



GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
COMMUNITY RAIL  
PARTNERSHIP

# IMPACT REPORT 2022-23

GCRP  Getting Our Community Moving

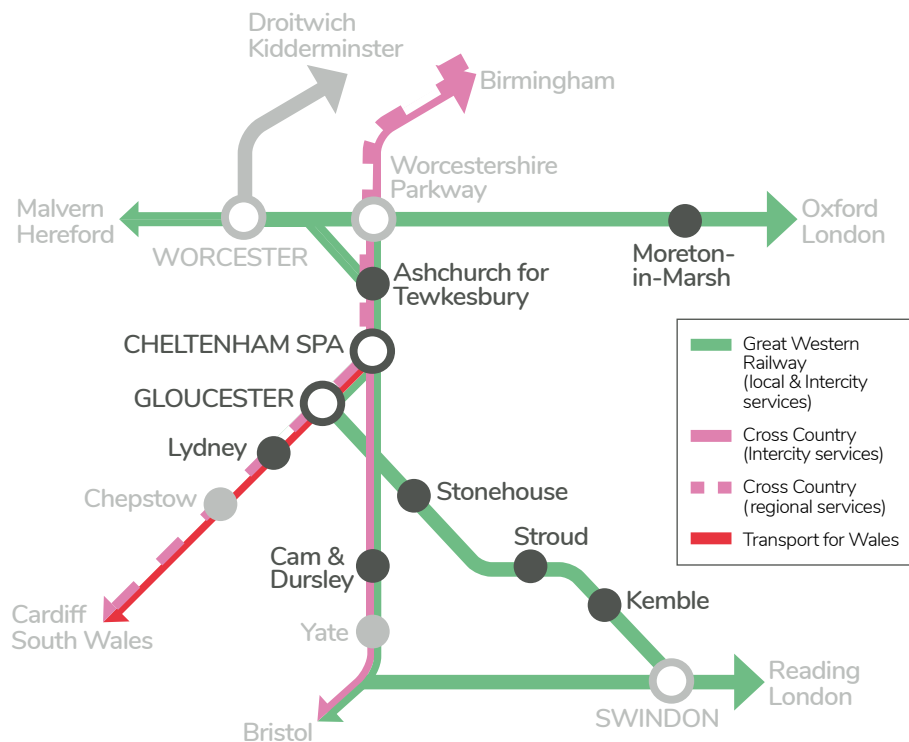
# CONTENTS

GCRP IN NUMBERS	04
COMMUNITIES	05
YOUTH & EDUCATION	13
LEISURE & TOURISM	21
TRANSPORT PLANNING	27
MARKETING	33
FINANCE	34
OUR DELIVERY TEAM	35
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	36

GCRP would like to thank our core funders Great Western Railway, CrossCountry Trains and Gloucestershire County Council as well as the many partners that have pledged time, effort and project based funding over the last two years.

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# OUR STATIONS & ROUTES



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

The past three years have been transformative for Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP). During this time, we have pursued our vision and mission, identifying key areas of focus based on the distinct needs of our local community. Establishing strong partnerships with our community partners has been a priority and in so doing we have maximised our impact and dedicated our work to the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

Our journey began amidst the challenges of the pandemic, and in true GCRP spirit, we responded by actively engaging with local residents, delving deep into the issues they faced, and tailoring our initiatives to address these concerns. Our commitment to supporting young people, promoting diversity and inclusion, and taking meaningful climate action emerged from this process of understanding our community's needs.

Despite facing industrial action in the past year, we persevered in delivering our activities as per our commitment to our community and funders engaging

positively with our partners to maintain and build positive working relationships. We identified our critical role in increasing public confidence in rail services and providing community connections, despite the challenges. Our dedication to the equity agenda and the role transport plays drives us to advocate for and support those who rely on public transport as their sole means of transport to access work, leisure and education opportunities.

While recent cuts to grant funding and budget constraints, combined with the prevailing cost of living crisis, pose new challenges, we remain resolute in our determination to continue making a significant impact and generating positive outcomes for our community.



**Hannah McDonnell**  
Executive Director  
GCRP



**Jon Harris**  
Chair & Non-Executive  
Director

Our VISION is a society where transport is inclusive,  
sustainable and better connects people

Our MISSION is to make it easier for people to use sustainable transport

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP IN NUMBERS...



**90+**

Connections  
made with  
other local  
organisations



**21**

Events  
presented  
at and  
attended



**977**

Youth  
engagements  
across our  
programmes



**1.5k+**

Survey  
responses  
and insights  
received



**23**

Organisations  
represented  
on Steering  
Group



**22k**

Leaflets,  
access and  
trail maps  
distributed





# COMMUNITIES

Connecting communities served by Gloucestershire's nine railway stations through arts, heritage, community development and leisure programmes

# OUR STATIONS

Thanks to the hard work of our various community and adoption groups, our station environments have been improving with new garden spaces and platform galleries.

Stonehouse In Bloom has been busy yet again, winning gold in the RHS Heart of England in Bloom competition for the fifth year in a row. The Station Master's Garden is now a Community Grow & Share Space with a large, raised bed filled with mixed planting of flowers, fruit and veg, and passers-by are invited to help themselves. Ashchurch-for-Tewkesbury, Moreton-in-Marsh and Kemble garden are being well maintained by community groups and water butts have been installed across our stations. Our Stroud beds were tended to by Network Rail volunteers to start the process of new upcoming projects through volunteer groups at Stroud and Cam & Dursley.

Creative Sustainability's Access Bike Workshop manager worked with us to develop a feasibility study associated with establishing a community led cycle hub at Stroud Station. The aim is to set up a space in the existing room on Platform 2 to test the concept with funding applications in the pipeline.

Our visit to Castlefield Viaduct, Manchester at last year's Community Rail Awards has inspired exciting projects for urban industrial spaces, however, we are on the lookout for new adoption groups - contact us to find out more!







## EXHIBITIONS

We are delighted to curate various exhibitions across our galleries at Gloucester, Stonehouse, Stroud, Cam and Dursley and Cheltenham stations that representing and involving underrepresented communities, climate action, young people and community voice.

The latest exhibition builds and celebrates community around youth activism and climate change. Titled 'What Can I Do?', artwork was collected from young people on their thoughts and experiences with being involved

in community organising through a one-day festival. This was a partnership project between GCRP, Creative Sustainability, Strike A Light and The Ryse.

Coming up, we will be showcasing Hundred Heroine's Photography bootcamp in our exhibition spaces. The project was funded by GWR's Community Investment Fund and celebrates the success of participants who explored photography of women photographers through train trips across the GWR network. We are also exploring installing new gallery spaces at Cam & Dursley and Lydney train stations, allowing local artists and groups a chance to display their work cross-county.

# GLOUCESTER PLACEMAKING

This year, GCRP has been focusing on station safety and welcome. With our research showing that safety is the key focus of young people when choosing how to travel and with the closure of the underpass at Gloucester Train Station we engaged local youth through a series of creative workshops exploring their vision for the station forecourt. The aim was to provide a pleasurable and informative “diversion” experience for passengers and the local community.

Led by Artist Aumairah Hassan, seven workshops engaging over 40 young people from Al-Ashraf Primary School, Al-Ashraf Secondary School, and The Friendship Café took place. The young people designed artworks that addressed the following question: “Imagine a garden at Gloucester Train Station. What elements would contribute to your sense of safety and welcome?”

The artworks tap into unique perspectives and insights of local youth and has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of the elements that create a safe and inviting environment for all community members. Keep an eye out for the incredible artworks that will be displayed in the near future at Gloucester Train Station.



GCRP will also be using the closure of the underpass and the artwork as a vehicle for conversations regarding place and locality. The consultation will be used to obtain insights regarding; use of the station space, safety, welcome, design methods and meaningful adjustments.

**“As a young woman who often travels by train I love the idea of a dedicated space where I can decompress and feel safe.”**



# BLACK HISTORY MAP

With generous funding from Active Gloucestershire, GCRP was delighted to collaborate with Black Ark Media on the launch of a celebratory Black History map that commemorated the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush generation in Britain. The map goes beyond historical significance and is designed to connect communities through rail and active travel, promote cultural understanding, and encourage active lifestyles.

The Black History map serves as a guide to discovering the diverse contributions of Black Britons to art, education, and culture. It highlights walking routes and active and sustainable travel experiences radiating from Gloucestershire's nine railway stations, leading to a series of significant Black History sites. By embarking on these journeys, users not only gain knowledge and appreciation of the past but also actively promote physical well-being and unity in their communities.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2023 we will be partnering with local community groups to organise guided community walks led by Black Ark Media, encouraging participants to engage in physical activity while immersing themselves in the rich tapestry of Black History.



Left: Ronnie McGrath and Derrick McLean of Black Ark Media

Derrick McLean, co-founder of Black Ark Media says: "We're excited to introduce this innovative Black History map, which not only celebrates our shared heritage but also encourages people to explore their surroundings and adopt active lifestyles. We hope to promote cultural understanding, celebrate diversity, and create a sense of unity within the community."

Richard Fishlock, Active Gloucestershire, adds: "As long-time supporters of GCRP and Black History Month we're proud to support this project. Combining the many benefits of walking with the chance to learn about Gloucestershire's rich cultural heritage is a genius idea from Black Art Media, and we look forward to promoting the routes and trying them out ourselves."

Over  
**2,000**  
maps  
distributed  
so far

# OXFORDSHIRE CRP DEVELOPMENT

Over the last three years, GCRP has successfully developed a county-wide community rail model, securing support from a number of community partners to deliver a range of social and economic benefits for communities. In 2022, GCRP was approached by Great Western Railway to assess the opportunities to formally establish a community rail partnership for Oxfordshire, using GCRP as a good-practice model for development. We are excited to be launching Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership (OxCRP) in 2023, which covers a network of 22 train stations, with the support of Great Western Railway, Chiltern Railways, CrossCountry and a number of local Oxfordshire-based community organisations.

During the OxCRP feasibility study, we consulted with six station adoption groups and 22 key stakeholders across Oxfordshire. We also launched our Oxfordshire stakeholder survey in late 2022, generating 138 responses with valuable feedback and insights into local priorities. These consultations, together with our extensive research into the opportunities for community rail to deliver economic and social improvement in Oxfordshire, has helped us to shape our 2023-2024 OxCRP Activity Plan.



A Charlbury Walking Trail map was developed as part of pilot activities for the development of OxCRP

The Activity Plan outlines programmes in four key areas:

- **Access and Inclusion**
- **Social Value**
- **Leisure and Tourism**
- **Stations as Places**

Our aim is to develop OxCRP as an equitable, well-led and proactive partnership, which focuses on: addressing inequality, promoting health and wellbeing, influencing inclusive and integrated transport, improving access to nature, engaging young people, and supporting the local economy through rail.

# COTSWOLD CALM CORNER

GCRP produced a feasibility study to assess the opportunities for a 'calm corner' that improves access to the Cotswold area, funded by Cotswold National Landscape. Working with Mima Group, an accessible design consultancy, we researched transport-related barriers for disabled, neurodivergent, and multifaith people to accessing nature via rail, and the opportunities to provide an inclusive space that improves their travel experience. Underpinned by our research around the transport accessibility gap, the wellbeing benefits of time spent in nature, and the significant opportunities to support growth in visitor attractions, the report outlines the opportunities to empower visitors with protected characteristics to travel safely and confidently.

Five visits were undertaken to train stations within, or with close connections to, the Cotswold AONB to conduct an analysis and shortlist suitable locations for the Calm Corner installation. We also consulted with a diverse lived experience user-group, and with their expertise developed technical design requirements for the space to benefit the widest range of travellers.

Next we aim to explore funding opportunities to develop, and ultimately create, an inclusive and accessible station-based space that provides moments of calm and decompression during an end-to-end train journey.

Thoughts from some of the workshop participants:

**“All information for the journey in that one space would be particularly useful as I’m constantly checking departure screens!”**

**“The space should be enclosed and ‘cosy’ so I can hide away, but also safe.”**

**“Staff to assist with any questions or uncertainty would be amazing.”**

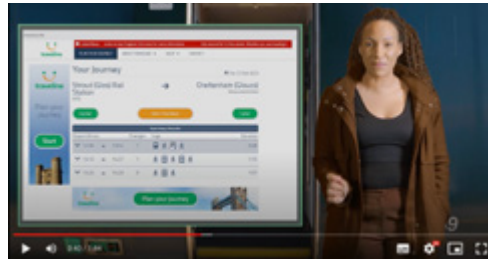
# LET'S TALK TRAVEL

While many travellers are comfortable using buses and trains, many also lack the confidence to use public transport and find the experience difficult or overwhelming. This limits their access to employment, training, education and other life opportunities. Over the last three years, we have focused on developing training resources to support travel confidence, empowering individuals' mobility, and raising awareness of transport barriers among the professionals who support them.

The Let's Talk Travel programme has continued its success, engaging 60+ organisations, 200+ employability and educational professionals and 300+ potential travellers with information on travel confidence and access to work via public transport. We have shared over 5,000 resources, raising awareness of transport barriers, maximising access to information, and better equipping professionals and tutors to support their clients.

Working in partnership with GWR, CrossCountry Trains and Stagecoach, we have produced a Travel Training film, which brings all of our advice around wayfinding, tickets, accessibility, safety strategies, and travel anxiety to new digital audiences, and acts as a training resource for professionals.

The film, along with our other resources, brings together three years of research around travel confidence and travel training and will be used across all of our projects and community engagement. We will be updating and adapting these resources for Oxfordshire, to support future projects engaging people with new experiences using public transport.



5,000  
resources  
distributed

60+  
organisations  
engaged





# YOUTH & EDUCATION

Addressing the challenge of net outward migration among young people in Gloucestershire, our youth and education pillar has emerged, providing support to under-represented youth and shedding light on the pivotal role of transport and travel in their wellbeing and decision to remain rooted in the county

# MOVEMENT

We were delighted to work with Severnside CRP to deliver Movement as part of the Department of Transport's national 'Tackling Loneliness with Transport' programme. Movement has contributed to the growing evidence base regarding how transport can reduce social isolation for vulnerable groups.

Our approach has been underpinned by research on the wellbeing benefits of time spent in nature, and our organisational goals of working with diverse and less advantaged groups. With 40% of 16-24 year olds in the UK reporting feeling lonely 'often or always', and many people from underrepresented backgrounds feeling unwelcome in rural environments, the project was developed to improve access to nature for those most excluded from the health and wellbeing benefits it offers.

We facilitated 11 days out by rail for 91 young people aged 15-24 to access rural and coastal experiences. These trips provided opportunities for them to gain experience using public transport, connect with their peers, grow their confidence, and explore new environments that may have previously been out of reach. Co-designed with young people trips included visits Batsford Arboretum in Moreton-in-Marsh, the Strawberry Line Cycle Project at Yatton Station, and the Forest of Dean.



**“It was great to get away from home life to experience new things – it made me realise there’s more out there.”**

*Movement participant*

# GETAWAY

Getaway, our access to nature programme, has continued to build the confidence and independence of young people from underrepresented communities to access Gloucestershire's green spaces by train. This year young people started suggesting trips and building their own itineraries. We explored past trips and future opportunities and interests, identified benefits to rural experiences and explored advantages and barriers of train travel.

Our approach to connecting with young people over time and building trust has been a success; this year, we were thrilled that the programme won first place in the Community Rail Network awards for the category 'Involving Diverse Groups'. We were delighted to deliver eight experiences for 194 young people, doubling our average number of young people on trips from last year. Responding to the young peoples wishes they experienced; high ropes adventures, rural skills, outdoor adventure parks and basketball in the Malverns. We partnered with Al Ashraf Primary and Secondary Schools, The Friendship Cafe, The Music Works and key countryside partners such as Cotswold National Landscapes and The National Trust.



**“I’m scared of trains – I want to be able to travel on my own and now I feel more confident.”**

Getaway participant

**“I enjoyed working on this project and I’ve learnt more about just how sustainable trains are, as well as some facts I didn’t know about my local train stations. It’s great that young people can experience going on a train while learning about why it’s better for the environment, it’s a good interactive way to educate them.”**

*Youth Climate Group participant*



We also delivered four workshops working with young people from Gloucestershire County Council’s Youth Climate Group, with facilitators Creative Sustainability, to develop an ‘activity pack’ exploring sustainable travel and climate in Gloucestershire. The packs are being trialled with young people to use for ongoing GCRP youth programmes.

We are looking forward to continuing our access to nature work, finding inclusive and innovative ways to get our communities more connected with nature and partnering with more local organisations and countryside partners to deliver further getaways.

**2,729<sup>KG</sup>**  
of CO<sub>2</sub> saved  
on Getaway  
trips

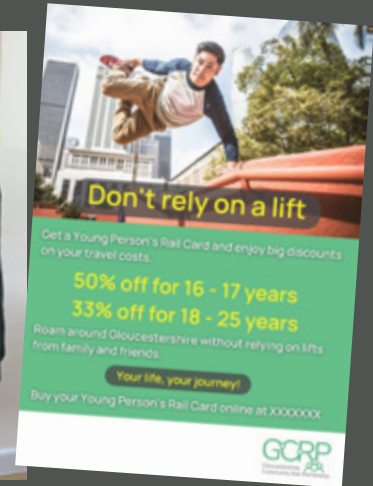


# SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS

Our Sustainability Communications programme was developed in response to the findings of our Youth Transport Survey in 2020 and our 2022 survey of University of Gloucestershire students which revealed that 64% of respondents were confused about the term sustainability and what it actually meant.

We set out to inclusively engage young people to conduct targeted market research regarding sustainability messaging. 16 young people from The Music Works Youth Advisory Group took part in a focus group led by The Music Works youth leads to explore key themes around sustainable transport, attitudes towards sustainability and transport habits. We then partnered with Participation People to develop a questionnaire based on the focus group findings. 584 young people across Gloucestershire and further afield completed the survey.

Key findings (full report available on our website at [gcrp.org.uk](http://gcrp.org.uk)) included that 78% of young people's top priority when travelling was their safety, and that young people perceive travel to be more expensive than it is. Based on these findings, young people developed a series of communication digital resources in a workshop for use on GCRP's digital platforms.



78%

of young people said their top priority when travelling was their safety

3x

on average young people perceived travel to be 3 times more expensive than it is

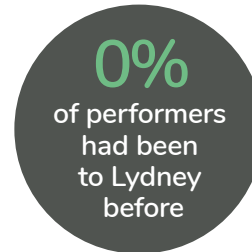
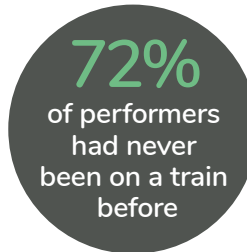
Above: one of the communication resources developed at the workshop

# CREATIVE PERFORMANCES (ON A TRAIN!)

We were delighted to build our Creative Arts programme this year, which aims to support the health and wellbeing of Gloucester's urban youth through connections with rural places and environments through sustainable travel. An inspiring testament to the power of the arts and sustainable transport in promoting the holistic development of young people in our community.

In May 2022, 18 young people from Strike A Light's Youth Theatre staged a performance that took place on board a train from Gloucester to Lydney. The young people engaged with rail travel and travelling to unknown places through discussion and creative expression over a six month period, leading to a show that combined comedy, physical theatre and magic.

The production - called 'Us' - took the audience through a journey of the imagination, with a 'Chorus of Doom' shying away from new experiences and another group encouraging them and the audience to journey into the unknown. The innovative performance took place at multiple locations starting at Gloucester station on Platform 2, on board a Transport for Wales train to Lydney and at Lydney Harbour, with a delighted audience who had booked tickets especially.



## Tunnel Vision

In April 2023, a group of young dancers from Strike A Light's Youth Dance Company, performed a dance routine on a train between Gloucester and Chepstow. 'Tunnel Vision' was especially commissioned by GCRP as a way for young people to explore Gloucestershire and further afield through becoming confident train travellers.

This project was designed to demonstrate that public transport can help increase independence and confidence in a stimulating and engaging way. The Edinburgh Warwick Scale was used to evaluate how each participant felt at the start of the project and at the end of the project so as to be able to compare the emotional and wellbeing improvement through the project. We saw a positive increase in scores across all respondents, with the biggest metric increase being "I've been feeling confident".

Emma-Jane Benning, Co-Artistic Director, Strike A Light said: "We love creating opportunities for young people to perform – especially when those performances can happen in places you wouldn't expect! Dancing on a moving train obviously comes with all sorts of challenges but the young people did brilliantly. Performance isn't all about theatres or stages: it's about people coming together and bringing a space to life. We're really excited for more projects like this in future."



**“This is amazing, such a good idea. Wow, they really are brilliant – I can't believe this is happening on a train!”**

Passenger audience member

# PLATFORM

We are thrilled to collaborate with five community rail partnerships in funding and delivering our highly successful rail education programme within the community rail context. Platform, launched in 2022, has continuously grown to encompass additional community rail partners and boasts a team of skilled and experienced education providers who deliver exceptional rail education to schools across Gloucestershire and beyond. This initiative not only complements all our existing programmes but also reinforces our commitment to making sustainable transport accessible to the next generation.

Platform project highlights include:

- Platform delivered in-person rail education to a total of 1056 students in the Gloucestershire area
- Train trips for 349 students
- 15 trips conducted
- Engaging primary, secondary, special, and alternative provisions schools
- Programme delivered in 12 Gloucestershire schools
- Valuable feedback collected from 330 parents and caregivers across the wider scheme area
- 3237 unique website users.
- 647 lessons downloaded for use in classrooms
- Six Gloucestershire-specific learning resources created



**“Over half my class had never been on a train before – the activities on the journey from Gloucester to Worcester really engaged them.”**

*Alison Petticrew, Elmbridge Primary School, Gloucester*





# LEISURE & TOURISM

A catalyst for change offering fun and engaging activities that inspire people to switch to sustainable behaviours and choices while enjoying leisure activities

# TOURISM DECLARES

We are proud to work in partnership with Visit Gloucestershire the counties strategic Destination Management Organisation (DMO) supporting their commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism. Together we hope to lead the way towards a greener future for leisure and tourism in Gloucestershire.

Visit Gloucestershire made history in 2021 by declaring a climate emergency through the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency movement, affiliated with the UNWTO. They developed a comprehensive climate action plan with a key focus on the Go Car Free agenda and collaborations with GCRP.

Our collaboration resulted in four trail maps, including the innovative TrainTripper platform, promoting sustainable travel in the county. Together we also developed the Destination and Community Rail toolkit, providing innovative resources to support sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore a series of cross sector Cotswolds Innovation sessions identified commitments to reducing transport emissions through collaborative approaches.

In 2022 we formalised our partnership as Visit Gloucestershire's local delivery partner, we actively



support their Net Zero and Transport objectives, enhancing access to leisure and nature for our community's well-being.

Our efforts gained international recognition, presenting our Net Zero and Transport approach at the Lapland Tourism Parliament and we are speaking at an upcoming tourism conference about the pivotal role of sustainable transport. Visit Gloucestershire is developing a renewed 12 month Climate Action Plan, reinforcing its commitment to environmental sustainability and shaping future initiatives.

Together with Visit Gloucestershire, we lead the way towards a sustainable and thriving future for leisure and tourism in our beautiful county.

# TASTE FOR TRAVEL

With transport-related emissions from tourism expected to account for over 5% of all man-made CO2 emissions by 2030 and a commitment to reduce car use by a third in Gloucestershire which receives 23 million visitors per year, car free visitors are high on our agenda. This year, our focus was on creating a series of exciting Gloucestershire-wide trails and maps, available both online and in print.

To bring these maps to life, we teamed up with Visit Gloucestershire, community organisations, and local artists. Together, we've produced four amazing trail maps celebrating 'Active Travel', 'Food & Drink', 'Black History' and 'Wellbeing Walks'. These walks all radiate from Gloucestershire's railway stations, connecting the entire county and showcasing our region.

By encouraging the use of integrated walking and cycling paths, this work supports our commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes through active travel and local adventures! These maps also help visitors extend their stay in the county, ensuring they make the most of everything Gloucestershire has to offer.



## Student Research Project

# YOUNG PEOPLE & SUSTAINABILITY

We collaborated with nine Hospitality, Tourism and Events students from University of Gloucestershire who conducted research during spring 2023 focusing on young people, sustainable transport, and its impact on rural and outdoor tourist destinations.

Key findings were from the research were:

- bus and car were the preferred method of transport to local tourist destinations
- there was some lack of knowledge about local tourist destinations which were not based in the city centre
- Motivations to use trains more included: accessibility, sustainability, cost and speed

- affordability, accessibility and good transport links were highlighted as reasons to visit rural destinations as well as nature, beauty and peace

These findings and recommendations complement our Sustainability Communications programme and deepen our understanding of young people's travel attitudes and behaviours.

This research will guide our collaboration with local tourist destinations, helping them cater to young people's needs and shape the future of transport for rural and outdoor leisure destinations.

40%

said the way they travel is the most important consideration when making choices about sustainability

69%

agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'The environmental impact of a journey affects the way I travel.'

27%

used the train for work or education, 22% to visit places further away and 20% to see friends and family

30%

of young people did not know, or were unsure about, what a railcard is

73%

said that safety was the most important influencing factor when considering train travel

# COMMUNITY RAIL AND DESTINATION TOOLKIT

In 2020, GCRP took decisive action amidst the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and impending national rail reforms. We led the development of the Destination and Community Rail Toolkit, showcasing the vast collaborative potential between Community Rail and Destination Partnerships. Working with 45 contributors, including community rail partnerships, Community Rail Network, the Travel Foundation, train operators, and Destination Management Organisations, the comprehensive toolkit has had a significant impact, with 48 downloads and attracting over 78 attendees through two targeted webinars.

In early 2023, we held three practical Cotswolds Innovation sessions, engaging stakeholders from the tourism and transport sectors. We explored collaborative solutions for reducing transport emissions in the popular Cotswolds destination. Notably, we are now partnering with Westonbirt Arboretum, focusing on a shift towards



sustainable transport and equitable access for their 550,000 annual visitors, particularly young people.

We have also produced a comprehensive Rail to Leisure report which outlines the immense potential for leisure and tourism sectors to leverage sustainable transport and active travel, thereby stimulating numerous positive outcomes at both the local and national levels.

Find the Destination Toolkit & Rail to Leisure report at: [gcrp.org.uk](https://gcrp.org.uk)

**“This is a first step in unlocking opportunities for leisure travel, to strengthen local economies & achieve sustainability goals.”**

Rebecca Armstrong, Sustainable Tourism Specialist, Travel Foundation



# TRAIN TRIPPER

Our innovative digital platform promotes car-free leisure trips in and around Gloucestershire, integrating transport information, promoting local businesses and highlighting some of the incredible local attractions Gloucestershire has to offer. Whether planning a day out with kids, a short getaway or a longer break in Gloucestershire, TrainTripper supports the county's net zero goals. With train travel at the heart of the platform, users can build a personalised itinerary of places to explore, eat and stay using sustainable transport where possible to reach their chosen destinations.

Launched in February 2023, TrainTripper has had over 2,000 site visits with 50% of individuals who download their itinerary then going on to book their train tickets. In collaboration with four key Destination Management and Marketing Organisations, TrainTripper is raising awareness among tourism decision-makers about sustainable travel. The platform is being supported by Great Western Railway, Cross Country and Visit Gloucestershire.

TrainTripper's long-term aim is to encourage sustainable tourism throughout the county and reignite the love for train journeys. Excitingly, we have plans to expand TrainTripper into Oxfordshire in the coming year, providing even more inspiration for sustainable tourism.



Over  
2,000  
site visits

70  
itineraries  
created

50%  
click through  
to book train  
tickets



# TRANSPORT PLANNING

Our Transport Planning workstream provides an opportunity for a community voice in shaping local transport solutions, and delivering tools and resources to help people travel more sustainably

# ACCESSIBILITY PANEL

GCRP has been independently chairing the CrossCountry Accessibility Panel, a quarterly online meeting aiming to inform and improve the customer experience for disabled passengers across the CrossCountry network. The panel operates under the ethos of 'nothing about us – without us,' ensuring the active input and participation of disabled individuals. It comprises 30 members, including experts by lived experience, rail industry stakeholders from CrossCountry, Network Rail, Community Rail Network, and independent accessibility advisors.

The panel has engaged in various activities, including co-creating disability awareness training videos for CrossCountry staff, designing the CrossCountry Passenger Assist customer experience survey, advising on the allocation of the CrossCountry wider accessibility minor works budget, and providing insights to rail industry stakeholders on accessibility matters. We facilitated the panel's first in-person meeting in Birmingham in July 2022, focusing on building relationships, transport integration, and enhancing the panel's voice across the network. Due to the broad range of topics and level of interest, we have increased the frequency of meetings to bi-monthly and are engaging the wider community rail network.



We are also conducting independent research on behalf of CrossCountry Trains to gather insights into the customer experience of Passenger Assist service users to understand the current service standards. A survey has been co-designed with members of the CrossCountry Access Panel and is available in various formats including print, journals, large format, online surveys and phone interviews. After piloting the survey we are now recruiting more Passenger Assist users to gather their feedback, working with national organisations including Community Rail Network, CrossCountry Trains, Network Rail and regional disability organisations, with the aim of presenting our final findings to CrossCountry and the Department for Transport by the end of September 2023.

# ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY GUIDES

**10,000+**  
printed maps  
issued in  
2022/23

Building on our work producing Access and Connectivity guides in previous years we now have nine access maps available to help people with their travel choices and access needs to and from railway stations across Gloucestershire. These cover Stroud, Gloucester, Stonehouse, Great Oldbury, Cheltenham, Lydney, Stroud Canal, Brockworth and Cam & Dursley, with Brockworth Parish Council also displaying 10 large printed maps at the Community Centre and noticeboards. Recently, we created new Access and Active Travel guides for Cam & Dursley and Brockworth, involving local stakeholders in the process and are currently developing an Access map for Chepstow, as well as reviewing and updating our existing maps.

We adapted our access map and the Walking and Cycling Trail map to display on new boards at Stroud Station. The town side is full of handy information for anyone visiting and on the canal side, we have an inspiring walking and cycling routes to explore the local area.



**“This map is so useful for helping me find local walks and nearby bus stops.”**

Local resident

# COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Community Transport Capacity Building study was developed to understand the interests, aspirations, and challenges faced by the community transport sector. The goal was to develop practical tools and approaches to deliver a pilot initiative, supporting multi-modal access to railway stations in the future. The main outcome of the study was the implementation of the Slimbridge Shuttle, a six-month pilot initiative connecting Cam & Dursley Railway Station with local places and attractions. Collaborating with local partners, we shaped the service to meet community needs and equipped the community transport provider, Community Connexions, with ticketing tools, marketing support, and operational resilience.

Moving forward, we will analyse the pilot initiative to identify specific areas of demand that align with local needs. Our focus will be on developing the necessary tools and infrastructure to support community transport, while working closely with sector stakeholders to establish a sustainable funding model to create a lasting legacy. Detailed feedback on the pilot's success will be shared by the end of the year, as we remain dedicated to enhancing social value through the collaborative efforts of community transport and community rail.



**“It’s a fantastic service and made it possible for us to visit Slimbridge with our toddler.”**

*Local young family*



# STATION SURVEYS



In 2022-23, GCRP gathered valuable data and local insights on parking, access, public transport connectivity, town centre activities, and tourism at Stroud and Kemble Train Stations, collaborating with GWR, local authorities, and councils. At Stroud station, a survey funded by the Town Council examined access, platform and footbridge utilisation, parking usage, town activities' impact, and customer experiences, providing insights into the local tourism economy. The findings were presented to Stroud Council based on over 200 survey responses.

A similar survey funded by Cotswold District Council was conducted at Kemble station, including a site assessment in collaboration with a placement student from the University of Coventry and also ITP, who provided strategic advice on public transport connectivity through to Cirencester. We received 502 survey responses supporting public transport research, local engagement and station adoption efforts. We also provided expert input on Cheltenham Borough Council's Mini Holland cycle study, focusing on cycling approaches in the Lansdown area and train station neighbourhoods.

700+  
surveys  
responses  
received

# ACCESS TO LEISURE DESTINATIONS

Recognising the last-mile barriers encountered by people accessing leisure destinations, GCRP commissioned Inclusion Gloucestershire to audit 20 visitor destinations, chosen in collaboration with eight of Gloucestershire destination marketing organisations. Looking at accessibility from our nine railway stations, the aim was to open up visitor attractions to be inclusive and to ensure seamless accessible connections, best suited to individuals' needs, broadening the audience and encouraging rail travel.

The report recommends that destinations offer comprehensive accessibility details, including transport options from nearby train stations. It also provides valuable insights to local destinations on how they can embrace rail-based visitors. By improving accessibility and inclusivity, attractions have the potential to expand their reach, attract a more diverse visitor base, and foster a culture of inclusivity that enriches the experiences of all visitors.

Inclusion Gloucestershire worked with Experts by Experience to design an audit framework to consider visit planning, travel to the location by rail (including the onward mile), and the destination experience, from a range of perspectives and lived experiences. Available on our website the report highlights key findings and recommendations for improvement. We are now working with Visit Gloucestershire to promote good practices and supporting destinations to implement the recommendations.

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Gloucestershire has experienced a significant surge in housing developments, with an estimated 60,000 new homes expected between 2011 and 2031. Our activities have provided valuable opportunities for consultation and evidence gathering, allowing us to gain genuine insights into the access needs of new residents.

Through direct collaboration with GCRP partners and leveraging existing local initiatives, we used our Inclusive Community Engagement model to adopt a needs-based approach, developing new ways to talk about transport, accessibility, and connectivity. We worked closely with local community organisations Lydney Town Council, Brockworth Parish Council, Creative Sustainability CIC, and The Door youth project, concentraign on the areas of Great Oldbury, Brockworth, and Cam and Dursley.

In partnership with Lydney Town Council and other community organisations, we held a series of events in targeted new estates and were a prominent presence during the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, fostering a sense of community among new and existing residents. GCRP provided information, met visitors from the Park and Ride steam railway operation, facilitated transportation with a courtesy minibus to the new estates, and supported live music performances.

We also ran a Try the Train event for a local parent and toddlers group, offering a return journey from Lydney to Gloucester.

We are excited to further facilitate and empower local communities to take action on transportation and accessibility matters that are most significant to them. Our focus will remain on journey routes and trip types that matter the most to these communities.

3,000  
resources  
distributed

200+  
people  
engaged

“We need to make sure that any engagement is as meaningful as possible and of as great a benefit to residents as it can be [...] It's great that GCRP is committed to taking a proactive approach...”

*Benjamin Richards, Transport Planner at Atkins*



# MARKETING

A new Head of Marketing and Communications role was introduced to the GCRP team in October 2022 to drive awareness of the community benefits and programmes we deliver and raise the profile of us as an organisation. This has entailed establishing relationships with local press outlets to secure coverage of our key programmes, driving our social media following and engagement, delivering informative and interesting content on our website to drive traffic and use of the GCRP website.

Some of the key marketing milestones include:

**107%**  
year-on-year  
growth of  
website  
traffic

**78%**  
average  
growth across  
all social  
media

**+12m**  
unique visitors  
and readers  
reached

Local press coverage secured across the following titles:

GLoucestershire  
**ECHO**

**GloucestershireLive**

**Stroud  
News**  
& Areas

**RailProfessional**

**SoGlos**

**PUNCHLINE**  
THE RAIL & TRANSPORT NEWS

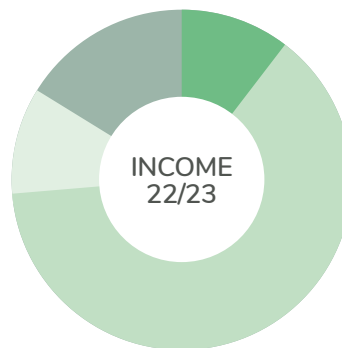
# FINANCE

We are grateful for the support we received including time, resources, pledges, project grants, core funding, and consultancy fees. Funding came from various sources including Great Western Railway, CrossCountry, Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council, Active Gloucestershire, Cotswolds National Landscape, Visit Gloucestershire, and the Community Rail Network. We also provided consultancy services to town and district councils and CrossCountry Trains.

We successfully diversified our income streams, leveraging our experience to provide independent insights. Funding was secured to assess the feasibility of establishing a new Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership, leading to operational funding for 2023/24 to launch and operate OXCRP.

Collaborating with partners, staff, and non-executive directors, we delivered community projects, including the Platform education project across five CRP areas. During the financial year, we focused on efficiently completing two-year and one-year projects, handling train operator grants for Gloucestershire-based community organisations.

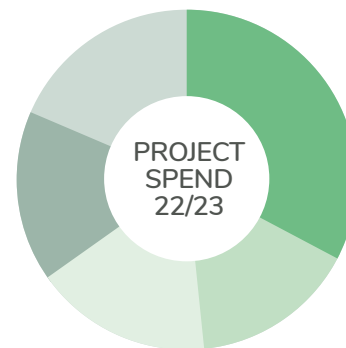
Our annual report and full accounts can be found at Companies House (company no: 12556197).



INCOME 22/23

Funding for regular activities	£44,900
Funding for specific projects	£277,200
Funding to support other organisations	£42,800
Consultancy & grant funded advisory services	£70,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£435,500</b>

Note this year we've seen further diversification of funding streams across grants, consultancy and advisory services and also widened our spend areas.



PROJECT SPEND 22/23

Communities	£142,100
Youth & Education*	£68,700
Tourism & Leisure	£72,400
Transport Planning	£71,800
Accessibility**	£80,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£435,500</b>

\*Please note this excludes PLATFORM education service as this is funded via Severnside CRP on behalf of all five CRP partners.

\*\* Accessibility has its own category this year given this expanding area of work.

# OUR DELIVERY TEAM



**Hannah  
McDonnell**

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

Strategic Planning,  
Destination  
Management,  
Equity & Advocacy,  
Climate Action



**Helen  
Buckle**

**HEAD OF  
MARKETING &  
COMMUNICATION**

Marketing,  
Business Development,  
Communications



**Molly  
Beebee**

**ACCESS &  
INCLUSION LEAD**

Accessibility,  
Inclusion,  
Community  
Engagement,  
Active Travel



**Alayne  
McDonald**

**COMMUNITY RAIL  
DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICER**

Health & Wellbeing,  
Community  
Development



**Faatimah  
Bham**

**COMMUNITY RAIL  
DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICER**

Connecting  
Communities to their  
Local Railways,  
Carbon Agenda

## NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:

**Jon Harris** - Accessibility, Transport Planning

**Odis Plamer** - Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

**Fouzia Qureshi** - Communities, Youth Work, Social Care

**Polly Gannaway-Pitts** - Inclusion, LGBTQIA+ Advocacy

**Sandy Moller** - Transport Planning, Integration

## GET IN TOUCH

Email us at: [info@gcrp.org](mailto:info@gcrp.org) or  
visit our website at: [gcrp.org.uk](http://gcrp.org.uk)





# OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

GCRP links community, public and private sector organisations through partnership working



[gcrp.org.uk](http://gcrp.org.uk)   

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership CIC (Reg. company: 12556197),  
Morroway House, Station Road, Gloucester GL1 1DW

