

Barnwood Circle Round Up

March 2023



Hello

Welcome to the March edition of the Barnwood Circle 'Round Up'. In this edition, find out about the latest meetups, the Empowered Employers campaign website and what we learned from our meetups last year. You can also find out what happened at our annual members event and all about our new Short Breaks funding programme.

Annual Members Event



In January we held our first Barnwood Circle annual celebration event.

The event happened because during our pilot, members told us they wanted an opportunity to meet other members, to get together and hear about the work that has happened.



This event was co-designed by a group of Barnwood Circle members and the Engagement Team, with the aim of being an interactive and welcoming event to celebrate the first year of the membership scheme.

44 members attended the event over 2 days at Llanthony Secunda Priory in Gloucester. It was great to have so many Barnwood Circle members there.

This is what people said about the day:

"A nice and relaxed atmosphere"

"It was a great opportunity to meet new people. I find it difficult to make friends and meet like-minded people and today has been ideal for that."

"It would be good to have more events like this where members can meet."

"I've learnt a lot more about the Experts by Lived Experience projects and would like to get involved in some this year."

We also had feedback about how to improve the event next time:

"Next time, I would like more time to mingle with other members".

"Can we do this event in the Spring or Summer next time?"

Empowered Employers campaign

Experts by Lived Experience in the working group for the employment campaign have been looking at social media and training that will be delivered to employers in Gloucestershire.

The involvement of this group of Barnwood Circle members has helped ensure that training being offered as part of the campaign includes everything that is important for employers to learn about. The training topics we have been looking at are Inclusive Recruitment and Creating an Inclusive Workplace.

Quotes from the campaign working group have also been shared on the Empowered Employers social media. The quotes show why Experts by Lived Experience are involved, and they express the group's hopes for the future of the campaign.

The training is aimed at employers, but Barnwood Circle members are also welcome to attend. Please look at the Empowered Employers website

www.empoweredemployers.co.uk or contact us for more details.



...Employers should look at the individual, not the disability.

- (Expert by Lived Experience)



...I want to have done the work for the next generation

- (Expert by Lived Experience)

What we heard reports

The autumn and winter meetups 2022 happened in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Stroud, Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds.

At these we heard about people's experiences of green spaces and employment in the county. Below is a summary of what we heard. If you would like to read the full reports, please contact us.

What we heard: Green spaces

What makes accessing green spaces difficult?

- How places are set up, such as pathways, gates and accessible toilets
- Lack of information so you're not often sure what to expect
- Transport issues getting to green spaces is a barrier
- Anxiety and low confidence to try new outdoor experiences



What would make a difference to accessing green spaces?

There were lots of ideas talked about that could build people's confidence to try more green spaces in Gloucestershire:

- Better and accessible information in advance, and on signs when you get there
- Feeling supported by buddy schemes, social groups and well-trained staff
- Improvements to how places are set up, like better lighting, paths, benches and shelters
- Creating affordable options, like free parking and try-before-you-buy schemes

What are we doing next with what we heard?

Over 2023, we are bringing together a network of outdoor providers. We will share the green spaces meetup report with this network as part of our work to influence changes to make outdoor activities more accessible.

What we heard: Employment

What makes employment difficult?

The main barriers that came up, were:

- Low awareness from employers, such as not understanding about adjustments, difficult recruitment processes and discrimination in the workplace
- Issues with the benefits system, like pressure from the DWP, difficulties moving from benefits into work, and not being clear on permitted work rules

In addition, people said:

- There aren't enough work opportunities
- They lack confidence
- There is a lack of PAs
- Poor transport links don't help



What would make a difference to employment?

There were lots of ideas talked about:

- Big changes are needed in the DWP, Job Centre, places of work and in schools
- Employers need to be more aware about disability rights and adjustments
- Inclusion training for managers and teams would really help
- More opportunities to build confidence for people who want to work
- Better volunteering opportunities that could lead to paid work
- Rural work opportunities and more workplaces in rural areas



Key themes in the meetup conversations were **flexibility** and **understanding**. People talked about positive experiences with managers, and other staff, who were supportive and kind. Being willing to make even simple changes to tasks, meetings, working hours and desk positions can all help.

What are we doing next with what we heard?

Some Barnwood Circle members have already been involved in a working group of Experts by Lived Experience, helping to shape Barnwood's campaign: Empowered Employers (www.empoweredemployers.co.uk).

The 'what we heard' report about employment will be shared on the campaign website to help raise awareness with employers in the county.



Short Breaks funding programme



A group of Experts by Lived Experience have played a key role in developing Barnwood Trust's new funding programme for Short Breaks and Respite Care.

Barnwood research into Short Breaks provision in Gloucestershire highlighted the challenges families are facing in finding the activities they need. In many parts of the county there is no provision of activities for disabled children and young people; where activities are provided, often they aren't accessible for everyone; and sometimes parents and carers have to stay with their children during the sessions, so the parents themselves don't get a break.

We wanted to set up a new funding programme with a £300,000 budget. We needed insight from our Experts by Lived Experience to make sure we get the maximum impact from this investment. We were delighted that 6 people joined the group to co-design the programme with us.

Thanks to the passion and commitment of the group, we believe we now have a robust and fair process for allocating our funding and improving the availability of Short Breaks activities for disabled children and young people, and their families. The grants programme will open in the summer, and we hope that by September we will begin to see the impact of this funding.

Future projects

Experts by Lived Experience projects have been continuing for some members over the last few months. For other members who are interested to get involved in new projects this year at Barnwood, this is what's coming:

Communications Working Group – late spring and autumn 2023

Anti-racist Engagement Co-design Group – from summer 2023

Barnwood's Annual Event Co-design Group – summer and autumn 2023

New Accessibility Fund Co-design Group – late summer 2023

Look out for more information about these projects by email. We will include instructions about who the projects are for and how to express an interest to be a part of them.

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Next meetups

The next round of meetups are under way and focusing on access to community spaces. We want to know what makes a space feel like somewhere you can go, or not.

Please come along to join the conversation at your nearest meetup.

Forest of Dean

Lydney Community Centre

Monday 20th March, 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Zoom

Thursday 23rd March, 2:00pm - 3:30pm



Tewkesbury

The Roses Theatre

Tuesday 21st March, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Zoom

Wednesday 22nd March 12:00pm –
1:30pm

Stroud

Zoom

Monday 27th March, 12.00pm - 1.30pm

The Sub Rooms

Tuesday 28th March, 12.00pm - 2.00pm

Gloucester

The Music Works

Wednesday 12th April, 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Zoom

Thursday 13th April 11:00am – 12:30pm



We will send you email invites with more information. If you have any questions or would like any assistance getting to your local meetup, please contact Wey using the contact details below.

Feedback welcome

We want to learn as much as we can about what works, and what doesn't.

If we can make this newsletter better, please let us know.

If you want to get in touch with the Engagement team about anything at all, you can email talktous@barnwoodtrust.org, and call or WhatsApp **07519 325601**.