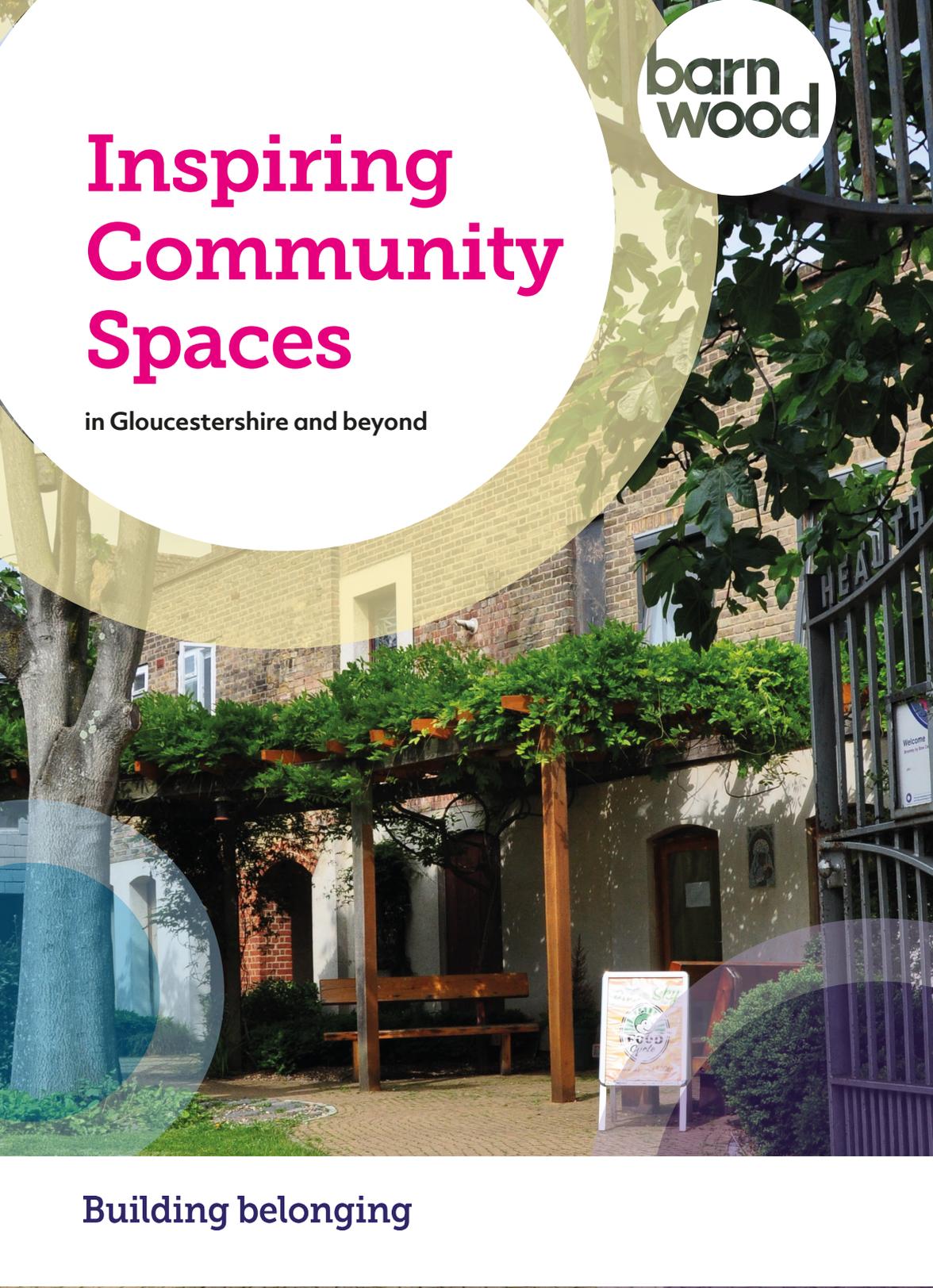




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Inspiring Community Spaces

in Gloucestershire and beyond



Building belonging

Introduction

Barnwood builds belonging

We work together with the people of Gloucestershire to bring the county closer together, exploding myths about disability and mental health. By sparking new community connections, sharing ideas and providing grants, we enable people to shape where they live and discover new opportunities.

Inspiring community spaces on our doorstep

Barnwood Trust's vision is to create the best possible environment in Gloucestershire for disabled people and people with mental health problems to make the most of their lives. Good community spaces are a vital component of that welcoming environment we are striving for. They enable people to connect with others, to take part in enjoyable shared activities, and to build relationships.

This booklet brings together examples of inspiring community spaces on our doorstep and beyond. The diverse spaces featured here range from the creative to the practical, including both interior and outside spaces, such as community hubs and playgrounds, and cafes, as well as bespoke spaces created for special kinds of communities, such as those at Maggie's Centres which support people and their families through their cancer experiences.

We hope you are as inspired reading about these local community spaces as we were visiting them.

Applewood

Applewood is a new housing development, built on the site of the former Cashes Green Hospital in Stroud. The design of the development, and its leafy outdoor spaces, aim to encourage the development of community and promote wellbeing.



How does it work?

Applewood is a mix of homes for rent and for sale, developed by Haboakus (a partnership of HAB Housing and GreenSquare Group). The freehold of the social housing properties, and some of the shared outdoor space, is owned by a Community Land Trust, to make sure they remain available and affordable for the local community.

The homes themselves are designed to maximise light, whilst also being energy efficient, with super insulated roofs and walls and a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system.

Importantly, all the homes are designed to be accessible and easy to adapt to meet different needs.



Inspiring community spaces



What's special about it?

The developer has used the natural features of the site to promote wellbeing and create opportunities for residents to meet.

There is a 'pocket orchard', a green wildlife corridor, and all the homes on the main square have gardens that open directly onto a central landscaped 'community space'. The streets are designed to prioritise the needs of resident pedestrians over cars.

Allotments next to the site have been retained and expanded to encourage residents to grow their own food - and share food production with neighbours, through community growing areas and an 'edible landscape'. There are opportunities for the community to share other responsibilities and assets too, for example through shared electric bike ownership.

Applewood demonstrates that socially and environmentally sustainable designs can be commercially viable.

Bromley-by-Bow Centre

It is many things: community centre, health centre, café, church, day nursery, children's playground, housing office, art studio, workspace, advice centre, social enterprise, and venue for work experience.

Bromley-by-Bow Centre is an innovative community organisation which supports families, young people and adults of all ages to learn new skills, improve their health and wellbeing, find employment and develop the confidence to achieve their goals and transform their lives.



How does it work?

Although Bromley-by-Bow Centre is a 'hub' for various services in East London it is much more than that; it connects with the community in many ways and on many levels. It breaks down barriers and considers all aspects of health and wellbeing. The arts and social enterprise have been central themes since the beginning.

At the core of the Centre's thinking is "...a belief in people and their capacity to achieve amazing things."

Inspiring community spaces



What's special about it?

It started as a church with an aging congregation in 1984. A new minister found there was a group of people who felt it was time to open the buildings up for the wider community to use.

The Centre today is internationally renowned as a dynamic and pioneering organisation that has transformed its community over 30 years. What's special is its ethos, which celebrates and builds upon the strengths of individuals and the community. Three key principles underpin its approach: accessibility, integration and encouraging people along what is often a 'long journey' to a positive future.



Cafe at All Saints

Café at All Saints is a commercial enterprise located within a church in Hereford city centre. It is a great example of the sensitive use of architecture to enhance a space and allow for more than one use.



How does it work?

The cafe creates a space for the sacred and non-religious to meet: a place where people enjoy a cup of coffee together, as well as a place for church activities - a church, a café and a community centre.

The money from the café supported the restoration* of the building; and after re-opening in the 1990's it has gone from strength to strength, with an average of over 3000 visitors each week. Through this the church receives a valuable contribution to the upkeep of the building whilst creating a space that is more open and welcoming to the public.

*RRA Architects



What's special about it?

The building hasn't been converted – the café simply shares the space. The worship area of the church still operates in the usual way but at the rear of the church there are chairs and tables, a suspended balcony area and a kitchen/servery in a self-contained pod. It was the first project of its kind in the UK.

Café at All Saints is one of 'Bill's Cafés'. 'Bill's' has had three cafés in churches (starting with the crypt of St Mary-le-Bow in the City of London) and has received various awards and much critical acclaim.



Community House Hubs

'Hubs' can take many forms, they can simply be a house or flat made available for use by the community – in other words, a 'community house'.



How does it work?

Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) has provided such a community house hub as part of the St Paul's Regeneration Project. It has a kitchen, two separate spaces for the community to use, and office space for neighbourhood staff from CBH. It provides a very local point of contact between CBH and its tenants; but it's also a base from which staff carry out community and youth work in the neighbourhood.



What's special about it?

The simplicity of the idea is what makes this project special. Taking an asset that the housing association already owns and creating a shared space for the community to come together means that activities, support and community cohesion are all possible in a neighbourhood.

First Choice Homes, in Oldham, have similarly made a couple of flats available for resident groups to use for meetings, activities and a community café.

Maggie's Centres

Maggie's Centres offer a space for free practical, psychological and emotional support to people with cancer and their families, carers and friends.



How does it work?

Maggie's Centres offer a 'community space' for a special kind of community: a community of people who are supporting each other through their cancer experience. People who are going through treatment are able to drop in at any time and they will be welcomed into a comfortable space that has been created especially.



What's special about it?

Maggie's Centres are located near Oncology departments, so that people affected by cancer have somewhere homely to wait for an appointment, to go for emotional support, or to take time out. Although various support groups and counselling services are provided by the charity, a central theme at Maggie's Centres is fostering 'community' - using the space both to enhance the care process, and to use the environment to contribute directly to emotional and physical wellbeing.

Men's Shed

A Men's Shed is simply a larger version of a typical shed in the garden - a place to enjoy pursuing practical interests with a group of other men who share tools and resources and spend time together in a friendly and inclusive environment.



How does it work?

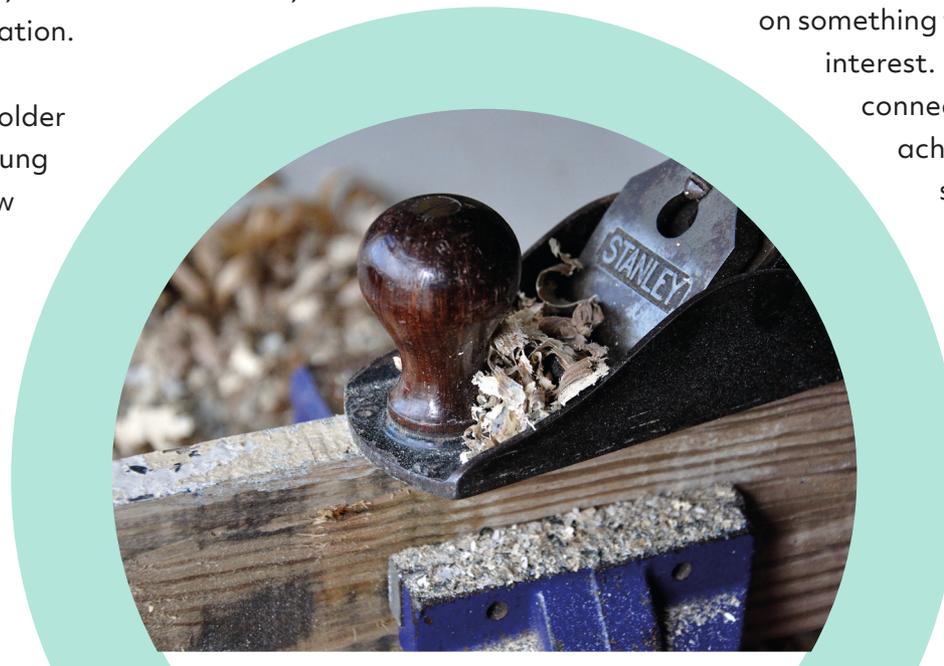
Sheds provide opportunities for men to get involved in practical projects, such as woodworking, engineering or gardening – whatever the 'sheddors' want to work on, either individually or as group. Activities can be as diverse as bike repair, vehicle maintenance, upholstery, model making or boat renovation.

Whilst 'sheds' mostly attract men, often older men, some have included women and young people. All that is really needed are a few tools and a space to meet – the 'shed' or building itself is not the essence of a Men's Shed it is the relationships between the 'sheddors' that matters.



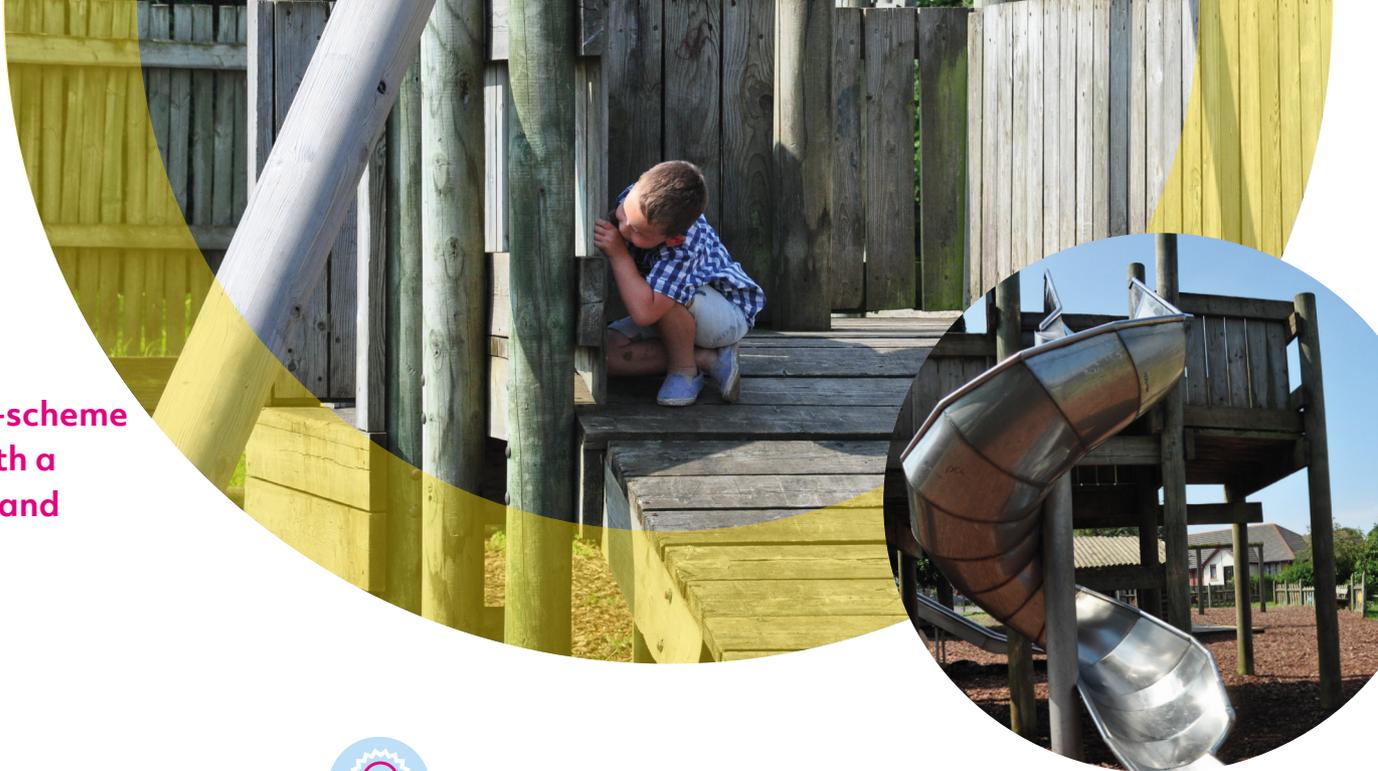
What's special about it?

It's a simple idea that can be set up almost anywhere, with very limited funds. It taps into the tendency for men in particular to engage with each other more readily and naturally when working on something together or sharing a common interest. It provides a means of making connections with others, creating a sense of achievement and reducing loneliness. While sharing skills and working side by side, new friendships and support networks are forged.



The Venture

The Venture is a community playground and play-scheme in the White City area of Gloucester, complete with a drop-in art hut for rainy days and a team of staff and volunteers to supervise play.



How does it work?

The Venture has a well equipped outdoor playground with slides, swings and climbing frames, plus plenty of green space for ball games and picnics. In addition, a team of staff and volunteers are there after school and during the holidays to befriend the children and supervise activities in the art hut. When the hut is open, kids can simply drop in – they don't have to be formally registered in the way they would with most play-schemes or holiday clubs.



What's special about it?

The playground was built almost entirely by the community, with just a small Lottery grant, on land leased from the City Council. It's a very spacious playground, with lots of equipment, and places for parents and carers to sit and chat. And there's the hut, which allows for different kinds of play and provides shelter, a toilet and facilities to make drinks and snacks.

There's a strong caring element to Venture's work. For example, providing free toast and fruit, being there when the children want to talk to someone, and looking out for those that may be finding life a bit tricky. The staff and volunteers are all local residents themselves, so the project is rooted in the local community.

The young volunteers benefit too – developing skills and experience which help towards their 'CV' and finding work.

Thinking of starting something similar?

Barnwood Trust has established a Community Spaces Capital Fund to help support eligible communities and organisations in Gloucestershire to improve and develop inclusive community spaces: places that play a part in making everyone feel welcome and included.

We would love to hear about your ideas and plans and may be able to support and fund your project if it is eligible. Priority for investment goes to organisations or community groups willing to go 'the extra mile' in building community and being welcoming and inclusive.

To find out more visit the Barnwood Trust website www.barnwoodtrust.org or get in touch with the **Community Spaces Team** on **01452 614429**

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