



Barnwood Trust

Impact Report 2025

barnwoodtrust.org

Contents

Welcome ⁴

-
1. Introduction from the Chair
 2. Matt Little - Chief Executive Officer
-

What Barnwood Trust does ¹⁰

What Barnwood is trying to achieve ¹²

The year at a glance ¹⁴

What happened in 2025 ²⁰

-
1. Influencing change
 2. Funding and investment
 3. Development work
-

The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2025 will be available from June 2026.

Welcome

Introduction from the Chair

Over the past year, Barnwood Trust has continued to expand and deepen its role as an agent for social change in Gloucestershire. As Chair of Trustees, I am immensely proud to reflect on a year marked by meaningful collaboration, bold decisions, and shared determination to help create a county where disabled people and people with mental health conditions can flourish.

In 2025, we saw the power and value of partnership in action.

Working alongside 119 organisations, we have helped to shape opportunities, challenge barriers, and champion the rights of disabled people across the county. This collective effort supported a wide range of initiatives – from improving access to nature and strengthening digital inclusion, to widening access to meaningful employment and reimagining short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families.

Our funding and investment programmes remained a cornerstone of our impact. We awarded 628

individual grants, enabling people to access essentials and opportunities— from freezers to fishing equipment— while strengthening our network of community partners, and developing the new Advice and Access service with our Citizens Advice. Through our organisational funding, 65 Funded Partners received support for core services and project work, with £6 million in grants awarded overall in Gloucestershire. We made social investments, in the form of loans, to the value of £416,000 locally and committed £1 million nationally in impact investments, ensuring our resources work hard for long-term, sustainable impact.



Our influence grew too; in partnership with Inclusion Gloucestershire, we responded to the Government's Pathways to Work Green Paper, made contributions to the redesign of the county's Short Breaks commissioning, and built an evidence base on transport and money advice. Increasingly our work continues to help shape policy and practice that we hope will have lasting benefits.

A particular highlight has undoubtedly been the contribution of Barnwood Circle members. With 100 members currently influencing and shaping our work, their invaluable expertise and experience guiding no less than nine co-design projects and four funding panels. Members continue to strengthen our decision-making and challenge us to do better — and, reassuringly, they consistently tell us how involvement at Barnwood supports their own confidence, development and sense of community. We are deeply grateful for their direction.

2025 was also a year of transition. After 17 years of dedicated leadership, we said a heartfelt thank you and goodbye to Dr Sally Byng and welcomed Matt Little as our new Chief Executive. We were also delighted to welcome new Trustees,

Siobhan Farmer and Kate Sayer, whose capabilities and expertise further strengthen our Board.

Across the Trust, focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging continued. Our work with The Better Org in 2025 helped deepen our understanding and build a clearer path for continued learning and action. This commitment is not a project with a finish line, it is a fundamental part of how we work, now and into the future.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to progressing Barnwood's vision for a fairer, more inclusive Gloucestershire in 2025—Barnwood Circle members, Funded and Community Partners, and colleagues across the county whose insights guide us every day.

Colin Smith,
Chair of Trustees



Through our organisational funding, 65 Funded Partners received support for core services and project work, with £6 million in grants awarded overall in Gloucestershire

Matt Little

Chief Executive Officer

It is a privilege to be working here at Barnwood Trust, and to be writing this introduction. But it does feel a bit odd because I joined towards the end of this year and can claim very little part in any of this impact – a theme I’ll return to.

I therefore want to start by saying a big thank you to my predecessor, Sally Byng. Thank you, Sally, for the integrity, sensitivity, resilience, foresight, determination and imagination you brought to this role. Sally is at the centre of so much positive social change – both here at the Trust and more widely across the county and country, and it is an honour to be following on from her.

Thank you also to trustees and the staff team at Barnwood for making me feel so welcome and to the obvious care, thoughtfulness, drive, intelligence and imagination you bring to your work and to this collective endeavour. Colin’s introduction provides a great summary of the wide range of work and impact achieved by the Trust this year. I think my job is

a simple one: helping us build strong on these foundations.

Of course there is a lot to do, it never stops, and these are difficult times in many ways. But it is also important to remember that there is still so much good going on - so many determined people leading change and contributing in such positive ways to community; so many vital collectives and organisations tackling barriers and supporting and developing the good stuff of life; so much potential... People are, thank goodness, incredible.

Against this backdrop, the notion of impact is a strange one, because the system of reporting, tracking and communicating means we all tend to claim impact individually, organisation by organisation, and report by report.

Yet the best and most lasting change happens when truly diverse people from all places and perspectives listen to each other, pool ideas, skills, abilities, build mutual understanding, support each other and act with care, creativity and commitment, together. Our role at Barnwood is to play our part as well as we can, with you, in this system we call home.

So, over the next year or two we will aim to build on the best of our work laid out here:

- continuing to influence and push for change together;
- using our financial resources and capabilities well and in a range of impact-focused and innovative ways;
- running the Trust well and creating as much value as we can as a modern and open organisation, with a welcome and inclusive space that this county can be proud of; and

- backing individuals and organisations as they push for change too – because the best change and impact happens together.

All of which can be a quietly and calmly radical act when set against forces driving an increasingly fragmented world.

The world can surely be a better, kinder, more equal and more understanding place and together we will try to make it so.

Matt Little,
CEO



What Barnwood Trust does

Barnwood is an independent charitable trust. We get millions of pounds of funding out into the county every year. But money is only part of the story.

We join with the people, communities and organisations in Gloucestershire’s disability and mental health movement—creating change so that disabled people and people with mental health conditions have choice of opportunities, access their rights, and are included where they live.

What do we do? We investigate the long-term, complex issues and barriers faced by disabled people and people with mental health conditions. We share research, develop projects, and run campaigns to influence the change that’s needed. We partner with local organisations, involve people with lived experience directly in our work, and look for better ways to invest and fund.

Barnwood Trust was set up over 200 years ago. Today, we are not your typical funder, and we don’t work in isolation. Learning and collaboration

run through everything we do. We bring people together for a different conversation and we explore big ideas.

We invest in ideas and organisations, listen and add clout where we can, to help make changes happen—always pushing for equity and inclusion and making a difference in the life of the county.



What Barnwood is trying to achieve

Our vision is that Gloucestershire will be a better place when disabled people and people with mental health conditions are equal, empowered and their rights are upheld.

Barnwood Trust's objectives are for disabled people and people with mental health conditions in Gloucestershire:



To have choice of **opportunities** that meet their hopes and passions.



To be **included** and involved in their communities and the places where they live.



To access their **rights** and see positive change on disability issues.



2025 Highlights

628 grants

awarded to disabled people and people with mental health conditions for items ranging from freezers to fishing equipment.



65

Funded Partners

received funding to deliver activities in Gloucestershire ranging from service delivery to core costs.



£6 million in grants

awarded to charities in Gloucestershire working directly with disabled people and people with mental health conditions.



119 organisations

partnered with us to make change happen in Gloucestershire on disability and mental health issues.



46

46 Barnwood Circle members

collaborated with us on 9 co-design projects and 4 funding panels.



3

social investments to social enterprises

in Gloucestershire supporting employment and training opportunities for disabled people and people with mental health conditions and the growth of a circular economy.



20

VCSE organisations

made use of meeting and training space at Overton House to support their charitable purposes.





Partnership between **Gloucestershire County Council, Barnwood Trust and VCSE Alliance** launched to enable more disabled children and their families to experience **improved Short Breaks provision**.

£737,048 awarded

£737,048 awarded in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council's Children's Services to **8 Gloucestershire organisations** to deliver **Short Break opportunities for disabled children and young people**, selected by a funding panel of staff and experts by lived experience.

Specialist **diversity, equity and inclusion** consultants, **The Better Org** completed a review with internal and external stakeholders to understand the DEI strengths and challenges of the organisation and move to action on these.



Joint statement from Inclusion Gloucestershire and Barnwood Trust on the **Government's Disability Benefit Reform Consultation**.

£250,000 invested

New **social investment** agreed with Gloucester-based **Sofab Sports** for **£250,000** over 10 years to 2035, supporting inclusive employment.

February

Accessible meeting rooms at Barnwood's offices made available for local partners to book for a range of inclusive and diverse sessions and events.

March

New **impact investment and social investment** policies approved, meaning we use our resources more proactively to invest in purpose-led businesses and organisations seeking to bring about positive change for disabled people.

April



May

£1.3m awarded

£1.3 million awarded to **10 Gloucestershire organisations** for **multi-year and project funding**, by an internal funding panel.

June

£500,000 invested

New **impact investment** of **£500,000** committed to **Ascension Fund III**, to develop improvements though healthcare technology.

New Trustees, **Siobhan Farmer** and **Kate Sayer**, join our Board of Trustees.

The year at a glance

£602,309
awarded

£602,309 awarded to **6 Gloucestershire organisations** to improve the **accessibility of their community space or place**, selected by a funding panel of staff and experts by lived experience.



Matt Little joins as the new Chief Executive, bringing new expertise around impact, social enterprise start-up and development, partnership working and community regeneration.

£500,000
impact investment

New **impact investment** of **£500,000** agreed through **Daring Capital's pledge portfolio** to provide capital for underrepresented founders who are setting up purpose-led businesses linked to our vision.

87 people attended the **Together with Barnwood** annual public meeting at Churchdown Community Centre.

£1.36m
awarded

£1.36 million awarded to **12 Gloucestershire organisations** for **multi-year and project funding**, by a funding panel of staff and experts by lived experience.



Following successful pilot throughout 2025, **North & West Gloucestershire Citizen's Advice** commissioned to provide an access and advice service, for greater support to a wide range of individuals.

July

August

September

October

November

December

Dr Sally Byng leaves Barnwood Trust after 17 years as Chief Executive.

Barnwood Circle Annual Member Event co-created to celebrate the contribution of members to Barnwood's work in the county. A social media takeover by members captured the day.



New **social investment** agreed with **Kid's Stuff** for **£75,000** and **The Bike Drop** for **£91,000** over 5 years to 2030.



Review of **Barnwood's learning and impact between 2012 and 2024** published by independent research company Brightpurpose, with a range of internal and external stakeholder perspectives.

What happened in 2025

Throughout 2025, we have developed our role as an agent for social change at Barnwood Trust – turning this into practical action in the county.

Over the year, we did three broad types of work:

Influencing change – focusing on knotty issues and working with partners across the county to provide evidence, learning and funding to help make a difference.

Funding and investment – using our resources to support individuals, groups and organisations across the county.

Development work – working to better understand and support disabled people and people with mental health conditions to shape our work and help us make change happen together across the county and beyond.



Influencing change

In 2025, we grew and developed our areas of focus – Access to Nature, Digital Inclusion, Employment, and Short Breaks.

Over the year we worked with partners, providing learning and funding to help make a difference. Alongside this we gathered evidence to help shape future work – access to transport and access to money advice.

During the summer we also prioritised a response to the Government's Pathways to Work Green Paper in collaboration with Inclusion Gloucestershire.



Access to Nature

Working with local nature organisations to build understanding and remove barriers to outdoor spaces in Gloucestershire.

The Access to Nature network continued – building on the success of our ‘Nature without Barriers’ event at the end of 2024.

23 people from 13 organisations took part in the network in 2025. In turn, this led to changes in staff training, more accessible communications, and improvements to physical accessibility at several key nature sector sites in Gloucestershire.

In 2026, we plan to launch a digital Access to Nature Learning Hub and a campaign to encourage people to improve access to nature locally. To support this, in 2025 we developed campaign content with 7 Barnwood Circle members.

We aim to build on the momentum of this work and develop some significant longer-term partnerships for the benefit of the county in the coming years.



“It’s amazing to work with people who are all absolutely determined to achieve positive change, to be in that room with people that are working really hard to make nature accessible to everybody is a really wonderful thing to be part of.”

“There’s a lot of things that wouldn’t have come to our mind at all if we hadn’t built relationships with Barnwood and other charity partners”

– Access to Nature Network Members

Benefits Reform

Responding to the Government's Pathways to Work Green Paper.

Recognising the depth of feeling following the Government's summer 2025 announcement to change disability benefits, we worked with others to contribute to the national consultation.

We worked in partnership with Inclusion Gloucestershire to:

- generate accessible interview questions with Inclusion Gloucestershire and Barnwood Circle members
- connect with colleagues in the county on this issue

- hold focus groups and surveys to capture the impact of proposed changes
- feed our findings into the Government consultation, and
- share these impacts directly with local MPs too.

Read the joint statement here:

www.barnwoodtrust.org/news/joint-statement-from-inclusion-gloucestershire-and-barnwood-trust-on-the-governments-disability-benefit-reform-consultation/



"The scale of the response to the Government's proposed changes to welfare benefits highlighted the significant impact they could have had on people's lives. It was important that, in partnership with Inclusion Gloucestershire, Barnwood was able to represent the experiences of disabled people directly to local MPs and via the media and highlight the disproportionate effect the proposed policies would have."

– Barnwood Trust Influencing Team



Digital Inclusion

Funding local organisations to create opportunities and remove barriers to the digital world for people in Gloucestershire.

Digital Inclusion funded projects finished their final year of funding in 2025. This successfully concluded the Trust's first issue-specific, test-and-learn fund. Learning from this will be consolidated into an impact and learning report designed to influence future practice and other funders.

We are keen to see improved digital inclusion in the county, and we anticipate that digital support and consideration of digital barriers and access will feature in future work that we fund at Barnwood.

||

"Barnwood Trust's Digital Inclusion Fund (DIF) has been a driving force for positive change in the Forest of Dean, enabling people with disabilities, learning disabilities, additional needs, and mental health challenges to participate fully in the digital world. This ... continued collaborative, user-led approach has delivered lasting impact, built resilient partnerships, and created a blueprint for digital inclusion that can be replicated far beyond our rural communities."

– Forest Voluntary Action Forum



Employment

Improving disabled people's access to employment opportunities by working with local employers and learning partners to remove barriers.

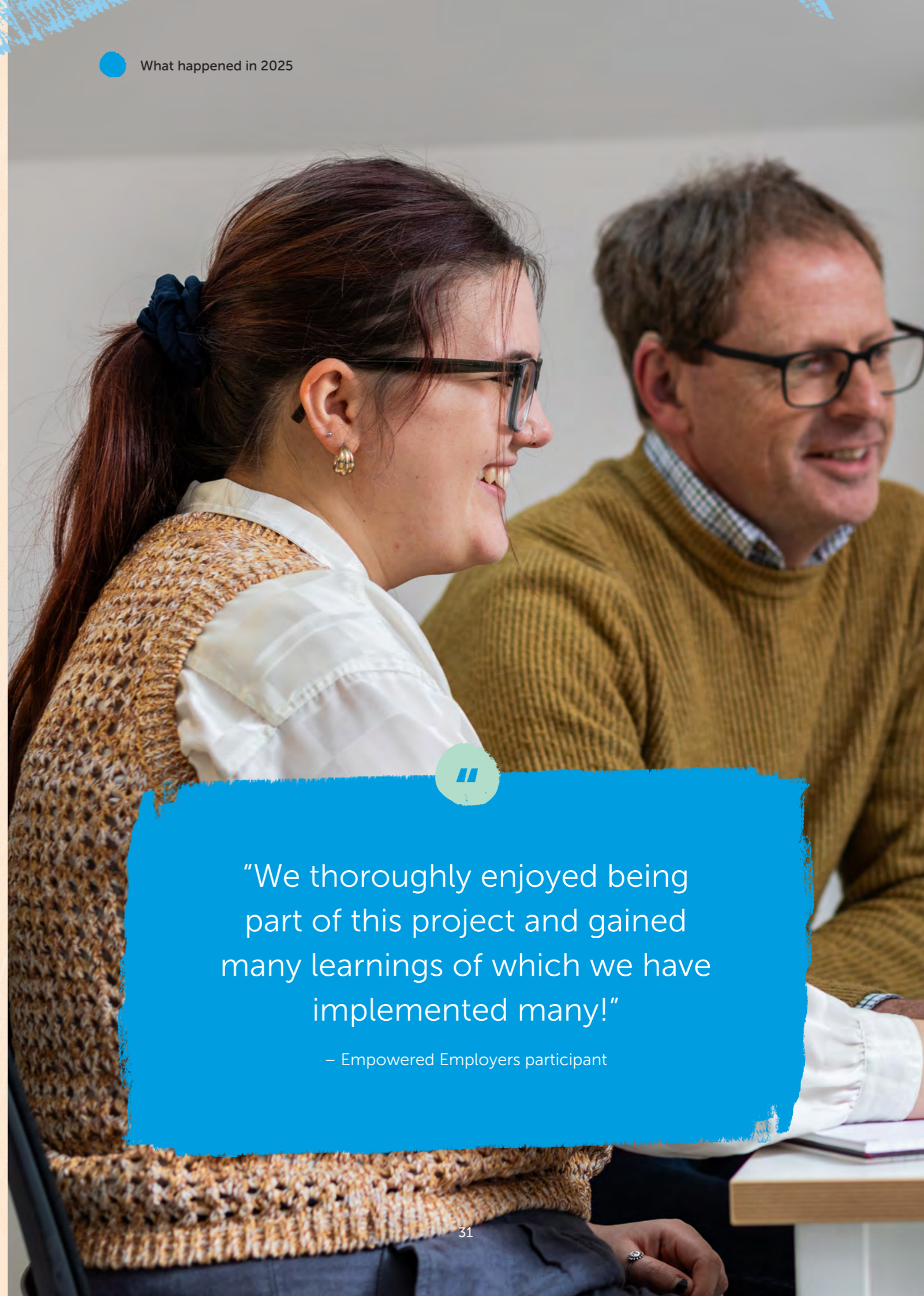
In 2025, employers who participated in the Empowered Employers campaign continued to action their plans to tackle disabling barriers and employment practices.

As this was a new area of work for Barnwood, we paused to review our impact. We engaged partners and disabled people across Gloucestershire, examined the wider employment landscape, and determined that the changes needed in employment are systemic and urgent — far beyond what a campaign of this kind could achieve alone. This review led to the closure of the Empowered Employers campaign, with learning embedded into funding, investment and influencing activity

— such as the Pathways to Work response, thereby finding other ways to drive outcomes linked to employment and inclusive growth.

In 2026, we will support organisations to strengthen inclusive employment practices, working with them to try to create better jobs and better employment practices for disabled people and people with mental health conditions in Gloucestershire, including through our social and impact investment.

We will also continue to advocate in public forums for employers and the government to remove barriers that prevent access to fulfilling work.



“We thoroughly enjoyed being part of this project and gained many learnings of which we have implemented many!”

– Empowered Employers participant

Opportunities for disabled children and young people

Funding and collaborating with local partners and the council to strengthen the Short Breaks offer in Gloucestershire.

In 2025, we published our impact report 'A year of Short Breaks funding', which highlighted the difference it made for families in the county. Nearly three-quarters of children accessing provision through this fund had not had a Short Break before, indicating that access had been successfully widened.

The Short Breaks Partnership was launched – working alongside our partners Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire VCSE Alliance and Collaborate CIC to deliver better access to Short Breaks for families of disabled children and young people in the county.

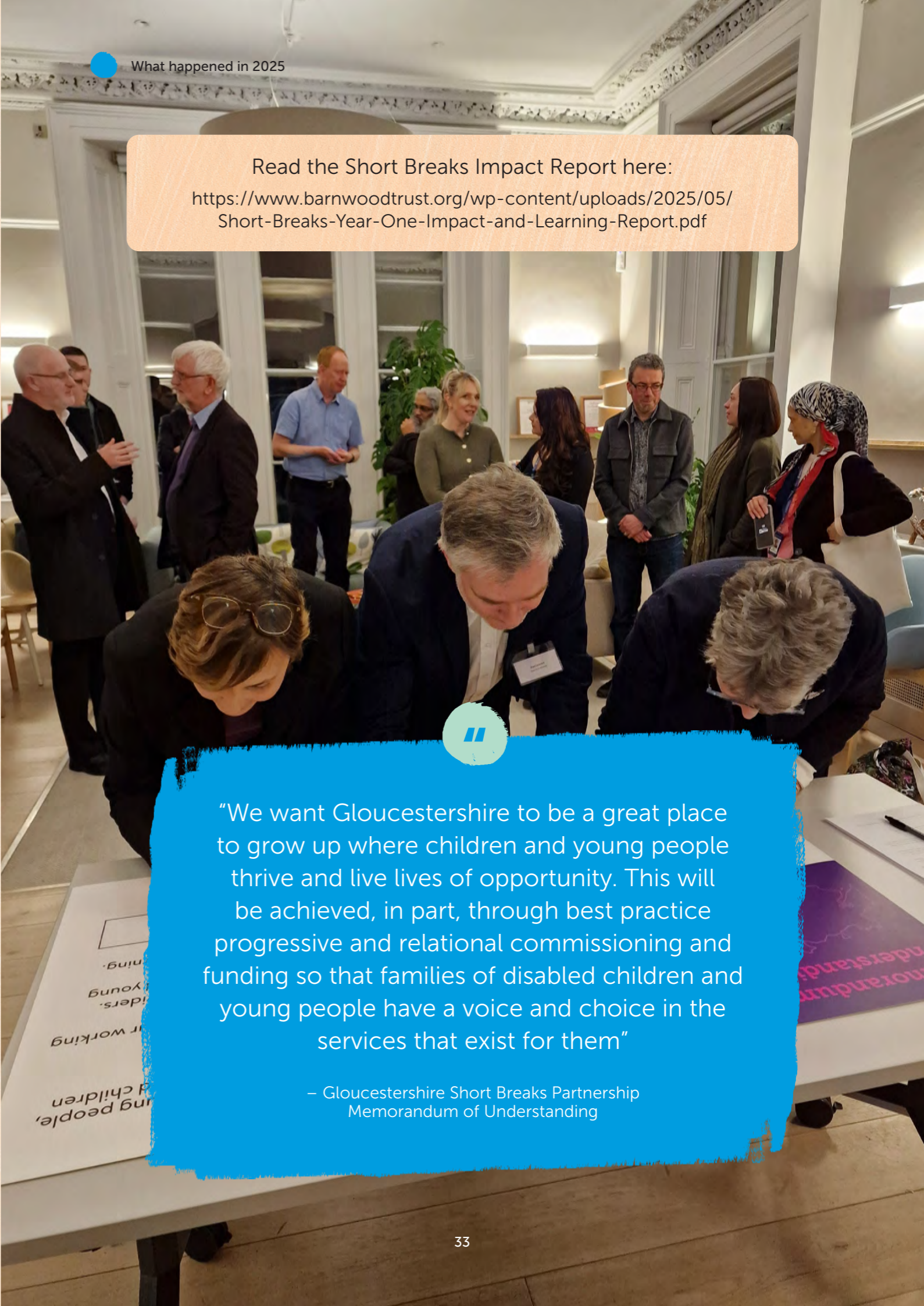
In 2025, we awarded test-and-learn funding to 8 organisations, until April 2027, to deliver short break activities. Input from these providers will contribute to the re-design of the commissioning brief for Short Breaks in Gloucestershire.

Our relationship with the County Council has been strengthened through healthy challenge and collaboration on this topic. Working this closely with the Council marks a significant step in the Trust's ability to influence county-level decisions.

In 2026, the evaluation and learning from this programme will continue to be captured. The aim of this is to shape commissioning practice for the better and to share this learning nationally.



"I've seen a huge improvement in confidence, physical benefits for fitness and huge mental health benefits. They were a rare chance for me as a carer and my child to relax, enjoy ourselves, and meet others in the same position."
– Short Breaks participant



Read the Short Breaks Impact Report here:
<https://www.barnwoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Short-Breaks-Year-One-Impact-and-Learning-Report.pdf>



"We want Gloucestershire to be a great place to grow up where children and young people thrive and live lives of opportunity. This will be achieved, in part, through best practice progressive and relational commissioning and funding so that families of disabled children and young people have a voice and choice in the services that exist for them"
– Gloucestershire Short Breaks Partnership Memorandum of Understanding



What happened in 2025

Funding and investment

Funding

Through Barnwood’s funding, we aim to support Gloucestershire with resources it needs to ensure that disabled people and people with mental health conditions are included in their communities, have access to opportunities, and access their rights.

Barnwood funds in three ways:

- Individual Grants to access opportunities and household essentials.
- Funded Partner Programme for core and project funding for organisations and groups.

- Themed Funding which is project-specific to help us and others learn about new or improved ways of delivering our strategic goals.

In 2026, we will continue to run these programmes, alongside planning our funding strategy for 2027 and beyond. We will reflect on what we have learned from the past few years to decide how our funds can make the most impact in the county.

What happened in 2025

Individual Grants

Working with community partners to fund disabled people and people with mental health conditions to access opportunities and household essentials.

In 2025, we awarded 628 individual grants, totaling nearly £1 million, helping disabled people and people with mental health conditions access essential items and opportunities that improve day-to-day life.

We continued to strengthen the individual grant by working through a growing network of community-based partners, ensuring support reaches people across the county who may otherwise face barriers to funding.



We established a new Advice and Access offer with Citizens Advice, giving people better guidance on Barnwood grants and connecting them to wider financial and personal support systems—creating more stable, long-term outcomes.

By embedding the grant in strong partnerships and local systems, we are making individual grants more strategic, more accessible, and better positioned to contribute to lasting social change.

“For the individuals we support within an advice service, the option to discuss a Barnwood Individual Grant opens an additional line of communication that allows us to explore circumstances and needs more fully. This has also helped us to consider how we may be able to link the individual to fellow Community Partners or other organisations and work more collaboratively together. Individuals are often emotionally affected by the option of an enrichment opportunity and are surprised that this can be considered. The overwhelming feedback is the difference that an enrichment opportunity has made... This clearly goes beyond the item or opportunity in itself.”

– North & West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice

Funding groups and organisations

Funding groups and organisations who work to create positive change for disabled people and people with mental health conditions in the county.

In 2025, 65 grants were awarded to groups and organisations across multiple programmes, to a total value of just over £5 million.

We established a new Accessibility Fund, co-created with Barnwood Circle members, and awarded by a panel of 6 members, 1 trustee and 1 Barnwood staff member. We made our first awards through this programme in 2025, investing £602,300 in 6 organisations across the

county to improve the accessibility of community spaces.

We ran 2 multi-year funding rounds in 2025 for the Funded Partner Programme – for core and project funding for organisations delivering work in support of Barnwood’s goals – and we will do the same in 2026.

We also continued to award small grants of up to £10,000, and this programme remained open to applications for most of the year.

Find out about the difference Funded Partners are making in the county here:

www.barnwoodtrust.org/your-voice/stories/

Funding figures for 2025

Type of funding awarded	2025			2024		
	Value	No. awarded	No. declined	Value	No. awarded	No. declined
Grants for Individuals	£931,500	628	9	£988,763	624	9
Grants for Organisations	£5,055,900	65	87	£4,237,678	107	18
Total	£5,987,400	693	96	£5,226,441	731	27



“The organisation, and therefore the individuals within it, have benefitted hugely from the grant. The internal development through training, policies and new structures has given us the basis to grow more work. It also, more widely, has made us more conscious of how we can better support those who are disabled and/or have mental health conditions. ...We are now consciously being reflective on our practice and how we could do it better. The development has meant we work better as a staff team and have expanded how many disabled/ neurodiverse colleagues we work with (or have created the right space for more people to identify).”

– Strike a Light, Funded Partner

Investment

Social and impact investments - making resources work harder for social and environmental impact aligned to our mission and making good financial return to ensure Gloucestershire benefits long term.

In 2025, we made three new social investments of £416,000 in Gloucestershire, and we committed to two impact investments totaling £1 million in the UK.

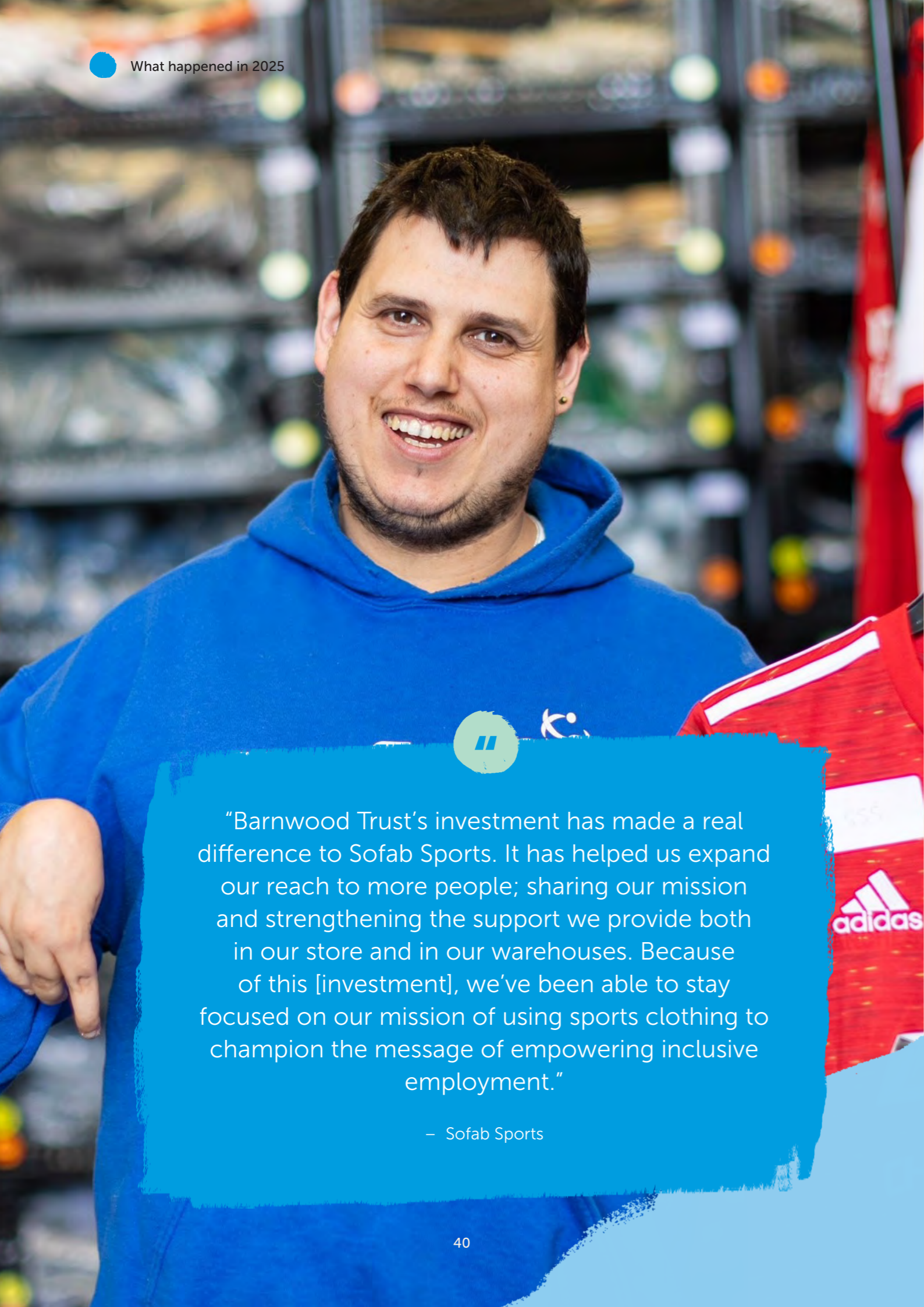
Our social investments are for Gloucestershire organisations seeking to create change for disabled people and people with mental health conditions. This means that we can work our money and reserves harder – creating opportunity and innovation, supporting our local voluntary and charitable sector, generating financial return, and increasing the positive impact from our investments.

Social Investment	Amount	Duration	Mission
Sofab Sports	£250,000	10 years	Provide training and paid employment opportunities for individuals overcoming various hardships in their lives.
Kids Stuff, The Grace Network	£75,000	5 years	Create a circular economy for children’s items in Gloucestershire and provide family centered employment in family hubs to support families in need.
The Bike Drop, The Grace Network	£91,000	5 years	Put cycling in everyone’s reach to create healthier people and a healthier planet.
Total invested in 2025	£416,000		



“The Grace Network is attempting to change the economy of Gloucestershire to better serve those left out of the community and the places where we live. This is no easy task and Barnwood’s investment has been vital to this plan. It allows us to build Community Interest Companies (CICs) that serve people, planet and community and stand up taller in a context of a hard world of change. We serve 130 staff members, 100,000s of community visitors with access, equity and engagement at the heart of our work. Barnwood is one of our key partners, without whom we wouldn’t be here today with visions of growth and development.”

– The Grace Network



“Barnwood Trust’s investment has made a real difference to Sofab Sports. It has helped us expand our reach to more people; sharing our mission and strengthening the support we provide both in our store and in our warehouses. Because of this [investment], we’ve been able to stay focused on our mission of using sports clothing to champion the message of empowering inclusive employment.”

– Sofab Sports

Impact Investment	Amount	Duration	Mission
Ascension Fund III	£500,000	10 years	Drive impact through technology in Fintech, Energy & Health
Daring Capital pledge portfolio	£500,000	6-10 years	Invest in extraordinary, underrepresented founders building for-profit companies to make the world a better place.
Total invested in 2025	£1,000,000		

We are also thinking about other ways to use our financial resources for more social and environmental benefit and impact. We are working with some significant national organisations to find ways to do this for ourselves and to influence these partners and organisations for the benefit of disabled people and people with mental health conditions.

Read about Barnwood Trust’s impact investment approach here:

www.barnwoodtrust.org/blog/continuing-our-impact-investing-journey/

Development work

Barnwood Circle

Working alongside Barnwood Circle members who inform and guide the Trust's work to make positive change in Gloucestershire.

In 2025, Barnwood Circle welcomed 19 new members, comprising disabled people, people with mental health conditions and unpaid carers. This brings the total membership to 100, helping to shape change that is needed in the county and beyond.

A total of 9 projects and 4 funding panels have benefited from the expertise and insights of 46 Barnwood Circle members this year. These included: ways to build belonging and make Barnwood Circle anti-racist; Chief Executive recruitment; social media takeover for Barnwood Circle's Annual Member Event; filming personal stories about accessing nature for a new digital learning hub; reviewing applications for the Funded Partner Programme, Accessibility Fund and Short Breaks Fund.

Involvement of Circle members in Barnwood's work has led to our practices improving, our connections in the county widening, and decisions being shaped and strengthened through people contributing a range of expertise.

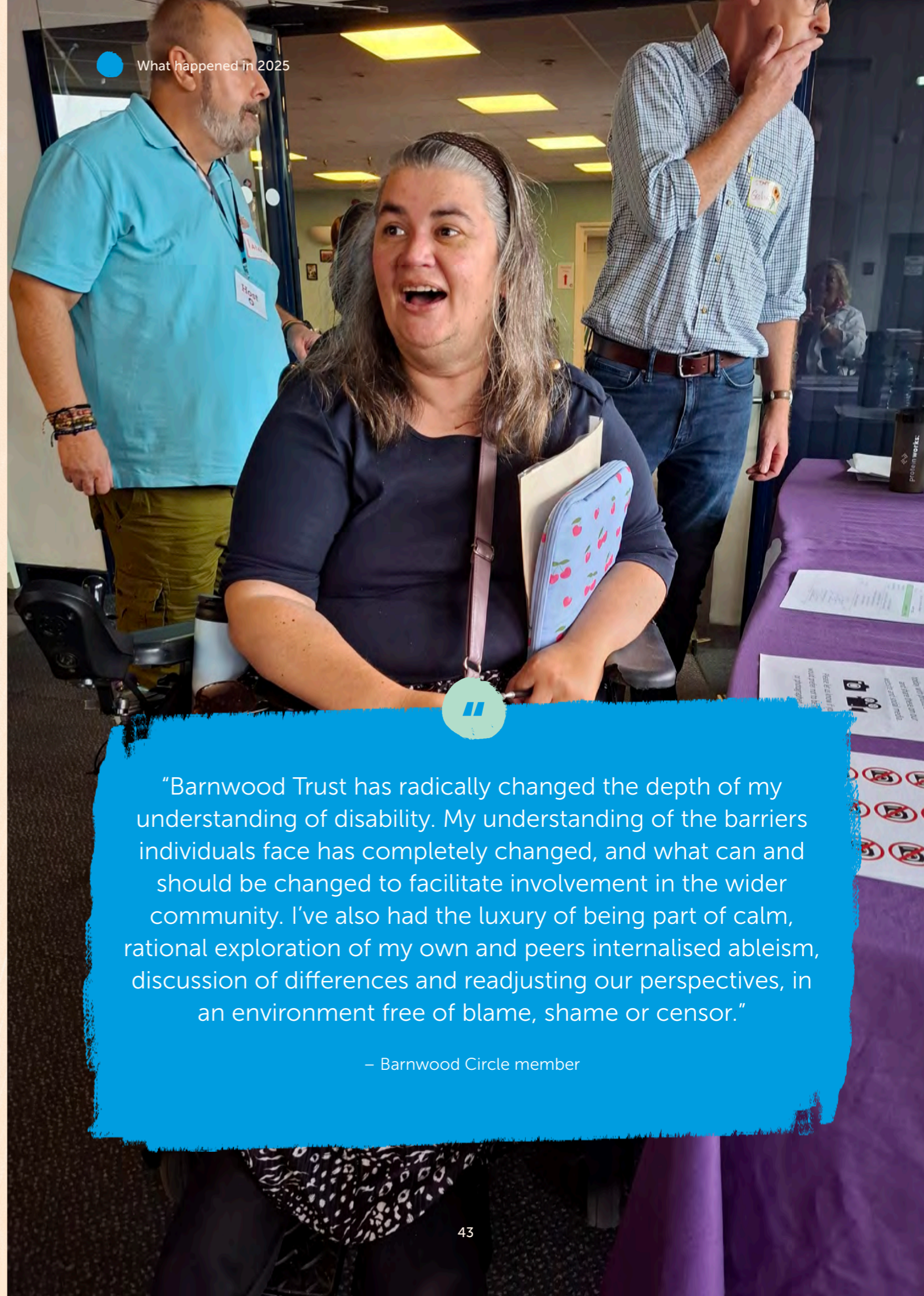
Involving experts by lived experience in our work also has an impact on the members. Feedback suggests that the involvement experience is positive, with personal learning and a sense of achievement.

Watch the Building Belonging podcast hosted by staff and members here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvDKUY7-hGbDN9TnAqeGOmg32RC_hyCTD

"Just a huge thank you for offering me this chance, and I felt that my voice really mattered."

– Barnwood Circle member, Access to Nature Film Project



"Barnwood Trust has radically changed the depth of my understanding of disability. My understanding of the barriers individuals face has completely changed, and what can and should be changed to facilitate involvement in the wider community. I've also had the luxury of being part of calm, rational exploration of my own and peers internalised ableism, discussion of differences and readjusting our perspectives, in an environment free of blame, shame or censor."

– Barnwood Circle member



"...The [funding panel] training made me feel like I was at work again. It was using skills that I hadn't used for a long time. Confidence levels increased massively. It's close to what I used to be involved in work wise. It was the first time in a long time that I tried to concentrate on something that was not an emotional drama or complaint. It was an absolute joy to focus on analysing something."

– Barnwood Circle member, Funded Partner Panel



"I want to take everything I've learned forward - using my skills and confidence to pay it forward, support others and continue with my personal growth and development. I've already started looking for new opportunities where I can keep making a difference and explore things I'm passionate about. This is just the beginning, and I'm excited to continue being involved in lasting change for people with lived experience."

– Barnwood Circle member

Research and insight

Gathering evidence to inform the work we do and to share this learning to influence change.

In 2025, our transport research brought together local evidence and insights, giving us a clearer picture of countywide challenges and opportunities. This has shaped aspects of our influencing work and informed both the Local Growth Plan and the Local Transport Plan.

Desk research into barriers to accessing money advice provided evidence in support of the new Advice and Access service, developed by North & West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice in partnership with Barnwood.

Work with Barnwood Circle members to explore participatory research methods has begun to strengthen how we design research with communities in future.



Governance and strategy

Overall management of the Trust through transparent, effective, ethical, and accountable ways of working.

We said goodbye to Sally Byng in 2025 and welcomed Matt Little as our new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

New Trustees, Siobhan Farmer and Kate Sayer, also joined our Board of Trustees. As we recruit new Trustees over time, we aim to further develop the diversity, experience and expertise of our Board.

We hosted our 5th Annual Public Meeting, Together with Barnwood 2025, with 87 people in attendance. The day was focused on learning, reflection and conversation. We shared the projects we are leading, the ideas we are developing and the change we are building alongside our staff, partners and Barnwood Circle members.

“

“It was wonderful to meet the team behind Barnwood and learn more about the organisation’s goals and what you aim to achieve beyond being a funder. The cinema area was also fantastic to see the individuals involved with Barnwood’s work.”

– Together with Barnwood’ attendee



“

“I came away with a refreshed view on how we can partner more with Barnwood and what our projects could do to inspire future policy making.”

– Together with Barnwood’ attendee

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Continuing to learn, and improve the ways we work, so that more people have a good, fair and constructive experience of Barnwood.

As a Trust, we are continuing our journey on diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and social and racial justice. This journey remains crucial and central to creating lasting positive change in and through our work.

In 2025, The Better Org (TBO) was commissioned to hear a range of perspectives from people we work with in Gloucestershire about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at Barnwood. TBO worked with us to identify five areas of DEI development. The Barnwood team then explored the findings together, learned from others, and began to put

ideas into action across the Trust. A development plan will come from this to implement from 2026.

The impact on Barnwood is already evident – by building understanding steadily and using inclusive DEI principles to underpin this work from the start – team members are taking ownership and engaging more deeply in the work.

We are keen to open dialogue across the sector about what it means to take a DEI lens on funding, power-sharing and engagement around our work.

Read about why this work matters and what we have learned so far here:

<https://www.barnwoodtrust.org/blog/dei-and-social-justice-at-barnwood/>



“When we formed into groups to examine the recommendations put forward by The Better Org, I remember hearing the term ‘social justice’ and thinking, this is new to me. I set about finding out more about the connection between social change and social justice. I discovered that people have mixed ideas about what it means for them and their work. It has been really helpful to have time to think deeply about themes within DEI and I have felt able to be honest about the bits I don’t know a lot about.”

– Team Member at Barnwood Trust

Overton House

Accessible and inclusive meeting spaces at Barnwood's offices.

Meeting spaces at Overton House enable inclusive and fully accessible activities and events. Building use is maximised by the Barnwood team, trustees and Circle members, as well as by partners who book rooms for their own purposes. In 2025, 20 partner voluntary and charitable organisations used Overton House for a total of 278 hours – for team meetings, training and community activities.

Spaces at Overton House can be booked for one-off sessions free-of-charge, find out more here:

www.barnwoodtrust.org/hire-our-accessible-meeting-space/



“Having access to the space at Overton House has been a huge factor in the success of the group. People have found it to be a very welcoming, easily accessible and pleasant environment which they want to return to. We have benefitted from good lighting and warmth. The room is uncluttered and calm without visual or sound disturbance...

This has enabled us to have whole group conversations and helped to foster social connections... Thanks again to Barnwood Trust for supporting this group to explore the arts, find friends, and access support when living with dementia.”

– Create and Connect, Art Shape



Learning in 2025

We have noted the following learning this year that will help us make more difference:

Creating lasting change requires strong partnerships, especially when working across complex systems and with many stakeholders.



As our projects grow, we need to balance hands-on delivery with influencing wider practice, so our work can endure.



Knowing when to stop, pause or reshape work helps us focus on what matters most and strengthens our overall impact.

Well-designed networks and communities of practice are just as powerful as programmes, helping learning and progress to continue long after projects end.



Meaningful equity work takes time, trust and collective commitment, and depends on strong relationships both in our team and in community.



Involving people with lived experience in a range of areas of our work leads to better understanding of what will work and create greater impact.





barnwoodtrust.org

Overton House, Overton Road, Cheltenham GL50 3BN

© 2026 Barnwood Trust - Registered charity number 1162855