

# Barnwood Circle Round Up

June 2023



## Hello

**Welcome to the June edition of the Barnwood Circle 'Round Up'.**

In this edition, find out about meetups coming this month, and what we heard at the last round of meetups. You can read about the start of our communications projects, an update on our Empowered Employers campaign working group, and feedback from the Experts by Lived Experience payments survey we ran in the spring.

We also want to hear from you about making this newsletter available in Easy Read. If you would like us to start making an Easy Read newsletter, get in touch.

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## Recent meetups

**The summer meetups have been under way since the beginning of June.**

The W.I. Hall in Moreton was the location for our first summer meetup, where we connected with our well-established Cotswolds group of members. We then returned to the Subscription Rooms in Stroud last week and have just held our Gloucester meetup at The Club @ Tuffley Park.



Thanks to all members who have been able to come along and join us at one of the summer meetups so far – whether that’s been in-person or online. The Barnwood team have really enjoyed welcoming many new members to the meetups, as well as catching up with those who are not-so-new to the scheme.

Connectors have been overwhelmed by the depth of insight that has been shared with us so far on the topic of ‘Accessible Information’ and they look forward to engaging with members in Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury areas very soon.

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## What we heard

**The spring meetups 2023 happened in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Stroud, Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds. At these we heard about people’s experiences of accessing community spaces.**

Here is a summary of what we heard, and a short report is linked below.

### What makes accessing community spaces difficult?

- Buildings are often set up badly so they are not accessible.
- Poor information and signage make it harder to use a venue.
- Staff not being aware or not being trained to use access equipment.
- Anxiety and low confidence to try a new place or space.
- Extra costs of going to a community space, venue or club.



## What would make a difference?

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

- Better accessible facilities, including appropriate toilets, ramps and lifts.
- Better venue information about its accessibility features and more accessible signs and marketing.
- Staff awareness training and more staff available to welcome and support people.
- Venues should involve people with lived experience in building planning.
- There needs to be improvements to affordable transport and accessible parking.
- Regular audits for community spaces would make them more accountable.



If you would like to see a copy of the report for 'what we heard' about Access to Spaces, email [talktous@barnwoodtrust.org](mailto:talktous@barnwoodtrust.org)

## What are we doing next with what we heard?

Over 2023, we will start to share these reports on the Barnwood Trust website. We will also share the information we gathered with teams in Barnwood to help influence future plans for an accessibility grant.

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# Payment survey results

Members who volunteer their time to Experts by Lived Experience projects are able to claim back expenses for:

- Travel costs
- PA support
- Interpreter costs
- Time spent on the project (£15/hour)

We sent a survey out earlier this year to find out how the Experts by Lived Experience (EbLE) payments are going. 15 people answered the survey.

Questions included:

- How was the information you were given about payments?
- How was the payment process?
- Is there anything that would help with getting payments?



All the responses we received were helpful. Here is a summary:

- Some people found the information clear and the process good.
- Some people said that they enjoy EbLE projects, and the payment is a bonus.
- Some people liked getting a call before the project started to have everything explained.
- Some people wanted access to advice about how payments could affect benefits or how to describe the payments so the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) understand.
- Some people wanted different or extra paperwork for the DWP.
- Some people wanted other ways to be thanked, other than payments.
- Some people wanted a regular payment date.



We are looking into all of these and will keep improving how we manage EbLE payments. Here are some things we have already introduced which we hope are starting to help:

- We are piloting having a named contact at the DWP so that members can get in touch for personal benefits advice.
- We have started having fortnightly payment dates but will see if there is more we can do on dates.
- In addition to a letter which evidences an EbLE's involvement in a project to show the DWP, we have also started sending 'remittance' advice slips which act as a receipt for the payments.

The Engagement Team will keep reviewing the forms and processes we have so that we can be as helpful as possible.

If you have any questions or would like to know more, get in touch with Wey on **07519 325601** or email [talktous@barnwoodtrust.org](mailto:talktous@barnwoodtrust.org)

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## Communication projects

The two communications co-design projects have now started. Group 1 is a group of 13 (7 EbLEs plus 4 Barnwood staff and 2 people from our design agency). The task for this group is to develop a booklet we can use to help us talk about the work of the Trust.



This is an important piece of work which will help us reach wider audiences. The work will then go on to develop this information into more accessible formats.

Group 2 is a larger group of 18 people (12 EbLEs and 6 Barnwood staff) who are working on producing a set of guidelines and communication principles. These guidelines will cover things like photography and filming, our digital channels, language and accessibility. These are rules for us to follow to make sure all of our communication is accessible and work for the people using them.

This is really exciting and important work, and we are looking forward to sharing more news as both projects develop.

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## Empowered Employers campaign

**Barnwood Trust's Employment Campaign 'Empowered Employers' has involved members of Barnwood Circle from the outset. The project group currently includes eight Experts by Lived Experience (EbLEs).**

The latest phase of the co-design work for this campaign has involved working with Music Works in Gloucester to record a series of podcasts. The EbLE's have met at the studios over 4 dynamic sessions to repeat some of the early group conversations we had for the campaign. Everyone involved thought that those conversations were really good to share more widely. It feels very important that people's voices and experiences are heard.

We are now waiting for the Music Works sound engineering team to finish working on the technical side of these podcasts. When the group has heard and okayed the final edit, it will be ready for public broadcast on a variety of platforms. Watch this space.

You can find out more about the Empowered Employers Campaign at [www.empoweredemployers.co.uk](http://www.empoweredemployers.co.uk)



# Barnwood Circle members make a difference in Gloucestershire

Barnwood Circle member Kay Torres has been involved in the employment campaign from the start. She was involved in the early stages of developing the name and the website. Most recently she has been involved in the sessions at Music Works in Gloucester where she recorded her thoughts and experiences as part of the podcast recordings.

Early in the campaign we asked for quotes from each of the EbLEs in the project group.

We asked everyone why this campaign was important to them and what they hoped to achieve through their involvement.

Kay said: "Before I started this campaign, I had a really bad experience of trying to find work. I handed my CV in at a local supermarket, and they looked at me as if to say, 'what are you gonna do?!' After that I put trying to find a job and working out of my mind, full stop."

By being part of the campaign, and the experience of speaking directly with the employers who are partners of Empowered Employers, Kays confidence has increased. This has led to her starting to volunteer for Cheltenham Festivals.

She has recently been working with Andrew Lansley, another Barnwood Circle member, and Innovation Manager at Cheltenham Festivals, to help make all of the Festival sites more accessible.

<https://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/access-requirements>

Through being part of Barnwood Circle and taking part in an EbLE project Kay has gone on to have direct influence on Cheltenham Festivals' ongoing work to improve and enhance the on-site experiences for disabled people and people with mental health conditions.



# New members of staff

We are pleased to introduce two new team members Tara and Jo. Jo started earlier this month as our Events Administrator – she’s moved from the Funding team and Tara is our Internal Communications Manager and has moved into our team from the People Team. Say ‘hello’ to Tara and Jo at future Barnwood events.



We are also recruiting for a new role in the team, an Involvement and Participation Manager to oversee Barnwood Circle and all our involvement activities with Experts by Lived Experience. Have a look at the Barnwood Trust jobs pages for more information:

[www.barnwoodtrust.org/involvement-and-participation-manager/](http://www.barnwoodtrust.org/involvement-and-participation-manager/)



Connectors are still very active across the county. Here’s a reminder of who looks after which parts of Gloucestershire:

Gloucester – Katie and Anna

Cheltenham – Lidia

Stroud – Charlotte

Cotswolds – Anna

Forest of Dean – Anna

Tewkesbury – Charlotte



# Accessibility update

Barnwood Trust is based at Overton House in Cheltenham. We want to make sure that everyone who comes here can do so independently and feels welcomed, informed and considered when they do.

We constantly need to work towards this, so in February 2022 we undertook a Disability Access Audit at Overton House. The audit found that overall, Overton House is an accessible building, but of course, there is always room for improvement. Some great improvements we have made already have included automating heavy internal doors, installing a hearing loop in our workshop room, remodeling our kitchens and providing much clearer signage both inside and outside of the building.

In future editions of Round Up we will let you know about the different work we are doing at Overton House to improve the accessibility of it for everyone.



# Events coming soon

The summer meetups are ongoing, and we are talking about accessible information. People have shared their experiences of accessing information in the Cotswolds, Stroud, and Gloucester. We have three more areas to cover in the county. If you have missed a meetup in your area, you can join the conversations in the following areas:

## Cheltenham

Barnwood Trust, Overton House,  
Overton Rd, Cheltenham GL50 3BN

Day 1- Tuesday 27th June 1.30pm -  
4.00pm

Day 2- Thursday 29th June 1.30pm -  
4.00pm

Online (Microsoft Teams)

Wednesday 28th June 10.30am -  
12.00pm



## Forest of Dean

The Main Place, Old Station Way,  
Coleford GL16 8RH

Wednesday 5th July 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Online (Microsoft Teams)

Thursday 6th July 11.00am - 12.30pm



## Tewkesbury

Northway Community Hub, Lee Walk,  
Tewkesbury GL20 8QG

Tuesday 25th July 11.00am - 2.00pm

Online (Microsoft Teams)

Thursday 27th July 11.30am - 1.00pm



Please let us know if you would like to attend, and we will send you an invite. If you have any questions or would like any assistance getting to your local or online meetup, please contact Wey using the contact details below.

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## 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](mailto:talktous@barnwoodtrust.org), and call or WhatsApp **07519 325601**.