucester and that's how it all started. For the first couple of years I was coming on a Tuesday. Because with my age, it's difficult to get a job. I was also working with another charity doing gardening up at Prinknash [Abbey] with the guys from the hostel and I was driving the minibus for them.

And then my dad died and I brought my mother down there to live with me, and then I introduced my mother to Fair Shares. Because I was doing some work, that was visiting people's houses, I didn't like going on my own, so I used to get my mother to go with me and so she became a member and she of course started coming on Tuesdays as well and basically it's been on from there.

Obviously when Covid came around, everything kind of went weird and my mother got dementia, which meant that I couldn't take her anywhere basically. But after she died last year, I just took it up again. I'm 70 now and obviously, there's no jobs when you're retired and I find it very social, very interesting. And although I'm not working as hard as I did when I first joined you, but I've kept it up because I like the company and I like the people. I get to go on good trips and basically, I think the nice thing is I feel that people rely on me as well, so I'm not just coming as just the spare part. I feel part of it like a family and yeah, it works really well."

But as he developed his links with us and other participants, he started to get more comfortable here. He would bring his mother down to stay and bring her along to our groups, and she built a connection with other participants. Those connections were a big part of the reason he eventually decided to settle here and bring his mother down, and then his daughter and grandson too.

Duncan began becoming involved in the art group, offering his practical skills. It did take quite a bit of time working with him in this very safe environment before he was confident enough to branch out and do other things, again initially supporting other aspects of Fair Shares through practical work like decorating and DIY.

As he started to make Gloucester his home and make proper connections and build back his own family connections it was also obvious that his confidence and comfort within Fair Shares grew and became more natural.



**"THE NICE THING
IS I FEEL THAT
PEOPLE RELY ON
ME AS WELL, SO I'M
NOT JUST COMING
AS JUST THE
SPARE PART."**



WHAT IS THE ART GROUP?

The art group meets weekly at the Friendship Cafe, working on creative projects either together or individually. It began as an open group for anyone who wanted to learn art techniques or take part in community art projects but has organically formed into a support group and therapeutic space for people dealing with mental health or anxiety struggles. We are not a mental health support provision, but participants benefit from the support of each other and through a creative outlet.

"We had many referrals from another local organisation, which changed its structure and closed its activity groups meaning individuals had to make new support networks in the community. Some of our participants previously attended another art group and wanted to make new friendships and take part in wider opportunities connected to Fair Shares."



"People report gaining knowledge and increasing their skills from taking part and from being around one another."

Half of the group are involved elsewhere in Fair Shares in various different capacities. The other half only attend the art group at the moment - but that's a part of our job, to see how they might be involved elsewhere and how we can encourage and support that. Often the first step in that direction is through slow, supportive engagement into other things as they meet other participants."

Amanda, Creative Time Broker



WHY DID PEOPLE COME?



- Personal support
- Conversation
- Social contact
- To develop creative skills
- To support well-being

ART GROUP IN 2023-24

24 Regular participants

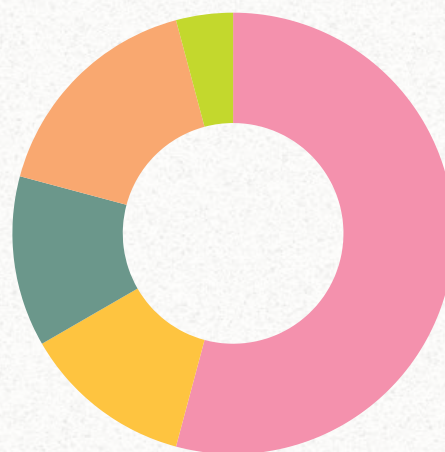


"It's difficult to put Fair Shares in a nutshell. Fair Shares is an organisation, a body that enables people to flourish and it gives individuals a sense of flourishing, and that's where I get my flourishing from."



4 - 85

Age range



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

Continued support for each other - We've been discussing tolerance, differences and being inclusive. We have learnt to support each other in encouraging their differences and are subsequently a close, supportive group.

Gently become more visible in the community - We want to support our group in creating artworks for public spaces. This is both a daunting and exciting task for the group, but will be a positive outcome for the progression of the group.

Communication - We've been supporting the group in communicating - they can ask for help, share thoughts and speak up in front of others. We've been focusing on developing skills alongside abilities to interact

Continue our peer mentoring programme - We've been supporting our peer mentors in connecting more throughout the group rather than pockets of people.



WHAT IS OUR YOUTH TIME BANK?

Our Youth time bank engages with young people 14 years old and above, either in a mentoring basis or in a group activity setting. It predominantly works in Gloucester but does engage with some Stroud Youth Groups and undertakes Time Banking activity across Gloucester and Stroud.

“BECAUSE OF THE PROJECT I HAVE MADE MORE FRIENDS AND IT HAS GIVEN ME THE CONFIDENCE TO TALK TO PEOPLE.”

- YOUNG PARTICIPANT

Mentoring focuses on supporting individuals with an area they would like to improve on – for example: employment, enrichment, personal development, mental health and relationships, or confidence building.

Our Group activities are designed to bring young people together and become active members of their community. Our work is varied and designed to engage different young people based on their age, interests, and suitability to certain tasks. We often work with educational and alternative education providers to support young people in becoming more aware of and involved in activities in their community.

For those who like to be creative we offer art classes that are run out of the Creative Hub (JOLT) in Gloucester city centre. These are held by ‘Artists in residence’ who are hired by Gloucester College to deliver two hour long weekly workshops (jewellery making, pottery, badge making, painting, mask making) and facilitated in partnership with our Young Person’s Time Broker. We also offer a variety of activities for those who like to be outdoors (gardening, outdoor furniture making, fruit picking, food growing, and painting) as well as general practical skills training.



YOUTH TIME BANK IN 2023-24

61 Regular participants

17 from alternative education providers



52% have additional needs

ISSUES YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FACING

Young people have a wide range of issues they have to deal with both mentally and physically, which can lead to them living a less fulfilling life than they'd like. Young people we work with face:

- Social communication difficulties
- Emotional Dysregulation
- Vesicoureteral reflux
- Mixed Anxiety
- Depression Disorder
- Epilepsy
- NEET
- Excluded from mainstream education

WHY DID PEOPLE COME IN 2023?

- **Learn practical skills** - through gardening, woodwork, drama
- **Increase social contact** - group activities + 1:1 mentoring
- **Increase confidence** - by becoming part of a support network, and feeling involved in their local community
- **Improve mental health** - creative activities, social activities
- **Increase sense of inclusion** - through being more involved in the community

“Through accessing these opportunities in the community, it has definitely had a positive impact in the student’s confidence / self-esteem and they have demonstrated excellent team work, problem solving, and communication skills.

The students have been able to vocalise their ideas to myself and Lloyd which is a great achievement and are enjoying the variety of experiences we are providing for them.

The students have had a very busy and productive term, they have all worked extremely hard and have produced work to a high standard.” - **Young People’s Mentor**

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

- **Patience Works** - Taking the time to make links and nurture relationships with outside organisations is crucial when it comes to developing a program intended for young people.
- **Create a strong foundation** - We will formulate our own program of delivery rather than have someone come to us with their vision. By doing so we’ll find ourselves in a stronger position from the outset rather than playing catch up.



WHAT ARE THE TRIPS?

We organise trips to various locations open to all Fair Shares participants on average once a month. Where we go and what we do varies to allow for different interests. The aim of these trips is to get people out and about, give them a different setting and environment. For many, they can't get out because of transport reasons, for others it's costs; for many it's about the company – not having friends to visit places with.

We vary the trips, sometimes to free locations such as the beach, a museum, the Forest of Dean. Sometimes it's to an attraction that may have a cost. We strive to get group or charity discounts meaning people have the opportunity to go to places which would be otherwise too expensive – for example Westonbirt Arboretum at 50p each.

Our participants say that being outdoors in a healthy environment is really important for them, and therefore we've adapted our trips to involve being outdoors and include walking – it essentially becomes a walking and talking group. We build up the list of trips based on conversations and ideas from participants. So it's always places that people suggest we go on a trip to.



We see obvious benefits on people's physical and mental health. We've seen people over the course of 4 or 5 years who went from only being able to walk a few minutes before being tired to now doing considerable distances. Some people benefit from being away from their day to day lives and in a new setting away from their troubles.

A participant who is a single mum had a son experiencing difficulties at school and having suicidal tendencies. She very specifically told us she just needed to get away for a day to save her from 'going mad'.

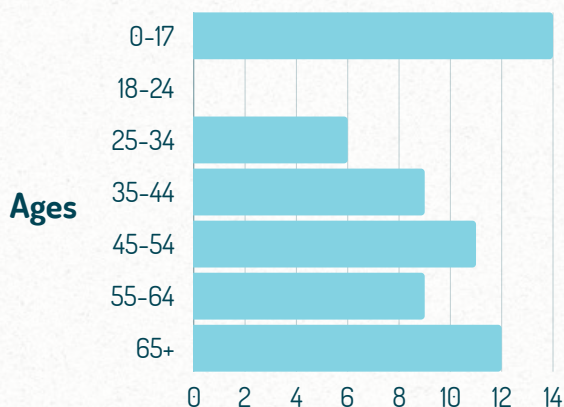
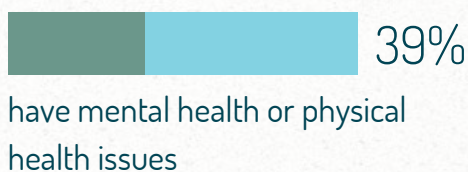
The other benefit to these trips is that staff and participants get to know each other better. We end up having interesting conversations as we're walking or over lunch and often participants will open up more about themselves or what they may be going through, or their backgrounds. All of this ultimately builds more trust into the system which makes everything else run more smoothly.



TRIPS IN 2023 - 24

61 Regular participants

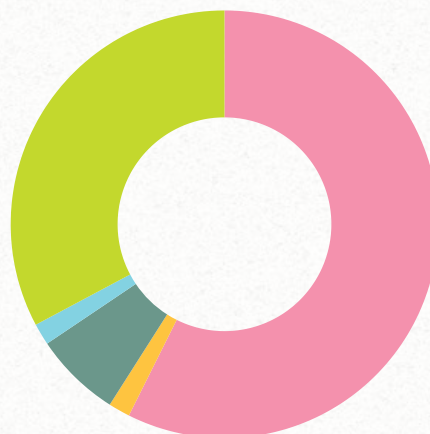
13 trips in 2023



WHY DID PEOPLE COME IN 2023?



- To see new places
- Financial reasons
- Social contact and meet new people
- To improve physical / mental health



- White British - 35
- White Other - 1
- Black British - 4
- White European - 1
- Unknown - 20

“Days like this are really important, taking you out of the everyday normal things.

I get to find out what I'm interested in. All my life I never even realised the different things that interested me. I've been a mum, a worker and a gran, but I even said to my kids, I'm only just finding out who I am.

I've spent my whole life just doing things without taking time out to explore myself and my interests so days like this mean a lot. You're never too old to learn new things.”

- Participant on a trip

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

- **Engagement** - We have evidenced that involving local people in all aspects of deciding and planning the trips is important, ensuring various opportunities for contribution.
- **Giving space for friendships** works in creating stronger support networks across Gloucester. Our trips facilitate this, amongst all of our activities.
- **People feel healthier and happier** - Supporting people that wouldn't usually be able to access spaces and places, and undertaking exercise together improves physical and mental health. In 2024, we will continue to do this.

PAUL

Paul lives in Tuffley and has been part of Fair Shares for almost 5 years. He was a qualified forestry manager and tree surgeon but had a very severe accident in 2000 which left him with permanent brain damage and the need to use a wheelchair. After marital problems, he was in a low place when he joined Fair Shares.

“Before I joined Fair Shares, I was having a very difficult time. I was really isolated. My wife had just kicked me out of the house and I just needed things to do, to be active. I mean I was always active before I got married and that was sort of a downward spiral from then on really. I discovered this place the same time that I started willow weaving in the arts centre in town. I found this place about the same time, and I started making stuff here. The lady at the art shop saw what I was making and said “Oh, would you like to try and sell some in the shop?” And that's what I've been doing.”

“I did a fine furniture making course before I came here - years ago, I was desperate to start that again. And using those skills from the fine furniture making course I can sort of offer guidance to 'J' and 'K' or whoever else wants it. I've helped 'L' build stuff. I know she found this place at the time of her father's death I think, and I'm sure she feels the same as me. It's just a place you can come and create, and there's a good camaraderie between all of us who come here. Everyone's got their own different baggage but it doesn't mean anything to anyone. You can just be yourself and be completely accepted. I love it. God knows where I'd be if it wasn't for this place.”

Paul has become a very active participant, particularly with the workshop. He's someone who brings a lot of skills to the group and is very generous with sharing those skills with others - he's become really well respected and trusted by everyone in the workshop.

Paul is a great example of a participant who's really well embedded in Fair Shares. He is involved in lots of different small ways with lots of little connections everywhere. He obviously benefits from being part of the woodworking project personally, and will share these skills and knowledge to benefit others. He'll come on trips, socialise with people outside of Fair Shares, request help from others when moving house, introduce friends to Fair Shares.

He even reported back to a Time Broker that someone he met in town wasn't looking right and that we may need to check up on them. It normally takes time for someone to become comfortable within the Fair Shares ecosystem, but when that does happen, all these small micro transactions, friendships and small acts of kindness start to ripple out in a natural, organic way.



**"THIS IS MY
HAPPY PLACE,
JUST TO MAKE
STUFF AND TO BE
CREATIVE
AGAIN"**



WHAT IS 'GREENING BARTON STREET'?

"We work alongside the local community to undertake gardening activities in the Barton/Tredworth area. We work together to maintain planters in public spaces, greening the area for all, on both main roads and residential streets."

It's an informal group to maintain and promote green spaces, improve gardening skills, chat and socialise, supporting the local community to have ownership in their local public spaces. We meet on average once per week through spring/summer/autumn."

Kathy, Green Time Broker

WHY DID PEOPLE COME IN 2023?



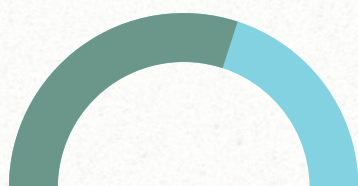
- To improve the local environment.
- To spend time outdoors in purposeful activity with other people.
- To improve knowledge and skills around plants and gardening.
- A chance to chat and socialise in a low-key, low-pressure environment.

"I VALUE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SO MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE FROM WITHIN THE CITY AND OUTSIDE AND GET INVOLVED IN SOME REALLY, REALLY INTERESTING PROJECTS."



GREENING BARTON STREET IN 2023-24

15 Regular participants



THIS YEAR WE WORKED WITH...

- Our participants
- 2 schools
- 12 local businesses
- Neighbourhood Policing Team
- A local church

WITH WHOM WE...

- cleaned up six planters along Barton Street
- replanted and then maintained them
- restored planters, shrubs and an orchard on a nearby residential street

ISSUES PEOPLE ARE FACING IN 2023

- Some participants have mental health struggles
- Some have caring responsibilities at home
- Some are asylum seekers housed in hotels with no access to green space

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT THIS YEAR?

- **Long-term community engagement** – relationships and enthusiasm take time to develop – our community need to see that we are in this for the long term.
- **Listening** – People need to feel that their concerns are being listened to and acted on.
- **Partnership working** – Communicating with other agencies / partners is crucial and brings results in the long term.

WHAT WOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

- **Publicity** – We want to be braver with publicity about what we are doing.
- **Engaging more of the community to play an active part** – We will look for more people to take responsibility for specific planters so that the general group can develop new things.

WHAT IS STROUD TIME BANK?

Our Stroud Time Bank has grown from the shared needs and energy of our community, starting with individual exchanges and evolving into group activities that bring people together. It's a space where everyone's time and talents are valued, with members supporting one another in meaningful ways.

Our activities span Stroud, Stonehouse, and Nailsworth, and our Time Bank is about building bridges—whether through local gentle walks, or on day trips to admire wildflowers, community gardening together, or sharing coffee and cake.

We've built strong partnerships with local organisations, enriching both our work and theirs. This year, we've collaborated with groups like All Pulling Together, The Museum in the Park, Top of Town Tots, the NHS, Memory Cafés, Cotswold Boatmobility, and the Community Food Hub, among many others.



"I've only been a member for a few months but I've enjoyed the stroud walks.

It has changed my outlook on life – as a newly retired person, and a bereaved carer with 15 years experience of looking after 3 family members with Alzheimer's through all its stages. I found it hard to accept help, don't we all, but the lady who helped me was amazing.

It's only just occurred to me that the helper gets pleasure and pride in being able to solve a need or problem for others... Therefore my needs have given pleasure to someone else, and I get pleasure from a new contact, and a problem solved. Double whammy in my opinion. I wish I had found you earlier."

- Recent Walk Attendee

INDIVIDUAL EXCHANGES

In Stroud this year we've facilitated a variety of individual exchanges, including:

- Assistance accessing grants for household appliances
- Gardening support, including maintaining polytunnels and growing strawberries
- Support organising art exhibitions
- House decluttering
- Help with bureaucracy for a participant with severe anxiety
- House moving support, respite care, and financial abuse intervention
- Book lending, dog walking, computer assistance, befriending, and vintage car tips



WHAT ARE THE 'GENTLE WALKS'?

These gentle walks, led collaboratively by staff and participants, are suitable for individuals who use walking aids or wheelchairs, are dementia friendly, and encourage support among participants.

One regular remarked - "These walks have saved me. I've got a social life now, with people my own age who accept me, which is a first for me. My mental health and confidence have improved so much."

NAILSWORTH WALKS

20 - 25 Participants

As part of the Nailsworth Dementia Action Alliance, we organise quarterly walks, meeting monthly at the Matara Centre - a tranquil setting that promotes well-being. Participants include family carers and those living with dementia.

Walking aids and wheelchairs are brought into the meditation centre, and volunteers often read poetry. Many caregivers join the walks to find peace and camaraderie.

STROUD WALKS

15 Regular Participants

These walks take place fortnightly, starting and ending at the Museum on the Park. Established in 2014 through a Dementia Adventure-led pilot project, these walks now draw participants from care homes, memory and carer groups, and the local community.

Our approach to all walks reflects co-production values, enabling participants to help shape and lead services. Unlike many traditional services, this approach offers agency and choice, allowing disabled adults and those with mental health conditions a say in the walks' development.

All attendees are treated equally, with no division between those receiving support, carers, or people living with memory loss. Walking and engaging with nature stimulates conversation, fostering a unique community. By attending as equals, relationships are strengthened.

These walks have also led to home safety checks by Stroud Fire Service for vulnerable attendees.

DURSLEY AND BERKELEY

In Development

We are exploring walk programs in these areas. Support is needed to initiate these, with potential collaboration with Berkeley Castle's new walkway and café, and GL11 Community Hub.

STONEHOUSE WALKS

6 - 10 Regular Participants

Once a month, we meet at Stonehouse Library to enjoy coffee and tea before walking in the local area. In partnership with All Pulling Together (APT), we walk and talk at a relaxed pace, sharing time together. Participants range from local residents using mobility aids to members of the local fire service.

Claire from APT assists a participant from Independent Living accommodation, helping her into a wheelchair and bringing her ¼ mile to the library. This is the only time this participant leaves her room for our walks. As a long-time member of Fair Shares, this support allows her to continue her involvement.

We also participate in the Stonehouse Walking Festival, coordinating with multiple groups, community organisations, the council, and the church. Two Fair Shares participants tested the route to the jetty at Cotswold Boat Mobility ahead of the festival, resulting in the area being cleared to ensure accessibility for wheelchair users.



WHAT IS THE STONEHOUSE COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT?

40 Allotment Sessions – Reaching 20 people – 10 Regularly

Our Community Allotment in Stonehouse is a vibrant space where people of all ages and abilities come together, overseen by long-time participant Clare Sheridan.

It's a haven for all, offering a place to grow not just plants but also friendships and intergenerational bonds. Younger SEND students work alongside older and marginalised members of the community, creating a sense of belonging for everyone.

"I like going to the allotment because I like to feel useful, it's a sense of belonging and community. People who are not too good on their feet are not made to feel like a pariah.

It's almost like family. Although we're a group, you individualise people. I love FS, thank you."



WHAT ARE THE COFFEE MORNINGS?

30 Coffee Mornings – Reaching 25 People – 15 Regularly

Coffee mornings in Stonehouse, Stroud, and Whiteshill provide a warm, welcoming space for people to meet, share skills, and discover more about what's happening locally.

Whether it's a chat over coffee or advice on practical matters like filling out forms or finding help with shopping, these gatherings foster connection and mutual support.

PARTNERSHIP & COMMUNITY WORKING

FOOD & COMMUNITY HUBS

Fair Shares supports various community groups, ranging from linking them up with other groups & sourcing resources to encouraging participants in giving their time.

One example was working with a woman facing homelessness alongside her support worker, encouraging her gently to participate. This person is now in a council flat, and is beginning to give her time at the food hub, learning to cook with volunteers.

NAILSWORTH ALZHEIMER'S CAFE

40-50 people attend monthly. The main organiser announced their retirement this year, and there was some uncertainty the meetings could continue.

We have been working with the group to support its continuation, organising speakers to attend each meeting and working with others to support crucial tasks—meaning the cafe is still able to continue.

NAILSWORTH DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE

Fair Shares arranged a screening of our film made about the lives of and people we work with living with dementia. 50 people attended, watching the film & seeing our postcards and talks.

OTHERS

We've also worked with the Nelson Trust, Know your Patch, Stroud Fire Service and Brandon Trust amongst others.

JANE

Jane, a Stonehouse council flat resident, was in a fragile state – both mentally and physically – when we first met her. Living in poverty and grappling with a history of mental health struggles, she felt isolated following family estrangement linked to her abusive ex-husband's trial.

Her lifeline were her pets, including birds that provided her peace and purpose. However, her health required her to keep them in an outdoor shed, which the council then demanded she relocate due to refurbishments.

We collaborated with APT and the Independence Trust, advocating on Jane's behalf. With support of the Animal Welfare Committee and Community Liaison Officer, we secured permission to adapt the shed.

Participants from our workshop gave their time to modify the shed to ensure it was safe and compliant. This allowed Jane to keep her beloved animals in a suitable environment, significantly improving both her physical and mental well-being. Her bedroom is next to the aviary and she sleeps with her window open, so she can speak to her birds at night.

This solution not only enabled her to retain her birds but also helped mend her fractured family relationships as her grandchildren now visit to see the birds in their new home.

"Two budgies were born in the nest. Since we put the aviary up, my sons have actually started to come over, it's been an opportunity to start to rebuild family relations. You've changed my life." The support of Fair Shares participants and partner organisations really ensured this situation had a positive outcome.



WHAT ARE OUR 'MEMORY PROJECTS'?

Our Chance to Chat Postcards and Memory Boxes help maintain relationships between carers and those they care for, reinforcing the idea that people living with dementia continue to make significant contributions to our community by passing on memories of social importance.

Each memory box is carefully curated to represent a specific period in time and contains real items that evoke memories and nostalgia, helping to prompt conversations for those who may find remembering difficult.

We collaborate with the Glos NHS Dementia Training & Education Team, Gloucestershire Libraries, and local Memory Cafes. Additionally, we work with various ethnic communities to create inclusive postcards, representing the full diversity of UK society—a novel approach for resources designed for people living with dementia.



Memory Boxes were first introduced at Stonehouse Library in 2023 during Dementia Awareness Week, where their use was demonstrated to six people, sparking renewed interest. Currently, Stonehouse Library has three boxes, Stroud Library has three, the development team has three for care homes, and the Museum on the Park has five. The artifacts are housed in bread bins, suitcases, and other nostalgic containers. We have also delivered a training session for 15 Stroud Library staff members.

These boxes have been used by the Stonehouse Over 60's Group, helping participants share stories from their lives—sparking memories of swing bands, seeing the Queen, Bethnal Green Market, and even encounters with the River God on the Zambezi. Other memory activities at Fair Shares include 'Memory Threads', a collaboration with the Museum on the Park and a local artist. This project uses textiles, fabrics, and buttons to trigger memories.

We have also provided special 'Memory Box' sessions at St. Katherine's Church in Gloucester for asylum seekers and older adults. These sessions fostered enriching conversations across diverse backgrounds, creating connections that participants described as valuable and memorable.

We've also participated in further community engagement sessions with:

- Barton and Tredworth Memory Group
- Home Farm Trust (a care home for people with learning disabilities)
- Chance to Chat sessions at Stonehouse and Stroud Libraries, particularly for those over 60, to demonstrate how staff and community members can use the boxes.

WHAT ARE OUR TRIPS?

We've taken our Stroud participants on a variety of wonderful trips. We've been on day trips to visit areas of natural beauty, admiring snowdrops, bluebells and wild daffodils, as well as a longer sea-side holiday.

These trips bring people closer together, start conversations and build friendships, help overcome isolation by sharing time with one another, and foster a sense of health and wellbeing.



11 of our Stroud participants joined our Gloucester ones on a sea-side trip to Bournemouth in September.

Mary and Mike, a married couple, went to Bournemouth. Mike is living with Parkinsons, and Mary cares for him. Mary knew he was able to be looked after if needed, and felt able to have some time to herself, the first opportunity in longer than she could remember.

"It was beyond thanks, when I took Mike back to the hotel when he was tired, it was the first time I've been able to go for a walk in a long time.

Mike did far more than he usually does on the holiday - feeling comfortable to meet new people and go out is a big thing for us.

Mike feels sometimes that he sticks out, with a walker, and he shakes. He is often not comfortable with other people. So being with other people that understood was fantastic for us. I'm still smiling."



Wendy, who is living with MS said " I went swimming- the only time I get to go in the sea is on the Bournemouth holidays, the last time I went in the sea was again in Bournemouth a year ago. It's lovely feeling safe in the water, Gill was holding me there, she held me there for ages".

Wendy and her husband walked along the beach hand-in-hand afterwards. "It's given us the confidence that we can go away together. It stretched me a little - you can do more than you think".



STROUD TIMEBANK IN 2023 - 24

140 Active participants



Mainly Female



Majority living with a health condition

ISSUES PEOPLE ARE FACING IN 2023

- Loneliness and Social Isolation
- Dealing with debilitating long term health conditions, either personally or as a carer
- Mental health issues
- Elderly & vulnerable
- Young people with disabilities

WHAT BENEFITS HAVE THEY REPORTED?

- Reduced Isolation
- Increased sense of belonging
- Greater involvement in their community, and recognition of their contributions
- Access to practical and social support
- Reduced anxiety and increased confidence
- Enjoying trips they otherwise wouldn't be able to do

THINGS TO WORK ON NEXT YEAR

- Continue encouraging the use of memory boxes as valuable resources
- Strengthen targeted advertising and community awareness
- Increase social media presence
- Post walk dates on the website
- Develop online resources, including postcards and memory box photos

"I've made lots of friends. I was with [another group] but I think FS is so much better because it's fairer. I'd start off meeting people who needed some help and they became friends, it helped me connect with the local community after moving here from Birmingham.

'L' has been coming for 10 years (almost all his life). It feels like I have another grandson. He talks to other people about me as his grandma. 'S' and 'P' ('L's parents) feel like family (they moved to Britain from India several years ago). In the early days everyone recorded all the hours, now it's not so important, it's more about friendships. It's like 'people banking'."

ADDING VALUE

IN 2023 - 2024 WE UNDERTOOK A RANGE OF ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES WHICH ADDED VALUE TO OUR GROUP PROGRAMMES...



- **Supporting people with cost of living crisis - Working with local partners GGC, GGT and Barnwood Trust -** Fair Shares continues to support our participants with accessing food vouchers and individual grants, easing the financial stresses on the hardest hit.
- **Gloucestershire County Council Healthy Activities and Food Project (HAF) -** Fair Shares was part of HAF in 2023, during Easter, Summer and Winter school holidays. We delivered creative activities for children and families at our allotment during the Easter and Summer holidays, working in partnership with Kindred Spirits. Children created their own Fairy characters using natural materials found in the allotment, and then made stories about them. This brought many new families into the allotment space for the first time, and has led to more use of the space by local people as a result. We also delivered archery at the Friendship Cafe,
- **Hotspots Partnership -** We work in partnership with **The Grace Network, GGT, The Venture, Community Building Collective, and GL11** as a group of community organisations that have come together to catalyse and invest in building connections within communities. Our aim is to empower communities to create, drive forward, and understand what works in developing community economic development plans, new initiatives, and social enterprises. This is to help grow local economic, social, and environmental resilience within neighbourhoods and to influence both local and regional mainstream systems.



OUR FUNDERS

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



OUR PARTNERS

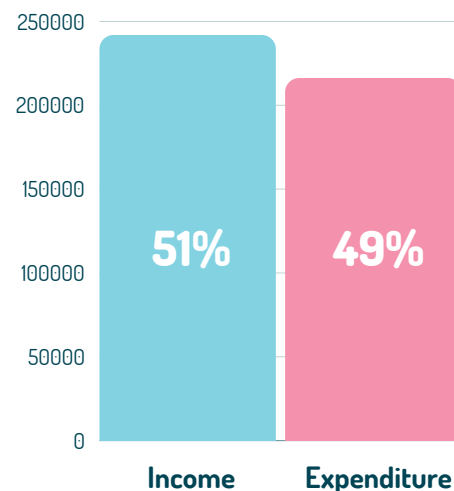
ACROSS THE PAST YEAR WE'VE WORKED WITH NUMEROUS PARTNERS ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE...

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Active Impact | Jolt |
| All Pulling Together, Stonehouse | Mudwalls Farms Ltd |
| Barnwood Trust | Museum in the Park, Stroud |
| Building Connections | Nailsworth Dementia Action Alliance |
| Creative Sustainability | Nelson Trust |
| Extra Care Charitable Trust | Nourishing Gloucester Project |
| Feeding Gloucester | NHS Dementia Training and Education Team |
| FVAF | The Apperley Centre |
| GL Communities | The Friendship Café |
| Gloucester City Council | The Venture Community Hub |
| Gloucester Services | Top of Town (ToTs) Community Group |
| Gloucestershire County Council | Stroud District Council |
| Gloucestershire Gateway Trust | Stroud Town Council |
| Gloucestershire Mental Health Team | Whitehill and Ruscombe Community Hub |
| Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust | Wynn's Café, Stonehouse |
| Housing 21 | Young Gloucestershire |
| Hotspots Network | |

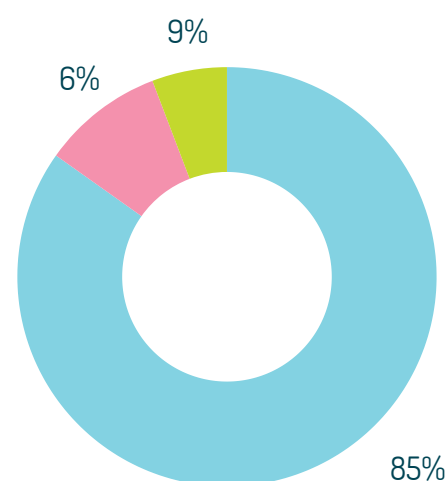
WE'D ALSO LIKE TO GIVE A HUGE THANKS TO ALL OF OUR STAFF, TRUSTEES, PARTICIPANTS, AND THE COMMUNITY - WITHOUT WHOM NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE!

FINANCIALS

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | 2023 - 2024 |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Income | £17,656 | £224,254 | £241,910 |
| Expenditure | £3,647 | £212,613 | £216,260 |



| Income Source | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | 2023 - 2024 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Grants & Donations | £10,560 | £194,624 | £205,184 |
| Charitable Activities | £0 | £22,726 | £22,726 |
| Trading Activities | £7,096 | £6,904 | £14,000 |
| Total Income | £17,656 | £224,254 | £241,910 |



| Expenditures | 2023 - 2024 |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Staff Costs | £150,376 |
| Other Charitable Costs | £65,884 |
| Total Expenditure | £216,260 |

