

Supporting our local communities

The 2021 yearbook



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Introduction

At British Gypsum, we want to make the world a better home by taking care of the local communities and natural spaces surrounding each of our six sites. That's why we launched our Building Better Communities programme in early 2020.

Our objectives are to:

- Contribute to happy and healthy people and communities
- Look after wildlife



- Help tackle poverty and improve inclusion and diversity
- Support young people from diverse backgrounds to access science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and careers



To support our goals, we fundraise for local charities as well as for UK construction industry charity CRASH. We also donate funds, materials and time to projects that benefit the local community.

What we did in 2021

Fundraised for **ten local charities** that are local to our six British Gypsum sites.



Supported the construction industry charity CRASH with materials, time and fundraising activities to help change the lives of homeless people, as well as children and adults receiving end-of-life care in a hospice.



Helped prevent social isolation by **donating £5,000** to the Fellrunner, a volunteer bus service that connects people from rural parts of Cumbria to Penrith and Carlisle.



Worked with local schools to **create new libraries and transform a playground**, giving pupils more opportunities to learn and explore.



Donated towards a new bench in Barrow Upon Soar that was designed and made by local residents, and which reminds people of the kindness and community spirit shown during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Restored rural spaces in Barrow upon Soar as well as Cocklakes in Cumbria, so that people can experience more of their local area's natural beauty.



Collaborated with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to **install a bat hotel near East Leake**, helping the protected species thrive and encouraging children in the village to learn more about the wildlife on their doorstep.



Supporting local charities

The local communities surrounding our sites each have unique circumstances and need different kinds of support. That's why colleagues at each site have chosen their own local charities to champion throughout 2021 and 2022, and they've been fundraising for them through activities such as bake sales and sponsored walks.

Each charity supports at least one of our objectives, whether it's contributing to happy, healthy communities or directly tackling poverty. Here's an overview of each site's chosen charities.

Barrow upon Soar

Barrow upon Soar Community Association (BUSCA) organises community events in the village and brings together an arts and theatre society, heritage group, library committee, magazine, and much more. We donated £1,000 to BUSCA's Barrow Voice magazine to help keep people in the community informed of local news.



The Carpenter's Arms is a residential recovery centre in Loughborough, not far from Barrow upon Soar. It helps people overcome addiction, escape homelessness, and re-enter the community through a tailored programme of support.



East Leake

Hope Church Nottingham has been a part of the Clifton community for more than 30 years. The charity's many initiatives include a local food bank, charity shops, a community café, and more.



The Tomorrow Project is a suicide prevention charity that helps vulnerable people through free confidential support.



WORKING TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Fauld

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity saves lives with three air ambulances covering six Midlands counties. It responds to traumatic incidents in remote locations that can't be reached by land ambulance. One of the busiest air ambulance services in the UK, the crew arrives within ten minutes on average.



The first Tutbury and Hatton Scout group develops young people's confidence and outdoor skills. Activities encourage Scouts to be adventurous and creative, and to explore their beliefs and attitudes while making new friends.



British Gypsum's Fauld site has worked with the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity for many years.

Our charities continued

Kirkby Thore

The Nourished Project is a new hub at the Salvation Army that provides food and necessities to the local community, but it's more than just a food bank. The scheme aims to destigmatise food banks, and provides practical advice about getting the most out of items on offer, from choosing ingredients to preparing nutritious meals.

The team at Kirkby Thore held six barbecues over as many weeks to raise £200 for the Nourished Project.



Robertsbridge

Martha Trust provides lifelong care for people with profound physical and learning disabilities in Kent and East Sussex.



Sherburn in Elmet

Selby & District Foodbank combats hunger and poverty in the local community by providing three days' worth of emergency food and support to those in crisis. Colleagues at our Sherburn in Elmet site donated tables and chairs to the foodbank to encourage people to sit and spend time with each other. This has helped those who live alone to make new friends and build valuable support networks.



Sherburn Hungate Primary School: With hundreds of homes being built in the village, the school needed to grow quickly to accommodate new pupils. Following a massive expansion of the school building, the site donated £2000 to help fill the new library with enough books for every child to enjoy.



Sherburn Hungate Primary School
Learning through Experience



Head of HR Jo Smart serves mouthwatering bakes at our East Leake head office to raise money for CRASH.

CRASH

British Gypsum is a founding patron of construction industry charity CRASH, which has helped homelessness charities and hospices build vital spaces for those who need it most since 1996. In 2021 we contributed more than £39,780 of funding and materials.

As CRASH turned 25, we celebrated with 25 days of fundraising in September. All six of our sites joined the effort, raising £8,572 to help CRASH fund a further 25 construction projects. Fundraising activities included a 96-mile trek along Scotland's West Highland Way, a 107-mile bike ride, sponsored walks, bake sales and raffles.

David McGarry, British Gypsum HR Director and CRASH trustee, said:

“As a founding patron of CRASH, we're proud to have been there every step of the way and to have supported this wonderful charity in making a difference to the lives of vulnerable people.

“At British Gypsum, one of our priorities is to support communities and help build spaces where people can flourish. We hope to continue our work with CRASH for another 25 rewarding years.”



Kirkby Thore gets competitive with its very own bake off contest.



Marketing team members brave Scotland's West Highland Way.

CRASH continued

Alongside fundraising and donations, we gave more than £8,000 worth of British Gypsum products to homelessness and social support charities to help them build the spaces they need to change lives.

Emmaus: tackling homelessness

We joined other CRASH patrons in supporting Emmaus, a charity that helps people leave homelessness behind through meaningful work, training opportunities, emotional support, and a stable home.

A former care home in South Lambeth was transformed into a safe, supportive home for 11 previously homeless people. This was made possible by nearly £12,000 worth of products and professional services donated by British Gypsum and other patrons.

As well as creating new bedrooms, the project turned large, worn-out bathrooms into a greater number of shower rooms, installed a new kitchen, upgraded the flooring and heating, and redecorated throughout.

2021 also marked the end of the five-year transformation of Emmaus Hastings and Rother, a community site and charity superstore providing a home and place of work for 23 formerly homeless people. Together with fellow patrons, we helped make the space more comfortable and welcoming, and improved the shopping experience for customers.

The revamp included new carpet tiles, ceiling tiles, and paint.

Blyth Star Enterprises: the road to independent living

We donated products to Blyth Star Enterprises, a charity that enables people living with complex mental health issues and learning disabilities to live and work within their communities. Our plasterboard products went towards creating two apartments for service users.

Winchester Churches Nightshelter: a safe place to stay

Finally, we donated building materials to Winchester Churches Nightshelter, which helps homeless people rebuild their lives beginning with a safe place to stay. The project refurbished accommodation to provide four homeless people with a comfortable home after their stay at the night shelter.



Emmaus Hastings and Rother offers homeless people a new start.

Supporting good causes

As well as forming partnerships with local charities, we work with projects that benefit the communities around our sites. In 2021 we focused on our goals of contributing to happy and healthy people and communities, and of looking after local wildlife.

Happy and healthy people and communities

So that we can be a good neighbour to those living nearby, colleagues at each site support charitable projects with funding, materials, and volunteering. Here are the good causes we contributed to in 2021.

Connecting rural communities

We donated £5,000 to a volunteer bus service that connects people from rural parts of Cumbria to Penrith and Carlisle. Run entirely by volunteers, Fellrunner helps those who would struggle to get around otherwise, such as older people and those who can't drive for medical reasons.

James Sisson, Fellrunner trustee and volunteer driver, said: "The people we support can feel very isolated, but these bus trips have allowed them to build friendships with people from other villages.

"When I first started driving, I had a service user say to me 'this is the only time I get to meet anybody. I enjoy their company, but when I get back, I'm just in my house all of the time.' So for many people it's also a community.

"We had a lady get on who hadn't been out since her husband died at the start of the pandemic. She was very nervous and had lost her confidence, but her fellow passengers helped her to overcome her fear of going out.

"It's a very important part of what we do."

Before the pandemic, Fellrunner ran excursions to fund its volunteer bus service, and not being able to do this meant it lost around £5,000. As many of Fellrunner's routes are near our Kirkby Thore site, we covered the shortfall to keep the local community connected during an especially isolating time.

■ ■
The donation has kept our services running
■ ■

James Sisson, Fellrunner trustee

James explained: "The donation British Gypsum has given us has helped us to stabilise our finances and keep our services running, even with fewer passengers than usual due to the pandemic.

"British Gypsum has a great reputation in our local area."



The Fellrunner bus service in Cumbria is vital for people who can't access local amenities on their own.

Supporting good causes continued

Encouraging avid readers

We helped foster a lifelong passion for reading among pupils at Burton-on-the-Wolds Primary School by contributing £4,730 towards a new library.

The school, near our Barrow upon Soar site, hopes the new library will boost literacy and provide new learning opportunities for pupils. However, Head Teacher Claire Wilson and her leadership team wanted to go even further, with a school library that encourages reading for pleasure as well as academic attainment.

Claire explained: "I'm very passionate about children not only learning how to read, but to love reading.

"Our books were very dated, so we looked into ways that we could fundraise for newer titles. But we also recognised that our library was tired, dull and uninviting, not to mention disorganised – it needed a complete a transformation to make it into a functional learning space.

"To really celebrate reading, we knew we'd need a library where children would want to come and spend time, as well as better showcased the books and encouraged engagement with literature."

As well as a wide range of captivating titles, the library features forest-themed furniture including bespoke shelving in the shape of trees, flower-shaped tables and chairs, and a tree in the centre that children can sit under while they read.

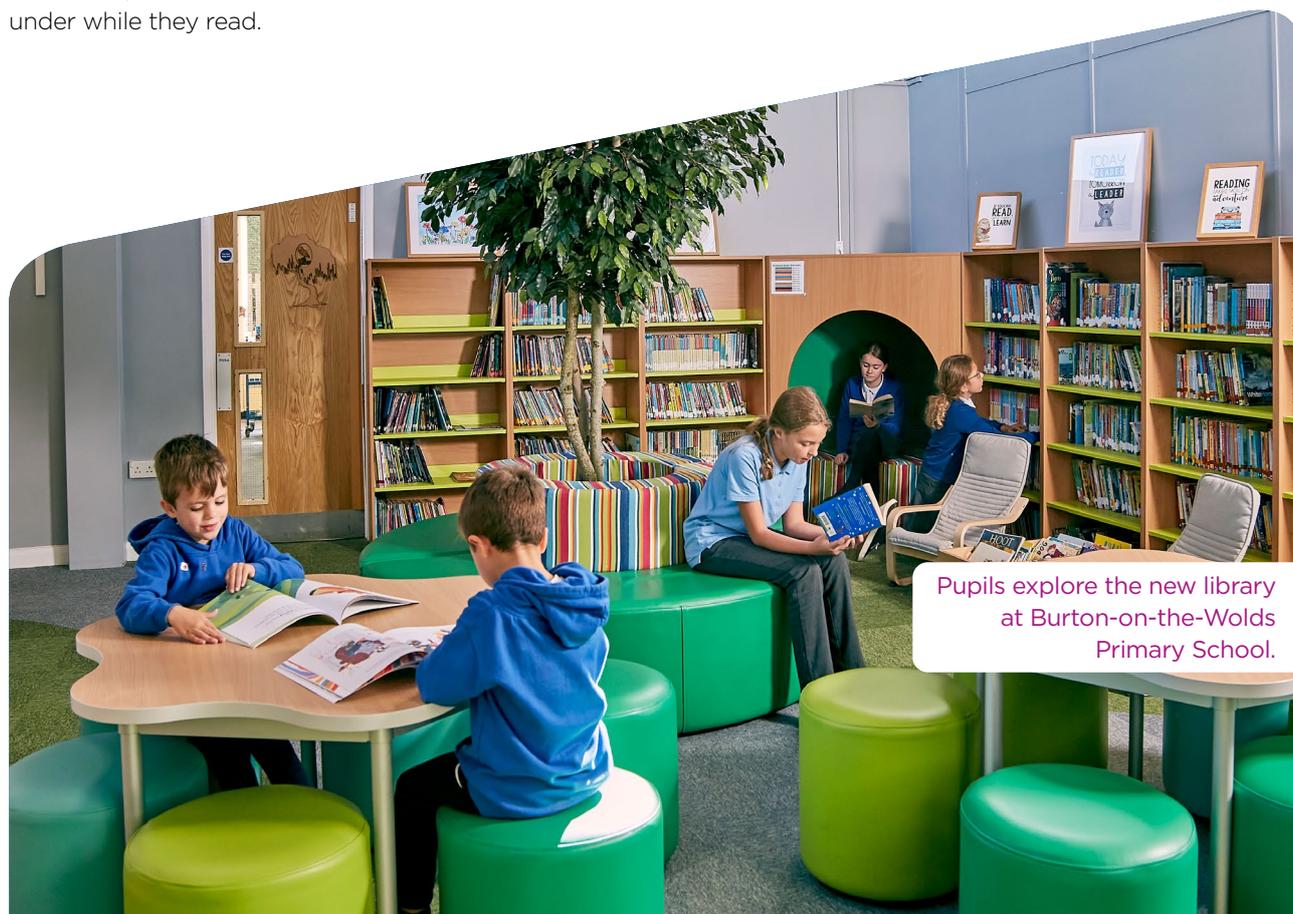
We intend to expand this library into a real community space

Claire Wilson, head teacher

With an improved organisational system, it's now easier than ever for children to find a book at their level that matches their interests. It's also the perfect setting for lessons about library skills, which teach pupils techniques for discovering the perfect book.

The benefits of the new library are set to transcend the school gates, giving children throughout the local community more opportunities to learn and explore reading. Claire said: "We intend to expand this library into a real community space, which local families, the nearby preschool and community groups will also be able to come and enjoy."

She added: "British Gypsum couldn't have been more supportive. They've helped us to make a real difference to our pupils and we've been absolutely delighted by their support."



Supporting good causes continued

Celebrating community spirit

Our Barrow upon Soar site donated £500 towards a new bench to sit at the heart of the village. Organised by Barrow upon Soar's Helping Hands Facebook group and part-funded by the parish council, it reminds local residents of the kindness and community spirit shown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local artist Stewart Pawley won a village competition to decide the bench's design. It was then made by a local metal worker before being installed outside of The Three Crowns inn, a popular pub at the centre of the village.

Play on! Creating a year-round playground

Colleagues at our Robertsbridge site helped Netherfield CE Primary School transform its adventure playground to give pupils a safe, comfortable and attractive place to let loose during break times.

The school's playground equipment previously stood on bark chippings, forming an uneven surface and becoming wet and boggy during the winter. We contributed around £1,400 towards soft, vibrant artificial grass that's more accessible when the weather turns cold. The new substrate has given children an enjoyable space to develop physical, cognitive and social skills all year round.



The revamped playground at Netherfield CE Primary School in East Sussex.

Supporting good causes continued

Natural spaces

We work hard to protect and enhance the natural environment around our sites to leave a positive legacy for future generations. As well as working more sustainably and reducing our carbon footprint, we help create outdoor spaces that local people can enjoy and where wildlife can thrive.

Restoring natural beauty in Barrow upon Soar

After heavy rainfall and flooding, a bridleway on British Gypsum land in Barrow upon Soar became unusable for local residents. To help people enjoy the area of natural beauty once again, we cut back vegetation, dug away the wet areas along the bridleway, and installed a French drain on one side to remove excess water.

We also laid crushed stone along the path to make it both more accessible and more attractive. Thanks to these improvements, local community members can enjoy the rural scenery without having to contend with boggy conditions, muddy boots, and the risk of slipping over.

Finally, we installed a new fence and gate, with the catch placed higher so that horse riders don't need to dismount to open and close it.

British Gypsum's Barrow upon Soar plant manager, Greg Bere, explained "Our aim is to be a good neighbour to the communities living and working around our sites, and we're pleased that our improvements to the bridleway will make it more accessible and enjoyable for local people to use.

"The change in the bridleway's appearance is phenomenal and shows that what seems like just a few small changes can make a big difference."

Our aim is to be a good neighbour to the communities living and working around our sites

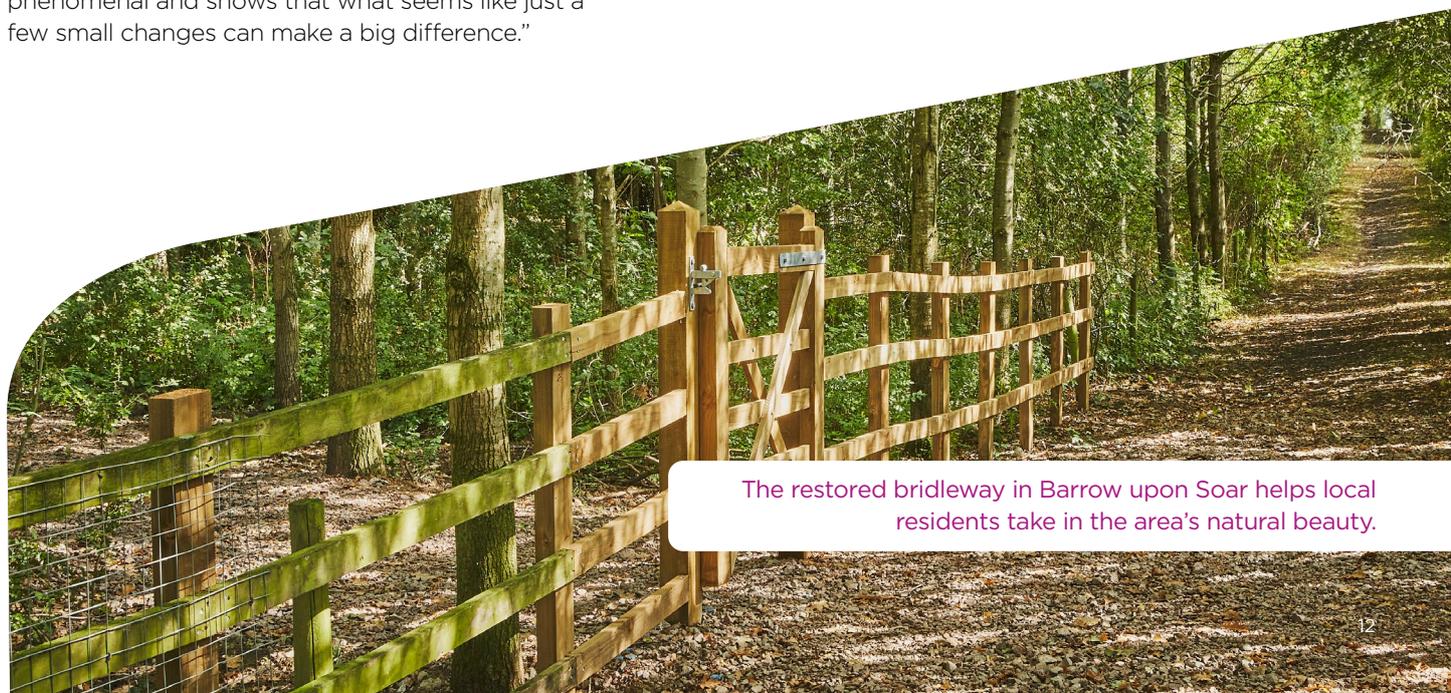
The improvements were advised by a rights of way inspector from Leicestershire County Council, and the changes have been well-received by local residents from hikers to dog walkers.

Rights of Way Inspector Richard Bye said: "British Gypsum has been smashing as a company to work with and I've heard many positive comments from those who live in the area.

"A big thumbs up from the Council's Rights of Way service!"

Hilary Fryer, County Councillor for Quorn and Barrow upon Soar, said: "The improvements that British Gypsum has made to the bridleway has given the community the chance to walk in comfort in all weathers.

"British Gypsum are good neighbours and recognise the importance of the environment, and as the village is expanding, these paths and bridleways are a great asset."



The restored bridleway in Barrow upon Soar helps local residents take in the area's natural beauty.

Supporting good causes continued

Safer ways to explore the Cumbrian countryside

Local communities near Carlisle can enjoy more of the area's breathtaking views after we helped divert an unsafe bridleway above the former Cocklakes gypsum mine.

Mining subsidence due to old shallow mine workings near the bridleway had caused temporary closures and re-routing. We worked with the Cumbria County Council Countryside Access Team to build a new, safe path and connect it with other local footpaths so that people can explore the area more easily.

We also helped upgrade another local footpath to a bridleway and add a safe road crossing point.



The new path helps people enjoy the Cumbrian countryside safely.

Jeremy Elvins, Minerals and Estates Manager at British Gypsum, explained: "It's important to us that our local communities are safe and well.

"We want to ensure that users of the bridleway, whether taking a stroll or riding a horse, can enjoy the local scenery without worrying about their safety."

Welcoming bats to our local woods

We collaborated with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to donate and install a bat hotel at Bunny Old Wood, near to our head office in East Leake. The hotel encourages the protected species to make the woods their home, boosting biodiversity and contributing to the local environment.

Children at East Leake Day Nursery won a competition to name the bat hotel, which is now called the Upside Down Hotel. The name features on a new plaque that gives passersby more information. Through the project, the children have learned more about the wildlife on their doorstep and the importance of protecting local species' habitats.



British Gypsum's Amy Everton (left) and David Griffiths (right) with Emily Patrick of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust at the bat hotel in Bunny Old Wood.

Bunny Old Wood was owned by British Gypsum until 1985, when we donated the land to the Wildlife Trust. Over the years we've worked with Wildlife Trusts near many of our sites to help species from bees to butterflies thrive by enriching their natural habitats.

Lorraine Price, Head of Brand and Communications at British Gypsum, said, "We love working with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, and we are excited to welcome bats into the British Gypsum family. We look forward to continuing our work with them to discover new ways to preserve habitats and encourage wildlife on our land."

Are you seeking charitable support for a project that benefits the local community near a British Gypsum site? Read more about how it works [here](#).




SAINT-GOBAIN

British Gypsum
Head Office, East Leake,
Loughborough,
Leicestershire, LE12 6HX
T: 0115 945 1000

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british-gypsum.com