



# GCRP

Gloucestershire  
Community Rail Partnership



## IMPACT REPORT 2020-22

April 2022

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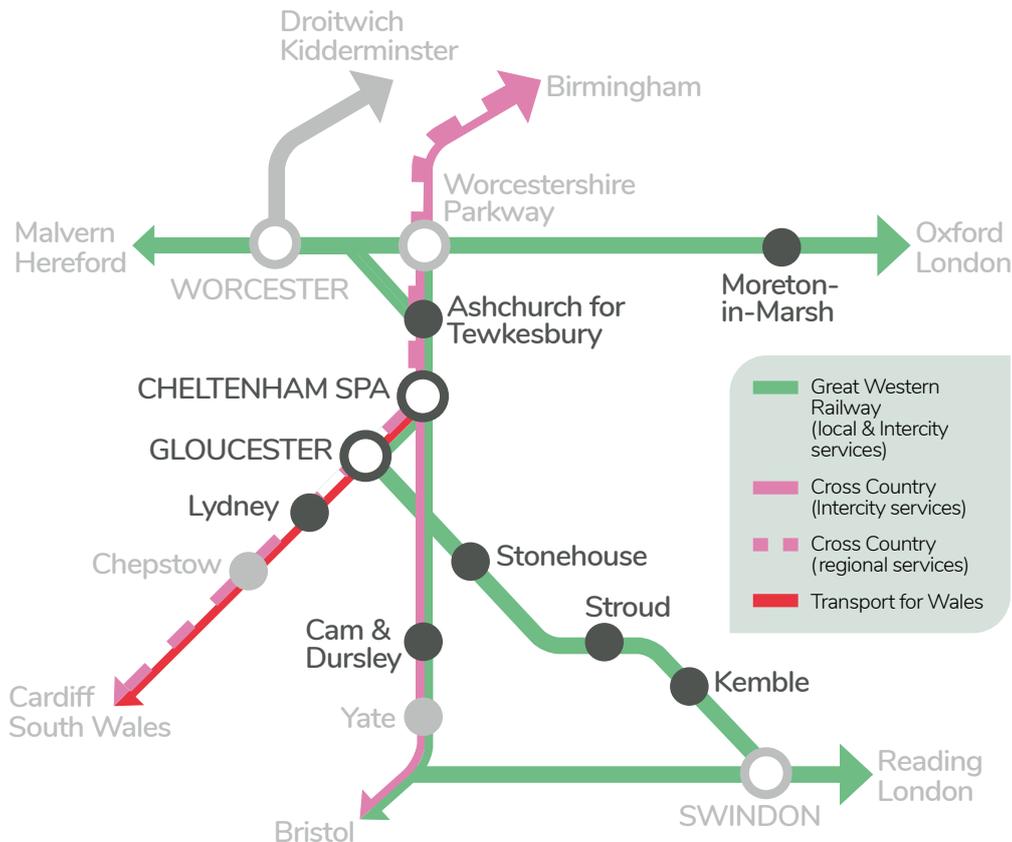
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GCRP would like to thank our core funders Great Western Railway, CrossCountry Trains and Gloucestershire County Council - as well as many partners that have pledged time, effort and project based funding over the last two years.

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# Our Stations and Routes



# INTRODUCTION

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership was officially formed as a CIC and a member of the Community Rail Network in May 2020. Launching during the pandemic was challenging but it strengthened our commitment to make a difference and inspired an innovative approach to making an impact. We adapted our activities and focused on developing a series of Access Maps, Leisure Trails, Surveys, Guides and online Youth Engagement Programmes.

The last two years have highlighted the urgent need to address the impact of social injustices and health and wellbeing inequalities on low-income individuals, families and ethnic minorities, both nationally and in Gloucestershire, and this will remain our key focus.

Putting people and communities at the forefront of all our thinking, our projects

are designed to put Gloucestershire and the sustainable transport agenda on the map through a participative, community led approach within four Programme areas:

- **Communities**
- **Youth and Education**
- **Tourism and Leisure**
- **Transport Planning**

We would like to thank the wider Community Rail family who have been invaluable to us whilst our CRP has developed. A wealth of information and experience has been shared with us, allowing us to enhance our programmes; we look forward to continuing our collaborative work across CRPs and continuously evaluating how to best serve our communities.

**OUR VISION:  
A SOCIETY  
WHERE  
TRANSPORT  
IS INCLUSIVE,  
SUSTAINABLE  
AND BETTER  
CONNECTS  
PEOPLE**



# THE STORY SO FAR...

GCRP was seeded back in 2019 when Community Rail activity at Stroud and Stonehouse Stations were piloted as part of developing a tourism strategy associated with the Stroudwater canal restoration project. Activities included a canal rail trail, an interactive heritage day, station exhibitions and mapping projects. The most popular event was the Canal Rail Trail linking the canal and rail experiences between Stroud, Stonehouse and Gloucester attracting over 700 people over one May bank holiday weekend. From here, there was no stopping us. Community rail was certainly in the blood!

In 2020 GCRP was formally formed as a Community Interest Company with founder directors Hannah McDonnell, specialising in Sustainable Tourism, and Jon Harris, specialising in Transport Planning. This small but determined team of two has

grown rapidly to a strong team of five directors who bring skills linked to our four programme areas. Launching the CRP during the pandemic might have been frustrating but it didn't stop us doing the best we could, considering the challenges and limited opportunity to employ a team and/or get out and about on the rails to engage our community the way we so wanted.

In July 2021 we welcomed Faatimah Bham, our Community Rail Development Officer, to the team who has transformed our youth programme Getaway and brought a wealth of knowledge and skills to what we can deliver. Faatimah has launched Gloucester Station Gallery, developed the inaugural exhibition with community groups exploring mindful photography and supported over 80 young people to access the Gloucestershire countryside by rail.

**OUR MISSION:**  
**TO MAKE IT  
EASIER FOR  
PEOPLE  
TO USE  
SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORT**

**GCRP**  
Gloucestershire  
Community Rail Partnership

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP IN NUMBERS



32+

Projects and programmes, ongoing and delivered



1.7k+

Survey responses received



144

Connections made with other local organisations



1,310

Youth engagement across all our programmes



18

Organisations represented on Steering Group



15.5k

Leaflets, access maps and tail maps distributed



# COMMUNITIES

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

# Station Galleries

Following on from successful community gallery launches at Stroud and Stonehouse, GCRP has added two new galleries to their network. At Cheltenham Spa, Cheltenham Camera Club have turned the waiting rooms into galleries that inspire people to explore wider Gloucestershire areas by rail. The inaugural exhibition at Gloucester, in partnership with Cotswold Canals Connected and Unlocking the Severn, celebrates local people connecting through photography, mindful walks and the River Severn, with the group sharing stories of resilience through the first COVID-19 lockdown. Gloucester, Stonehouse and Stroud stations now have linked exhibitions connecting urban and rural communities through rail and art and plans are in place for new exhibitions celebrating local place, history and living history. GCRP is looking for opportunities to add new galleries to their network, allowing local artists and groups a chance to display their work cross-county.



GCRP, Canal & River Trust, GWR & Look Again celebrate the launch of the Gloucester Gallery

“Creating this exhibition brought me together with other people at a really difficult time in my life. Seeing them here gives me hope and will hopefully inspire others too.”

*Gloucester based participant*

# Platform Performance

An exciting platform performance by Strike A Light's youth theatre, 'Us', is scheduled to take place in May 2022.

Aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of Gloucester's urban youth by connecting them with rural places and environments through sustainable travel, GCRP approached Gloucester based arts organisation Strike A Light to develop a programme for a 'platform performance' by younger people.

Strike a Light have delivered a series of workshops over the past six months, encouraging 20 young people to engage with rail travel through discussion and creative expression, stimulating engagement that is cross-cultural and diverse. The workshops have allowed the young performers to explore their



feelings on travelling to unknown places via a mode of transport, rail, that is relatively unknown to them.

The final performance will take place at an urban station (Gloucester), en route to a rural destination (Lydney) and at Lydney Harbour, making the stations feel more social and engaging through the 'at station' and 'on board' performances and linking the rail journey to an exciting destination.

*'Us' is not just a journey from A to B. This is a completely original, devised performance from Strike A Light's wonderful youth theatre*

**STRIKE  
A LIGHT**  
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# Station adoption

After activity paused during the pandemic, our volunteers and adoption groups are busy again, working hard on improving station environments with new garden areas, platform galleries, and community workshops. Thanks to GWR's Community Cohesion Fund, Edible Stroud are replanting beds and sealing pathways to reduce ongoing maintenance. They were assisted by 13 volunteers from Network Rail who cleared beds ready for fresh produce.

Stonehouse in Bloom has been working with Community Rail since 2019 when they officially adopted Stonehouse Station and began their Station Planter Project. There are now 13 reservoir planters on the station that were purchased with grant funding from Community Rail and they have also received financial support from GWR for seasonal planting displays. Stonehouse in Bloom also have exciting plans to develop the old Station Master's garden.

"It's a pleasure to keep the station looking beautiful all year round and the positive comments from passengers are proof that our work is hugely appreciated."

*Debbie Curtis,  
Stonehouse in Bloom*





No not smoke anywhere  
ation.  
garettes is also not permitted.

Taxis

1. Blue Train	2. Red Train	3. Green Train	4. Yellow Train
0800 000 000	0800 000 000	0800 000 000	0800 000 000

National Rail

We're all in this together.  
#BeKind  
LevelWithConfidence

# YOUTH & EDUCATION

Our youth programmes and projects prioritise the inclusion of under-represented communities, with activities such as days out by rail, understanding the transport needs of young people in Gloucestershire and rail education programmes.

# Platform - Joint Education programme

After months of preparation, working in collaboration with Severnside, Worcestershire and TransWilts CRPs, we were delighted to launch our joint community rail education programme, Platform, in January 2022. Having recruited an impressive team of three, we now have an active and engaged education team who have been involved in a rigorous induction programme which involved sessions with CRN, GWR, Network Rail, Lancashire CRP and the South East CRP Education Programme. The team have been getting to know the various CRP areas, riding the rails and building resources for the digital platform that launched in March 2022. Their schools programme is due to be developed and ready to start from May 2022.

Find out more at: <https://platformrail.org>



## Rail education programme

Platform offers a rail-education programme to schools which aims to connect young people to their local railways and communities, and empower them to make healthy, sustainable, aspirational, and ethical life choices through:

### The Platform Website:

A central hub for free, rail-related, local resources and lesson plans that are tightly linked to the National Curriculum and will signpost teachers to accessing in-person offers around the CRP areas

**In-School Workshops:** Led by qualified, experienced teachers covering rail safety, sustainability, healthy travel and rail careers

**Rail Familiarisation Visits:** Complimentary travel for classes to take a train trip, practising rail safety



# Let's Talk Travel

This initiative started in April 2021 with the aim of proactively providing rail-based and integrated transport information and journey planning to those seeking access to work, training, and placements across Gloucestershire.

A preliminary study identified that up to 40% of those not currently in employment struggled with travel. Jobseekers and learners often limit their choices because travel is a barrier. Common themes are anxiety and lack of confidence, lack of skills around journey planning, financial barriers and logistical difficulties with travel.

Let's Talk Travel engages with employability professionals across the county, raising awareness of the issue, providing solutions focused resources, information and workshops to help them support their clients. Covid restrictions impacted on delivery with organisations restricting face to face contact with clients for long periods, despite this there have been significant achievements.



“As a car driver who rarely uses buses or trains, I didn't really have the necessary insight to be able to support clients with travel on public transport, so the support provided by Let's Talk Travel was very welcome.”

*Employability Professional*

Let's Talk Travel

Cutting the cost of travel

Let's Talk Travel

Want to feel more confident using public transport? We've got some ideas that might help...



Find new resources & information on our website:  
[www.gloucestershirecommunityrail.org](http://www.gloucestershirecommunityrail.org)

# ACHIEVEMENTS APRIL 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2022

## AIMS

Highlight how barriers to travel limit employment/ education choices  
Raise awareness of the initiative

## AIMS

Development of resources

## AIMS

Share and maximise access to resources and information to industry professionals

## AIMS

Training Development for end users

## AIMS

Workshop Delivery

## OUTPUTS

Contact with 70 professionals from 35 organisations across the UK

Virtual and face to face meetings with 12 organisations (plus a further 60 professionals)

## OUTPUTS

Resources including:  
Information sheet for professionals  
Travel confidence leaflet  
Cutting the cost of travel leaflet  
Digital newsletter

## OUTPUTS

Digital resources sent to 130 professionals including Travel Confidence leaflet, Access maps and newsletter

Hard copies of information shared with 30 organisations

## OUTPUTS

Two workshops developed:  
1. Current travel habits and exploring barriers  
2. Effective journey planning

## OUTPUTS

Workshops integrated into Gloucestershire College Skills Accelerator training with four workshops delivered to 25 young people

## WHAT'S NEXT:

1. Increased uptake and delivery of workshops, engagement with both professionals and clients and attendance at employability events

2. Financial support: introduction of a scheme to provide bus passes, train tickets and bikes to those unable to access support elsewhere

3. Developing additional resources, including production of a video illustrating the solutions to travel barriers

# Youth Transport Survey



Our Youth Transport Survey was co-produced with Stroud District Youth Council over several months to ensure it was engaging and relevant to young people. The 860 responses provided insights into key transport challenges facing young people in Gloucestershire, with 150 of them registering an interest in participating in GCRP's Youth Transport Forum. One respondent said: *"It means a lot to have a say in public transport. As a young person, public transport is key to my sense of independence and it's also very important for me to try to reduce pollution and make my community sustainable."*

**Andy Ives, Kickstarter**

"I've been on a six month Kickstarter placement with GCRP to gain workplace experience. My main project was analysing the data collected through the Youth Transport Survey. The findings were presented to our steering group to create avenues of change to allow more young people to use sustainable modes of transport. The project has not only developed my skills but has also given me tremendous satisfaction that the work I've done will be beneficial to people's lives."

 **50%**

of respondents report cost affects their ability to get around

 **80%+**

acknowledged that public transport is a smarter environmental choice and impacts the way young people choose to travel

# Getaway

In Autumn 2021, we launched our new youth programme 'Getaway'. Underpinned by the idea that the countryside is for everyone, and that young people should feel confident and independent when travelling by rail and sustainable transport. We are working with two Gloucester based community organisations, The Friendship Café and The Music Works, to provide inspiring days out to rural destinations.

Active and creative experiences for over seventy urban youth from underrepresented communities at Hawkwood in Stroud, WWT Slimbridge, Cotswold National Landscapes, Stonehouse Canals and the Forest of Dean have helped build young people's future aspirations. 24 young people from The Friendship Café's youth groups also visited SkillZONE, an interactive life skills village, to build railway and public transport confidence and independence.



"I got a lot out of this trip, I met some cool people and it helped me get into a positive mindset. I learnt how to film and use a camera; next I want to know more about how to edit."

TJ, The Music Works

# Getaway programme impact in numbers:



7

day trips  
and  
events

taking young people on return train journeys to increase their confidence and explore rural areas



75

young people  
engaged

by working across multiple teams to encourage these young people to take up new experiences



32

inspiring  
new  
experiences

for young people to expand their horizons, learn new skills and gain confidence in train travel



1441<sup>kg</sup><sub>C02</sub>

emissions  
saved  
collectively

compared to individual car travel for the same journey, equivalent to 146 gallons of diesel consumed



37

resources  
packs  
provided

to young children, with six support sessions with GWR REACH and the British Transport Police

# Friendship Cafe Girls Group

Our Getaway trip to WWT Slimbridge with The Friendship Cafe Girl's Group in November 2021 was a huge success. A train journey from Cam & Dursley to Gloucester was the highlight for many of the young girls. A youth worker commented: "Some of the girls had never been on a train before - I'm so glad they had this opportunity." The girls also had a session with the British Transport Police on the day and were given fun activity packs by GWR staff at Gloucester Station to learn more about sustainability and safety on the railways.

"I want to go on the train again because it was a big adventure!"

"The train was cool, we didn't know it could take us to Gloucester so fast!"

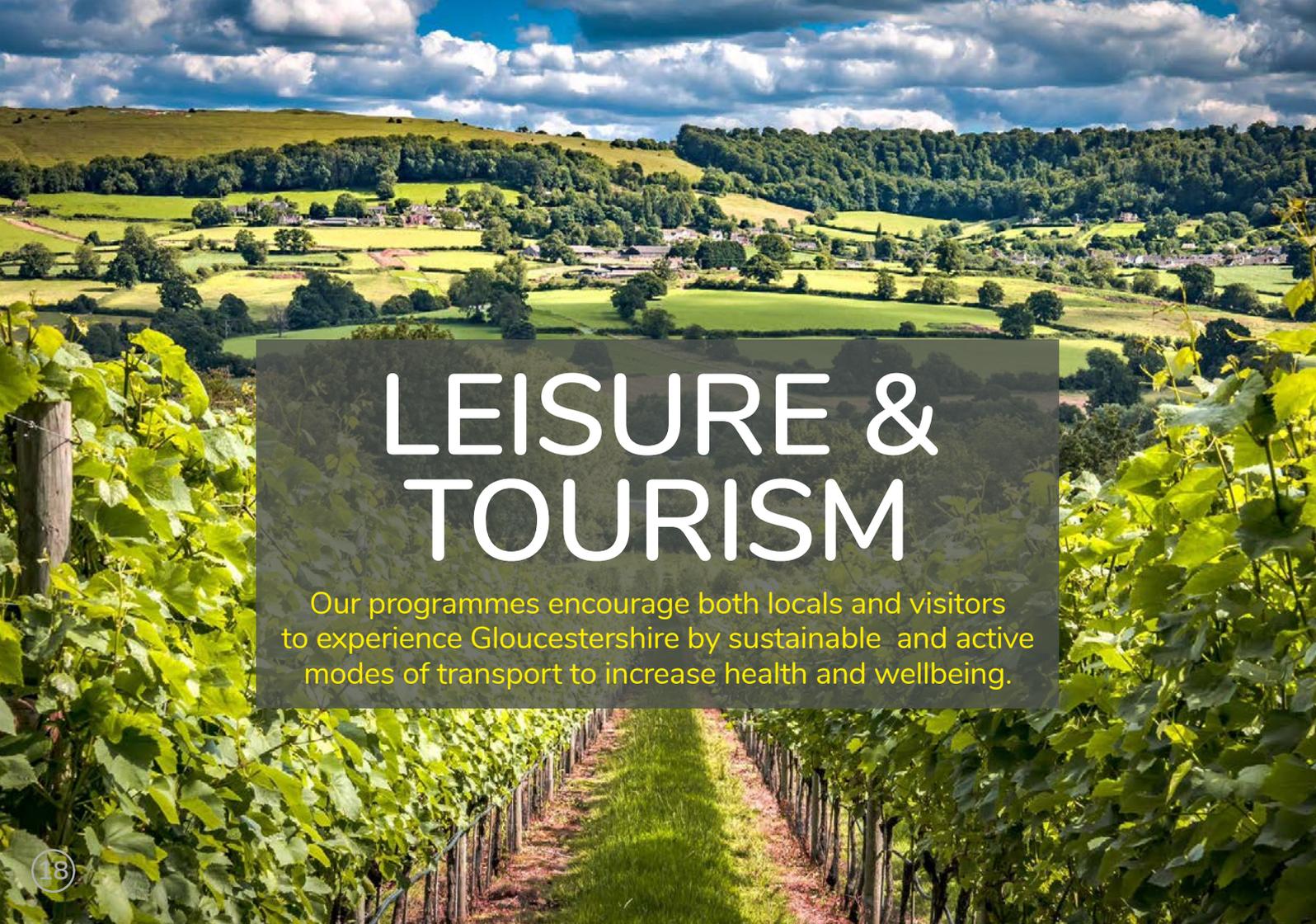
"The people helping us at the station (staff) were very friendly and it makes me feel safe knowing they'd help me if I got lost."

"We learnt loads - like we didn't know the train could have a weight/person limit!"

"I thought it was just grown ups who go on the train but we can go on it too."

"Being on the platform was fun but now we know how to stay safe - we didn't even know what the yellow lines were for before."





# LEISURE & TOURISM

Our programmes encourage both locals and visitors to experience Gloucestershire by sustainable and active modes of transport to increase health and wellbeing.

# Taste for Travel

Working with community groups, local artists and independent food and drink businesses, we produced four maps that include 16 food, farm and forest trails designed to inspire local adventure radiating from Stroud, Stonehouse, Cheltenham and Lydney stations, connecting to walking, cycling and bus routes.

Working with destination management organisation Visit Gloucestershire, we are currently developing a series of 'bookable' trails linking rail, bus and active travel to destination experiences across the county. These easy-to-use integrated experiences will be designed to attract locals and visitors to consider rail journeys as part of the adventure whilst supporting local businesses. Our work with Visit Gloucestershire has also seen a 52 times increase in engagement on our website through promotion of our trails since January 2022.

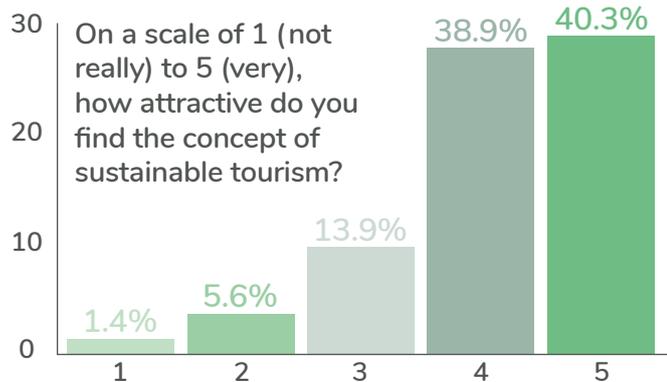


“The maps encouraged us to get out and about together as a family.”

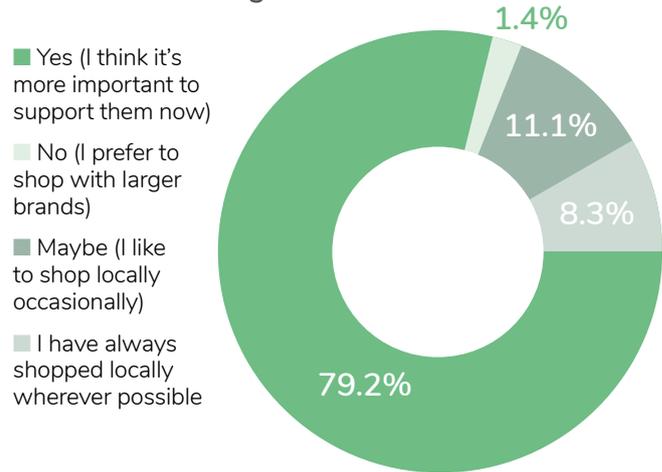
*Young mum, Stroud*

# Tourism & Events student research

In April 2021 we worked with 14 University of Gloucestershire students who conducted operational research into customer behaviours associated with sustainable transport applied to our Taste for Travel Leisure Maps. Through focus groups, surveys, workshops and on-site visits, they identified customer engagement, target markets and practical recommendations. When asked about levels of interest in sustainable leisure experiences, the responses were surprisingly high.



Following the financial disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the past year, has your attitude towards supporting small businesses changed?



## CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations made informed the final edits to the trail maps launched in 2021. Key points for consideration included the importance of sustainable and active travel to young people, with 63% wanting to pre-book and a commitment to supporting local businesses. The success of this partnership with the University has resulted in further joint working on our bookable trails.

# The Great Rail Experience

This pioneering research and development project will establish a scalable working model to support and futureproof the relationship between community rail, destination management organisations and the rail and transport industry in the context of the leisure market. To develop a functional and relevant model, we are working with four community rail partnerships, three rail operators, two heritage railways, four destination management organisations and Community Rail Network to identify recommendations for each distinct role.

These will be identified in the blueprint to support the role of community rail within the Great British Railways 'Rail 2 Leisure' model.

Working with Visit Gloucestershire, GCRP acts as a pathfinder for this strategic destination management organisation demonstrating how rail and sustainable



modes of transport can be effectively embedded within tourism management and destination experiences. The Taste for Travel trails provide active case studies that evidence the potential to support the sector whilst addressing the climate agenda and inspiring better understanding of the role sustainable transport plays in the climate emergency.

A high-speed train, possibly a Shinkansen, is stopped at a station platform. The train is dark green with a yellow nose. The background shows a brick building with arched windows and a street lamp. The text "TRANSPORT PLANNING" is overlaid in large white letters on a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle.

# TRANSPORT PLANNING

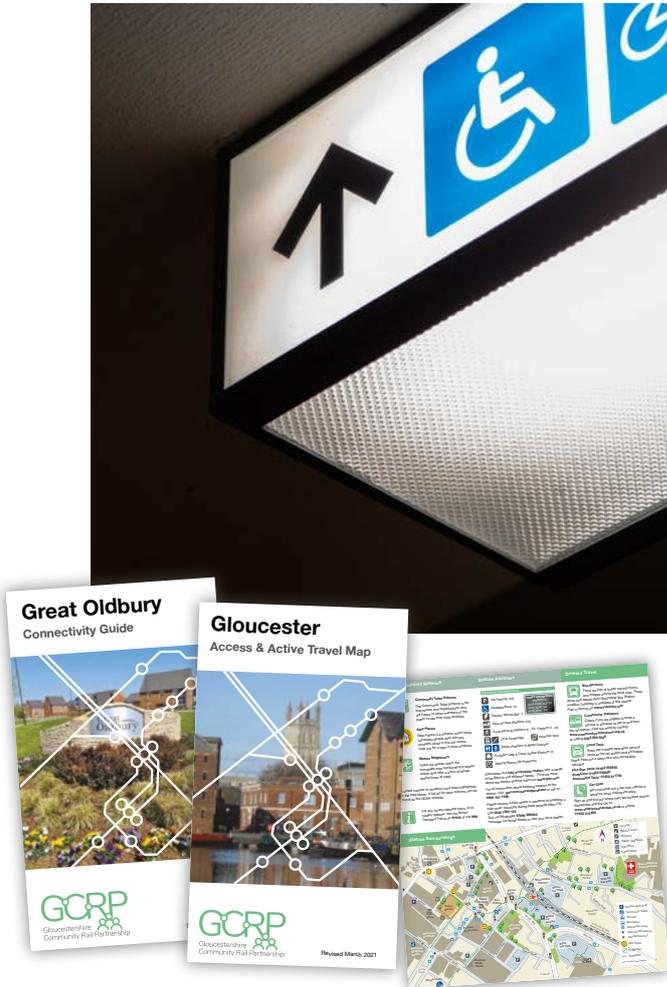
Our transport planning workstream provides an opportunity for a community voice in shaping local transport solutions, and delivering tools and resources to help people travel more sustainably.

# Access and Connectivity Guides

In 2020/21 we started to develop our series of access maps and guides for town and cities in Gloucestershire. Designed to help people plan their journeys on foot, cycle, or other forms of sustainable travel, we wanted to make sure that people arriving by train could easily find their way around area and make the 'last mile' from the station as straightforward as possible. The maps are useful for local people and new residents moving to the area.

Our Gloucester Access Map contains additional information to support disabled people (including those with hidden disabilities) to navigate their way around using accessible and quieter routes.

Since Summer 2021 we have issued over 8000 maps and guides covering Cheltenham, Gloucester, Lydney, Stroud and Stonehouse. With more maps on the way in 2022 we have received lots of positive feedback from stakeholders and individuals about the maps and we plan to regularly update them. Through our partnership with the University of Gloucestershire we have been able to gather all the data for a new Cam and Dursley map and we plan to next look at Moreton in Marsh and the Kemble/Cirencester areas.



# Sustainable Transport Planning

In 2020-21 we carried out a comprehensive set of travel needs surveys, collecting views from over 470 people and 29 organisations across Gloucestershire. Helping us to think about what 'post Covid' travel needs might be, this helped us to prioritise our activities and be ready to work collaboratively with local authorities, parish and town councils, and local community groups. We also used our skills in gathering local evidence to support specific communities with their own local transport planning projects.



## CASE STUDY:

### Brockworth Transport Plan

GCRP has been supporting Brockworth Parish Council since April 2021 on the research for their own local transport plan. Designed to give a real community voice and evidence on accessibility public transport, walking and cycling, road safety and connection to new housing, this collaborative project used multiple surveys, walking audits, public meetings and other consultation techniques to really understand the community transport needs:



**5+**  
miles of  
footpaths  
audited



**250+**  
survey  
responses  
received



**8**  
working  
group  
meetings



**2**  
open  
days  
held

# Connecting New Communities

In 2021 we ran events with local organisations and a travel plan coordinator promoting sustainable transport choices to residents of Great Oldbury, a new housing development near Stonehouse and we produced a connectivity guide for over 500 households focused on rail and sustainable transport links.

We also collaborated with the local bus operator to promote their new route connecting the site to Gloucester City Centre, Stonehouse and Stroud. The Saxon Gate development in nearby King's Stanley also benefited when we researched local travel issues and needs at a pop-up event and in Lydney we got the community out for carol singing in the streets!

The Connecting New Communities project will now look at the importance of community voice on transport issues, innovative participation and engagement. This project brings together developers, local authorities, transport operators and, most importantly, local community groups and organisations.

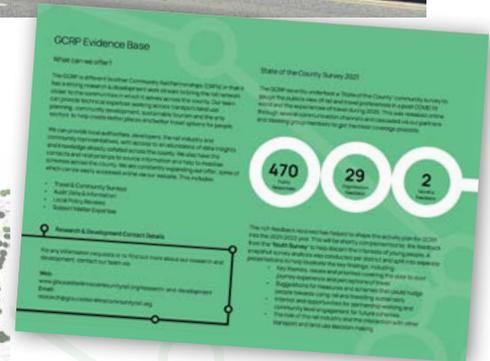


We are working in four locations, Great Oldbury, Brockworth, Lydney and Sedbury to help facilitate the representation of the community voice in new housing developments. The transport and connectivity agenda is critical for all new residential schemes in Gloucestershire, so we are working with Creative Sustainability and a wider range of local community organisations to develop a model that put people's voices at the heart of planning aiming to improve both transport and social connectivity.

# Developer Guide

Our 2021 Developer Guide sets out a way of working with the local transport authority to ensure rail and wider transport integration is fully considered in the planning process. The guide was produced to support local communities and stakeholders to have their say on important transport issues, providing templates and tools that help gather hyperlocal evidence to aid decision making.

The guide also helps with shaping community views throughout the planning process. We worked with the Community Rail Network to promote the approach at its 2022 Conference and we are supporting CRN in the development of a national guide based on the Gloucestershire approach. In April 2022 we hosted a joint professional masterclass with CRN, the University of Gloucestershire and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.



# Bridging the Gap

GCRP is a bridging organisation connecting communities and community organisations in Gloucestershire with rail and sustainable transport in a relevant and inclusive context.

Our role relies on good, trusted relationships with community organisations where mutual understanding and alignment is satisfied between our three key stakeholders:

- Transport Industry Partners
- Community Rail
- Community Organisations



We would like to thank our project delivery partners and look forward to continued joint working opportunities:



# FINANCE



We are grateful for all the time, resources and funding that our GCRP members have invested in our projects, programmes and our ‘business as usual’ activities. Without annual funding, but also generous ‘in kind’ support we wouldn’t have been able to grow in the way we have. In particular we have received cash funding from GWR, CrossCountry Trains, Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council – but also a huge amount of time and effort from other partners.

GCRP has been able to secure both core and project based funding over 20/21 and 21/22, with a significant rise in the funding made available to us for innovative, impactful projects that we have been able to pilot and develop. We have also worked with other partners, such as Visit Gloucestershire and the Gloucestershire VCS Alliance, to secure new funding streams for 22/23.

Most of our current projects have allocated funding to either Summer 22 or Spring 23, with new bids in the pipeline. We start the 22/23 programme year with over £150k of committed funding. We have also provided advisory services to local parish councils and community groups and to CrossCountry’s Accessibility Panel, and diversified our income by securing Section 106 resources linked to new housing schemes.

Our formal accounts for 20/21 have been concluded, with our 21/22 figures due to be ready in early Summer 2022.

You can view our annual report and full accounts at Companies House (Registration number: 12556197) or email us at: [admin@gloucestershirecommunityrail.org](mailto:admin@gloucestershirecommunityrail.org) for a copy.

# Figures at a glance

## FINANCIAL YEAR 20/21

Funding secured for 'business as usual' activities\* **£29,515**

Funding secured for specific projects **£15,000**

\*A component of this funding was used for additional projects

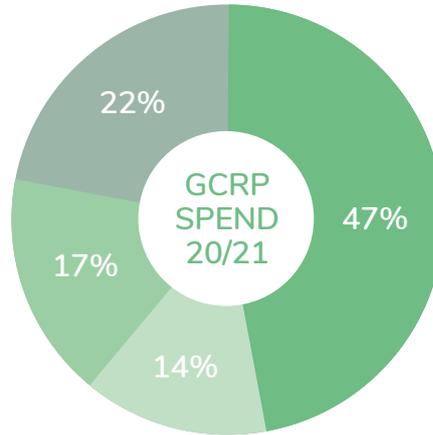
## FINANCIAL YEAR 21/22

Funding secured for 'business as usual' activities **£42,138**

Funding secured for specific projects **£163,025**

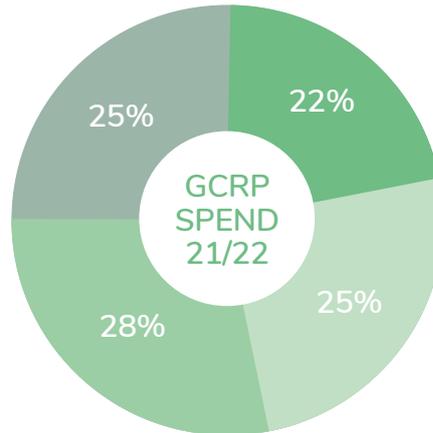
## PROJECT BREAKDOWN

We wanted to ensure a balance of projects across our main theme, year on year. Whilst the pandemic had some impact on the type of activities we could run and the funding balance, it was important that we invested across the breadth of our priorities.



## GCRP SPEND AREAS 20/21

Communities (inc. core activities)	£21,015
Youth & Education	£6,000
Tourism & Leisure	£7,500
Transport Planning	£10,000
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>£44,515</b>



## GCRP SPEND AREAS 21/22

Communities (inc. core activities)	£45,787
Youth & Education	£50,817
Tourism & Leisure	£57,667
Transport Planning	£52,067
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>£206,338</b>

# OUR TEAM

Our dynamic, cross-cutting team will expand as opportunities arise



**Hannah McDonnell**  
Co-Director

Responsible tourism, inclusion, destination management



**Polly Ganaway-Pitts**  
Non-Exec Director

Arts and culture, inclusion, LGBTQIA+ advocate



**Steve Gardner-Collins**  
Non-Exec Director

Visitor economy, supply chains, services



**Jon Harris**  
Co-Director

Transport planning, behaviour research, accessibility, education



**Sandy Moller**  
Non-Exec Director

Transport planning, integration, community projects



**Sue Harris**  
Company Secretary

Administration support



**Faatimah Bham**  
Community Rail Development Officer

Community access development, carbon agenda



**Anna Reeves**  
Let's Talk Travel Consultant

Access to work and training, employment support



**Mia Exell**  
Marketing Officer

Marketing, website, social media

# OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

All Community Interest Company (CIC) activities are underpinned by a primary economic, social and wellbeing focus to benefit communities and visitors served by railway stations in Gloucestershire. The Community Rail Partnership plays a 'glue' role by linking communities, planning departments and transport companies together.



# CONTACT US

Find out more at:  
[gloucestershirecommunityrail.org](http://gloucestershirecommunityrail.org)

Follow us on:



Email us at:  
[info@gloucestershirecommunityrail.org](mailto:info@gloucestershirecommunityrail.org)



Gloucestershire  
Community Rail Partnership