

Supporting our Local Communities

THE 2023 YEARBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2023 Yearbook



At British Gypsum, our commitment to enriching lives and the environment is demonstrated through our Building Better Communities programme. Launched in 2020, our overarching mission is to help create a better world, centred on uplifting the communities surrounding each of our sites.

Throughout 2023, we actively supported various organisations and initiatives. By contributing materials, time, and funds, we actively contributed to the wellbeing of individuals and groups in our local communities, addressing issues such as poverty, inclusion and diversity.

In addition to our local endeavours, we take pride in our role as a founding patron of CRASH, the national construction industry charity, committed to pivotal building projects for hospices and homelessness charities.

We invite you to find out more about the causes we championed in 2023 in this yearbook and look forward to a continued journey of collaboration with organisations that form the foundations of our local communities in 2024.

Dean O'Sullivan, Managing Director



2023 IN REVIEW

In 2023, we contributed over **£65,000** as well as our time and materials to **36 local causes**.

Our yearbook will introduce you to sixteen of the causes we supported during the year, which focus on the following priority issues.



Tackling poverty

We volunteered with and donated to food banks that support local families in times of crisis.



Boosting social inclusion

We helped to improve the lives of people who face social isolation, addiction, and profound disability.



Helping young people flourish

We contributed to projects that benefit young people, from an outdoor classroom to a musical youth theatre.



Building happy and healthy communities

We donated our materials and invested in building facilities that make sports more accessible to the local community.



Supporting CRASH

We also raised **£14,893.80** to help CRASH with projects for homeless people as well as those receiving end-of-life care in a hospice.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CRASH



British Gypsum has maintained its ongoing support for CRASH throughout 2023. As a founding patron of CRASH, a charity dedicated to assisting hospices and addressing homelessness within the construction industry, we have been actively involved in supporting these causes since 1996. We take pride in contributing to CRASH's mission of constructing spaces for those in need and are committed to aiding the charity in its essential endeavours.

Through various contributions and fundraising efforts we raised **£14,893.80** last year. Of this amount, **£11,000** was donated by British Gypsum, while an additional **£3,893.80** was raised through different initiatives, including the Corporate Patron donation and the Christmas Card Appeal. These efforts exemplify our dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of others, reinforcing our ethos of creating places that care for people.

One notable initiative was the collective effort undertaken by our colleagues in March. During this month, employees participated in the BIG March, all in support of CRASH. Participants went on regular walks, enjoying the outdoors and the opportunity to bond with colleagues while diligently tracking their steps. This initiative not only contributed to the well-being of participants but also underscored our collective commitment to supporting CRASH's invaluable work. Colleagues also raised money through an office bake sale, a 5-a-side football tournament and a regional golf day.



The BIG March



The Southwest Region Golf Day

As expressed by David McGarry, People and Organisation Director, "CRASH plays a significant role in supporting the most vulnerable in our society precisely when they need it the most.

Thanks to the combined efforts of British Gypsum and CRASH, **40 homelessness and hospice projects** were supported between April 2022 and March 2023. CRASH provided critical professional expertise, essential products, and grants totalling **£685,406** to aid homelessness charities and hospices in transformative building projects. This collaboration leaves a lasting legacy in the communities where we operate, enriching the lives of countless individuals for years to come.

HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES

We support our six local communities by volunteering, donating money, and contributing our products to projects that make a difference.



BARROW UPON SOAR



“We’re always pleased to help contribute to the welfare of young people in our communities.”

Greg Bere,
Plant Manager
at British Gypsum’s
Barrow upon Soar site

Seagrave village playground

New roundabout takes local playground to dizzying heights!

Due to its rural location, Seagrave playground acts as a lifeline for young people in the village and plays a pivotal role in the local community, with many pupils from Seagrave Village Primary School using its facilities after school and during the weekends. Recognising the importance of this communal space, Seagrave Parish Council, backed by village donations and a contribution of £2,800 from British Gypsum, completed the funding required for the acquisition of the new roundabout.

Installed in November 2022, the roundabout has swiftly become a hit within the local community, drawing more families to the park area. Sue Norledge, Clerk of Seagrave Parish Council, expressed gratitude, stating, “We wanted to update our village park to both support young people and contribute towards health and happiness in our community. The donation from British Gypsum enabled us to afford a good quality roundabout which will last, and we are so grateful.”

The Baldwin Trust

Community project sets sail with therapeutic boat trips

The Baldwin Trust provides wheelchair-adapted narrow boat trips on Leicestershire's waterways, enhancing the wellbeing of people of all ages, especially those living with disabilities, mental illness, social exclusion, or isolation. The Baldwin Trust focuses not only on providing therapeutic boat trips, but also on fostering a sense of community among their volunteers, many of whom live in or near Barrow upon Soar.

We donated £5,000 to The Baldwin Trust to help with the running costs for The Trust's boats, including mooring fees, fuel, maintenance costs, safety equipment, uniforms, and training opportunities for volunteers. This financial support allows The Baldwin Trust to keep trip costs low and, through their Project Waterside scheme, offer financially supported trips to qualifying community groups.

"The Baldwin Trust's dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals aligns with our values of community support. We are pleased to be able to contribute to a project that brings joy and inclusivity to those facing challenges." Greg Bere, Plant Manager at British Gypsum's Barrow upon Soar site.



"This support will go a long way in ensuring the continued success of our therapeutic boat trips, providing much-needed respite and joy to those in our community facing challenges."

Hannah Coombe,
Secretary for The Baldwin Trust





“The donation from British Gypsum has been a real lifeline.”

Jane Melbourne,
Committee Member at
Barrow Pre-School Playgroup

Barrow Pre-School Playgroup

An inclusive space for a struggling pre-school

Earlier this year, we contributed £1,400 to revolutionise the play area at Barrow Pre-School Playgroup, creating a secure and sensory haven tailored for children with special educational needs. The Barrow Pre-School Playgroup, operating as a registered charity since 1971 within the Methodist Church Hall in Barrow upon Soar, stands for inclusivity, guided by elected parents and staff. Offering essential funded spots to local children aged 2-4, the playgroup plays a vital role in fostering a caring and friendly environment within the community.

With the infusion of £1,400, the playgroup has revamped its space, introducing new crash mats to enhance safety in the climbing area. Additionally, a room divider has been incorporated to establish a dedicated sensory space for children sensitive to noise, complemented by the inclusion of engaging building material toys for imaginative play.

Jane Melbourne, Committee Member at Barrow Pre-School Playgroup, expressed her gratitude, stating, “Our mission is to ensure every child enjoys a positive pre-school experience in a nurturing environment. The donation from British Gypsum has enabled us to enhance safety, create a sensory haven for children with special educational needs, and ignite interest in construction through realistic building materials.”



Carlisle Villa Amateur Boxing Club

Total knockout for local boxing club

In a significant renovation, Carlisle Villa Amateur Boxing Club expanded its training facility with assistance from us. The Cumbrian boxing club doubled its premises, accommodating more weekly guests and offering increased training sessions to the community. British Gypsum's donation of new flooring and roof insulation materials helped facilitate the creation of an extended training area, featuring an extra ring, new equipment, and expanded space for fitness sessions.

The expanded space, completed in February 2023, now hosts HIIT sessions, women's classes, mental health groups, and youth clubs for the local community.

Jimmy Brennan, Lead Coach at Carlisle Villa Amateur Boxing Club, highlighted the broader impact, stating, "We're more than just a boxing club now. Our mission is to have as many people from the local community attend our sessions, and this extension has enabled us to double our number of attendees and offer more help in the local community."



"We're so much more than just a boxing club now."

Jimmy Brennan,
Lead Coach at Carlisle Villa
Amateur Boxing Club



Fellrunner village bus

Continued support for a community lifeline

The Fellrunner village bus service has received an additional £2,000 donation this year, building upon the initial £5,000 given in 2021.

Operated by about 35 volunteers, the Fellrunner village bus is a lifeline for over 50 villages around Penrith, providing a crucial minibus service with over 10,000 passenger journeys annually. Beyond its transportation function, the Fellrunner village bus has evolved into a social hub, addressing rural poverty and isolation. The bus, combating the decline of services in many villages, offers more than mere transportation.

Our latest £2,000 donation is earmarked for refurbishing the oldest bus in the fleet, a crucial step in extending its life amidst daunting replacement costs for new buses.

“For many of our customers, the bus is their transport lifeline, allowing them to get into town to shop, collect prescriptions, get money, and keep appointments.”

Kevin McGilloway,
Chairman of Fellrunner bus





St Helena's Church

A new lease of life for medieval church

Situated just three miles from British Gypsum's East Leake head office, the village of West Leake houses the thriving St Helena's Church. Serving a population of 200 residents, the medieval church has been a focal point, requiring consistent maintenance over the years, particularly for its plasterwork that has languished in poor condition for over a decade.

This year, we donated £1,000 to facilitate the repair and replastering of the church's interior walls using natural lime plaster. Tim Parker, Vicar at St Helena's Church in West Leake, said: "This donation from British Gypsum has enabled us to replaster a much greater area than we would have been able to afford ourselves. The more we can do in one go makes the entire process more cost-effective, and means it can be done quicker, so we're able to open the church and resume services as quickly as possible."

"It's fantastic to have someone else who takes an interest in our community and offers much-needed support."

Tim Parker,
Vicar at St Helena's Church

St Peter's Junior School

A safer and healthier environment for its students

We have supported St Peter's Junior School in Ruddington with a donation, comprising funds, materials, and volunteers, which has revitalised the school's outdoor play area, with a particular focus on enhancing the Trim Trail. This initiative aims to provide a secure and invigorated space, prioritising the safety and well-being of the students.

Our contribution plays a key role in breathing new life into the Trim Trail, a vital play area promoting physical activities and creativity within a secure environment. The upgraded facilities align seamlessly with the school's commitment to fostering an enriching learning environment, especially in Physical Education.

Mrs. Judy Noble conveys gratitude, affirming, "The donation from British Gypsum has transformed our outdoor space, making it more vibrant and engaging for our students."



"The additional equipment has allowed more children to benefit from these improvements, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity."

Mrs. Judy Noble,
School Office Manager



“The repair has again made these two paths more accessible to all users, particularly wheelchairs and buggies.”

Andy Denker,
Friends of Meadow Park

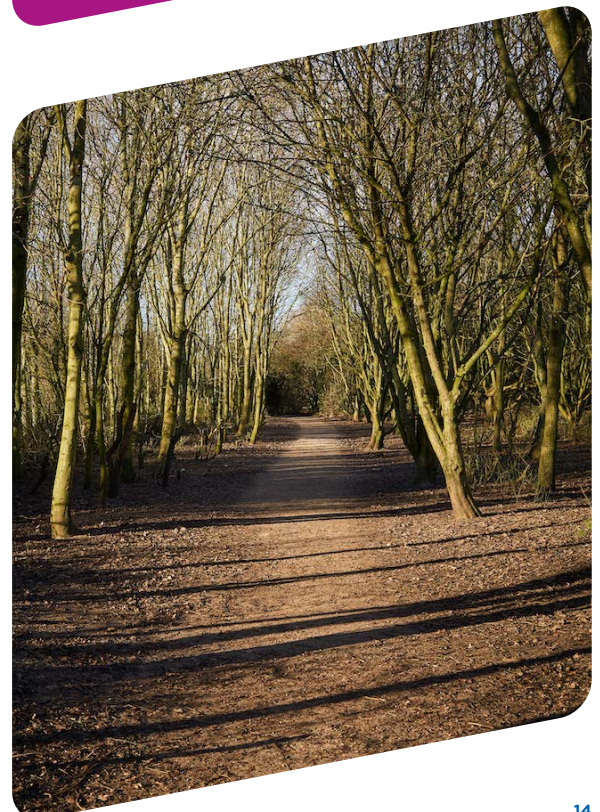
Meadow Park

Improving an essential green space for all to enjoy

We proudly donated to Meadow Park this year, an essential green space in East Leake, as part of our commitment to community projects. Spanning eighteen hectares, the park is a beloved local leisure spot, managed by East Leake Parish Council. The Friends of Meadow Park sought and received a £2,000 donation from British Gypsum’s Community Projects, aiding in vital path repairs post the 2019 floods.

The repair project, costing £10,000, widened paths to 1.2 metres, added limestone gravel for height, and topped them with a durable limestone dressing. This crucial work enhances accessibility for all, signalling a step towards restoring full community access.

Keith Givens, East Leake Plant Site Manager, expressed his support of this project, “As part of our commitment to fostering inclusion and supporting local initiatives, we are delighted to have played a role in enhancing the accessibility of Meadow Park,” he said.



Clifton Central Park

Paying tribute to those lost during the COVID-19 pandemic

Situated at the heart of the village, Clifton Central Park serves as a cherished retreat for local residents to unwind and connect with nature. Originally established in 1947 to address post-war housing shortages, the park faced neglect over the years due to insufficient funding for maintenance staff. The rose garden lay unused for four decades, and the lack of accessible outdoor meeting spaces hindered community events.

With support from Nottingham City Council, the flower park has undergone a complete refurbishment, restoring its former glory. New flower beds, boxes, and six benches have been added, providing a tranquil environment for residents. We added to this work with a donation of £4,000, to fund two bespoke benches, commemorating those lost to the pandemic, whilst also creating an area for people to sit and enjoy the renovated park.



“We believe this new memorial garden will give our community a place to meet and reflect the lives of their loved ones.”

**Clifton East Ward Councillor,
Cllr Maria Watson**





“Woodwork not only boosts children’s confidence but also nurtures their creative and critical thinking skills. These early experiences could shape future career paths, possibly leading to future engineers at British Gypsum!”

Rebecca Wood,
Teaching Assistant

Brookside Primary School

Diversifying learning for the next generation of engineers

Brookside Primary School in East Leake has undergone a remarkable upgrade in its educational offerings, with help from a £1,350 donation from us. This contribution has enabled the school to introduce woodworking classes for Early Years and beyond, enriching students’ learning experiences.

The funds were utilised to procure essential resources like a workbench, tools, safety gear, and materials, creating an engaging and hands-on approach to education. Beyond formal teaching, the initiative also opens avenues for extra-curricular clubs, emphasising the school’s commitment to holistic development.

Keith Givens, Plant Manager at British Gypsum’s East Leake site, commended the collaboration, envisioning a future workforce nurtured through such initiatives.





Sherburn Gymnastics Club

Head-over-heels with donation from British Gypsum

Sherburn Community Gymnastics Club leaped into a safer and more inclusive future this year, thanks to a generous £3,000 donation from us. This support has facilitated the creation of a secure 13-metre trampoline track, enhancing the training experience for over 400 members aged two to 50.

The club, a registered charity since 2020, plays a vital role in the community, extending beyond gymnastics coaching. Events such as first aid training, weight loss meetings, and antenatal classes underscore its diverse impact. Our contribution, combined with the club's own investment, resulted in the acquisition of the specialist trampoline track, ensuring safe training for all members, including those with disabilities and special learning needs.

“The donation from British Gypsum has helped a lot of people, and for that, we are so grateful. The new trampoline is accessible for everyone to use, giving our gymnasts much more confidence and the chance to learn high-skill moves while reducing their risk of injury.”

Amanda Alderson,
Club Manager, Sherburn Gymnastics Club





“We are delighted to contribute to an improved learning environment for the children in the Sherburn community, hoping to inspire them to read not only during school hours but also in their leisure time.”

John Day,
Plant Manager at
British Gypsum’s Sherburn site

Sherburn Hungate Primary School

Encouraging a love for reading

At the start of 2023, we donated £5,000 to Sherburn Hungate Primary School to help them purchase a large range of books for their library, which caters to pupils aged 5-11. The School, long having served the community of Sherburn-in-Elmet and neighbouring areas, expanded significantly in 2021 to accommodate up to 450 pupils and, as such, needed to increase their resources to accommodate this growth in student numbers.

Over the years, British Gypsum has actively volunteered and provided donations to facilitate the school’s growth. Notably, their recent initiative transformed an unusable area into a sensory nature garden, creating an outdoor space for students to explore.

Martyn Broom, the Head Teacher at Sherburn Hungate Primary School, expressed his gratitude for our support: “British Gypsum has been very supportive, providing donations and manpower to help us offer an outstanding education. The recent donation has had an incredible impact, allowing us to invest in quality reading materials and turn our new library into a fantastic learning opportunity for all children. British Gypsum has significantly enhanced our students’ love of reading, and for this, we are eternally grateful.”



Willmott Dixon Programme

Rebuilding lives through skills development and training

We proudly supported the community-focused ethos of Willmott Dixon this year by contributing to its Building Lives Programme, specifically the Drylining Academy for inmates at HMP Lincoln. This initiative is not just about imparting drylining skills but creating a pathway for successful inmate reintegration into society.

The donation included essential materials like plasterboard, timber sole plates, screws, studs, and fixing straps, crucial components for the drylining training programme, underscoring our dedication to making a positive impact on lives through tangible support and resources.

The Drylining Academy at HMP Lincoln provides inmates with a unique chance for personal growth and skill development. Beyond acquiring trade skills, participants earn qualifications enhancing their employability upon release.

Shelley Williamson, Social Value Manager at Willmott Dixon, emphasised, “We are deeply committed to driving sustainable change through our initiatives. The partnership with British Gypsum is a testament to our shared dedication to social impact and redefining the lives of individuals within our communities.”

“The donation exemplifies our commitment to community wellbeing and sustainable rehabilitation. We are honoured to contribute to a programme that equips inmates with skills and knowledge, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives.”

Sam Blacknell,
Head of Skills Partnership
at British Gypsum





“This donation will allow us to expand our reach and establish a new group in Hastings, where breastfeeding rates are low. The generous donation will help secure the future of our groups, providing essential support to mothers and families in need.”

Nicola Moat,
Founder of Moat
Breastfeeding Group

Moat Breastfeeding Group

Nurturing bonds to enhance local maternal support

Moat Breastfeeding Group is a local charity dedicated to offering vital breastfeeding support to mothers in the Hastings and Rother area. Established in 2019 to address the urgent need for breastfeeding support, the group has become a lifeline for mothers facing challenges due to a decline in Health Visitor support, serving as an essential network for new mothers.

Recognising the importance of this resource, we decided to partner with and donate £1,500 of financial support to Moat Breastfeeding Group, ensuring its sustainability and accessibility to all, enhancing professional guidance, emotional support, and community building among parents.

Moat Breastfeeding Group's commitment to comprehensive support contributes to better health outcomes and emotional wellbeing for both infants and mothers.



“Our legacy is grounded in this discovery, and it’s incredible to see how gypsum remains an essential component in construction.”

Tanya Young,
Plant Manager at British Gypsum’s
Robertsbridge site

Celebrating 150 Years of community partnership

150th anniversary of our first gypsum discovery

We proudly commemorated the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gypsum at our Robertsbridge site in 2023. This pivotal event marked the inception of the company, highlighting its enduring influence in the construction industry.

In 1873, the Robertsbridge site became the birthplace of plaster and plasterboard manufacturing in East Sussex. Today, British Gypsum continues to mine gypsum in the same area, underscoring its rich heritage and unwavering commitment to quality.

To celebrate this milestone, we hosted a family day near the Robertsbridge site, offering engaging activities and attractions for all ages. Attendees explored the site’s history through educational exhibits and a visitor centre showcasing a large gypsum deposit, symbolising the foundational discovery.

As part of its commitment to community support, British Gypsum donated the proceeds from the summer raffle to the RNLI and Evelina London Children’s Hospital.

Tanya Young, Plant Manager at our Robertsbridge site reinforced the company’s dedication to the local area, noting that the majority of employees are local, and many have been part of the British Gypsum family for generations.

Beyond the celebration, British Gypsum continues its community-focused initiatives, supporting local causes and recognising its staff with appreciation gifts throughout August 2023.



Find out more about our
Building Better Communities
programme and apply for
support [here](#)

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