

Annual Report

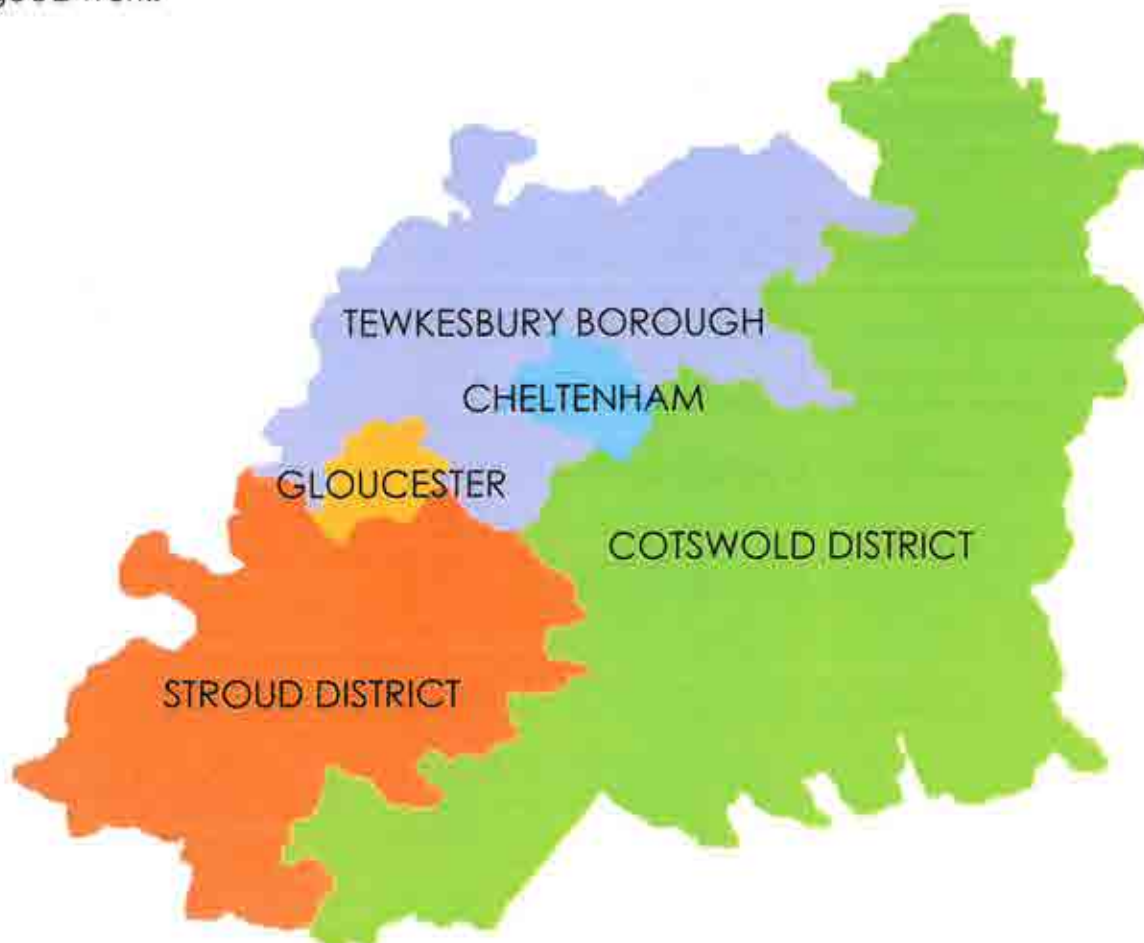
2015-2016



A message from our Patron—Anne Cadbury OBE JP DL

I have been Patron of the charity since 2006 and witnessed many changes as it evolved to meet demands. The change from Third Sector Services to Community Connexions, with its accompanying new vision, is perhaps the most significant. The charity is now concerned solely with the provision of community transport which allows it to concentrate on just one service. And this is a service which is really needed – getting older, vulnerable and disabled people to their doctor and hospital appointments, out to do their shopping or to meet friends and relatives. Some of these journeys are essential but all ensure a bit of independence and improved quality of life. And when people are happier it has been proved they also live longer, healthier lives.

So I am pleased to give my continuing support to Community Connexions and commend their good work.





Cavus Batki — Chair

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Annual Report, which sets out what we have achieved in the past twelve months and our future plans.

2016 has been a year of significant change for Community Connexions. Our service area has significantly grown with four new transport bases, now covering almost the whole of Gloucestershire.

Performance

A balanced budget in 2016 reflects the hard work of staff in a difficult economic climate, continued investment in modernising the fleet and exceptional costs relating to the re-branding of the organisation in 2015.

Governance

The board was sorry to receive the resignation of the previous chair Richard Garland, who stood down due to work pressures. I hope to continue with his enthusiasm while retaining the stability of previous chairs. Andrew Baynes also left after twelve years as a trustee and even longer service as a volunteer driver. We are pleased that Andrew has been nominated for local awards for his support.

The board was delighted to appoint Lena Deysner as Treasurer. As a Chartered and practising management accountant, Lena will be able to advise the management team in the difficult job of maintaining our cash flow.

Following a governance review, the board has improved its ways of working in line with best practice for charities' governance. This includes the formation of sub-committees which better use the time and expertise of trustees.

Outlook

The expansion of our service area to the Cotswold and Stroud districts, due to the liquidation of Cotswold Volunteer Services, presents a significant opportunity. Economies of scale mean it should be possible to maintain existing transport services, while awarding a much-needed cost of living pay rise for all staff and continuing the fleet modernisation demanded by our funders.

With it's new vision Community Connexions will have to innovate and adapt to continue helping our service users. A good example of this is the recent marketing of our larger vehicles for holiday trips during quiet months, possibly by the regaining of our Operators licence.

Together, we can continue to serve those vulnerable members of our community who rely on us for their hospital appointments, their school trips and sometimes their only link into the wider community.



Cont:

Our People

I would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their ongoing commitment. The team, have worked extremely hard this year. Taking on services in the Stroud and Cotswold districts, with only days' notice, has been a significant challenge and required exceptionally hard work. A number of driving staff have been recruited from CVS which has helped transfer some of their local and organisational knowledge.



Lena Deysner—Treasurer

In 2015/16 Community Connexions finalised its transformation from Third Sector Services to a charity with a much clearer goal, focusing solely on provision of community transport service across Gloucestershire. This involved a new vision, mission statement and new objectives together with a re-brand of our organisation. In order to achieve our goal Community Connexions runs a fleet of 26 vehicles, employs 45 staff and around 70 volunteers.

Along with this significant change came a new CEO, Paul Riddick and a new Finance Officer, Helen Pemberton. This brought a welcome period of stability and allowed us to start a new exciting chapter in the long history of serving the most vulnerable people in Gloucestershire.

Key achievements and challenges in the year 2015/16

The expansion of our service area presents a significant opportunity due to the economies of scale, whilst allowing us to maintain existing transport services and continue with the fleet modernisation required by our funders.

The economic climate remained challenging last year, making it difficult to win contracts. This coupled with continued pressure from the local authorities to reduce funding due to their reducing budget, means that Community Connexions will have to innovate and adapt to continue helping our service users.

Overall, the financial year resulted in a small deficit reflecting continued investment into maintenance and modernisation of our fleet of vehicles, as well as one-off costs relating to the re-branding of the organisation in 2015 and a small loss made on the sale of one of the vehicles.

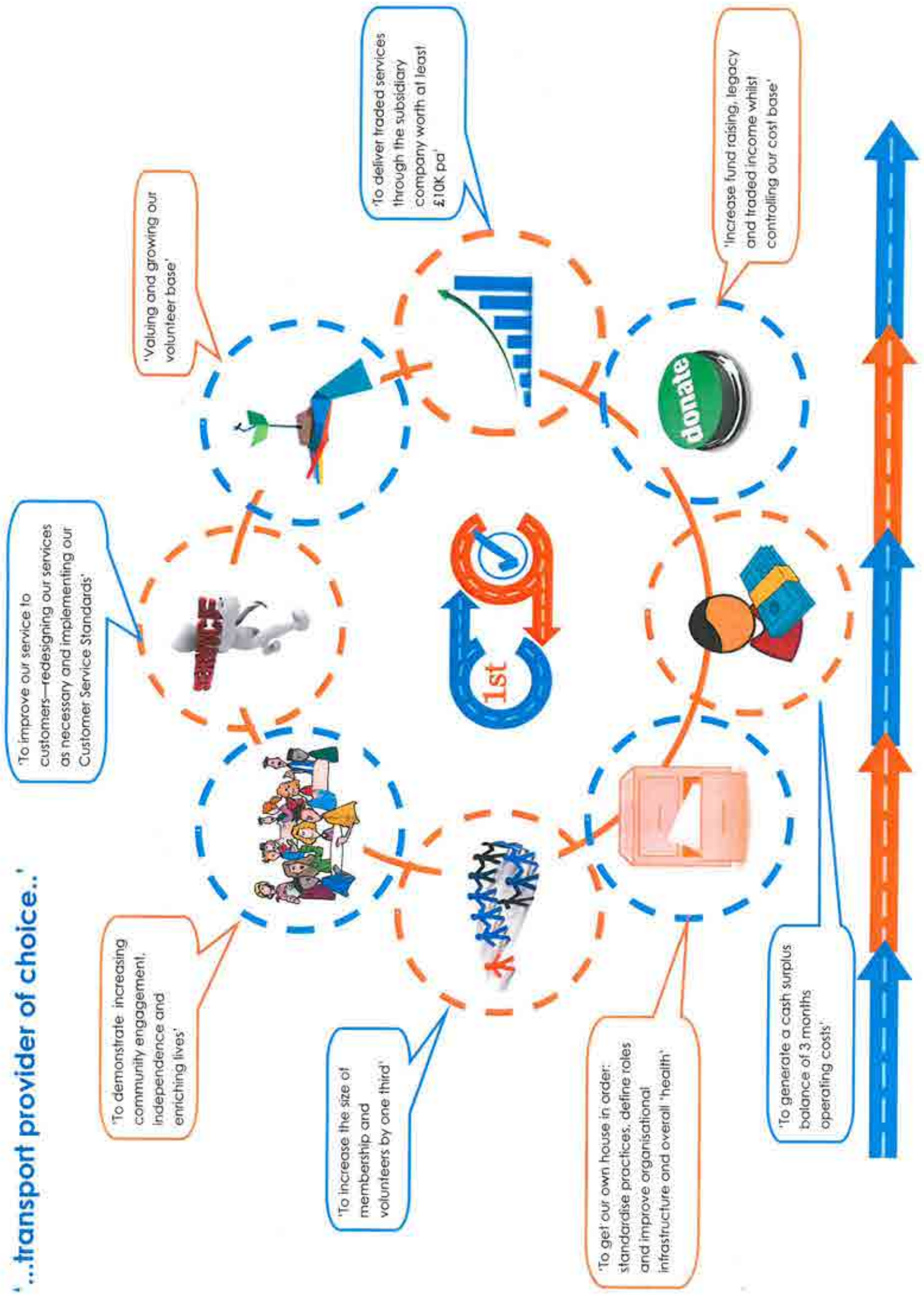
Audit results

The Financial accounts for the year 2015/16 have been audited by Andorran Limited and we are pleased to report that the audit identified no fundamental weaknesses in our control systems and confirmed that the accounts represent a true and fair view of our performance.

The matters that have been identified during the audit have already been addressed by the management.



'...transport provider of choice..'



'To improve our service to customers—re-designing our services as necessary and implementing our Customer Service Standards'

'To demonstrate increasing community engagement, independence and enriching lives'

'To increase the size of membership and volunteers by one third'

'To get our own house in order: standardise practices, define roles and improve organisational infrastructure and overall 'health''

'To generate a cash surplus balance of 3 months operating costs'

'Increase fund raising, legacy and traded income whilst controlling our cost base'

'To deliver traded services through the subsidiary company worth at least £10K pa'

'Valuing and growing our volunteer base'





Paul Riddick—CEO

The need for Community transport has never been greater. Changing demographics has meant the number of customer journeys has steadily grown, with the projection it will keep growing over the coming years.

Increasing numbers and developing demands means things have to evolve and transform. Community Connexions has done just that. A change of name from Third Sector Services signalled a new, more focused future. Focus gives an organisation the clarity it needs to move towards its chosen goal; in our case to be the community transport provider of choice for Gloucestershire.

Achieving this goal will require a transformation of our charity and we all know an organisation is only as strong as its people. We are fortunate to have a team of staff, volunteers and trustees who recognise the need for change and have the skills and ability to make it happen. Their enthusiasm to serve our customers in the best way possible means they become our ambassadors and thereby ensure our success.

Together with our funders, partners and colleagues, we can assist in reducing social isolation, improving quality of life and building communities; aims which link in with county stakeholders' strategies.

The importance of transport within strategies is often overlooked, with schemes (both in the private and public sectors) being developed without real consideration of how users will get there and back home again. It often seems predicated on the premise 'customers' will be fully mobile and own cars. And yet often those without personal transport are the very people who require the services the most. Therefore part of our ambition must be to move community transport up the local, county and national agenda.

We already have a clear vision, a strategy tying in with county needs, an enthusiastic staff/trustee/volunteer team and a plan to raise our profile. We also need to ensure we grow in a sustainable way, utilising a tested methodology; we have been fortunate to have been assisted in this process by an independent consultant.

Looking back at previous Annual Reports CEO's usually say it has been a 'challenging but exciting' year. This year has been different and we now have a strong foundation on which to build and grow our charity to best serve the people of Gloucestershire.

To steal a catchphrase – the future's bright; the future's orange (and blue).





Bev Hemming - Business Development Manager &

Lisa Stearns—Transport Manager



We could report 'more of the same' but that would not accurately reflect what has been a year of significant positive development. Following the rebrand and key personnel changes we have, with our small team, entered into a new era where a meaningful, clear vision and strategy - shared with staff and volunteers alike, heralds much welcomed, open and honest communication between everyone involved with the charity.



We want our valued volunteers to have a rewarding experience and, following our Volunteer Recruitment & Open Day in October, we have been successful in recruiting volunteers to roles other than driving, although volunteer driver recruitment remains a key challenge.



We know that we make a significant difference to the lives of many people—which was echoed when our customer survey reported that 95% of passengers would recommend us!



Mother and son, Judy and Greg Murray (left) have been using our community transport for almost 10 years. They travel both independently and together to ensure that they are able to maintain their independence and quality of life. Judy says

"I don't know how we would manage without you."

Valerie Howarth (right) has been diagnosed with dementia.

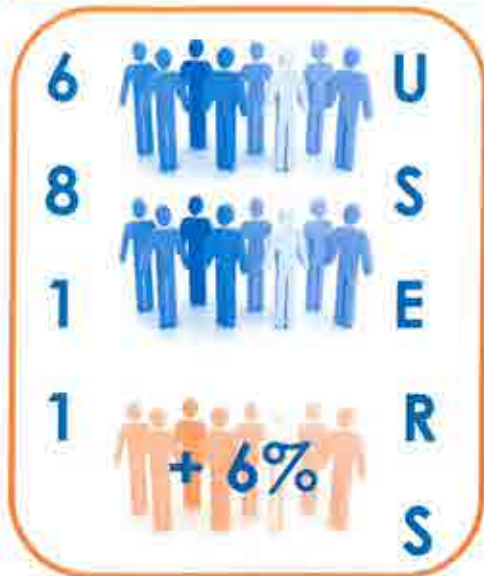
Val said "Until registering with you I was struggling to cope with trips to visit my husband, to get basic shopping, attend health appointments or even occasional days out with my daughter who is my carer. My life is now transformed with travel to all of my regular destinations."



So perhaps it is 'more of the same' team!



2015-16 COMMUNITY CONNEXIONS HIGHLIGHTS



95% OF PASSENGERS WOULD RECOMMEND OUR SERVICE!

27% of our passengers travelled before 9am



DAY CENTRE



TRANSPORT PROVIDED

11,302 passenger journeys

31,222 passenger trips were for education



202 Registered Groups

50 volunteer drivers

138,966 miles

15,194 passengers



BOOKINGS TAKEN

87967

Our vehicles travelled 279,956 miles

5676 HEALTH JOURNEYS



48% of bookings were made by Victoria



76% of trips & 84% of passengers are regular bookings



4556 passengers

20% SUBSEQUENTLY CANCELLED BY THE PASSENGER

73,248 SLA passenger journeys