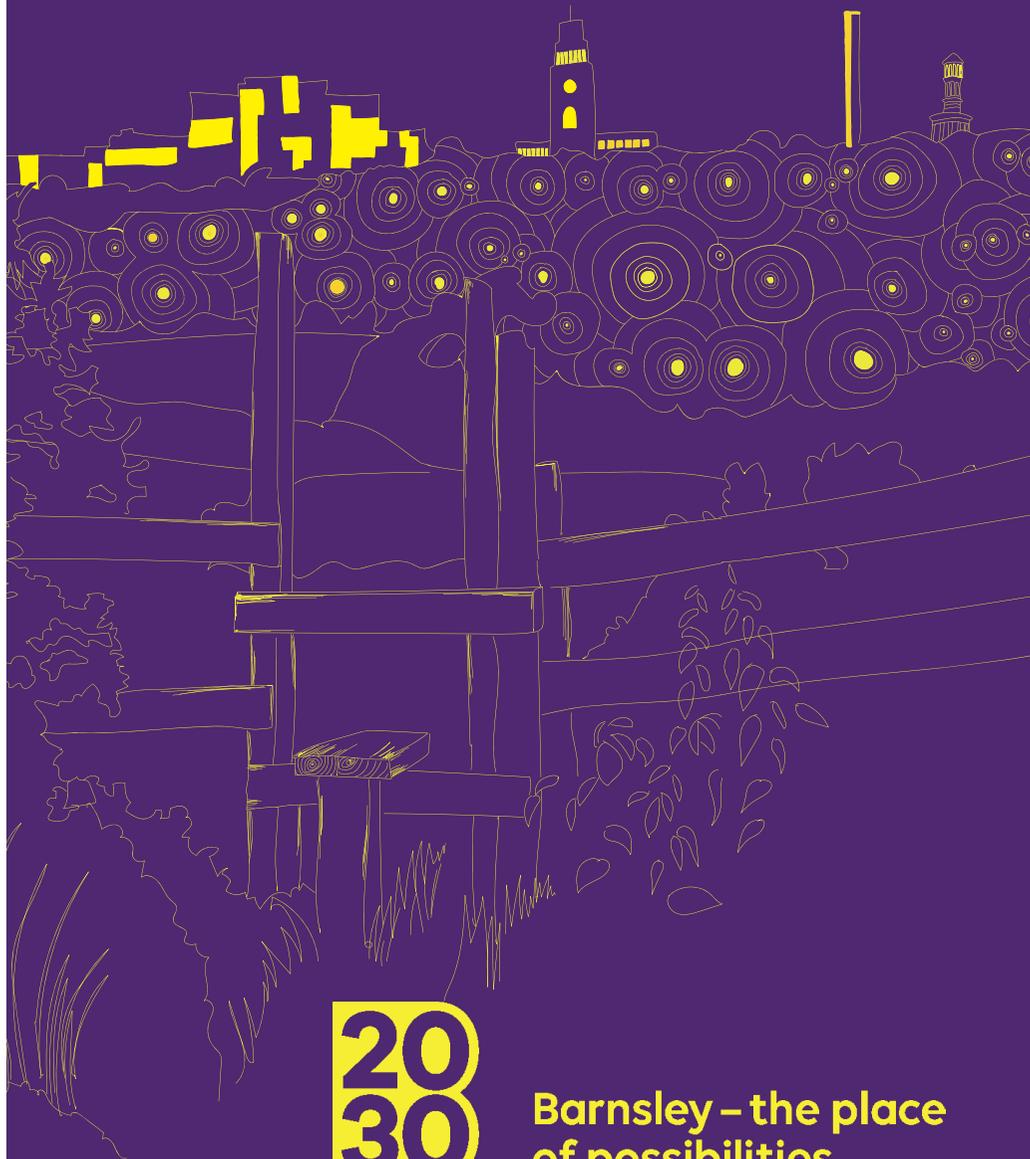


# Our Futures Now



**20  
30**

**Barnsley – the place  
of possibilities.**



# Our Futures Now

## Barnsley 2030: The Place of Possibilities

Curated by Dawn Reeves



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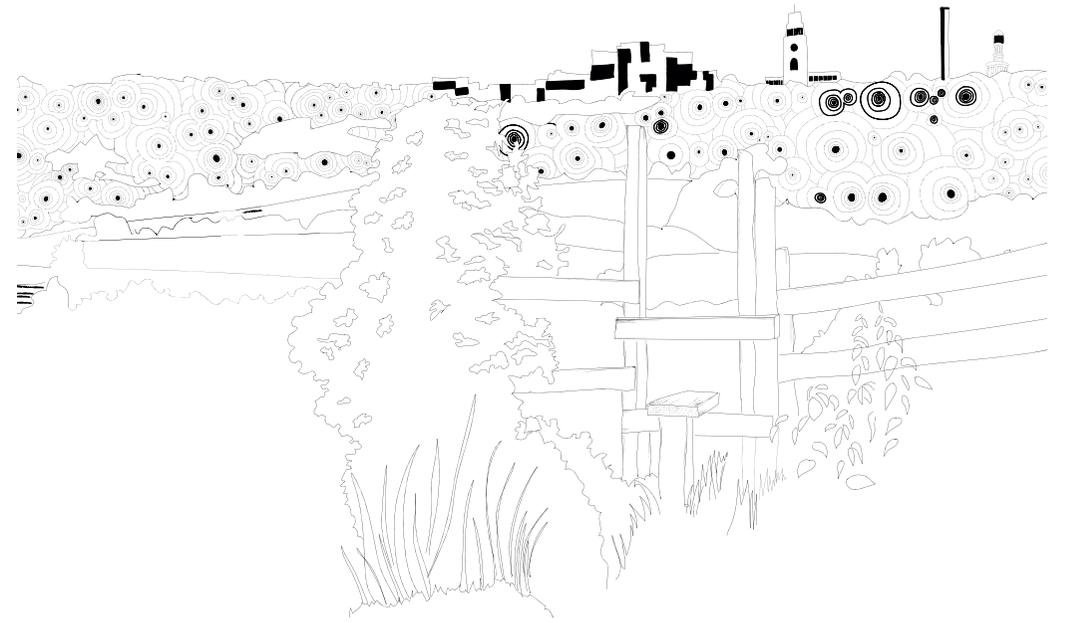
## Contents

<b>Our vision and ambitions for 2030</b>	<b>2</b>
Making Barnsley the Place of Possibilities	4
<i>Sarah Norman</i>	
THIS FUTURE, THIS PRESENT	10
<i>Ian McMillan</i>	
<b>Sustainable Barnsley</b>	<b>13</b>
Circle of Life	14
<i>Paul Castle</i>	
Opening our hearts	16
<i>Jessica Whiting</i>	
Waste warriors	18
<i>Kay Boasman and Victoria Chappell</i>	
Waste Warriors 2	20
<i>Kay Boasman and Victoria Chappell</i>	
Gliding into the future	22
<i>Jacob Finney</i>	
More me, more us	24
<i>Tracy Bell</i>	
Magic in the moment	26
<i>Shokat Lal</i>	
Bob and Bailey	28
<i>Adele Saywell</i>	
Employee of the Year 2030	30
<i>Amanda Garrard</i>	
Head for the hills	32
<i>Faith Ridgwick</i>	

<b>Learning Barnsley</b>	<b>37</b>
Lift-off!	38
<i>Liz Leek</i>	
A different song	40
<i>Amy Clarkson</i>	
A place to be and to grow	42
<i>Kathryn Green</i>	
Re-charge summer 2030	44
<i>Neil Copley</i>	
Proper respect	46
<i>Julie Hammerton, Emma Baines and Angela Kelly</i>	
The things that make us	48
<i>Megan Howlett</i>	
The time that it takes	50
<i>Mel John-Ross</i>	
A new path	52
<i>Jen Harris</i>	
Learning to care	54
<i>Joseph David</i>	
Big crew	56
<i>Stephen Houghton</i>	
Deciduous Organs	61
<i>Eloise Unerman</i>	
<b>Young People's Perspectives</b>	
Improvements needed	63
<i>Bruce</i>	
More!	65
<i>Alex</i>	
LGBTQ+ 2030	67
<i>Arizona</i>	

Our passions	69
<i>Thomas</i>	
<b>Healthy Barnsley</b>	<b>71</b>
Building harmony	72
<i>Julia Burrows</i>	
It shouts family	74
<i>Michael Potter</i>	
Good lives, well lived	76
<i>Wendy Lowder</i>	
I'm not your enemy	78
<i>Alison Dixon</i>	
Harnessing the power	80
<i>Jane Holliday and Alec Olsen</i>	
Life is for living	82
<i>Rachel Ruston</i>	
What makes us stronger	84
<i>Sara Hydon, Rachel Ruston, and Kay Deacey-Coulton</i>	
I get by with a little help from my friends	86
<i>Sharon Graham</i>	
Acting on hope	88
<i>Rachel Neale</i>	
<b>Growing Barnsley</b>	<b>93</b>
The pivot	94
<i>Dave Robinson</i>	
Use it or lose it!	96
<i>Phil Hollingsworth</i>	
The gold of Goldthorpe	98
<i>The Dearne Team</i>	
The front foot	100
<i>Paul Brannan</i>	

Mapping the future <i>Matt Gladstone</i>	102
Art of the possible <i>Tracey Johnson</i>	104
The life I want to live <i>Anne Firth</i>	106
A different seam <i>Paul Clifford</i>	108
The land of the possible <i>Kathy McArdle</i>	112
Let's make 2030 happen!	117
Story questions	117
Book club questions	121
Stories that Matter	123



## Our vision and ambitions for 2030

In Barnsley we want everyone to have a good life. This means everything from a quality place to call home to good physical and mental wellbeing and a sense of self-worth through diverse and secure employment opportunities. It is also about having access to the best possible local facilities in a community that values our people and our place. We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, develop new skills and, most importantly, to achieve their potential. Barnsley aims to be an exemplary place to live and a great place to do business.

We want to meet the needs of today without compromising the needs of the future and encourage people to connect to each other as well as to our place. We look to the future with excitement and optimism.

This is why our vision for 2030 is Barnsley: the Place of Possibilities.

## Sustainable Barnsley

Protecting our borough for future generations.

## Learning Barnsley

Developing skills and talent within people of all ages.

## Healthy Barnsley

Keeping ourselves and our families well.

## Growing Barnsley

Barnsley is open for business.



## Making Barnsley the Place of Possibilities

I am a great believer in telling stories that help people imagine the possibility of a better future. It is hard to create something, or work to achieve it, unless you believe it can happen.

When I first arrived in Barnsley as its new chief executive in 2019, I spent time listening to partners, staff and residents about their dreams for the borough, and set about developing a shared vision and set of ambitions for Barnsley in 2030. Having these conversations was a privilege. Open, friendly, and straight-talking people in Barnsley have helped me understand what matters here and what needs to change.

What I found out amazed me; great, fantastic things that simply not enough people know about outside of the borough. Of course, there are challenges, but there is also vision, humour, insight, kindness and grit. There's so much potential, so much to shout about, and yet people here rarely do.

Barnsley is a place full of gifts and so rich in many ways. In tough times, the wildness of the hills and the beauty of the well-tended parks and gardens lift me. When I walk up the steps of the town hall, I feel a sense of belonging. As someone who's spent most of their working life in public service, I'm proud of our civic contribution and the strength of collaboration across the borough. Whether it is Barnsley Youth Choir, our Youth Council, Barnsley College students or our Children in Care Council, our young people inspire me. In Market Kitchen, the Glass Works, the businesses taking off at Digital Media Centre 1 and 2, improvements in our principal towns and the new housing and employment developments across the borough, I see growing opportunities for everyone.

Now we have a vision that thousands of people helped create, of Barnsley as the Place of Possibilities.

**The stories in this book** are designed to bring the vision to life. They get into the detail of what people want to see, through real scenarios and imagined moments. There are glimpses of the future, what's special and what's at the heart of our borough: people who are proud, confident, and determined.

Many of our writers have chosen to build their stories on the resilience shown during the pandemic. Some of the stories are fictionalised, written in collaboration with our support team at Shared Press, and some exist in a very real and not too distant future. Others are first person narratives that come straight from the heart.

There will be challenges on our way to 2030, there always are, but by acknowledging them we can start to face them, to plan ahead. Some contributors have jumped straight into 2030 and walked around in new shoes, heads held high. Some stories explore how we got there. Others show in fine grain relationships and mindsets shifting. They illustrate the lives we can live. And by writing down what we can see, taste, touch and feel, the possibilities become real. Like athletes imagining the race ahead of them, we prepare ourselves for success. Our ambitions are achievable.

This is an unusual book, because there's no ending and there are empty pages for you to add your stories. We're on this journey together, looking to the future with enthusiasm and optimism. In Barnsley, people make things possible.

*Sarah Norman*  
*Chief Executive, Barnsley Council*



## THIS FUTURE, THIS PRESENT

*Once this was the future, and we wrote it down  
In a list. There were possibilities, opportunities  
And thinking stretching right across the town*

*And far beyond. We wanted air to breathe and sing,  
Homes we could call our very own, invite friends in  
To make memories that matter, stories that cling*

*To the very shape of who we are, who we want to be.  
Once this was the future and we made a promise  
To the children as yet unborn: this is what you will see*

*And these are the streets you will call your own;  
They are for everyone, all are welcome to stay;  
The roots are put down and no one's alone.*

*And as for me? I'll tell you what I want round here:  
Hope, tumbling all over these places like leaves  
In Autumn. Hope: a window that's always so clear*

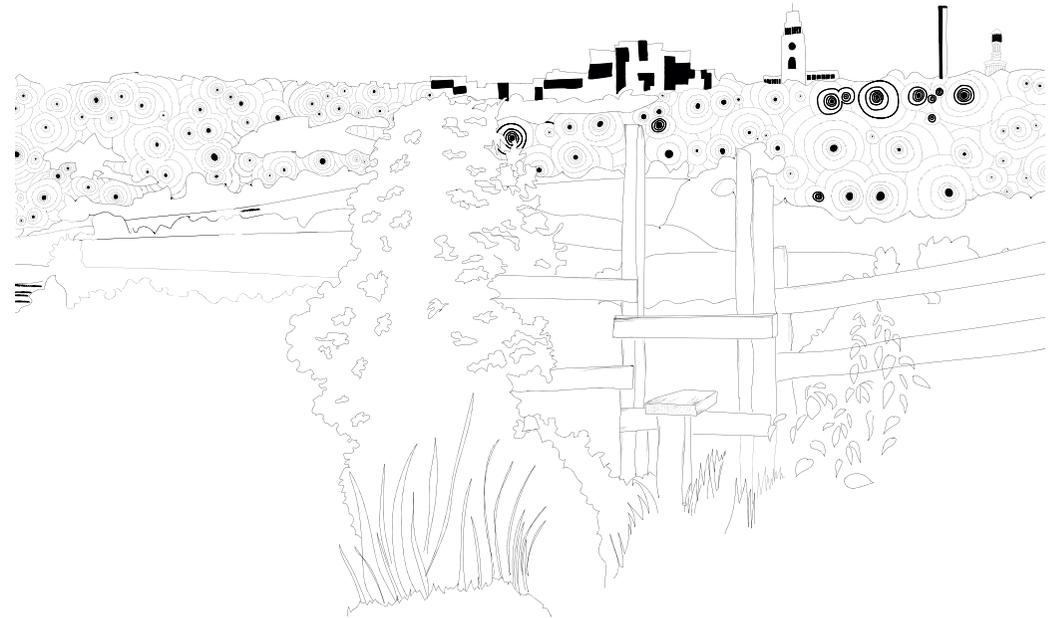
*You can see all our possibilities through it.  
Hope that the people will really want to stay  
Hope that confirms that Barnsley can do it,*

*This thing they call making a place we all love  
And we're here because we want to be.  
Hope that fits here like a hand fits a glove.*

*This future inches closer. Let's call this the new world  
We promise ourselves, packed tight with everything  
We need to live by, to learn with. A flag is unfurled*

*With BARNSELY 2030 written on it. Our beating hearts  
Are beating together in the borough we've made.  
This was the future. Now the present day starts...*

Ian McMillan  
Barnsley's former Poet Laureate, Writer and  
Broadcaster



## Sustainable Barnsley

### Protecting our borough for future generations

People live in sustainable communities with reduced carbon emissions and increased access to affordable and sustainable energy sources.

People can get around in Barnsley more easily than ever, the number of cycle routes increases and there are better connections across the borough.

Barnsley has increased the amount of renewable energy that is generated within the borough.

People are proud of, and look after, their local environment.



## Circle of Life

“Hey Dad look, there’s the lapwing again! I could include something about birds for my re-wilding project, what do you think?”

“Sounds like a plan Ben, they seem to like the sedum roof. If you watch long enough, you’ll see all kinds of birds.”

Bird names fly out of his mouth as he pulls at my sleeve. I didn’t know he knew so many. Growing up I was a bit of a birder myself.

I want to say, “don’t forget that the green rooves support wider bio-diversity, the surrounding land is much richer, and it brings new jobs...” but I bite my lip, it’s his project. I hope his interest doesn’t fade, that we’ll share this passion for nature, it’ll be a solid bond.

My own Dad and I never really had conversations like this. And I could’ve done with a friend like Ben growing up, not a lot of the lads cared about the outdoors and nature back then. I’m glad it’s changed. I’m getting ahead of myself but maybe he’ll become an ecologist. I’m happy that so many places are investing sustainably, the green evolution gives me one less thing to worry about for my kid’s future.

\*

“No Dad it doesn’t heat the water, its heated water, re-used water from the coal mines, the ones you used to work in.”

“That’ll be raight. How do they do that then?”

I’ve set my son Adam off rambling about underground pumps and the principles of heat technology. He’s not like the engineers we were used to in the pits, never gets his hands dirty. Calls it clean tech. I were listening tho. It’s maybe the tenth time he’s told me about his new house in Carlton, heat that’s powered by old mine-water. I’ve told all the lads down the allotment about him, he’s done well for himself. He’s doing proper work, honest work, good for the land, good for the community. He raised a good son too. I’ve a grandson who’s as crazy about all this nature stuff as my lad is. I’m glad for him, for them.

\*

“Ben, boots off!”

“Yeah, OK Mum” I say. Sitting on the stairs, I can see my Dad talking to Grandad Jeff again about heating. Ha, I think Grandad pretends not to understand, because he secretly likes talking about something Dad’s passionate about. It’s mad that an old coalmine could help bring them together after all these years.

*Paul Castle*

*...different generations are creating the future together*



## Opening our hearts

I volunteer in a cemetery. No, I don't dig graves! I work closely with nature, taking care of the grass and the flowers, admiring the squirrels, birds, bees and bats. I say good morning to the dogwalkers and regular passers-by. The group I volunteer with is enough to lift the spirits of anyone. Working stuck right in the middle of a green space makes the experience perfect.

The thing I tell people is, it's not just a cemetery. It's a place where people from all walks of life make friends, have a moment of peace or reflection, connect with their ancestors, or open the floodgates and release their emotions. The cemetery creates a buzz of energy, a hum in the air. It swirls around the trees, between the headstones, around the chapels, waiting to connect, calm and heal us.

On days of anxiety or sorrow, pre-driving test, pre-job interview, post-funeral, I sit in the cemetery and come away renewed, refreshed, knowing everything will be okay.

And volunteering reveals stories you wouldn't get anywhere else or in any other way.

Take the fallen angel. A headstone in the shape of an angel was lost for years. A lady popped in and asked if we knew about it. Stabbing around in the dirt near the angel's plinth, we found her face down, buried in the grave behind and missing half a wing. She was cleaned up and restored. That week, a relative of a volunteer uncovered a silk bookmark to commemorate the funeral of Annie, the lady beneath the angel, solving the mystery of who she was and what she meant to people.

Take also the long-lost brothers. I put a message on a website asking for stories and photos of my street.

Ping! A reply. "My grandad kept pigs on your street. My dad grew up there."

Ping! Another reply. "So did mine. What was his name?"

It turned out the pair agreed to meet up in the cemetery and then pop along to my street to see their grandad's (and dad's) house. They found out they were brothers! A walk through the cemetery after college meant that I met the pair, just by chance. One of the brothers decided to volunteer with us after that.

See how nature, parks, green open spaces and volunteering help to physically and mentally heal us?

In 2030, I'd like to see more voluntary groups, more support for them, increased financial investment in, and support for, parks and open spaces, and more people opening their hearts to nature, embracing their surroundings, looking after their environment, and having pride in our special green spaces.

*Jessica Whiting*

*...our environment connects, calms and heals us*



## Waste warriors Or... Nightmare on Dearne Street

*The river smells worse every time I see it. I don't come down to the Dearne often anymore; it's not a pleasant spot. All signs of life are long gone, its water murky thick with slurry and blue-green algae. I can just make out a half-submerged shopping trolley, gathering debris from the sluggish waters.*

*It didn't take long in the end. A few short years of international pressure and the British government caved and was forced to sign into law the ban on exporting waste.*

*Little changed in those first few years. A few fringe groups heralded it as the End of Times, the point where society came crashing down, but nobody paid them much attention.*

*I had no idea about the plans to turn Dearne Valley into our rubbish dump. There was so little time between the signs going up and the*

*bulldozers coming in. The government took it out of local hands, though they wouldn't have listened to our complaints anyway. 'Your waste has to go somewhere!' they'd say. And well, they were right.*

*We were no longer able to ship it off to the far corners of our Earth, out of sight, out of mind, someone else's problem. The reality was dumped on our doorsteps. Our back gardens. Our public spaces. The council's got no money to fix it. Getting rid of rubbish is expensive.*

*I never take my dogs down there anymore. I worry broken glass might cut their paws, although lately even the local kids don't go there and smash bottles. Nobody wants to be near the rubbish dumps, so they stay and litter our streets instead. It's not their fault really, there's nowhere else to go.*

*I know people still walk their dogs around the place. I pass one of the many dog poo bag trees, artificial rainbows of tattered plastic swinging from the branches. It's the only bit of colour we see around here now. The wildflowers were one of the first things to go. I skirt the mattress mountains and watch my footing, some walkers don't bother picking up their dog's mess and is there any point? It hardly makes a difference now. The damage is done.*

Kay Boasman and Victoria Chappell

*...we won't let a nightmare future happen*



## Waste Warriors 2 Or... A breath of fresh air

*“I’m home!” I call out, plonking my bag down at the door.*

*There’s a muffled response from the kitchen. Then my husband sticks his head into the hall. Smudges cover his apron, and he grins.*

*“Took you long enough, our kids and Judy’s lot are at the park already.”*

*“Bumped into Kira on the way back, got chatting.” I hold up the bundle in my arms. “She gave me this blanket, almost new, she got it for her nephew but he didn’t like the feel. Said it might as well go to a good home.” It’s bright yellow, edged with black pompoms.*

*“Bring it with, be good to sit on while we eat.”*

*“Aye, that’s what I thought. I’ll just go get changed.”*

*Laden with enough of my husband’s cooking to feed all of Barnsley, we set out for the park. The sun is merrily shining. Turning onto Park Street, we swerve to avoid the caddy bins neatly lining the curb. I poke my husband and he bats me away with a laugh.*

*“Yeah, yeah,” he snorts, “If I never hear about them again, it’ll be too soon.”*

*I hold my tongue, quietly pleased. We paved the way for the new waste system used across the borough. My colleagues and I, we saw it through from the start.*

*We got kids into bins, sometimes literally! Our young people led the way and, building on the great work in schools and with children on our side, parents got over the embarrassment of discussing their waste habits. It became competitive; who could create the least rubbish? (Our family got nowhere near the top ten.) We supported zero waste shops and refill centres in the principal towns so people bought food in brown bags not plastic tubs.*

*I’ve lost track of the initiatives we did, but at some point the penny dropped. We succeeded. I knew it’d happened because my husband started returning his beer bottles to the deposit scheme. Our waste figures decreased and we were recognised by the government as a leading environmental borough. The unassuming plaque sits in our offices: 100 percent recycled material.*

*People in Barnsley don’t like being told what to do, nor do we like to brag. But once we’ve set our minds to it, quietly we get on.*

*We enjoy our picnic by the Dearne, as beautiful as any spot in the borough.*

Kay Boasman and Victoria Chappell

*...we will be environmental leaders*



## Gliding into the future

Electric cars glide. Smooth, quiet, and many people don't realise how quick they pick up speed. No cranking through gears, no foot hovering over the clutch. It's simple to speed up and there's an even better design for slowing down. Every time you lift off the throttle or push the brake pedal, the car slows down and tops up the battery a little.

So, when driving an electric car, life is much easier – and people are beginning to realise it.

The council has bought thirty-four electric vans in the last twelve months and we've invested in thirty charging points. When I wrote the council's strategy for our fleet of four hundred and twenty vehicles in 2019, we thought we might have around six. Now the market's changed and, while I haven't had the time to write a new strategy to capture the different world we're now in (and does it really matter?), the

direction is set and we're just getting on with it.

By 2030, anything that can be electric should be – bin lorries, pest control vans, housing maintenance and the vehicles used by our parks and neighbourhood teams.

I've given myself the target of trying to convince the world to go electric. Colleagues get range anxiety. "How far can it go before it needs charging again?" And plenty say, "We've had these vans since God were a lad."

But once they've had half an hour driving one of our demonstrator cars they love it. It turns out that a lot of the drivers don't really care what comes out of the back of the vehicle as long as there's a radio and they can get their job done. The only downside is that some staff need to take their van home overnight. Now they'll have to leave them in the depot if they don't have enough charge.

People care about clean air, being committed to a sustainable future, and leading the way for others. Our vans have a big green plug on the side so everyone can see we are leading the way with electric vehicles in Barnsley. Just think how much carbon we're saving over a year with our four hundred and twenty vehicles doing around forty miles a day. That's got to mean cleaner air round here.

We're planning to replace the Mayor's car with an electric one, although the number plate will still be THE1. And when we can afford it, my girlfriend and I will get one. She thinks it should be an Audi Q4. I'm happy with that.

*Jacob Finney*

*...the direction is set and we're just getting on with it*



## More me, more us

It took a pandemic and a crazy little brown Sproodle to get me into the fields I've lived beside for twelve years, and to really appreciate what was right on my doorstep. Coco is as daft as a brush, very loving with lots of hair. Grooming always seems to fall to Mum. My kids, aged six and ten, love her too. She's got us all out of the house, discovering paths across the back from Redbrook to Mapplewell. Getting a dog was a real turning point.

It's been a hard year or so for everyone and difficult to stay sane, never mind motivated. At work, we've had to be everything to everyone. We're one of the teams behind the scenes, the engine room that gets teachers and healthcare workers into jobs. We're critical to keeping schools and care homes open and many other vital public services on the road.

We've had the rug swept from under our feet with government changes on a few occasions and, for someone who like me who likes things to be planned and controlled, that's really challenging. I was trying to mobilise people, at the same time feeling my own, and others', fatigue.

I do feel on good form now, more like myself. We're closer as a family and, at work, we're more resilient as a team. That's not a surprise, I guess, but what I've learned this past year, is that it's the tough times, the serious pressure, that can produce the best outcomes.

Our tiny DBS team, who make sure those who work with children have the right safety checks, were amazing. They redesigned a new online service from scratch and have been so successful they are now delivering services for other councils and generating income. That's important for the future. As we face more austerity, we must do more with less. It's one example of investing in change for the long-term and growing together.

The positive changes in Barnsley make us proud and people want to invest in 2030. We are a group of people who care and want to see change.

I think that all this made me realise the importance of investing in where you live. There's a world outside of work and I think we owe it to our children to ensure it's a good one.

*Tracy Bell*

*...I'm more resilient, we're more resilient*



## Magic in the moment

My first job was as a clerk in the revenue department. My dad was so proud of me, going to work in the council, wearing a suit and tie. I didn't have the heart to tell him I spent the first four weeks licking poll tax envelopes. But really, it didn't matter what I did, he supported me all the way. Mum and dad came to England in the Sixties, mum had to learn English from scratch and when dad was made redundant from Celanese, the chemical people, in Derby, it hit them hard. They were constantly having to adapt.

Walking around some of the terraced streets in Barnsley town centre reminds me of where I grew up and the challenges facing families who are struggling to find work and excel in education.

My parents' work ethic has had a profound influence on my life. I take with me a drive and passion. I want things to be

better for the most disadvantaged in our communities, to improve people's lives, and I see the huge role officers like myself can play in enabling others.

When I think about the 2030 vision, first I think visually. The streets are welcoming, there's no litter, it's greener, with glossy, leafy shrubs, flowers bringing bursts of colour, trees helping us breathe. We've created more open public spaces where people meet. Workers meet during their lunch breaks and the streets are busier with people coming and going to work. I love walking and physically being in places; I stride out to the bits of the borough I don't visit so often. I see myself stopping for a coffee, sitting outside on a bright sunny day, I feel hopeful and optimistic.

In that moment, I see glimpses of deeper change in the place and the council. From our darkest times during Covid, we've moved into the light. I hear people in the café chatting confidently about their lives. It might be small stuff, but there are unexpected connections and possibilities in the mix. The usual friends and family updates are peppered with community activity, learning and social events, jobs and health. They don't mention the council, why would they? It's not about us. Although behind the scenes, we are here with them if they need us and that feels right.

When I look at my messages from work, there's evidence of innovation. We're delivering differently, reporting results for our communities, and colleagues do not seem as stuck as I remember. I know I'm doing the best work of my life; we all are.

I like the phrase, "What got us here, won't get us there." Everything's a moment in time, we continue to evolve. I'm already thinking about 2040.

*Shokat Lal*

*...we are here with our communities, all the way*



### *Bob and Bailey*

*Bob has lived in Barnsley for the majority of his life and loves his local area and walking his new Labrador puppy Bailey, around the local parks. But he sees a lot of litter on the ground near overgrown bushes, which look like they have been used for drug-taking or starting small fires.*

*Knowing that one person can make a small change, Bob makes some enquiries and works with a local group to take shared ownership of a piece of local land that he and his fellow dogwalkers go past daily. To start with, they tidy it up, make it more accessible, so they can see what they have to work with. And they make a plan.*

*They plant some small trees, knowing they will take time to grow, plant a community vegetable patch, create a sensory area that people can walk through and take in lots of different smells. And*

*they add some accessible benches so everyone can be part of this newly invigorated site. They even install new recycling bins to combat the litter issue. None of this was done quickly.*

*Over the years, Bob, and his somewhat older dog Bailey, walk a route that includes the shared piece of land. He sees trees that stand tall and a litter free area. There are no piles of ash on the ground from fires. He takes in the bustle of families enjoying strolls through the sensory area, picking vegetables from the growing patch, and children discussing in which section of the bin to put their bottle.*

*Bob feels warmth from his community and positivity for all the changes that have been made. He knows his community have stepped up not only to improve their environment, but done their bit for the world as well. Bob knows that long after he and Bailey are gone, their dreams and hope for Barnsley will be carried on through the soil and roots of the plot of land they have cultivated.*

Adele Saywell

*...our communities are stepping up for the environment*



## *Employee of the Year 2030*

*Chris looks out at their assembled colleagues, cheeks burning. They stare back with smiles that say, “Well done, mate, you’ve really earnt that award.”*

*There are also people looking at their watch, dreading one of those dizzying dives into detail that Chris is famous for. But that’s what people don’t understand. Chris has spent years becoming an expert – okay, borderline obsessive – on different heating systems because it’s fascinating. Call them a nerd, but how else do we get all the Berneslai Homes tenants up and running with air source heat pumps if we’re not into them ourselves?*

*Plus, it’s an actual miracle of science extracting heat from the air outside to fire up the water in the radiators, even when it’s snowing! The new bigger, sleeker rads make sense and look good. And now tenants can see the reductions in their electricity bills. It’s a no-brainer.*

*One of the directors makes a speech reminding everyone about the eighteen-year-old Chris, who began work on the kick-start programme all those years ago. “They were like an annoying kid asking why all the time.” The director laughs. “Perfect training for the sort of professional curiosity that we need more of.” And it helped with the promotion to head of customer services.*

*Chris waits for the moment to speak, wondering whether to say how much their home matters. Mum and Dad were tenants too, and money was tight. Life was full of complications growing up, the transitions they and them made. But there was fierce love too.*

*Maybe that’s a bit personal? Quietly, Chris thanks the director who’d been their coach back in the day, helping them to come up with their own solutions to problems, building confidence and self-reliance.*

*“Obviously it’s been a challenge not to tell you all everything there is to know about everything,” Chris says. That resonates with the audience; there are a few laughs. “But you can pick my brains about solar panels and battery storage anytime.”*

*Chris is now aiming for a Level 5 coaching qualification. As managers, sorting out the investment needed to make Berneslai Homes energy efficient has been a serious challenge, but one that meant the physical improvements needed have become a reality.*

*From the tenth floor of Gateway Plaza you can almost see the whole borough, from the Dearne to Penistone, and nearly to Sheffield. “That’s my home down there.” There’s a small catch in their throat. “I’m proud of the work we do. If we don’t care, who does?”*

**Amanda Garrard**

*...a green sustainable future is possible*



## Head for the hills

My lanyard hangs heavy, decorated with the badges of my adventures. I used to love travelling, exploring new places, learning new things. But recently, through the power of nature, I've felt connected back to my home, to Barnsley, and the relationships I have here.

My mum is an avid bird watcher. During our socially distanced garden visits, I've learned about hedge-dwelling birds and birds nesting on the ground. And I became interested in running and races and the links it's given me to nature.

I lost my grandfather during the pandemic. He was a great runner and in his younger days he used to love racing in The Trunce. He trained hard and took any excuse to dress up or push a pram through a river. When someone broke their foot and asked me to run in their place for the Barnsley Boundary

relay race, I was incredibly nervous, and to be honest, lacked confidence. It's ten-and-a-half miles of 1,188-foot elevation. Running the race in memory of my grandad helped me push through. It was exhilarating and I went on to run in the Thurlstone Chase.

Running over those hills gave me a deep purpose, and a sense of fulfilment. It was a beautiful and emotional race and it struck a passion in me that I like to think I inherited from my grandad. That passion took me across the countryside, over hills and through fields of cows. I like to stand on those hills, not only to take a break from running, but to reflect on my own life, my work, my family, and my own passions. It makes me feel close to my grandad as well.

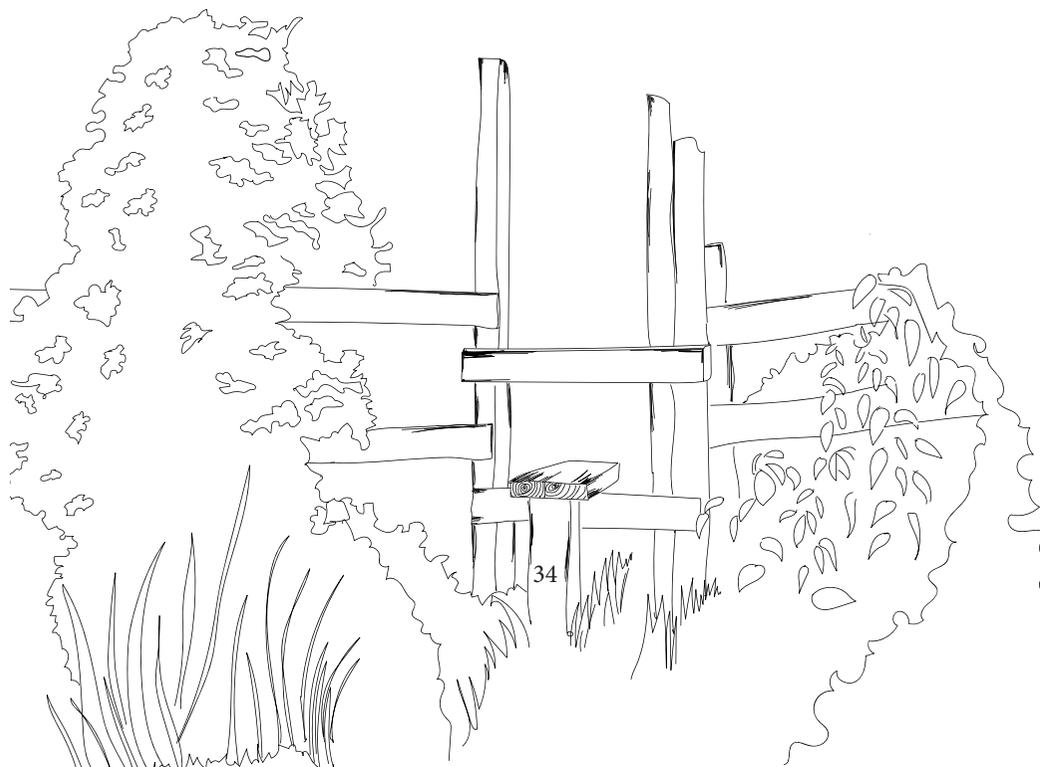
Covid was hard for me in many ways. My mental health suffered and I became an anxious person – not my usual self. The walls of my house became a prison but forcing myself out into the countryside gave me hope. Hope for the future; what 2030 will look like.

I imagine ten years from now, those paths I run will look the same with the same challenges for a runner. But there's magic in those hills and the paths that lace through the land. I feel positive about taking on challenges because I won't be alone. Those paths now represent positivity and safety. I feel blessed to live where I do and positive for the future.

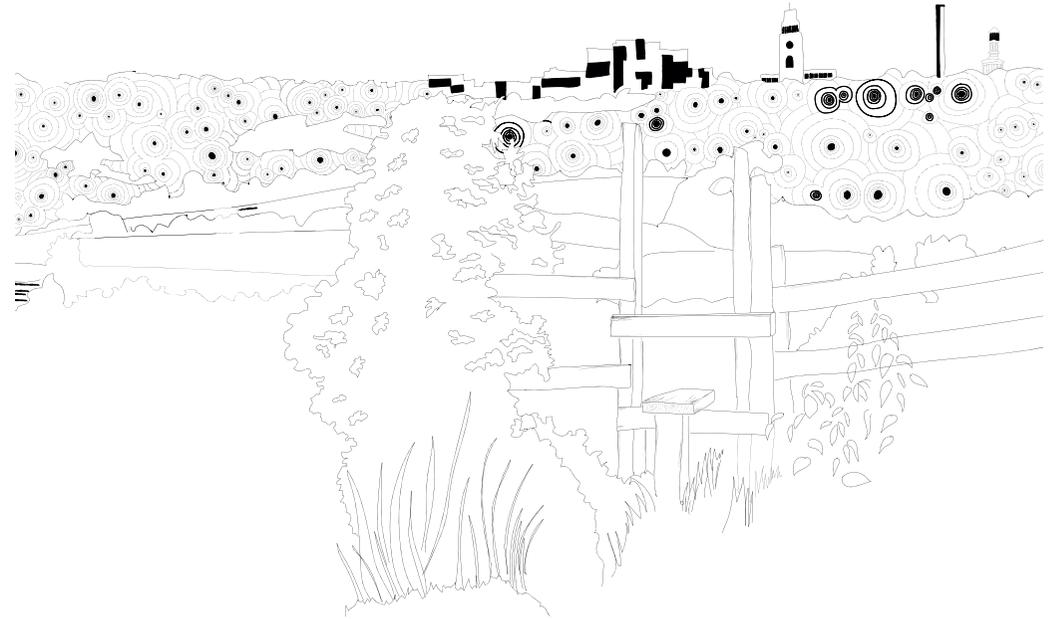
Faith Ridgwick

*...the countryside gives us hope*

*Add your 2030 story here...*



*...together our stories are powerful*



## Learning Barnsley

### Developing skills and talent within people of all ages

Children and young people aim high and achieve their full potential with improved educational achievement and attainment.

Everyone has the opportunity to create wider social connections and enjoy cultural experiences.

Lifelong learning is promoted and encouraged with an increase in opportunities that will enable people to get into, progress at, and stay in work.

Everyone fulfils their learning potential, with more people completing higher-level skills studies than ever before.



### *Lift-off!*

*Aleesha is jumping up and down. They all are, sweating, eyes wide. She's shouting, "Yes!!" but she's lost her voice. The noise is immense. The 2030 Mars landing has been successful.*

*She gets a nod from the team leader that means she can make a quick call. The corridors are just as loud. Colleagues high-five her. It'll be crazy early in the morning in Barnsley but mum will answer. Since she joined the NASA navigational satellite modelling team, three years back, it's been so intense. Aleesha wants to hear her mum's voice.*

*"She were always good at maths," Mum tells everyone. The maths got her here. But when she thinks back, Aleesha remembers looking up at an artist's projection of Gaia in the atrium at college. That was the magical moment; the scale of it, so far, and at the same*

*time, right here. Looking up at that picture of the Earth made her believe she could go places, that it would be alright.*

*By the time the artist's projection of Mars arrived at the college, her tutor was already talking to her parents about her applying to uni. Aleesha had thought her mum wouldn't want her to leave home, wasn't sure if she was ready to either. But the Red Planet, the unknown, called her.*

*"It's not a choice," Mum had said. "You're not betraying Barnsley, you're honouring it by making your mark."*

*"And you're standing on the shoulders of giants," Dad said, tapping his foot for emphasis. "We've burnt the hell out of this planet and we need bright ones like you in charge to craft our future."*

*At college she'd worked on an app for self-driving cars, went to Oxford (not Leeds!) to study maths, did a Masters in satellite navigation tech for military uses, and started air traffic control training. Then when the NASA program was advertised, she'd applied. Now she's 390 million kilometres from home, so consumed by Mars, she's virtually there with the astronauts.*

*Let Mum and Dad sleep, she decides, and calls her friend Cal instead. He woops as loud as her NASA team did when the touchdown was secure and their directional navigation job complete. "Yo, Barnsley inter-galactic! Wait, wait..."*

*He connects their call to the others in their groupchat. Some are getting up in Royston, others in London or Finland, and those finishing their working day in Osaka. Cal has a new Egyptology book out, so he's wired too. The conversation holds Aleesha in a good place, solidly connected to home and looking at the stars.*

Liz Leek

*...we honour Barnsley when we make our mark*



## A different song

I bought my first house when I was nineteen. Now me and my boyfriend have moved into our second place. We saved half of what we earned and still went out like other young people. I want the youngsters in 2030 to realise these possibilities. I wanted to jump into adult life, to get started. Getting a home was something I could do; I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do job-wise. I'm twenty-four now and I still don't.

Even so, in 2030 you might find me in a school in Barnsley, talking to a group of young people about their futures. I'd be sharing practical tips about life, the stuff you don't normally learn in the classroom and encouraging them to find their own paths.

I might ask them about the music they like and maybe play them a song, a record from my vinyl collection. I've got a bit of everything. Anything rock 'n' roll was my grandad's

favourite. I love the scratches, the sounds of the past. I've got classics like Amy Winehouse, and Arctic Monkeys is a go to. I know where all my LPs come from, they've all got a story.

I was clear I didn't want to go to uni even though I was made to feel like I was falling behind, like I was daft somehow because I hadn't applied. I chose the apprenticeship route and it's really worked for me. But it's not a competition. I hope young people in 2030 already know that; you can achieve what you want in different ways.

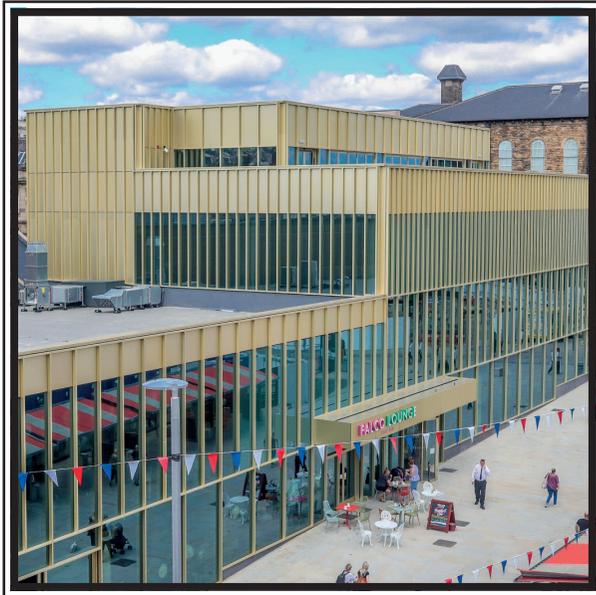
It was a big step leaving Sheffield to move to Barnsley. It's not that different from going away to college. There are always challenges. I'd speak about those too. I can find a song for every mood. When things feel tough, I always turn to Dance the Night Away by The Mavericks.

I'd also say that sometimes the difficult things are the most worthwhile, like the Future Leaders course. I hope that in 2030 I'll be working as a manager, maybe still in the council. It's given me lots of opportunities and my confidence has grown along the way.

I love Barnsley. It's a place of possibilities.

*Amy Clarkson*

*...we can achieve what we want in different ways*



## A place to be and to grow

It's the second week of the Easter holidays and the library has been a lifesaver.

Suhani shepherds the twins along. Her two boys of ten stop to look at a bug on the pavement. Avika's nattering beside her. Just behind, her husband, Kumar, walks arm-in-arm with his mother and Leena, their eldest daughter.

Suhani waves Avika on, and she dashes inside, a blur of purple and plaits. When it's time to leave, they'll find her at the crafts table, likely smothered in glitter and threads.

The boys are at her heels. Suhani is intent on getting them into the free Easter music programme. After the last session, the twins spent hours making a xylophone out of pebbles and tin foil. If their interest keeps up, they might like a keyboard for their birthday.

In the library, her mother proudly says, in English, "Good

afternoon," to a member of staff, and then fires off rapid Hindi.

Kumar translates. "She'd like to know the directions to the Conversation Café to practise her English."

Kathryn grins. "I'm taking these papers that way now, I'll show you."

Kumar translates it back, pleased that despite the language barrier, Kathryn addresses his mother directly.

Leena pats Suhani's arm. "I've seen Alicia, Mum, can I go with her?"

"Of course, to the study booths?"

"Yeah, I've got my laptop, so we'll go sit by a charge point."

"Okay, I'll text you when we're leaving." Suhani turns to Kumar. "The group finishes at three, we can collect her then, but there's a chat with cake until four, so we've probably got a couple of hours."

"Shall we get a coffee and explore the fiction then?" he asks.

"Coffee and fiction it is!"

Making her way back to her office, Kathryn thinks about the woman she's just taken to the café. She reminds Kathryn of her own mother, that 'give-it-a-go' attitude. Her mum, she thinks, would have loved the classes they hold at the library now. The breakdancing ones would have made her laugh and she would have tried all the crafts, maybe taught some! She would have definitely volunteered to demonstrate her spinning.

Kathryn remembers the long winter evenings when her mum taught herself machine embroidery for a challenge and the sheer joy of it and wonders what else she might have tried given the opportunity. Pottery maybe?

Kathryn knows that since the 1850s, libraries have adapted to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities. She is proud of the work they do to enrich lives.

In 2030 they will continue to be a hub, full of information and new experiences – the community's place of possibilities.

*Kathryn Green*

*...we love that 'give-it-a-go' attitude*



## Re-charge summer 2030

*I'm walking the boundary of the borough with Paul, a social worker colleague. We're meeting at Dunford Bridge. It's a bright day, but the fierce wind makes waves on the reservoir. On our journey, we talk shop. That's me, I find it hard to switch off. Always have.*

*We've come to see the world, and the council, in a similar way. I recognise in my friend the sort of proper self-respect that comes from hard-won achievements. He stands tall. His legs relish the hills.*

*We came through the pandemic, and the challenging times that followed, and turned the council into an even better, more modern and efficient organisation. At the same time, our communities thrived, and against the odds people's lives improved. It's clear to me that one thing wouldn't have happened without the other.*

*But when we started these walks in 2021, it was a different story.*

*Paul said his team would roll their eyes at the customer experience or digital transformation work, not really knowing what it was about. Or they'd joke, "Well, at least it will keep someone in Westgate busy."*

*Barnsley's boundary is seventy-two miles long. We've done a fair few stretches over the last ten years. As the seasons change, each day is different. There can be snow up here in August. And we're different; older of course, fitter maybe? Better prepared, with the right kit and know-how.*

*Today, Paul is waxing lyrical about how flexible his team is, constantly adapting to what families need. Without prompting, he gives a nod to our organisational development and HR colleagues. Remember, he says, like it's another universe, how much time and energy we used to spend on discussing hybrid working and t's and c's?*

*I do remember the times when my shoulders loosened, the tension released when we cracked some of those tough nuts.*

*What made the difference was the quality of our relationship. Things like these walks, taking time to be together, led to more trust. Whether I'm walking with Ken from grounds maintenance, Alison in planning or Dev from the homelessness unit, there's always less focus on the me and more on the we.*

*Being up here on the edge of the district, you see the bigger picture. There will always be constraints, but that won't stop our progress. We remain open to possibilities. The journey is never complete.*

Neil Copley

*...our communities thrive, people's lives improve*



## Proper respect

Angela can see her colleagues, her friends, through the long, glass windows, sitting inside the coffee shop. It's no longer a novelty to meet in the city centre to work.

"Have you seen the new restaurant over the way?" Julie says.

Angela shrugs her bag off, her Welsh dragon keyring clattering on the tabletop. "Yes, didn't realise it was open already though."

Emma nods, "Took the kids there a few nights ago. Michael and I were trying to remember the last time we'd been out for a meal in town as a family."

"Before the kids, surely?" Angela teases.

"Feels like it, but not quite." Emma's mind jumps back to her hen night after the pandemic. It was lovely to have places to

go in the centre that attracted the evening crowd in, rather than away. No need to go into Leeds these days.

"So," Julie starts, settling into work mode. "Brilliant session with the Youth Council." Emma nods, "I love the handing over of the baton. Kelly – we knew her at fourteen! – has taken her seat as a councillor and she's doing the induction for the new teenage representatives."

She loved the energy and creativity that so many young people brought into the vision for Barnsley. Their focus on zero carbon had helped them become leading edge in battling plastic pollution and the town has so many more trees now.

"And the inter-generational budget idea is fantastic." Julie rummages in her bag for a moment, pulling out a handful of papers held together with a large red paperclip. "And there's another round of local green spaces projects."

Angela applauds. She'd struggled at the start to believe that they'd get this far. Some parts of the borough were further ahead in their thinking than others. What made the difference was the human connections they made, the trust they'd built and the respect that had grown.

"Aye, we'll connect more young people to the new opportunities in the town as they leave school or college," Emma says, "Instead of letting them jet-off to Sheffield and the like."

"Back in our day," Julie jokes, "You stayed put! Well, if this works out, some of them will too, I hope."

"And we'll have done something right." Angela is heartened that the young people share the same degree of pride that she has in Barnsley. "It'll be a positive choice."

*Julie Hammerton, Emma Baines and Angela Kelly*

*...we are handing over the baton to our young people*



## The things that make us

I feel focused, like I'm in my own world. The time on the clock silently passes by. My Eighties pop playlist buzzes in the background. The scent of my sugarplum candle fizzes in my nose as my fingertips crash down on the keyboard.

It's not always like this. Other times, it's the sound of birds tweeting, the chill from a slight breeze and the crisp pages of a book running through my fingertips. Sometimes, it's the chaos of arts and crafts sprawled out across the table. Often, it escapes in an escalating conversation as our minds race to build on an idea, with sparks of creativity kindling a vibrant atmosphere as we talk.

Occasionally it's the fluttering in my chest, the warm glow to my cheeks and the electricity in my legs as I do a new yoga routine or perfect my stroke as I swim. Maybe it's the aroma of a new recipe wafting through my home.

It can be the spurts of frustration, the deep inhale, a second to refocus the mind and be brave. Then, suddenly, elation when I achieve my thing. I did a thing, look at this thing, have you seen my thing?

These things hold the story, the up-all-night doing, the new skill to test, the confidence that I know what I'm doing, my tired eyes, the rest and recover, the break from the daily grind.

As much as I love my things, I feel proud and joyful when I see other people with theirs too. You see the effort, practice, learning, graft – the journey made along the way.

They say smiles are infectious, but so is passion. The conversations about the how, the why, the where, the highs and the lows that another person has felt while advancing their thing.

I want more of that in the future. I want everybody to make time to invest heart and soul into feeling the feelings of doing a new thing, learning a new thing, challenging a new thing and succeeding at a new thing.

*Megan Howlett*

*...passion, practice and graft are all part of the journey*



## The time that it takes

When my husband asked what I'd like for my birthday, I chose Early Bird. It's an original hand-printed, wood engraving by the artist Gillian Tyler, who grew up in the Dearne Valley. He did check though, asking if I knew just how small it was. It's a miniature, measuring just 75mm x 75mm. That for me was the essence of this beautiful intricate print. The skill and the time she would have taken to complete an engraving on such a small piece of wood is hard to imagine.

I very much appreciate artists mixing traditional crafts and modern techniques, like the perfect digital print. The time taken to produce this

miniature engraving also makes me think of the ways we change behaviour and how we design and develop services at work.

We have transformed the ways we engage with young people in Children's Services. Instead of officially presenting reports to councillors for example, young people share their own views by producing their own videos and films. This takes more time; it involves a shift in power relationships and giving up control. But the result, hearing the spoken word by young people, is so much more meaningful and influential. Their experiences leave a lasting impression on me. It can be spine-tingling.

It's part of our move to co-production. Consultation is fairly easy, and it takes less time. But the danger is that when we consult, we maintain the power, selecting what we want to include and what we don't. We consult through our own lens and preconceived ideas, our biases, and unconscious bias.

I am constantly inspired by young people in Barnsley. They are equal citizens. They know best what a child-friendly town looks and feels like. Through co-production, young people have generously contributed to designing and shaping the communities where they live. And we have benefitted from their talents and optimism. They are our greatest investment and it's their future.

As I visualise Barnsley in 2030, I imagine a place where the young adults recognise how they directly shaped and influenced the fabric of the place, the design, the transport and amenities. The opportunities, and the place that Barnsley will be, have been crafted through the co-production happening today.

*Mel John-Ross*

*...young people in Barnsley are inspiring*



## A new path

The day I leave the bank with the documents neatly signed and bound under my arm, there's a spring in my step, and spring is in the air.

It was daunting at first, all the meetings and formalities, all the money talk – especially when I was never that great at maths in school. I've got much better.

I head to my nan's, and we pour over the papers as she makes tea and slips another slice of cake onto my plate. I'm officially a business owner, fully registered, even if my joint florist and coffee shop only exists in my head for now. I still need to think of a good name.

It took time retraining under the council programmes, fully funded, but all my effort has paid off. I've even got my lease – a lovely spot on a peaceful side street just off the busy centre.

It's the perfect place for people to drop by and have coffee and freshly baked buns after a day of shopping.

There's a gym opening around the corner from me too, run by a couple who were in my business management class. They graduated quicker than I did, but there's no deadline for this kind of thing. I can move at my own pace. They've promised to place some of my flyers on their front desk, and attend my grand opening too. So have my old colleagues, who are sad to see me go, but can't wait to pop in for a chat.

I loved my old job, but I knew I didn't want to do it forever. When the opportunity arose to pursue something I'd often dreamed about, I figured why not make the leap?

Nan slaps a folder down in front of me, and pats me on the arm. "Just a little something for you, love."

I'm mystified, and flip it open to find pages of interior design spreads, carefully trimmed from magazines, and colour charts. There's some of my old childhood drawings too, doodles of massive daisies in scribbled grass.

"I know it's not much," she says lightly, "but I thought I could help with the fun part."

It's okay to change your mind and do something new. We make decisions about our future in school, but we don't always have to stick with them. Having the support and opportunity to pick a new direction, to retrain and learn new skills can be essential for living a happy successful life.

*Jen Harris*

*...do something new*



## Learning to care

In 2030 I see many more people with skills and training in caregiving. I see people being much clearer about where to go to look when they need help, especially if someone in their family or a friend are diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's, for instance. People in all communities are more willing to seek help.

We will have more awareness of the range of symptoms, and good decision-making in families, so that we aren't devastated by the strong emotions these diseases bring up.

With more training and education in caregiving, we can reduce the burden of care and improve quality of life in caregivers. Caregiving can be overwhelming; there are so many aspects to it. Information and techniques for creating a safe and supportive environment are so important.

We should have caregiving support programmes, with courses on coping emotionally and ways to access and take advantage of local resources, for both caregivers and care receivers. They could cover areas such as personal techniques, recognising early warning signs and health issues, and provide education on specific diseases like dementia and stroke.

Increasing education and clinical skills like tube feeding, catheter care and tracheostomy care would make a real difference to some caregivers and receivers. Family education would be a curriculum priority for nursing, as well as care discharge procedures.

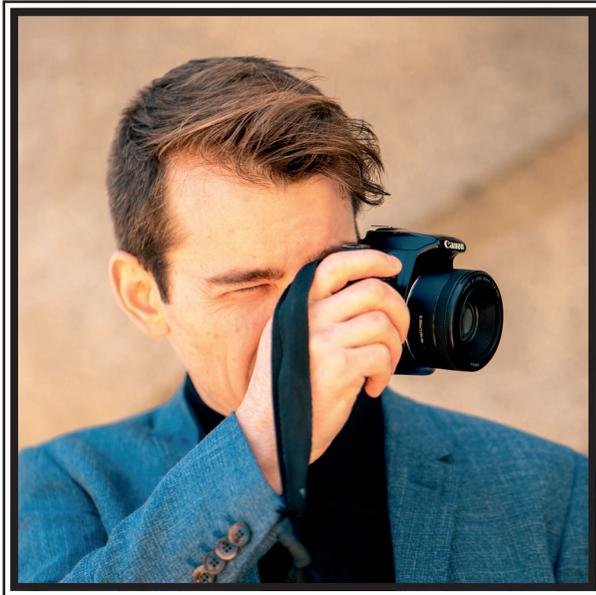
I hope we learned from the pandemic when stress among carers was at an all-time high. It was a moment of truth and people feared what was yet to come. Caring for the elderly demands a lot from caregivers even in the best of times; in perilous times it gets worse.

Learning is important in our family; we had to learn to live with our dog Milly. She taught us so much, to communicate more, understand our different opinions, sentiment, and love. We have grown as a family and made new friends on our walks.

In 2030, we will share all our knowledge, learning and experience to help maintain all our caregivers' health and well-being. More research will have been carried out on struggling caregivers and we will have created a community network of respite care providers. The three key pressing issues in the caregiving ecosystem are accessibility, affordability, and lack of awareness. I would like us to have found the solutions to them.

*Joseph David*

*...always looking for ways to improve*



## Big crew

The picture captures a moment, the spirit of a generation. The wedding party, a happy couple surrounded by friends, is outside St Luke's in Grimethorpe. There's a strong current running between the group who've know each other since school. It's a bond that's been critical to their successes, to overcoming life's obstacles, their sense of themselves and where they're from. I feel it so strongly because if I wasn't taking the picture, I'd be in it.

Emma's the bride. Her face is relaxed, ready to smile but not desperate. People trust her, and vote for her: the youngest ever Barnsley MP. And if I remember rightly, back in the day she'd been on the Youth Council.

Broad-shouldered Adam, is looking to the sky, still dreaming. A filmmaker who's worked in the States, he broke through in TV streaming but circled back to Barnsley and the woman

he loved.

Evie and Kay link arms. They were always thick as thieves. Evie keeps body and souls alive, trained as a GP, now a mental health specialist. She's pragmatic and generous.

Lily wears a bold green and gold dress, the grafter, on her second business, someone people want to work with and for. And Paul, who started as a mechanic and got into Tesla's early, is now an expert in green car-tech. He leans towards his partner Ram.

Right before I took the shot, Ram said, "No one's better than us." He's the connector, the communicator, expresses things well. "They might be more intelligent or richer, but they're not better human beings."

I agree. Along with the smiles, there are shadows in the faces. In the past, I thought our biggest strength was our spirit and our biggest weakness was our spirit. We could've become insular, inherited a lack of aspiration or dependency, been the doubters who thought things wouldn't change.

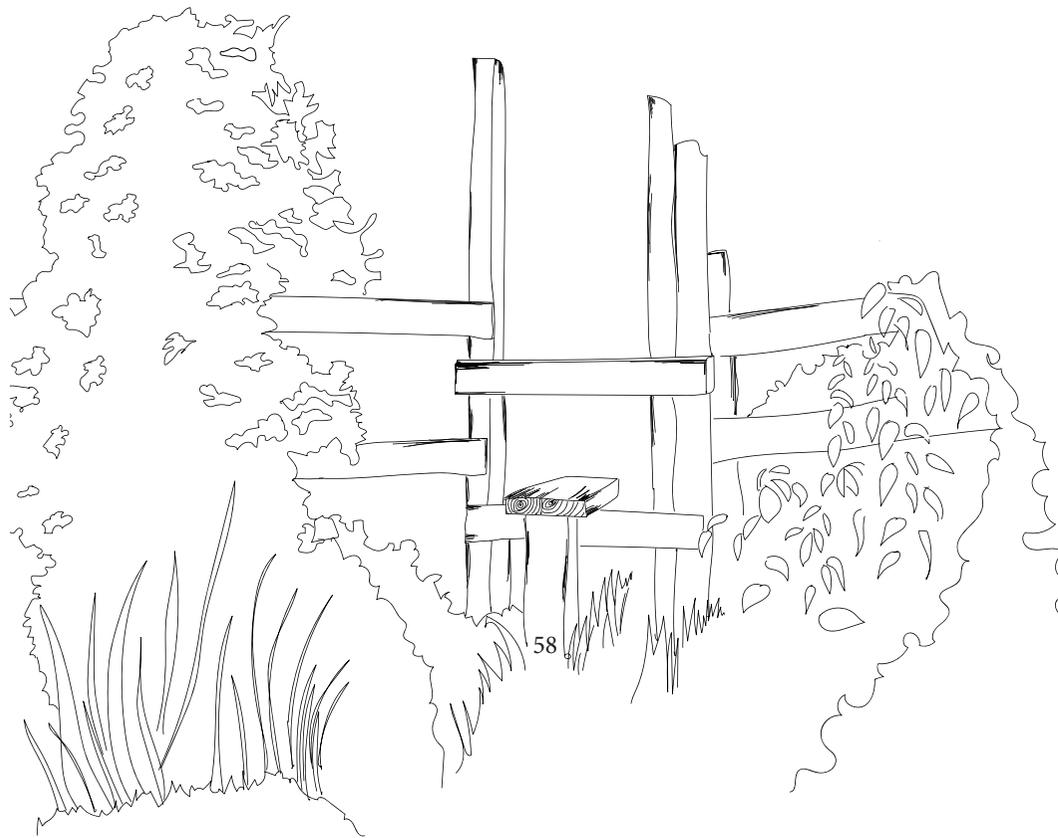
But we had something that our parents didn't. We saw Grimethorpe improve – our school, the houses, the environment, things that touched us. The town centre too. It became a place where things we wanted could happen. You can see it in the photo, the direct eye contact, a modest grin, an attentive ear, a glimpse of intensity that says, go again, keep moving forward. Life can be tough and also amazing.

This is a picture of confidence, self-belief and determination.

*Stephen Houghton*

*...we are in a place where things can happen*

*Add your 2030 story here...*



58

*...together our stories are powerful*

59



## Deciduous Organs

*I plant a seed in your parched little lungs,  
a creek of surfactant cutting through dry alveoli.  
Your sweet nectar smile has disappeared,  
a drought of giggles as dainty as a daisy chain.  
I pray for a harvest of fresh air,  
for your ribcage to become a greenhouse  
of hot breath smiles that blossom  
white against the mirror, for clovers peeking  
out from between your cells.  
My organs are deciduous and I need  
to see you bloom before I wither.*

Eloise Unerman  
Barnsley's Poet Laureate



## Improvements needed

Over the next ten years, I see more accessible transport for young people who experience special educational needs and/or disabilities, making sure no-one misses opportunities and every young person has equal access. There are seats or spaces available for all with Wi-Fi and USB connections.

I would like accessible signage that accommodates those who are blind. For example, making sure departure and arrival times are in braille on signs in the interchange and at stops.

I'm also really passionate about protecting the environment and see the use of more sustainable transport, as well as recycling areas in the interchange and surrounding town area.

Currently, I'm disappointed with Barnsley transport services, as a young person with special educational needs and disabilities. This makes it difficult for people like myself to access different opportunities, such as where we choose to learn, work and our leisure activities.

*Bruce*



## More!

In the future Alex would like to see the community clean and tidy. Shops in Barnsley town centre would have notice boards to say what's appropriate and not. There would be rules for people entering buildings, more police and security to keep the town centre safe and to help people who are struggling in daily life.

Also, there's new shops so people don't get bored of going into the same shops all the time. And Alex says we would have places with more things to do like entertainment.

(Alex wants a lot of things) LoL.

*Alex*



## LGBTQ+ 2030

Arizona sees that in 2030 people are more accepting and less judgemental toward others who are different. There will be more understanding of the LGBTQ+ community so people get what it is and that it is not bad to be LGBTQ+.

In the future, she sees more events and groups for young people to go to who are LGBTQ+ so that they have a place where they can be themselves and they won't get judged for who they are. They can express themselves in a way they couldn't otherwise. She wants schools to teach kids and provide more information about it so that everyone has a better understanding.

Arizona is twenty years old. She gets judged for being a lesbian by friends, some of her family and even strangers. This has had an impact on her mental health, as she feels as though she can't truly be herself.

Boys and men come up to her saying that they can turn her straight, but it's not as simple as that. It's part of who she is and it's not a bad thing to be gay, bi, lesbian, transgender, or any other sexuality. She started to self-harm due to the bullying and the homophobia that she has experienced. She feels like she isn't good enough for people.

*Arizona*

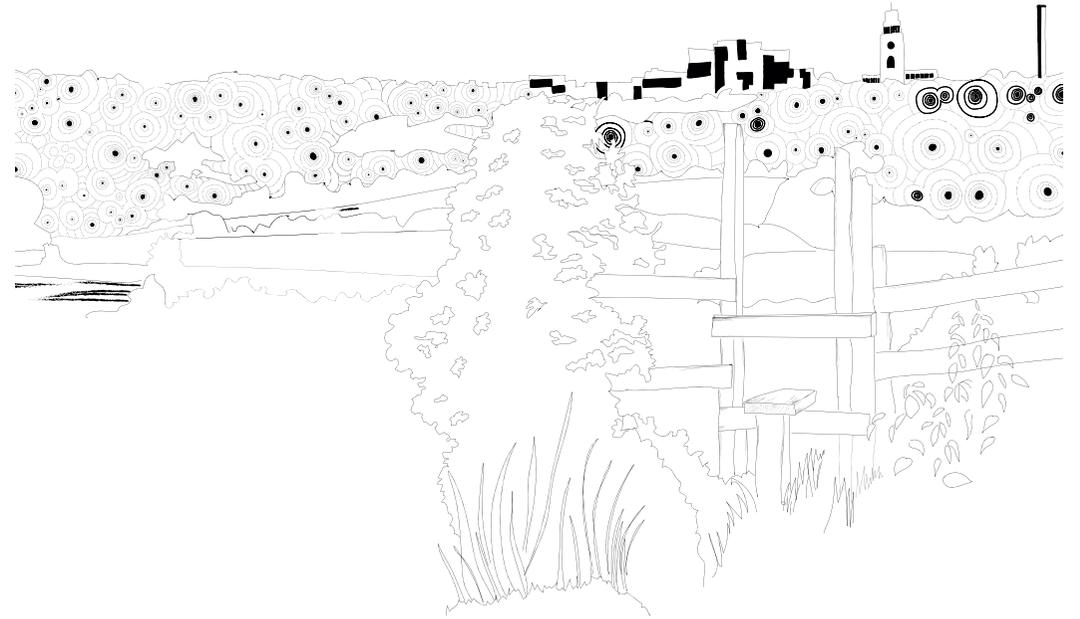


## Our passions

Thomas is an aspiring entrepreneur who wants to set up a business in Barnsley. He has autism and knows that currently support to get a company up and running is really sparse. As he accessed Barnsley CVS (Community and Voluntary Services) and applied for funding for his non-profit organisation, there have been developments toward giving people with disabilities the support they need to set up a business based on their passion.

A decade later, many local organisations have been set up breathing more life into Barnsley and encouraging people from outside the borough to travel to it. The shops are unique and give Barnsley an identity. Thomas feels accomplished and very happy about the new developments Barnsley has gone through.

*Thomas*



## Healthy Barnsley

Keeping ourselves and our families well.

Everyone is able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health.

Fewer people live in poverty and everyone has the resources they need to look after themselves and their families.

People can access the right support, at the right time and place and are able to tackle problems early.

Our diverse communities are welcoming, supportive and resilient.



## Building harmony

“Chain gone, has it?”

I’m sitting on the kerb, hands grubby, wishing I’d put the right tool for the job in my pannier. The young man persists. “Need a hand, cocker?”

“Sorry,” I’m miles away, miles from home and I need my bike to get to work tomorrow. “Yes, thanks, you’re a lifesaver.”

“My garage is just round the corner,” he says, “I’m Daz.”

I notice the kind person/impromptu bike repairer has some pretty aggressive tats: bloody knives, skulls and the slogan we, the people. This sets me off thinking about that former American president and the people who used to send me nasty messages back in the Covid days – just for doing my public health job.

I smile and follow him up the road. He’s got a limp and he looks like he could do with a few square meals in him. Wonder what he makes of me? I decide to take the phrase at face value: yes, we are the people, me and Daz; different but both capable of small acts of kindness. That’s what it’s like round here.

It takes a moment to click, but outside Daz’s garage is an elaborately painted, fire-breathing, campervan.

“Wow! That’s a beauty. Can I have a look inside?”

Over the last few years, I’ve been obsessed with campervans. We swap specifications, parts suppliers, and good sites to park up. He pulls his sleeves down over the tattoos.

Forty-five minutes later, while he goes off to find the bike chain tool, my mind jumps to shared passions in unexpected places. I love how they bind us together, building connections, building community.

I remember my first job as a health visitor. I used to love introducing new mums to each other, a kind of friend’s matchmaking service. Nothing was more rewarding than seeing the mums together five years later, lifelong mates. It was more important than me turning up to weigh a baby, for example.

I no longer need to link people directly. Now we focus on setting up the opportunities for people to create relationships for themselves. That’s at the core of our community projects. In 2030, I see people are more resilient, less isolated, happier.

Daz’s dog is a noisy Staffy.

“Don’t worry,” he says. “The loudest dogs are the ones that are most afraid.”

I send Daz an invite to join a campervan forum I find useful. Maybe he’ll stop by next time he’s in my neck of the woods.

*Julia Burrows*

*...building connections builds community*



## It shouts family

Friday is Dynamo's night at Darfield Cricket Club. Our under nine boys and girls are in their sky-blue t-shirts, the under eleven's are in yellow, and the under thirteen's are in the mix with parents, extended families and friends. It's noisy, buzzing. We want every night to be like this; we've started a women's team and we want to create opportunities for people with disabilities to play, and we're bringing in more talented players from our BAME communities. Our vision is friendly and inclusive.

One of my lads plays in the under fifteens, which is a rollercoaster. I find myself smiling, taking a deep satisfied breath when he gets a wicket, then letting it out heavily. The behaviours that go with intense competition aren't always pretty, if you know what I mean. Then I watch him put an arm around one of the little ones who was upset and can't wait to tell my wife Claire. Those moments are important,

they can mean someone turns up next week or sticks with a club.

It's not just fitness and health; the connections you get from a sports club build relationships, a sense of belonging and community. I still play, my dad played, so did my brother and uncles and now my sons and nephew. The past matters, but we can't get stuck in it. Cricket struggles: it's not the sport of choice, the kit can be expensive, and people can get worked up about the small stuff (like decisions the captain's made), which can suck the life out of it.

Luckily, I've got a thicker skin as I've got older. In life, same as in work, you reflect, keep learning, keep moving forward. I've learned so much from feedback, sometimes taking it on the chin and improving as a result. And I'm often surprised. A few years ago, we managed to get funding for new nets and involved the local councillors. In such tough times, it's been good to see the council and community coming together in different ways for our long-term health.

If you get the timing right, a cricket bat has the strength to hit the ball far and wide. In defence, the sturdy wood protects the wicket. It reminds me that our club can have great impact and great resilience. I look forward to some cracking Friday nights in 2030.

*Michael Potter*

*...keep learning, keep moving forward*



## Good lives, well lived

Recently, I went with one of our social workers to visit an elderly couple and their daughter. Barbara had had three strokes. Her husband Stan, who helps his wife a lot, was there and Karen, their daughter, who runs a small but struggling café busting her guts to support the extended family. Stan was struggling – episodes of bone cancer, fainting, his hearing not great, but he was doing his best. On the bright side, he quipped, he'd once fallen through the floor of the bookies and because he'd been in the air force, he knew how to land.

Their relationship was warm and full of banter, but with a harsh edge. Their experience of the agencies there to support them was pretty naff and I listened in horror as Karen made a call and was asked, “Which one of the needs do you want to talk about today?”

It was one of those moments when different scenarios come into sharp relief. My nightmare was that Stan would break his hip in a fall and he'd be admitted to hospital. Barbara would be taken into residential care and Karen's business would fold under the strain, her mental health damaged and the families' finances in ruins. They'd still have a house, but it would no longer be a home, a place to feel secure and happy.

That would be the complete opposite of what we're trying to achieve.

I've thought a lot about home and what it means to me, how lucky I was to grow up in a welcoming and caring place. There were good times, good neighbours. It was a refuge when I needed it. Somewhere to feel whole.

Stan and Barbara's story has been a call to action. We're working to create a positive scenario, one where we all play our part. As system leaders, we're knocking those organisational walls down and putting on our community glasses, sharing more, thinking differently. We're not posturing, our language is changing, and we're less fearful of letting others in. We have come a long way to encourage more distributed leadership. We leave our teams to get on with the doing, but listen well and move rocks out of the way when we need to. There's still the danger that the lack of resources consumes us, but we won't let that hold back our enthusiasm. We will keep moving forward.

In my 2030 vision, Stan and Barbara tell their own story of home, how we all played our part, because at the end of the day, don't we all want to live in a place we call home, with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing what matters to us?

*Wendy Lowder*

*...we all play our part in a positive future*



## I'm not your enemy

I got chatting to a friendly older chap at a community event in Goldthorpe. It was at the time of Brexit and everyone was talking about it.

"I'm a miner," he said. "People came from all over to work in the pits. Scotland, Wales, Ireland, also Poland and even further. We never had a problem with the inter-racial stuff. In the strike, I remember the families of the Polish workers used to send them food parcels. And they would share them with us. Families in Barnsley would've gone hungry without their help. How quick people have forgotten."

That story has stayed with me. That's my Barnsley, where I've lived all my life, a place where we help each other out, no question. We're proud of our spirit.

Now I work on social media for the council. I worry that we're losing sense of ourselves. We share the job of reading

and responding to the messages that are posted on our community pages. It gets on top of me some days. I feel a weight on my chest, it makes me sad and sometimes angry, and it's hard not to see some messages as a personal attack.

I know true Barnsley people wouldn't want to see anyone hurt, and I guess they don't think they're attacking a real human being. We don't expect people to agree with us all the time. Objections voiced respectfully: that's a healthy democracy. And it can be useful. I know people get upset over missed bin collections, about council tax increases, pandemic regulations, or national policy. But it's me who receives the hatred and it feels like the weight of it is on me. I'm called all the names under the sun.

In the past we didn't respond: don't rise to it, we used to think. But now we've got a new approach and a campaign to spread the word: "No place for hate." We support each other to stand up against hate of all kinds. We correct misinformation, remove abusive posts and we're asking everyone to work with us and pledge to combat hate themselves, because I know Barnsley is better than that.

Because it's not just online, this is about how we live together, as individuals and communities, neighbours old and new.

Our street is full of kids, they've got the run of the place. They play happily, they talk and ask about things. My twelve-year-old asked me about the difference between transgender and drag the other day. It was a good conversation. We need more conversations.

In 2030, I see us being more open, interested in and valuing of difference, sharing experiences, and we keep the Barnsley spirit alive.

*Alison Dixon*

*...there's no place for hate*



## Harnessing the power

12:15

N: What time do U get in?

S: Can't believe I'm stuck on train and you got yourself a lift!

N: I've been telling U to join the whatsapp group for ages! Will raise transport issues at our Age Friendly Barnsley meeting... again 😞  
Might have time for a cuppa before heading to the festival?

S: Sounds good. Glad they changed the line-up. I heard Artic Monkeys are on. Hardly spring chickens now. But supposed to be good.

N: Wow! Look at U Steve! Didn't want to go last week and now UR all up to date on who's playing.

S: I may or may not have had help finding the info. Amenable grandson. Again! He loves that band.

N: I'm excited. Haven't been to a concert in years. Used to love them!

S: Same. I'd go to all sorts. Without those internet classes I'd never have seen you staring at me from across the screen... We wouldn't be having our first date 😊

N: Cheeky! We R both a bit old to be giving anyone the eyes. But yes, glad I decided to get involved. BU3A are brill. Can't believe I went so long without the internet. My family and friends live in that iPad! Only way I can stay in contact. I just wish I could convince my sister to get on. Hate the idea of her being so excluded. So wrong people miss out on so much.

S: Never too late to jump on the internet band wagon, IMHO. 70 is the new 55! US president is older than us and he's not stopping. We're a productive force to be reckoned with. You can put that on your list for the next meeting.

N: We know!!! It's just when it comes to paying for social care in this country, suddenly we're the problem... Don't get me started.

S: No, no, I agree. 2030, 22% of the population are 65+. Things are better. But not good enough.

N: At least Barnsley folk realise the human cost. And we're good at making the most of what we've got.

S: Kindness rules. Pulling into the station now. I'll be wearing a carnation.

N: You're not?!

S: I'm not 😊! Look forward to meeting IRL.

Natalie 70, and Steve 75 enjoyed the Later Life Love Festival, but will they meet again?

Jane Holliday and Alec Olsen

...things are better and we can improve



## Life is for living

“Morning! Did you have a nice weekend?”

“It was okay.”

“The weather was beautiful, wasn’t it?” I say quickly. “So, sorry to jump straight into work, but I need to get an update on those actions from the last meeting?”

That might’ve been me in the past. Not someone who doesn’t care; just someone wanting to do the best job possible, someone without time.

But these days, I’m more likely to notice the little words.

“An okay weekend?” I’ll ask. And then I’ll stay open and see if there’s something else.

I’ve learned to listen and respond differently. People in our teams have struggled with so many different things:

financial difficulties, the hidden impacts of disabilities, serious mental health conditions like suicide and abusive relationships. I’m not qualified to support my colleagues, I’m in IT, but I can listen, with empathy and respect, slowing down, giving space for what needs to be said, acknowledging how hard it often is to say what hurts.

“I’ve been through some really, really tough times, and my colleagues have been there for me,” I say. “And I can signpost you to someone who can provide the right support.”

I’m glad that we work somewhere where this is possible and glad that the culture is changing. Creating a ripple effect, is how I describe it. We smooth troubled waters, spread the love, support each other.

Barnsley is a fantastic place, but there are divides and real needs. I see that especially in schools. The more I listen and pay attention to the people around me, the better I think my contribution is as a manager. And as a human being. And that way, we play our part. And it’s more likely we all meet our goals.

Over the last couple of years, I have started competing again on my horse after a thirty-year gap and took on a major cross-country event. I wasn’t sure we’d even get over the first fence; my heart hasn’t thumped that hard in a long time. I took strength from my amazing horse Angel, her bravery, trust and loyalty, and from my dad who stood watching, like he always did all those years ago, as the rain chucked it down. He’s eighty-three now and a total inspiration to everyone around him. And still appreciating life.

Time is precious, we get one life so let’s make the most of it and help others to do the same.

*Rachel Ruston*

*...the more we listen, the better we connect*



## *What makes us stronger*

*Mrs Andrew's boiler has exploded. She's flooded out, desperately calling us, and we can't pick up. Dev Patel is caught in a traffic accident near Junction 37. Queues are backing up into town and on the motorway slip road. Not only are the phones down, the website's frozen and there's no council social media. The police need to contact Adult Social Services and reach a social worker urgently as there's a vulnerable adult at risk. But they can't reach them, or gain access to their file.*

*Then there's a meeting to agree the contract for a major new re-gen project in the town centre and the Teams software doesn't load. The developer walks away. Two hundred and fifty staff are waiting outside Westgate Plaza, going mad that their swipe-cards won't let them in the building. We're grinding to a halt.*

*It's 3am, 29th July, 2030. I wake up sweating, pick up my phone and message our WhatsApp #DreamTeam group of two colleagues – my work family – true friends.*

*– Had that nightmare again.*

*Letting the anxiety go helps me drift back to sleep. In the morning I see the replies.*

*How are you feeling this morning?*

*- Strong cup of coffee on its way?*

*- Give me a bell?*

*When I turn on the computer and the system is running smoothly, I swing around on my chair, reach for my tin of Vaseline lip balm. Taking a deep breath, I think back to the pandemic.*

*In 2020, we had to get everyone working remotely, thousands of staff in a matter of days. We had to implement our new systems to maintain over four hundred new e-forms to support grants access for local businesses closed due to restrictions. We helped families access holiday meals for children, organised volunteers and Covid tests and tracing. It wasn't just about reshaping our services around existing technology or adjustments to the status quo, we took opportunity to rethink, to create, and shape a whole new digital customer services platform.*

*– Cappuccino with extra sprinkles be good!*

*A heart emoji comes back. It's all virtual, but it's the support and teamwork that makes us resilient and something we instil in our managers and teams too.*

*When we speak later in the day, we focus on a recent major cyber-attack. That's what prompted the nightmare, I guess. We get circa eight thousand attacks a year, all dealt with in a calm, confident way, learning as we go.*

*With the gifts of experience and friendship, the practice of reflection and rolling up our sleeves, whatever 2030 brings for our customers, information and digital services and the people of Barnsley, we'll face it together.*

*Sara Hydon, Rachel Ruston, and Kay Deacey-Coulton*

*...personal connections keep us going*



## I get by with a little help from my friends

It's 11am on the dot and Morgan lets herself into Terry's house. "Morning!" She's trying to sound bright and breezy, but it comes out wrong, flat somehow. The bedroom door is ajar, Terry is sat on the edge of the bed, shoulders slumped.

"I'll be raight," he replies, his tone more muted than normal.

"I'll put kettle on. You're okay to get into the shower?"

He nods, stands in slow motion, shuffles to the grab rail.

"And don't forget to have a shave."

Morgan forces herself into action, opens the bedroom window, picks up the compression socks discarded on the floor. They could do with a rinse.

"All good things come to an end..." Terry shakes his head. "It's an exciting day for you, young lady."

"It is," she smiles, but doesn't catch his eye in case she fills up. For nearly four years she's been coming here, twice a day. It's more than she sees her own grandad.

This part-time job has funded her studies to become a social worker, not something she'd ever thought about when she started as a home-carer during the pandemic. That was such a thing. And now she's graduating. As she gets the medication pot ready, she reminds herself, Terry will be fine, he's safe and cared for, enjoying life, actually. This is not the last time she'll see him.

The handover is in place. As they got to know each other, they worked out what was needed, designed the care to suit Terry. They know he's a night owl, doesn't eat breakfast. There's a team around him. Morgan had been nervous at first sitting in a room full of professionals, the GP, council care commissioner, physio, and social worker, but when the nightmare happened and Terry had a serious fall, they'd kept him out of hospital. She's learned so much. They know how well it can work when it works. But it's hard not to worry about the resources.

"I couldn't get you a congratulations card so I'm going to sing you a song," Terry says. Morgan fakes a groan; his guitar is always to hand. Terry's told her a million times he was in a band, played all sorts, weddings, events at the town hall. It's bound to be the Beatles.

"Wait," she says, fishing out her phone. "Can I record it?"

"Wanna bet! I'll be going viral."

*Sharon Graham*

*...well cared for and enjoying life*



## Acting on hope

I know that behind doors, someone is playing Grand Theft Auto with a young person with learning difficulties. There's been a drop in karaoke and volunteers and friends belting out Shania Twain. Instead, neighbours are delivering random items of shopping to those who can't get out. A poster offering supervised playtime is zip-tied to the railings of a playpark. There's a community public space group out tending the plants along the paths. And I see the results of a group litter pick: bags and bags of rubbish neatly tied and propped up ready for collection.

Glimpses of people looking out for each other are everywhere. Somewhere along the road to 2030, there was a shift. We gave up muttering, "Someone should do something about that!" We began to realise that sometimes that someone was us. No-one told us to lend a hand – we did it because it needed to be done. We held ourselves together.

The small and enduring connections matter. Many years ago, I volunteered for a local transport project and gave a lift to Alex, a young autistic man who lived near me, who was on a training scheme. I didn't have much in common with him, but we would listen to the car stereo, Radio 2, every day. We never knew what Chris Evans would play next. It was fun and it cemented a bond between me, Alex and his family. The carpool lasted five years. We still exchange Christmas cards.

Now I start to see that I'm slowly doing myself out of a job. As the manager of the Volunteer Centre at Barnsley CVS, the work we've put in to build capacity and support community action is yielding positive success. Volunteering is flexible, you can do what suits you, when it suits. And you can passport your skills, add it to your CV and gain recognisable experience.

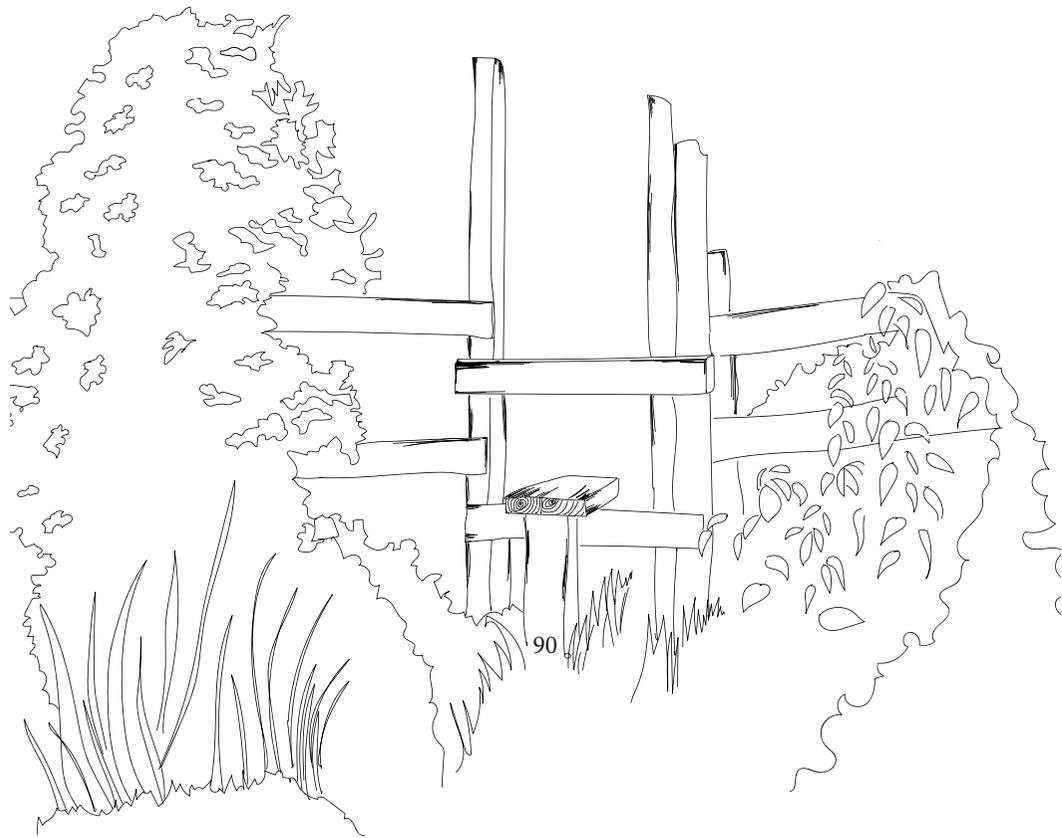
I've benefitted from so many inspiring people doing this kind of work in the community, so many ideas and initiatives have accumulated and grown. The way we acted at our best in the pandemic stuck. The Barnsley way is practical, sincere, and kind. For me, hope is in the detail, on the edges, not shouting how good we are, or wanting to take centre stage.

We just do it ourselves, and I couldn't be prouder.

*Rachel Neale*

*...we need to shout louder about how good we are*

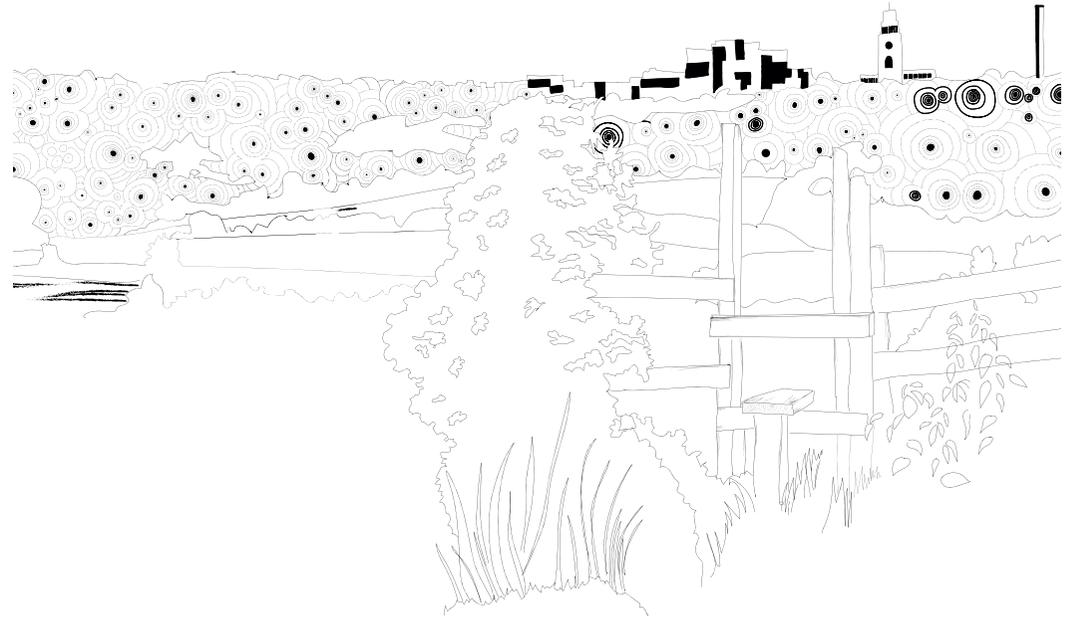
*Add your 2030 story here...*



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*...together our stories are powerful*

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## Growing Barnsley

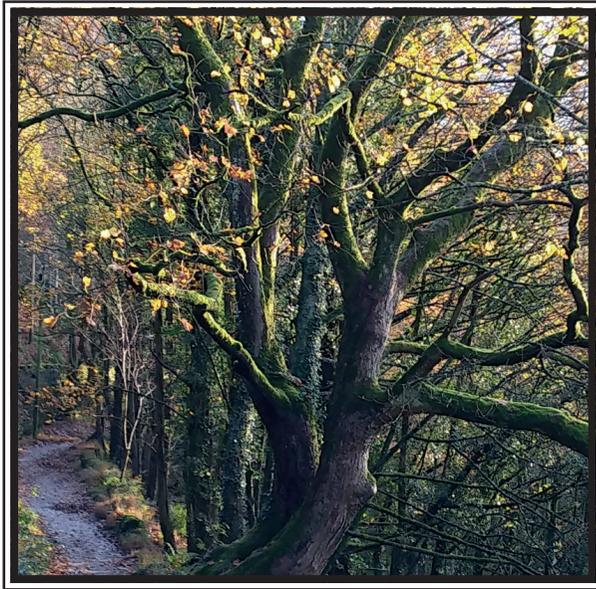
### Barnsley is open for business

Local businesses are thriving through early-stage support and opportunities to grow.

Barnsley is known as a great place to invest, where businesses and organisations provide diverse and secure employment opportunities, contributing to an economy that benefits everyone.

People have a wider choice of quality, affordable and sustainable housing that suits their needs and lifestyle.

Barnsley has significantly increased the number of people, businesses and organisations that are able to access and use digital resources, benefitting all aspects of daily life.



## The pivot

There's a moment when you realise you can't see the path through the forest; the trees and the wood blur. At that point, you might see me shaking my head or pacing about, feeling thwarted. We could've spent months on a project, put in the time, tried different options, asked an expert, and whatever it is, it's not working. The effort outweighs the benefits, the law of diminishing returns has kicked in, and I realise it's time to stop, to change direction.

I allow the relief to sink in. Letting go of the frustration makes me feel lighter and I know that's a collective thing. The respite allows the team to regroup; we can go again. In IT, pace matters, but there's an acceptance that if we want innovation, it carries the risk of failure. Whatever it was, I tell myself, there was a good reason to do it, but let's learn and not do it again.

That's in my DNA. I stop as many things as I start. I've made mistakes and sometimes it takes a while to see where to go next. I worked in a bank for ten years before I joined the council. I was really busy and didn't notice I wasn't happy. It was the best move I ever made. Over the last few years, I realised I had to stop smoking and lose weight. Getting fit was a massive effort but it set me on a different direction. I'm glad I pushed myself, turned things around.

For Barnsley 2030, likewise. We need to keep on our toes in order to thrive. I deeply believe that Barnsley is a place where you can fulfil your aspirations, to do something you're good at and that makes you happy; something that sustains you over time. But opportunities can be fleeting, you have to grab them, and sometimes make them.

My son has just finished college and his dream job is a park ranger. Like many youngsters it's all pretty uncertain, but in 2030 I imagine him working in or around Barnsley doing what he loves.

My oldest daughter is a care worker; she's making that her career. I've also got a two-year-old. I've no idea what he'll get up to, but I'm sure they'll all grow and change as I have.

The more we change, the easier change gets. They'll be proud of Barnsley and the possibilities it offers.

*Dave Robinson*

*...we can reach our aspirations here*



## Use it or lose it!

We set out earlier than usual for our Saturday tradition, spending time at the local market.

The walk there is prettier now. Between the Store Front Initiatives and the Green Space groups, Silkstone (Penistone) has had a makeover, and it looks better every day.

My wife veers off. She likes to amble round the stalls, greeting the familiar faces. I head to the artisan bread stall, miles better than the sliced stuff we've had delivered to our door for years by the online supermarket.

The stall's not set up yet, so I wander down a few others and get chatting with a woman selling socks. I blink and I'm buying some stripy wellie socks for my daughters, thick walking boot ones for my wife, and a couple of pairs for me.

There's a cracking gift stall where I buy a bird box. I get lemon drops and cubes of fudge in brown paper bags from the sweet stall. I've yet to make a purchase from Beryl's Bunnies, but who knows?

Since lockdown, our habits have changed and as a result we feel more connected to our local centre. I see our community spirit continuing to grow in the years to 2030, with more people and businesses investing where they live. The council put £6.5 million into improving the surrounding towns and villages, giving grants for shops and removing grot spots. How a place looks influences how we feel about it and what we do. We've been here ten years and we've no plans to move house.

We need everyone to value their local centres. If we don't, they won't exist. It'll be a challenge to make sure this vibrancy is replicated across the borough. Every community has its tensions, but Barnsley is on the up; there's a strong base to build on.

My wife joins me as the bread stall opens. The woman running it greets us cheerfully, offering a taster of her new garlic ciabatta. "Kept some at home of course," she says, "we're having it for tea with this home-made lasagne."

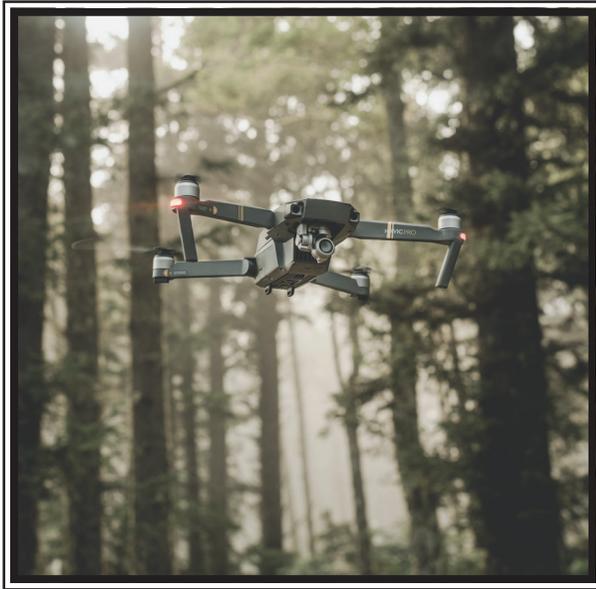
Also for sale, I see.

We pick up our usual loaves, and some of her freshly made garlic bread, and my wife says that she fancies lasagne now too. We all laugh and I wonder how many other families will be having lasagne and garlic bread for tea.

Maybe we spent more than we intended, but, honestly, I'd rather our money goes back into supporting our community.

*Phil Hollingsworth*

*...community spirit will continue to grow*



## *The gold of Goldthorpe*

*It takes time to set up a drone and Dave is a perfectionist. He makes sure everything is just right. It's the 25th August 2030 and Dave's been hired to take the after pictures for the regeneration project. All set up now, the drone soars high above the Dearne.*

*Zooming over Goldthorpe's Tiny Forest, a densely planted, lush green medley, Dave is mesmerised. Thinking back to the pictures he took of the Dearne before, he can't believe the difference. The forest grew really fast, no chemicals were used, it's completely natural.*

*Having stood in the forest himself, he knows it's the size of a tennis court. From the drone, it looks like a postage stamp. Dave grins. Being an environmentalist, he sees this little patch working hard, breathing goodness into the air, and eating more than its fair share of carbon.*

*The drone moves across a sustainably-built housing development. Patches of emerald and rich clay roof tiles splash onto the monitor. As it swoops over Phoenix Park, he sees the final stages of a new travel route and children enjoying outdoor play together. Dave recognises the old Horse and Groom Pub site. It's transformed into a hive of activity.*

*The drone speeds up, capturing images from all over the surrounding villages. The whole valley feels alive. "Is that everything?" he asks, light-headed and dizzy with visual details.*

*"Don't forget the Playhouse," Claire replies.*

*Dave soars the drone back across town, taking pictures of the theatre. It's a stunning building. He feels lifted and he hasn't even been inside, but he can see the new event area in the park, where a group is setting up a stage for a show. "I think we've got it all. I can see why more people are coming."*

*Claire smiles. "Yeah, we love it here, you should bring the family, there's lots to explore."*

*"Maybe I will," Dave replies. "I remember back in 2021, some people thought the plans were so ambitious, they weren't sure you'd get it all done."*

*Claire smiles again. "True. We've managed to get real money invested into the place. It's never easy, but people care, we're still on the up."*

*Genuinely inquisitive, Dave asks, "But what made the difference, d'you think?"*

*"Working together, is the one thing we'd all say," Claire reflects. "But we wanted to move forward on all fronts; we wanted all aspects of the change to happen, and we stuck to it. It all matters."*

*The Dearne Team*

*...change is real and rapid*



## *The front foot*

*Stopping at number 42, Paula takes a mental note, files a picture of the window. The lace curtain is ragged. Through it, she can see piles of papers and shoe boxes, bags of clothes. Possible hoarder? It might be nothing, but the image is whizzed off to her colleague in the private sector housing team. They are tenacious; they'll find out the story, get in there before the problem escalates.*

*Paula's walking into town to meet a friend, her eyes peeled for any hint of dilapidation. Well, not quite. But community wardens are never off duty. Where there's blight, graffiti or a sign of neglect, there can be a spiral of decline. She's a devil for the visual detail.*

*Not far from the station, a young woman with no shoes draws her attention. Then there's shouting, confusion, the woman seems to have lost her son. A newsagent comes across claiming the woman stole two Mars bars. Paula works with the police community support officers; she knows who to call.*

*Slowly sitting down on the pavement beside the woman, Paula asks, "What's your name, love?"*

*Sally's life is chaotic. There's a son in care and signs of substance misuse. Paula understands why people might see the situation as risky, might cross the road, could imagine this sort of commotion happens a lot, when it doesn't.*

*From the newsagent's point of view, maybe incidents like this make the town centre seem less safe. Paula stays schtum. She knows the facts don't match the perception of crime. It's actually the opposite. For the last ten years, the stats show crime has fallen in Barnsley and public confidence has increased.*

*It's been a tricky balancing act. Some people want the authorities to take a harder-line enforcement approach. They don't want to see Sally and all her complexity. The council has a duty to support all citizens and, at the same time, to better the economy and make sure it's a lively, welcoming town for people to enjoy. It's both/and Paula thinks; people need to take a more rounded view.*

*At the edges, nothing is that simple. We can be strong one day, vulnerable the next, and we all live here. We all need to feel safe, be safe.*

*The newsagent shrugs. "Pay me for the chocolate next time."*

*That's Barnsley 2030 for you, Paula thinks. Handing over the baton to the PCSO, she imagines a sweet frothy cappuccino and a good chinwag waiting for her.*

Paul Brannan

*...a safer place for everyone*



## Mapping the future

I remember looking over at the table next to us and thinking, bloody hell, this is massive. The size of our small Barnsley contingent somehow made the chances of us winning seem less likely. I was in awe, sat in this stunning hall in London at the National Awards for the Royal Institute of British Architects. Barnsley, a place most people down South wouldn't be able to point to on a map, was nominated for a prize in recognition of community involvement in the Glass Works development.

Winning that first award was a classic underdog story. I couldn't have been prouder of the team, of everyone who helped make it happen – a real council group effort working in partnership with the private sector in so many ways. The scheme's now won thirteen awards with more in the pipeline. I think that's given us momentum and drive to continue.

My 2030 vision is to deliver more like this.

To be successful, a level of risk is necessary. We've learnt that you have to push boundaries to create something worthwhile. There were plenty of obstacles in the planning process for the new town centre, such as complex legal negotiations on shifting sands, stores changing their minds and threatening to pull out, an ever-changing national climate, plus a global pandemic to contend with. When you're right in the thick of it, it's impossible to have all the answers. This weekend I'm still on tenterhooks about one of our operators picking up the keys to a building; with Covid things can change so quickly.

Those moments can feel like an uphill battle. I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro after my sister died of breast cancer in 2019. The trip raised money for a charity supporting young women who had experienced exploitation in South Yorkshire. The support team were so skilled at managing risk. I learned a lot and ended up helping them too. It's hard for everyone; there are always challenges that you can never predict, but it is about how to work around them and address issues collectively.

That's the unpredictability of life. I think our relationships with family, friends and colleagues are what help us through. They give us, and they give me, the energy to push on to 2030 and beyond. It was through our strong community relationships that we became award winners.

Those moments show that we intend to make our mark, put Barnsley on the map and keep it there.

*Matt Gladstone*

*...we punch above our weight*



## Art of the possible

There are human beings at the heart of every company. In contrast to the hugely technical nature of their work, people in technology-based start-ups can be warm and people-focused. By working collaboratively, we've created fertile ground for new businesses to grow and enabled tech to be a force for good.

My job has been focused on creating a welcoming and open-minded digital hub to support start-ups and bring investment. In 2026, there will be our two stunning buildings, Barnsley College's SciTech hub for digital learning, a hive of activity in the regenerated town centre, and an emerging digital campus called The Seam. But, for me, the most important thing has been getting the environment right.

Business support in the tech sector isn't linear. An enterprise might start really slowly, not even making much money at

first, or get tangled up in all manner of challenges. So, we help clear the way, tackling the weeds that might stifle growth.

Talented local people like Gary, someone who spotted an opportunity for an app to help people manage debt, are creating new companies to tackle real problems. We were delighted to help out his business with whatever was needed. Then, when the company finally got FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) approval to enter the market, we celebrated with them. They've now raised over a million pounds of investment to take the next steps in their scale-up journey.

And to stretch the metaphor, we focus on nurturing the soil. So when Julie wanted to start a coffee business, it wasn't strictly one of our target areas, but we said, why not test trade here in the DMC? She brought people together with a friendly approach that was essential in creating a network of businesses on similar journeys. It gave the DMC a human face and fuels us in so many ways.

We feel like we are on our own adventure alongside our businesses, changing and adapting. We've learnt about how to create the conditions for growth from our partners in a network of European cities. Who'd have thought that Barnsley would find such good connections in Helsinki, Tallinn and smaller places like Nyiregyhaza in Hungary; friends all sharing and learning. It broadens our horizons and puts us on the map!

Barnsley needs to shift its economic base and be the best town it can be in a region that's on the up. We need more and better jobs that will be here long-term. We'll be growing more of our own and in 2030, along with more green shoots, many will be in full bloom.

*Tracey Johnson*

*...our businesses are growing and adapting*



## The life I want to live

I'm meeting my friends in a wine bar in Barnsley town centre and I'll be wearing my favourite kaftan. It's multicoloured with a floral print and a geometric trim. It's from Zara and it says glamour and good times. I feel super comfortable in that outfit, in that environment, ready to enjoy myself.

If we'd been meeting earlier, we might have gone to a Victorian style tearoom in the Arcade or one of the other cafés that have sprung up. I'd have thought a lot about what I wore. That's me; I love clothes. I might have gone for my shoes designed by Orla Kiely, tan leather with her classic imprint on the sole, and a modern jacket. Wherever I go, whether I'm taking my mum to a hospital appointment or minuting a meeting, I like to get the outfit right. The day seems to go better. It helps me to focus on the moment, do what I'm there to do.

Not all my friends live in Barnsley and, in the past, we might have met up in Leeds or had a day out in York. Now it's not unusual to meet in the town centre where there are places for all age groups. It's lost some of the Friday night pub crawl heavy drinking feel, which was pretty deep rooted and included me when I was younger. Barnsley is more than that. The focus is less on getting drunk and more on the social connections, enjoying ourselves. It takes time to change as individuals and as a place, like stopping smoking, but we all benefit when it happens.

In my late teens, I started buying unusual items and developed a bit of a flair for it. I've always worked and can afford it, so why not look good and feel good? When two of our team members at work got married, a colleague asked my advice and I said what I always say: don't dress for the occasion, wear what feels comfortable. We all need that little something to express ourselves. For me this is my clothes; they bring me confidence and help me express myself.

Tomorrow, I'll be walking across the fields to a village pub in Cawthorne with my husband. It takes about half an hour from Darton, so I'll be wearing a nice pair of boots, leggings and a comfy puffa.

*Anne Firth*

*...you can enjoy a great life here*



## A different seam

We are always building on our heritage, so it's right that our next step in regenerating the town centre is called The Seam. We may no longer mine coal, but there's a rich seam of creative potential here.

We're working hard to create a new sense of community in the town centre. The plans are for an urban park, high quality low carbon homes, a new home for the digital campus – a testbed for new ideas and smart technologies. There'll be commercial opportunities, links to the college, learning and skills, growth space for businesses, a transport hub and an hotel. There's space for innovation so everyone can develop and flourish.

We've been digging away at this for a while now and while the leap from mining to digital technology feels immense, in some ways our approach is the same. We're working

together, teams of people putting in the hours, dealing with uncertainty and risk, combining skills and expertise. It's what makes us strong. The results of our labour will provide jobs, feed families, and build communities in new ways.

Developments like this are bigger than any individual or single organisation. They take time, ingenuity, persistence, and deep commitment. We plan for obstacles, collaborate to find ways to overcome them. Many departments and partner organisations have worked to get us this far. There's a shared focus and intention. One of the principles of the development is people first, and that means a lot to me.

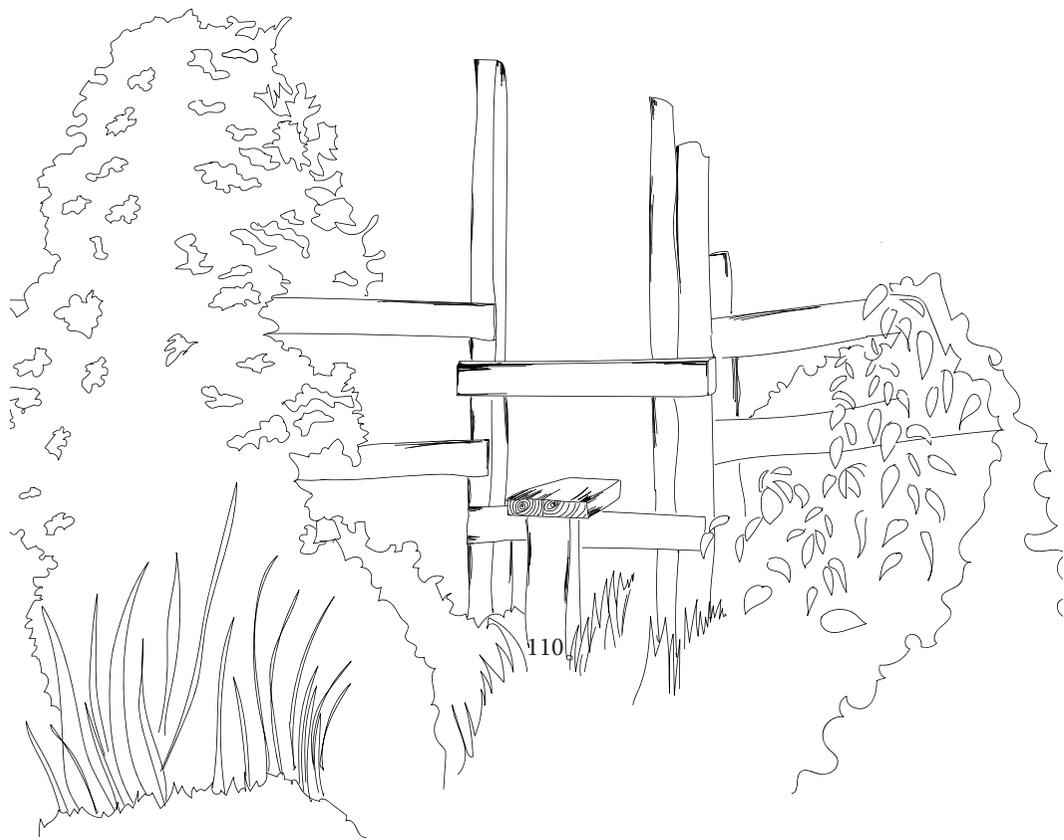
I'm grateful for the chance to spend my days transforming the borough. I'm from Barnsley, and I'm proud of making a positive impact in our town and playing my part in our future. It's not only the town centre, we're working on good growth across our towns. Levering in resources is always the hard part but we're making it happen, building on the confidence generated by the Glass Works and our beautiful Lightbox library. Barnsley's potential hasn't been fully tapped yet and there's more to do.

Our 2030 vision is about people making things possible for others. We use the word transformation a lot, but I think we really transform ourselves through work like this.

*Paul Clifford*

*...I'm proud of this place, and the work we do*

*Add your 2030 story here...*



110

*...together our stories are powerful*

111



## The land of the possible

### **possible (adj.)**

“that may be, capable of existing, occurring, or being done,” mid-14c., from Old French possible and directly from Latin possibilis “that can be done,” from posse “be able” or “to have power”.

### **possible (n.)**

“that which may take place or come into being,” 1640s.

It's 2030

“You're not from round here” they still say.  
And they're right.

Barnsley is not Blayney,  
Old Norse is not Gaelic.  
The “Berne” storehouse and “Lay” field  
Have a different root to Cabra, my mucky place.  
So why do I feel at home,  
Like I'm living in the landscapes of my childhood?

### **My Blayney**

I come from a place of possibilities.  
My father wove plays out of air,  
My mother sewed scraps into costumes,  
Farmers tended fields into milk,  
Grafted a scrap of ground into a meeting space,  
Ideas into things,  
Eyes opened through adventures.



But Barnsley is my place now.  
A place where people find their power  
Where people make things possible.  
And these are my people.

A teacher started a choir,  
Now a thousand young voices rise to the rafters of a new  
centre for song.

A curator welcomed those who had come from afar,  
Now a café is filled with culture and colour and feels like  
home for even the strangest of strangers.

A young renegade threw in the grenade of a skateboard park  
just on the edge of town  
Now the clatter of wheels on ramps echoes through the  
evening streets.

A digital whizz imagined a place resting above seams of  
earth.  
Now it's a living lab neighbourhood where people mine for  
knowledge.

A crazy-head built a recording space in the forest  
Now the games of the world are soundtracked in Barnsley.

“But what on earth did you do?” people ask.

Listen.  
Believe.  
Provoke.  
Cajole.  
Console.  
Unlock.  
Resource.  
Befriend.



That's all we did.

Barnsley and Blayney are different worlds,  
But the bluebells are the same.

They just need sunshine, water, earth to nourish, and some  
help to keep the weeds away.

We'll be working here forever, say the bluebells, waving.

'Sithi', they say.

*Kathy McArdle*

## Let's make 2030 happen!

You can add your own story – here's some top tips for storytelling

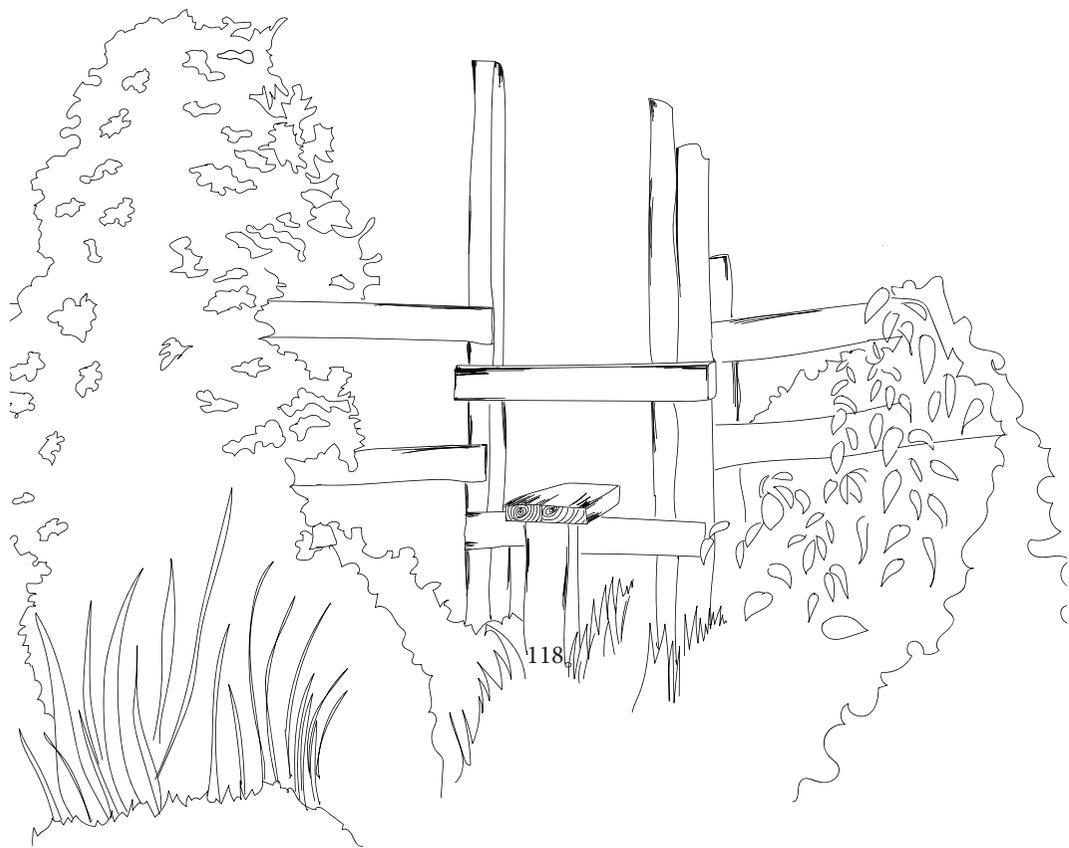
We want more people to get involved and tell their stories. This book is designed for people to add their own stories and there will be lots of activities happening to support this.

Copies will be in all the Barnsley libraries and a gloriously oversized book will be touring the borough. Many of the stories you've read are by first time storytellers. Working with the team at Shared Press, we use some simple story tools and questions to help you get the basics of your story together. We hope you find them useful.

### Story questions

1. Which theme or ambition from the Barnsley 2030 vision do you most want to see happen?
2. Pick a moment that illustrates that. It could be something you imagine happening in the future that doesn't happen now, or something positive that exists but could grow into something special in the future. Remember to add in why this change matters to you.
3. Imagine that moment when the future we want to see happens. It's great to add into your story some small details – what can you see, a colour, a smell, how were you feeling? Something to help the reader picture the future of Barnsley.
4. What was the obstacle you or people in Barnsley had to overcome, a challenge or struggle, to make that bit of the vision happen? We need to know the bit that was difficult for you!
5. Finally what changed? And what did you learn? It might be an ongoing situation, that's okay. What are your specific hopes for the 2030 future?

*Add your 2030 story here...*



118

*...together our stories are powerful*

119

## Book club questions

We hope the stories will help everyone working in Barnsley focus on the 2030 vision. As we visualise the future we want to see, the more likely it is to happen. To help you reflect on the stories, to imagine the future you want to see and to talk to your family, friends or colleagues about what you've read, here are some book club style questions.

What **stories stand out or are the most surprising**? Notice your own reactions, which ones resonate, make you stop and think?

### **What stories inspire you?**

Which stories most **reflect how you see yourself and others at home or at work**?

Where are **our strengths in Barnsley**? Where might we need to make a real shift?

What's your **experience of making change**?  
How can we make sure these positive changes are achieved?

Can you highlight what's already happening as part of the vision, the **green shoots of change**?

What are the stories you tell yourself about **your life and work and why it's important**?

What stories could you tell your colleagues, your friends, family and communities that **build momentum** toward change?

**What next steps do you want to take?** What if anything is stopping you from getting started?  
What can you do to change this?

## Stories that Matter

Barnsley Council has worked with Dawn Reeves of Shared Press on this project. Shared Press is an independent publisher and social enterprise with a remit to share stories that engage with the sharp edges and messy boundaries of modern life, give voice to new writers who care about ideas and innovation, and inspire new creative conversations with readers. We focus on public life and public services.

### **About Dawn Reeves – Director**

Dawn is a story activist, creative facilitator, public services expert and writer. A former director in a large public sector organisation, she now works with a range of clients looking for creative approaches to making change happen. Her energy and enthusiasm for this work come from a deep curiosity about the world and a drive to collaborate. She's a published novelist, has written for the Guardian and was the writer-in-residence at the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

Contact her via [dawn@dawnreeves.com](mailto:dawn@dawnreeves.com)

### **More from Shared Press**

It's a small list, but it's perfectly formed and it's growing...

In our shoes – Experiences of young people in the criminal justice system (December 2021)

One Story – Councils, covid and better futures (March 2021)

The Threads that Bind – System leadership in Bradford (January 2019)

Town Hall – Buildings, people and power (December 2018)

This Leader Can (December 2018)

Boldly and Rightly – Public Service in Bexley (June 2018)

We Know What We Are – Thriller (November 2017)

Holding Up the Mirror – True stories of public service in a post-truth world (October 2017)

Under the Skin: Stories about the culture of place for Grant Thornton LLP (October 2016)

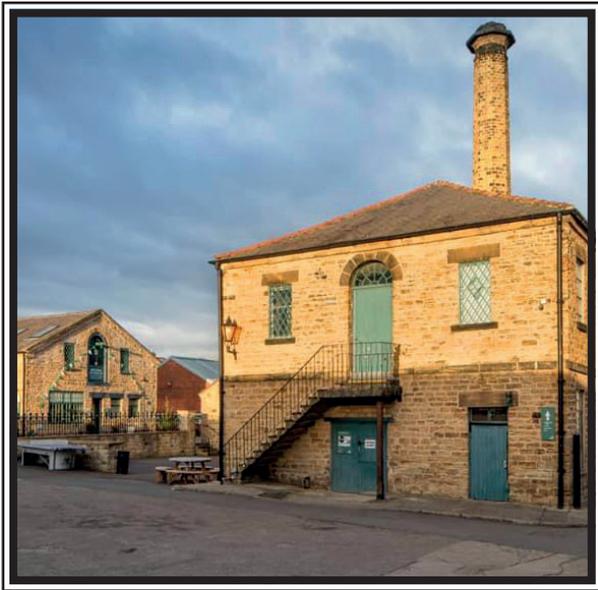
Walk Tall – Being a 21st century public servant (May 2016)

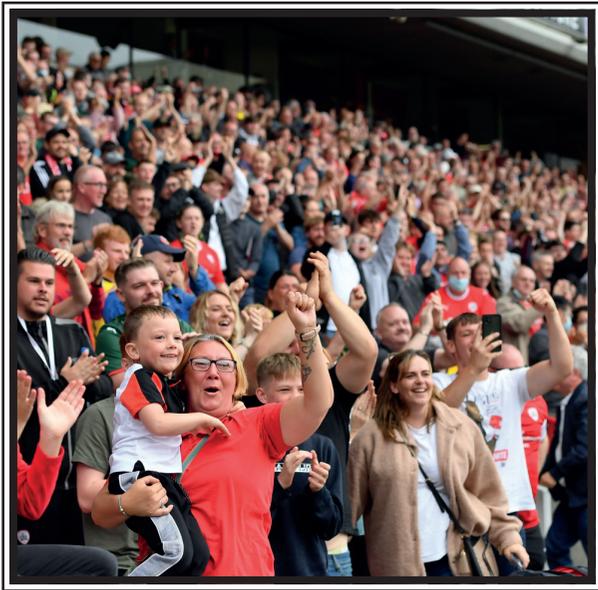
Making Our Mark (June 2015 plus global edition June 2016)

Change the Ending – Flash fiction (September 2014)

Hard Change – Thriller (March 2013)

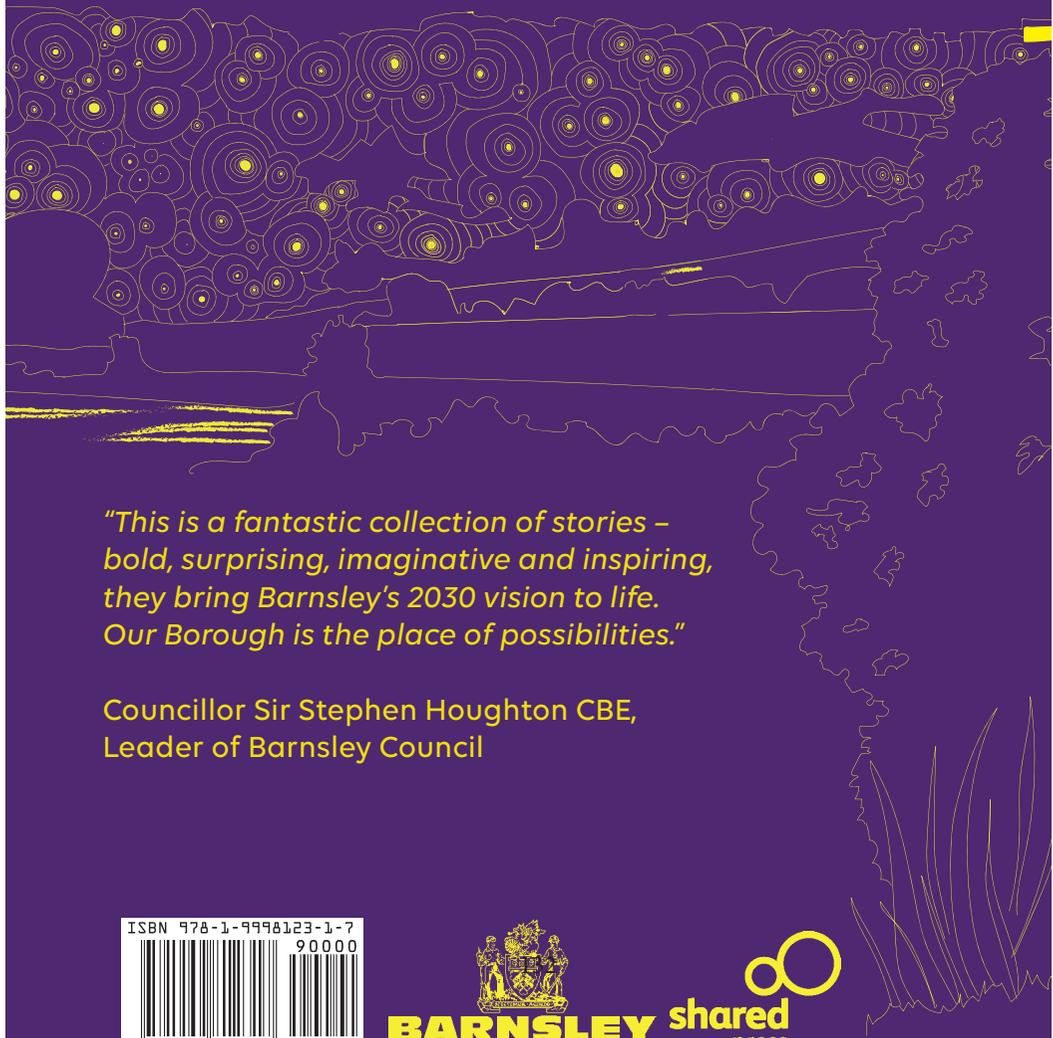
**[www.sharedpress.co.uk](http://www.sharedpress.co.uk)**











*"This is a fantastic collection of stories – bold, surprising, imaginative and inspiring, they bring Barnsley's 2030 vision to life. Our Borough is the place of possibilities."*

Councillor Sir Stephen Houghton CBE,  
Leader of Barnsley Council

