



JOIN THE DOTS

GASPI! Social Impact Report 2022-2025

May 2025

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▲ MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDERS

Welcome to our first Social Impact Report!

We founded Gloucestershire Arts and Social Projects (GASP!) in 2022 to nurture the city and empower Gloucester's residents through providing more access to the life-changing benefits of the arts.

High levels of need meant that existing organisations across the city, an Arts Council England (ACE) Priority Place, weren't able to meet demand for the delivery of visual arts projects for residents. Supported by GL4, Strike A Light, Create Gloucestershire and Gloucester Culture Trust, as well as the fantastic community organisations who have helped, funded and supported us, we are proud to present what we have created together with the people of Gloucester, for and in the city, and how the organisation has evolved over that time.

Here's to the next chapter!

Hannah Thomson & Soozy Roberts

This report has been made possible by funding from Bath Spa University, Arts Council England and created by our awesome graduate designer Molly Wells.



▼ WHY WE'RE HERE

We use existing spaces & partner with local organisations to make contemporary arts accessible in Gloucester, a city without a dedicated large public art gallery.

We exist to retain creative talent in the city through our development pathways, mentoring and paid opportunities for Gloucester-based artists.

We join the dots across Gloucester communities, developing social cohesion and movement across all areas of the city.

We bring nationally significant artists and partners to put Gloucester on the map as a progressive city for developing contemporary visual arts.

We focus on contemporary art over traditional because it provokes change, asks why? It appeals to wider sections of the community, re-contextualising local histories for diverse audiences.

We respond to communities' desires to tackle social issues, and give local people agency to co-create cultural provision that meets their needs.

Our work with residents addresses issues including anti-social behaviour, a lack of arts opportunities on the edge of the city and reinvigorates Gloucester's empty shops to uplift the city centre.

We listen, respond and intuitively adapt our work according to evolving community needs.

GLOUCESTER

▲ ART

▼ SOCIAL

We (Hannah Thomson and Soozy Roberts) were working independently in Gloucester as artists and producers, and developing contemporary art in Matson. We joined forces to maximise our capacity and support each other to realise more ambitious and sustainable projects for the people of Gloucester. We wanted to put talent development at the core of our work, and to provide creative opportunities to people who may not normally engage in the arts.

GASP! @ EWE 2022

From January to May 2022, we worked on the first official GASP! Project at The Ewe Space, which at the time was an underused community space for the residents of Matson.

We set up three creative internships for local young people Nadiyaa, Daisy-May & Remaar and worked with staff and residents to create 2 on-site contemporary art exhibitions over a 4 month period. GASP! @ EWE also saw the creation of a special youth episode of the Ewe Space podcast to showcase arts and community-based work in the area, and a rethink of the space itself with a community-led branding project.

Since that time, a strong and newly formed residents' group have taken on responsibility for workshops in the space.

It was the learnings from this project around the limitations of short-term funding which saw us set up GASP! as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in the months that followed.



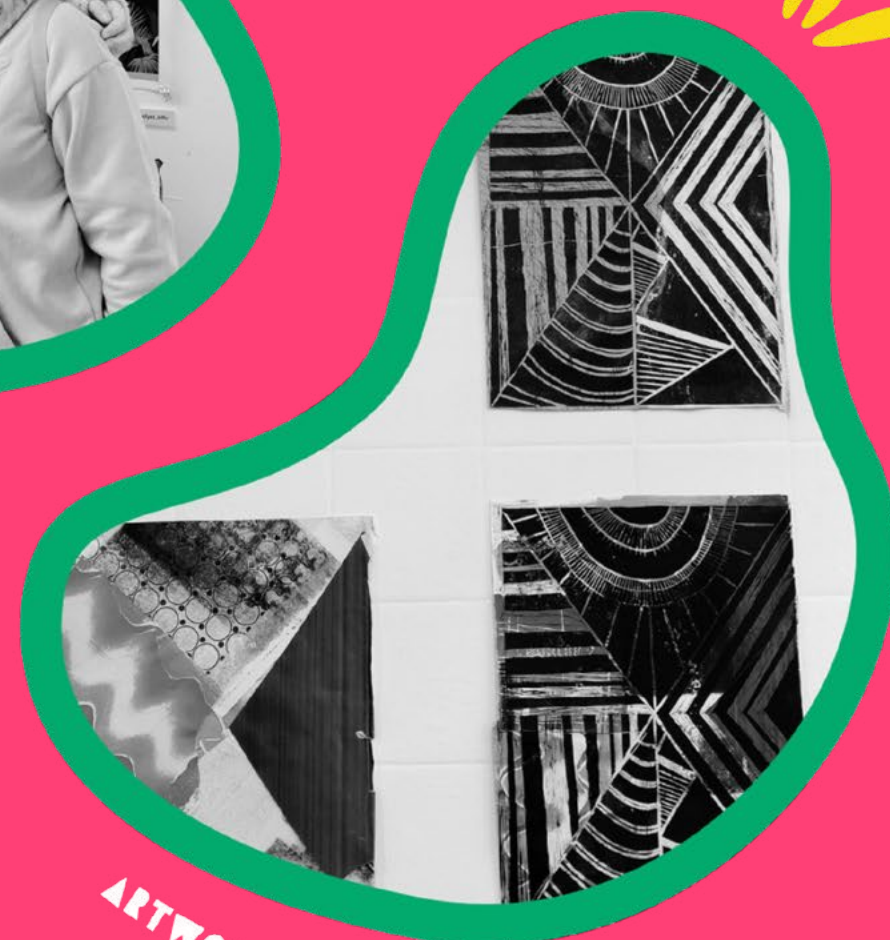
ARTWORK BY NADIYAA



THE EWE SPACE



ARTWORK BY HANNAH



GAWP! 23

2023-2024

People on the outskirts of the city often don't engage with events in the city centre. We conceived GAWP! 23 to develop community cohesion and link Podsmead residents to the newly redeveloped King's Square.

KINGS SQUARE

We brought together a mixed graduate exhibition, an art market, and a show-stopping centrepiece in the form of a 15ft castle made by young creatives and inspired by Gloucester Castle Keep. The square was also filled with a fantastic local art market, live painting and nationally acclaimed artists Hunt & Darton, Ali Brown and Kareen Griffiths (Calmify).



"I've never done anything like this before. It's so fun! It's great talking to people about art" - Stallholder



**55
ARTISTS**

**326
COMMUNITY
PARTICIPANTS**



**14
NEW ARTWORKS
COMMISSIONED**

WORD WALK

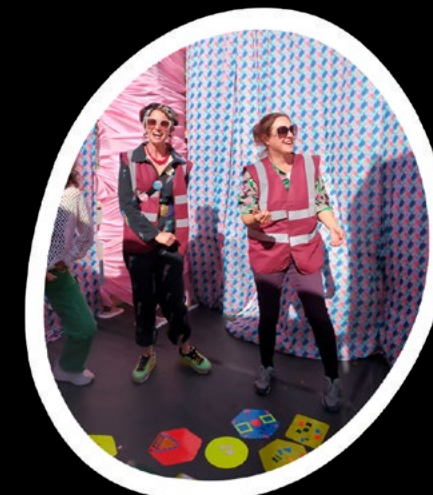


Working with Podsmead Big Local and Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society, we supported local communities and artists to create an art trail for Gloucester. Featuring 10 originally commissioned artworks plus accompanying audio, Word Walk tells the stories of local people and places, past and present. The trail loosely follows the railway line from Podsmead to Kings Square.



**20
PAID CREATIVE
OPPORTUNITIES**

"Great interactivity, good fun, great art!" - Visitor



**3187+
VISITORS**

PODSMEAD

With music from The Music Works Gloucester, food from the Eat Well Wagon and art from the people of Gloucester, the Art Car Boot in Podsmead brought the community together to browse and sell artworks on the second day of the weekend. The event included 4 artists who were commissioned by GASP! to make new work in collaboration with local organisations.

FOLK FOLK4

We were commissioned by Canal & River Trust to lead on engagement for an exhibition centred around the National Waterways Museum Gloucester's canal folk art collection.

We offered paid opportunities to 5 of our Young Creatives, to co-curate the exhibition with us. This involved selecting from and interpreting the museum's collection, as well as creating their own interactive, photographic and audio elements.

Working with our contemporary art groups including unaccompanied asylum seeking children, Matson Makers and Art School Matson, we made artworks in the exhibition including folk inspired denim jackets, masks and a sculpture of the river goddess Sabrina.

In total, more than one hundred people contributed to the project. The resulting exhibition took place at National Waterways Museum Gloucester from 23 March to 1st June.

The Folk for Folk exhibition was not only extended due to its popularity but was shared nationally by ACE as an example of excellence in their 'Unlocking Collections' campaign.



100+
COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

7565
VISITORS

"Honestly so grateful for GASP's help in getting me to this point and all the amazing experiences and memories you've provided. I still remember you gassing me up to make that interactive exhibit at Folk for Folk which I'm still proud of! And basically loads of little experiences that have added up to a lot more confidence for me"
- Jenna Thoresson



5
PAID YOUNG CREATIVES

"I've enjoyed it and learnt a lot through working with GAS Projects and the museum" - Chloe, Young Creative

35
ARTISTS



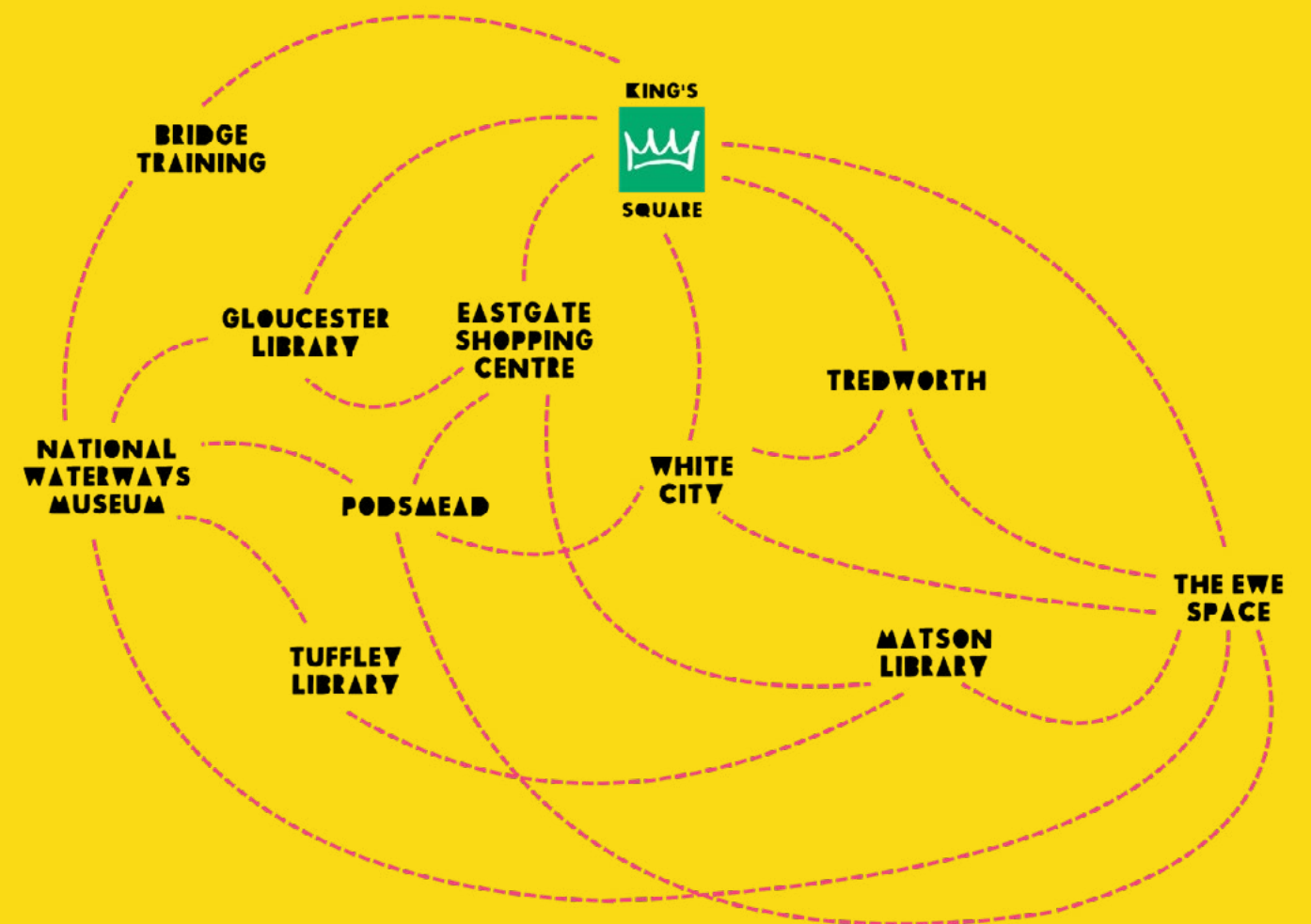
2023-2024

GASP! @ GLOUCESTER TALL SHIPS FESTIVAL

In May 2024, GASP! were invited by Gloucester City Council to design and run the children's art area for Gloucester Tall Ships Festival. Gloucester's single biggest cultural event, the Tall Ships festival takes place in the historic Gloucester Docks and celebrates the city's rich maritime history. We ran three days of nautically themed art and craft workshops for younger visitors and enjoyed working with over 500 visitors.



GASP! JOINS THE DOTS



GAWP! 23 showed us that without a major art gallery or visual arts strategy for Gloucester, we needed a longer-term, embedded approach to engagement across the city. We began testing and developing this longer-term engagement and applied to ACE with local funders for a year-long engagement program; GAP24-ENGAGE.

This program helped us to hone our engagement with groups across the city linking communities on the outskirts of Gloucester to ambitious art projects in the city centre.

Joining the dots across the city and linking communities is an integral part of our work. It breaks down barriers and stereotypes and helps to create a cohesive, contemporary, visual arts offer for Gloucester.

GAWP! @ THE NATIONAL GALLERY

From May 2024 to May 2025, as part of their bicentennial celebrations NG200, The National Gallery's travelling art studio programme, Art Road Trip, visited eighteen places across the UK to create community-led arts projects with local arts organisations.

We were invited by Create Gloucestershire, to host the Gloucester city centre leg of the tour in King's Square on 27 and 28 July 2024.

We jumped at this prestigious opportunity and following GAWP!23, we knew that King's Square was the place. With support from ACE we developed a longer term engagement project to make relevant the National Gallery collection with our contemporary art groups. We took a coach from Matson to The National Gallery to create community artworks to exhibit on the square and in our pop-up gallery. We delivered a range of exciting workshops inside and outside the gallery. We exhibited exciting and relevant national artists alongside local artists in our pop-up gallery and exhibition 'GAWP! REPRESENTS....' The exhibition focussed on artwork from diverse and working class artists. The overwhelmingly positive response from visitors included the need for a permanent gallery space in King's Square.

"All very colourful, accessible and inspiring and reflective of the city's diversity- Gloucester needs more of this!"

476
WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS

100+
EXHIBITION
VISITORS

"Gloucester needs this kind of thing. You should be here permanently!"- Visitor

1250+
VISITORS



6
PAID YOUNG
CREATIVES

17
ARTISTS
EXHIBITED

"We deserve a space like this in Gloucester! Art brings our community together and keeps culture alive" - Visitor

GRIEF RAVE

We brought Annie Frost Nicholson and The Loss Project's public art project 'Grief Rave' to Gloucester. Grief Rave brings people together to play, listen and dance to music in a welcoming group space, helping to process all kinds of bereavement.

We held our Grief Rave on the Sabrina 5 barge at National Waterways Museum, which GASP! Young Creatives helped transform into a sparkly and welcoming venue for people to dance out their feelings in a supportive environment.

100+
VISITORS

"Nice to do collective dancing with no alcohol. More art please that is free for working class people to engage with." -
Paid Young Creatives

3
**PAID YOUNG
CREATIVES**

"I'm very glad I came. I enjoyed the connections and space to talk about actual things, not small talk. I would love more of this in Gloucester." - *Paid Young Creatives*



KIDS BUSINESS

Artist duo Hunt & Darton's hugely successful 'Kids Business' creates site specific public artworks in empty high street shops and we were excited to bring the initiative to Gloucester for the first time.

Young people aged 8-16 from Blackbridge Youth Club were supported via a series of workshops to grow ideas, cultivate skills, and bring their democratically created business idea to life in a vacant unit in Eastgate shopping centre. They took part in a dramatic make-over of the space; branding, painting and stocking it, until the business was ready to open to the public, staffed by the same young people who imagined it. The result, Karen's Kids' Diner, then popped up over a weekend at the shopping centre, to the delight and surprise of passers-by.

"Hold onto your hats, Gloucester! GAS Projects and the kids of Podsmead have just dropped a culinary bombshell."
- Hunt & Darton

3
**PAID YOUNG
CREATIVES**



23
**PARTICIPANTS
AGED 8-16**

"The most fun I've ever had in Eastgate Shopping Centre".
- Phil Hindson, Chief Executive, Gloucester Culture Trust

BRINGING NATIONAL ARTISTS TO GLOUCESTER

"GAS Projects are quite simply brilliant. They bring nationally significant visual artists and institutions to Gloucester, not just for the sake of it, but to work with local communities to develop their creativity."

PHIL HINDSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GLOUCESTER CULTURE TRUST

JOKE AMUSAN



HUNT & DARTON



ANNIE FROST NICHOLSON



CATRIONA ROBERTSON



LUKE SMILE



KAREEN GRIFFITHS (CALMEY)



DANIEL TRIVEDI



ALI BROWN



NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED, LOCALLY INSPIRED.

GASP! CONTEMPORARY ART GROUPS

GASP! Contemporary Art Groups are free and connect people from some of the most deprived areas of Gloucester and nationally, to professional artists and creative opportunities, both locally and in the city itself.

ART SCHOOL MATSON

Art School Matson is a club for 11-16 years olds and takes place at Matson Library after school on Wednesdays during term time. This club has seen consistent engagement since its first session in October 2023 and has grown from 4 to 15 regular attendees. A short walk from Gloucester Academy, this group is accessible to young people who live on the Matson estate, enabling them to attend independently.

Art School Matson has made work for GAWP! @ The National Gallery, Folk for Folk and Grief Rave and inspired our newest group in Tuffley.

"My favourite project was the customised denim jackets because we made art for an exhibition. I still brag about it to my friends! I felt a sense of pride that people were looking at me and my friends work and enjoying it"

- Art School Matson Group Member

"It makes me feel more creative because I can think outside the box. I wouldn't be able to try these things at home"

- Art School Matson Group Member



MATSON MAKERS @ EWE SPACE

This weekly group for adults grew from ad-hoc workshops we ran in the Ewe Space. Continuous engagement has been a struggle and at time of writing, we are considering moving to a project based rather than fixed weekly approach here.

Matson Makers originally helped create our Warm Words art works and Hyperbolic Hanging Baskets to decorate the Ewe Space, and has since made work for Folk for Folk and GAWP! @ The National Gallery, as well as contributing to the yearly Matson Christmas Tree Festival.



"Matson Makers has blossomed into more than just a craft club for me. It's a sanctuary where I can de-stress and unleash my creativity"

- Kiran Batool, Matson Maker

TUFFLEY ART GROUP

Our newest group was launched in February 2025 and takes place at Tuffley Library after school on a Thursday. The library has struggled with unruly behaviour after school, particularly on a Thursday. The club has so far seen continuous good engagement and has led to us becoming a partner of the new Gloucestershire City Council Youth Support Services.

**450
HOURS+**
**FREE WORKSHOPS
DELIVERED**

**YOUTH GROUPS
GROWN FROM
JUST 4 TO 30+
MEMBERS PER
WEEK OVER
BOTH GROUPS**



HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & FOOD (HAF) WORKSHOP & EVENTS

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme is funded by the Department of Education for those in reception to year 11 who receive income-related free school meals.

We started out doing activities for younger children and families, but have moved our focus to teens and SEND young people, as we noticed a gap in provision for these groups. After our fantastic National Gallery trip in Easter 2024, our intention is to add more art focussed trips outside of Gloucester to our HAF programme, which will also continue to be linked with hands-on opportunities for our own Gloucester-based projects.



UASC REFUGEES GROUP

We started working with unaccompanied asylum seeker children (16-18) in October 2023, in response to the lack of education spaces and provision in Gloucester, particularly for 16-18 years old in this group.

We worked with GARAS and the virtual school to set-up a weekly art session with them at The National Waterways Museum to run alongside our Folk for Folk project. In Spring 2024 we re-engaged the group through Bridge Training, offering a weekly session in making, alongside their ESOL course. The group were keen to continue their English rather than art-making, so we designed a project where they could write all the English words they knew onto cardboard for our GAWP! At the National Gallery community exhibition.



GASP! YOUNG CREATIVES

GASP! Young Creatives is our development scheme for 18-30 year olds who live in Gloucester who are considering or taking their first steps towards a career in the creative industries. We offer frequent paid opportunities to work alongside us on our projects and also to help guide our programming to ensure it meets the needs of young people in the city. These opportunities can involve working with established national and local artists and enable those starting out to gain valuable experience in event planning, curating, workshop facilitation, community engagement, marketing and more.

GASP! Young Creatives have helped to create and produce some of our most impactful work including GAWP! 23, Folk for Folk and GAWP! @ National Gallery.

"I was told my whole life that in order to have a job in the arts, I would have to move to a different city, as Gloucester didn't have those opportunities available. The Young Creatives definitely helps address this as it has helped create local art opportunities in Gloucester for me to be part of and has allowed more of a creative art scene within our city"
- Sherina Steele

"I wanted to learn new skills and gain experience that can be hard to access as a working-class creative. Each project has given me the chance to collaborate with other young people, artists, and the wider community" Chloe Owens

"It means so much that GAS Projects wants to work with us in these ways to support and benefit our art. I'm really grateful." - Tia Callum

19
PAID
DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

180+
DAYS OF PAID WORK
FOR GLOUCESTER
-BASED YOUNG
PEOPLE



Our first three years have taught us so much about how we can best serve Gloucester's communities, creatives and individuals by responding to their needs and co-creating with them to create ambitious contemporary arts engagement and events. This is an exciting time for Gloucester, a city experiencing huge change and redevelopment of the City Centre, the Eastgate/ Greyfriars area and the University of Gloucestershire's City Campus set to open on King's Square along with the new Forum space nearby.

Our work will continue to connect those living on the outskirts of the city, in communities like Matson, Podsmead, and Tuffley to the city centre through contemporary art.

Our next steps are to continue developing our contemporary art group offers, whilst using empty shops and meanwhile spaces for contemporary art exhibitions and projects. We want to support developments and changes across the city, partnering with organisations such as Colliers and the city council to commission artists and public art that will champion and drive contemporary visual arts and social change across the city of Gloucester.

Let's Go!



THANK YOU

As well as the communities we work with, we'd like to extend a huge thank you to the organisations, trusts, foundations and individual donors who have supported us, without whom our work in Gloucester would not be possible.

Graphic Design: Molly Wells

Photography: Barbara Evripidou, Kazz Hollick, Hannah Thomson, Soozy Roberts



GAS PROJECTS



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Gas Projects

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