



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Foreword from our Patron, Dr Cathy Stannard

I was delighted to be invited to hold the office of Patron for Community Connexions and I have held that position for over 12 months. This has given me some insight into the positive societal benefits offered by the charity. My experience in the NHS (Dr Stannard worked as a Consultant in Pain Medicine for 23 years and is now Clinical Lead for Pain Transformation in NHS Gloucestershire ICB) and working with other charities has demonstrated how essential transport is in delivering health equality, independence and ultimately a better quality of life for our clients. The focus of my work is improving recognition by the NHS that third sector partners hold the key to supporting people to address what's important to them – improving outcomes, tackling inequalities and promoting access for the most vulnerable in our communities. Working in collaboration, we should enhance efficiency and thereby provide better value for money.

My aim is to boost this cooperative approach to health provision, giving independence and choice, especially for those most disadvantaged in our county. Community Connexions is an integral part of the solution, and it is pleasing to see it increase its offer over the past year.



A message from Paul James, Chair and Paul Riddick CEO

During the year two new Trustee/Directors have joined our Board – Matt White and Graham Hewitt. Both bring vast knowledge and experience to our charity and we welcome them wholeheartedly.

This year has been very busy with new developments. We have embedded the Robin (on-demand rural transport) in Berkeley Vale, South Cotswolds and Tewkesbury. Services run between 7am and 7pm, six days a week and provide vital transport in areas previously under-served by public transport. Passenger numbers have grown considerably and is now considered indispensable.

With the support of the Barnwood Trust and the National Lottery we have also introduced our Better Connexions project. Better Connexions makes leisure and recreational activities more accessible for elderly and disabled people, supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged and enabling equal access. We partner with local charities and organisations that support the elderly, disabled and vulnerable, providing accessible transport that allows them to deliver day trips to local attractions and beauty spots. A lack of available transport that is both accessible and affordable means these groups often struggle to access community activities or nature for the purposes of recreation.

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Using our accessible minibuses, we help to break down barriers to access that prevent vulnerable individuals from getting out and about, taking part in community activities and enjoying nature and local attractions. These trips help reduce the isolation and loneliness faced by those living in rural areas, particularly elderly and disabled residents, leading to improved wellbeing. Participants enjoy a sense of community, friendship and can better engage with the area in which they live. Socialising and spending time in nature are known to benefit mental health, while enabling those who are otherwise unable to leave their home to be more active helps to improve physical wellbeing. Trips to cultural, historic or educational sites allow for stimulating experiences that help to keep faculties sharp and improve mental wellbeing.

Through our partnerships, we advocate for improvements to access and increase awareness of the needs of vulnerable, elderly and disabled people. We are working to create a network that can drive change, allowing those living with mental and physical disabilities to see improvements in their community around disability access.

This financial year has seen a healthy surplus and an increase in our Reserves, against a backdrop of a continuing cost-of-living crisis, longer lead times for servicing and repairs and substantial increases in minimum wage and National Insurance contributions.

Passenger numbers have continued to increase as have the number of volunteer drivers, so we find ourselves in a good position for the coming financial year.

Our thanks to the staff, volunteers and our Board for making this year a success.

Case Study

Becky Edgar. Mid 40s, Matson, Gloucester, physically disabled (CP), walker and wheelchair user.

Becky no longer is in paid employment, she volunteers for 2 different organisations and without Community Connexions would not be able to do so. She has used our services for 4 years and almost exclusively the volunteer car scheme. Becky sends her bookings through 1 month in advance and Sharon is wonderful at dealing with them. David Day is the driver she normally uses and he is brilliant, supports her arm if she needs it, doesn't mind if she has her walker or her wheelchair. He has a car low enough for her to get into.

Becky helps run Chatterbox and volunteers at a church group in Cheltenham for senior citizens. She doesn't like it when the bus is used for her wheelchair as she feels it could be helping more people than her.

Passenger Feedback

'Just wanted to say thank you so much for the hire of the mini bus yesterday, Martin was brilliant and we had such a great time on the boat.'

Karen Williams
Kingfisher Treasureseekers
(Trip to Saul Junction)



'Please do pass on huge thanks from Ken's family for being such a huge support to him in Prestbury. He hasn't had an easy life and to see him enjoying new found friends and to have his independence at 94 is brilliant. We visit and stay in touch but couldn't possibly do all that Connexions do for him, it's so, so much appreciated by him and by us.'

Sheila King
(Niece of Ken who uses us to get to Pilates and the supermarket)

Annual Results 1st April 2023– 31st March 2024

