

# Barnwood Circle Round Up



March 2026

## Hello

Welcome to the March edition of the Round Up newsletter.

In this edition, you'll find updates on our funding programmes, upcoming events and opportunities to get involved, training and development offers, and news from across Barnwood Trust.

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## End of Membership - Save the Date

If you got involved with Barnwood Circle before 2024, your membership ends on 29th May. We want to say a massive 'thank you' to those who will be ending their time with Barnwood Circle. You have given so much over the years helping to shape Barnwood Circle and the work of the Trust. We hope you continue to be change-makers, helping to make Gloucestershire a better place for disabled people and people with mental health conditions.

We will be holding a celebration event on 26th May. It's an opportunity for everyone to celebrate what's been achieved. All members are welcome, but space is limited, so priority will be given to those leaving. Look out for more information coming soon.

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## Volunteering and Information Fayre

Those with memberships ending in May will have seen the invite to our Volunteering and Information Fayre. It is a relaxed drop in style event aimed to connect you with local organisations making a difference in Gloucestershire. This is now open to all members. Please contact one of the Connectors for more information and to sign up.

# Access to Nature

Last year, 7 members worked with us to produce short films about their experience of being in nature. These will be part of the Trust's new Access to Nature Learning Hub website, which aims to inspire and support organisations to make their nature spaces more accessible. The Learning Hub is nearing completion and will be launched in August.



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## Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Recruitment

Thank you to Deborah, Iain and Sharron, who took part in the recent CFO recruitment panel. Matt Little, our CEO said afterwards, "All candidates have given feedback to Prospectus (the supporting recruitment consultants) about how much they enjoyed the day, how welcome they felt, and how fair, open, high quality and interesting it all was from their perspective.

I wanted to let Barnwood Circle members know how much their feedback was valued by trustees, how clear it was, and how it absolutely shaped the decision-making process... and we knitted the different feedback together to reach a final decision. It was easy to do that because of how clear and constructive your panel had been."

We will share who was appointed as soon as we are able to.

# Project Updates

## Accessibility Fund

This Fund supports organisations to improve access to indoor and outdoor spaces for disabled people and people with mental health conditions. The criteria were developed by Barnwood Circle members, and Barnwood Circle members are also involved in scoring applications and make recommendations to the Trust's Funding Committee.

The next panel will be having a training session on 27th May and will meet on 2nd July. This panel has a rolling membership to ensure new people have the opportunity to join while always having some experience. Look out for more information coming soon if you're interested in getting involved.

## Funded Partner Programme

This funding stream runs every 6 months and is open to organisations working with, or wanting to develop work with disabled people and people with mental health conditions. It offers funding of up to £150,000 over 3 years.

The funding panel is made up of 3 staff and 6 members. The panel changes each time, with one staff and 3 members being replaced.

The current panel has completed a training session and are now scoring applications. They will meet as a panel in April to make recommendations to the Trust's Funding Committee.

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## Campaigning and Social Change Training

In February, the Shiela McKechnie Foundation (SMK) delivered introductory training on campaigning and social change. This explored how meaningful social change happens and some key practical campaigning tools and approaches. Those who attended shared some very positive feedback, including how they were planning to apply what they'd learnt. We are now planning to make this opportunity available to everyone during their membership.

# Conversation Cafes

Following a successful series of Conversation Cafes at the end of 2025, the team have chosen to continue these monthly throughout 2026. They are happening across the county at different locations, and we really love to see people travelling to different parts of Gloucestershire to join the conversation and meet other Circle members in different areas.

So far this year we have held Conversation Cafes in Cheltenham and Gloucester, welcoming about 30 people in total. We have held conversations on topics such as 'changing high streets and community spaces', 'stress, overwhelm and coping', 'navigating NHS appointments', and 'how music affects relaxation, emotion and wellbeing'.

All of the topics are suggested by people who attend the cafes. At the beginning of the session we ask people to vote on which topics they most want to talk about. Conversations then take place in small groups and there are breaks for refreshments, to socialise, and to move around to a different conversation topic.

Here are details for the next few:

- Thursday 23rd April, 2:00pm – 4:30pm, The Westwoods Centre, Northleach
- Thursday 28th May, 10am to 12pm, online
- Wed 24th June, 10am – 12:30pm, Overton House, Cheltenham



Please get in touch to book a place.

Do you want to be a part of the conversation? If so, then please reach out to a member of the team to book your place. We look forward to seeing you at a Conversation Cafe event very soon.

# Statement Writing

Statement Writing sessions have been part of the programme of events for members whose membership ends in May. These sessions are a chance to pause, reflect on your time as a Circle Member, and recognise everything you've achieved during your membership.

Everyone who has taken part so far has told us that they found the process useful and uplifting. Many said it helped them see their growth more clearly - whether that was developing new skills, building confidence, or recognising the contributions they've made. These are things to be genuinely proud of.

If you haven't had the chance to take up this offer yet, there is still time. We would be very happy to support you with writing your statement. Just get in touch, and we can arrange a session that works for you.

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## Individual Grants

Our Individual Grants Team works with Citizen's Advice North & West Gloucestershire to help disabled people and people with mental health conditions across Gloucestershire access the support and advice they need. This includes directing people to individual funding.

If you're in need of support and would like help being introduced to one of our Community Partners, please call our Advice & Access Team via Citizen's Advice North & West Gloucestershire on 0808 189 6280 – their lines are open between 10am to 4pm Mondays – Thursdays.

Alternatively, you can email the Advice & Access Team using [adviceandaccess@gloscab.org.uk](mailto:adviceandaccess@gloscab.org.uk)

[Find out more information about Individual Grants here](#)

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## AccessAva

Are you struggling to understand your rights to social care? AccessAva can help you find the right information quickly and easily. AccessAva is a free digital service that helps you navigate the complexities of health and social care in England. Available 24/7, it offers clear, straightforward legal information and guidance so you can understand your rights and get the support you need.

[Find out more on their website here](#)

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## Thank you

We're so grateful for your involvement in Barnwood Circle. As always, we welcome your feedback - if there's anything you'd like to share, please email us at [talktous@barnwoodtrust.org](mailto:talktous@barnwoodtrust.org).