



GLOUCESTER FM

Report 2005 - 2006



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CEED

Job Centre Plus

Thank you to everyone who came to the studio to provide, music, news, information, and advice and interacted with the community live on air.

Gloucester FM Report 2005 - 2006

On Thursday 10 November 2005 I received the news the board and GFM listeners had been waiting for. GFM became one of the first 61 Community radio station in the United Kingdom to be awarded a full time community radio license to broadcast 24/7, 365.



Since securing the license there have been numerous questions about what type of station GFM will be and how is it going to be different to the other radio stations already broadcasting to the people of Gloucestershire.

Firstly, the BBC is subsidised by license fees most people pay to the government each year, Severn Sound is a privately owned company that generates revenue via advertising, and both stations we believe have different aims and objectives to GFM.

Secondly, everyone who is actively involved as a presenter or volunteer is giving his / her time free, presenters and volunteers are not paid, thus ensuring community radio stations remain true to the ethos of local people running their own radio stations, *with the people for the people*, that has been GFM's aim. GFM has been able to offer local people from the community the opportunity to get involved and make and broadcast programmes that are aimed primarily at the BME communities, but not exclusively.

Thirdly, GFM broadcast primarily to the people who live in Gloucester, not the county of Gloucestershire and only plays music of black origin. Nevertheless, we are aware that there are listeners in the outside the city of Gloucester due to GFM streaming audio via its website www.gloucesterfm.com.

Furthermore, community radio stations awarded full time licenses have up to two years before they have to commence full time broadcast.

The following is an insight into community radio that we must keep repeating to clarify the difference between community radio stations and other radio stations locally and nationally.

*“Community radio stations are a new tier of not for profit broadcasters, owned and run by local people, mostly volunteers which enable communities throughout the UK to use the medium of radio to create new opportunities for regeneration, employment, learning, social cohesion and inclusion as well as cultural and creative expression”. **Airflash Magazine, Community Media Association 2005.***

Gloucester FM is a registered voluntary not profit organisation limited by guarantee. Access licence's are generally awarded to organisations or groups that provide access to the radio airwaves to communities that might be excluded from main stream radio programmes broadcast on their local radio station/s, or it can be proved that there is a need to provide communities with access to the radio airwaves to make and broadcast programmes by members of the local community that meet the needs of the community.

Summary

At 8.00am on Friday 21 July 2006, Gloucester FM (96.6) www.gloucesterfm.com created history in Gloucester. This was the start of full time community radio broadcasting in Gloucester, a community radio station organised and run by people from the community it intends to serve, primarily the inhabitants of the city of Gloucester. Unfortunately, the launch was not afforded the publicity by some companies that have been given to the regeneration plans for Gloucester, which was disappointing. GFM has the potential to engage and inform its Multi Cultural listeners of future plans to regenerate the city that we all live in. The Citizen newspaper continues to provide support and on behalf on the board I say thank you to Ian Mean, the editor.

Since starting full time broadcast on Friday 21 July to Thursday 31 August 2006 there were 4,524.061 hits on the website and 118.013 page hits and the web cam has once again proved to be very popular with the community. We have had 6420 text messages, 706 emails and 1432 phone calls. We hope to be able to raise funds to purchase a telephone system that collects and saves the texts and telephone calls received in each programme.

The work and preparation for this historic day took up most of the board's time, having decided to ensure a gradual growth of GFM by taking on the managerial responsibilities of setting up and running GFM full time. In the board's opinion it was not feasible to seek funds to employ staff, which might not secure the funds to deliver the start of the full time community radio broadcast on 21 July 2006.

It was incumbent on the board that all the money raised went on the development of GFM community radio station. From the board's perspective having to pay

staff and then be in a position of not being able to pay increased running costs, and not being able to develop GFM slowly, was not feasible

The board's main priority was to secure funds for a new studio, thus freeing up the old studio for training, off air production work and the emergency broadcast back up studio. The employment of staff to manage the running of GFM full time would significantly increase the running cost of GFM. With this in mind the board talked to other voluntary organisations and found that more often than not when a manager was employed, the additional cost of paying wages can lead to financial meltdown for the organisation. Sooner or later it becomes clear that it is not cost effective to have volunteers and paid staff, unless the paid staff secures the funds to pay his / her and all the other staff wages.

Eventually, if funds are not forthcoming the manager is made redundant and the organisations then faces financial closure, the revenue generated has more or less gone on paying the wages of staff and not the running of the organisation. The board does not want to find itself in the situation of having to pay staff and GFM running costs, then having to decide which to pay. There would not be a decision to make, the sustainability of GFM is crucial to the community, and the board could not justify paying wages, when the money could pay the running cost to keep GFM on air.

I personally question the need for full time paid staff, with the right volunteers being prepared to do specific tasks, GFM can become a radio station run by people from the community who want to be involved because they want to, *"With the people for the people"* is the aim.

Nevertheless, the boards recognises that staff might be required, as stated in GFM's business plan, and it is the boards intention, to seek funds when it is viable to employ a Station Manager, who will in turn seek funds for full time running costs and his or her wages and that of a Marketing Manager, Administrator and a part time Technical Assistant.

The board of directors set about it's task of delivering full time community radio broadcasting to it's listeners with enthusiasm, but the planned on air date for the start of the full time broadcast on 21 July nearly did not happen. The request for GFM's new frequency was sent to Ofcom in January 2006.

Ofcom recommend that it be submitted at least four months before the proposed launch date. GFM gave six months notice. This was one of the most noticeable changes moving from 28 days to full time broadcast, unfortunately for the board, Ofcom did not just have GFM's application to process and give frequency clearance to, but a number of the other 60 stations hence the delay.

When GFM broadcasted for 28 days, confirmation of the license was normally received in January for July broadcast. The clearance for the old 106.7 frequency was normally received in May. This gave the board approximately seven months to generate funds for the 28 day broadcast.

Six weeks before broadcast the board received GFM's new frequency of 96.6. The transmitter could not be built until the frequency was cleared; there were no guarantees it would be completed, tested, installed and commissioned to Ofcom guidelines by the 21 July. With this uncertainty and the short lead up time the board could not really market the launch of the full time broadcast like previous years to attract sponsors and advertisers. However, we thank Leon Brown for securing two months sponsorship for the Talcum Powder Soul Show.

We must also thank Jason Dunsford, White City Community Project for securing the advertising campaign for Gloucestershire Neighbourhood College for GFM for nine months. It has been pleasing to receive feedback from members of the community who made enquires and took up the training on offer after hearing the advert on GFM.

With the help of Sue Blackmon and Rosemary Hamar, GFM was able to secure funding to runs its Open College Network accredited 5-day radio production-training course that is delivered by Kevin Philemon and the team from Ceed. However, for the second consecutive year some of those who had expressed a desire to take up the training were not able to attend for various reasons, the most common one were volunteers not being able to get time off work to attend if they were employed.

In future consideration will be given to running the course in the evening over a longer period to accommodate those who are not able to take up the training during the day. GFM's in house training team did an excellent job training and supporting new and exiting presenters on the use of the new equipment, thank you to every one of you.

During the CEED training volunteers take part in practical activities that are aired during broadcast that gives them the opportunity to put into practise what they have learnt. The following attended and completed the training: Ellie Haile, Luke Roberts, Marcus Perry, Mark Mills, Kayla Patterson, Lloyd Morris, Shane Fishley, Andrew Gillespie, and Chenaide Williams.



Carol Francis organised training and co-ordinated volunteers on a day to day basis during what was a difficult training week with radio and IT engineers carrying out the final tests and repairs to studio 1 and 2. Thank you Carol

Glen Brown, Martin Rafferty and I worked on weekends to install the new studio; by doing it our selves GFM was able to save on the installation costs, which was to prove invaluable.

There are times when things are carried out that you do not get the chance to publicly thank someone for. I truly believe that without Martin Rafferty's help on the weekends, including the Saturday before he went on holiday, it would have cost GFM a serious amount of money to get the studio installed by professionals, thank you for your help Martin it was really appreciated.

With the new studio came new IT equipment and software, GFM secured funding for the new IT equipment from Gloucester Challenging Attitudes Partnership. We are grateful to Brenda Yearwood for the help and support in securing the funding and placing the order with Enco.

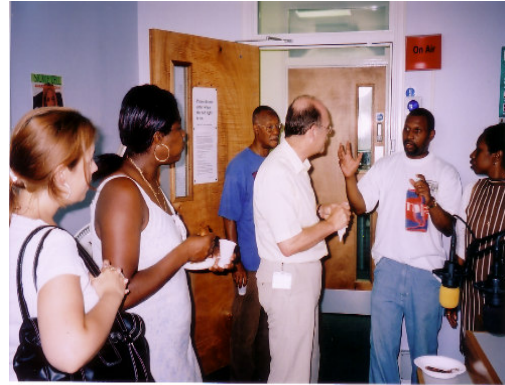
GFM licensed music scheduler software Power Gold. One of the reasons for purchasing the music scheduler was to stop the same track from playing at the same time every day. I know our listeners notice these things. It was hoped that there would be a number of people who would learn about the setting up and use of the music scheduler that would become crucial to the station indent and the running of the station when presenters are not available.

Unfortunately, it was difficult for others to take up the opportunity and we were running out of time and things had to be sorted. We are extremely lucky to have a volunteer with the skills and experience of Jerry Hipkiss. Jerry took responsibility for sorting out the numerous genres of black music categories and loading new music into GFM's music library and became very skilled in the use of Power Gold. Mr Hipkiss, AKA Mr Radio, thank you for your time, effort and dedication to helping GFM to serve our community.

July 17, GFM's new aerials were put up and the transmitter installed ready for Ofcom Engineers to inspect. Sadly, the new transmitter developed problems while being tested and gradually got worst the night before the start of full time broadcast. Fortunately, the staff at Radica Broadcasting, in particular Rob Spiers and the team worked through the night to install a temporary transmitter to get FM on air at 8.00am 21 July 2006, it was great to hear Jerry Hipkiss voice loud and clear that morning.



It was pleasing to know that we could call on a long time supporter for help when we needed it, on behalf of the board I sincerely thank Evadney Campbell MBE for preparing GFM's press release that was sent out inviting business and organisation to our launch party. Nevertheless, I must express our disappointment that more people did not attend the launch party, was this a sign of things to come.



I will also express our gratitude to Community Counts for the grant awarded in 2004 for the transmitter. The grant enabled GFM to place an order with Radica Broadcasting in 2004; however, the funds could not be activated until the full time license was secured in 2005. This was a major part of full time broadcast that GFM had secured funding for that enabled us to move towards seeking funding for a new studio.

GFM already had a broadcasting studio that we could have used if we did not secure funding for a new studio that would be more suited to full time broadcasting. The board knew the community was expecting GFM to commence broadcast in the summer of 2006. We also knew we could be on air in the summer, but it was imperative to have two studios for reason previously mentioned.

Securing the funds for a brand new radio broadcasting studio took up most of the boards time, not knowing if funds would be secured caused a great deal of anxiety, However, some support was at hand. I will take this opportunity to publicly thank Alison Kite, from Gloucester City Council's Community Development Team and Varsha Patel, the former Community Support Worker at Linking Communities for the help and support given to me personally to secure the funds needed to purchase the equipment for the new radio broadcasting studio for the start of full time broadcast. Funding was secured from The Henry Smith Charity and Awards for All.

One of the board's aims was to start the full time broadcast before the Gloucester Festival started on Saturday 22 July 2006. In the past GFM has started its RSL broadcast on the Monday after the festival had started, but GFM presenters had Provided music support from the bandstand prior to, during and after the Carnival Procession returning to the park. Plans were put into place for volunteers /

presenters to phone the studio and give listeners live updates on the carnival launch and increase support for the festival from the first day.

Sadly, GFM was not invited to participate in Gloucester City Festival in 2006, an event that GFM had changed its broadcasting dates to coincide with. It appeared to the board that the festival team no longer saw the need to seek the support of GFM, despite Dan Robertson and I attending a meeting at the beginning of 2006 regarding the plans for the 2006 festival.

As soon as it became clear that GFM was not going to be asked to participate in the Gloucester Festival the board did not contact the festival team again. We believe the festival team does not fully appreciate the impact GFM has had on the City of Gloucester since its first broadcast in October 2000.

Listeners have consistently approached board member to ask us to campaign for the re-instatement of the Caribbean Night during the festival. St Anne a parish in Jamaica is twinned with Gloucester and on 6th. August each year during the festival Jamaican independence is celebrated around the world, yet in Gloucester it is celebrated by having as multi cultural day, which has no meaning or is relevant to the Jamaican Community on Independence Day. The Caribbean night was an integral part of the festival that the whole community was able to come together and celebrate Jamaican Independence during the festival.

Securing our full time license has meant quite a few things have changed, for example The Chelsea Building Society, were not able to provide the publicity material for the launch of GFM. Fortunately GFM's Carl Docksey was able to help with the printing of 10K flyers that were distributed in and around our city of Gloucester, thank you Carlos.

Some organisations and groups that have previously given time in kind were no longer able or willing to do it; lots of issues seem to revolve around money. We believe there is an assumption that GFM would be generating lots of money, therefore everyone wanted paying, including some members.

It's important that you the members tell members of the community that community radio stations are not money and profit led. Ofcom has set out clear aims and objectives for community radio, any profit generated must be given to charity or a not for profit organisation with the same or similar aims and objectives as GFM.

Furthermore, it's important that members are reminded that soon after it was announced that GFM had been awarded its full time license a meeting was called with volunteers / presenters who had expressed a desire to remain involved should GFM secure its full time license.

It was re-iterated that no one would be paid, GFM is a voluntary organisation, community radio stations are about people getting involved because they want to

and must be committed to being a volunteer. (***A Volunteer is an unpaid helper, someone that gives his / her time free***)

Those present were asked to state their availability to help the board to prepare the programme schedule around what commitment had been received.

Where it was not possible to secure volunteers, adverts and requests were made to the community for volunteers to come forward. The board was concerned about how volunteers would be able to cope with full time broadcasting, therefore, plans were also put in place to introduce a rota that would enable presenters to have time off air to rest and reflect on the programme he / she has presented, and become a listener.

Full time broadcasting has confirmed the board's concerns that there must be a large pool of volunteers and presenters available to present programmes. It has been encouraging that there have been people from the community sending demos and coming forward to become volunteers, we still need more, we need volunteers with specialist skills, we need everyone to encouraging someone to come forward.

GFM prides itself on only paying music of black origin, the only station in Gloucester that does the aforementioned. However, the news, information and advice broadcast is for the whole community. It is hoped that each community can learn about each other via GFM. It is our aim to provide more news, information and advice for the diverse communities living in Gloucester when we have the volunteers to do so.

The Community Link Show has carried on where it left off from previous broadcasts and has tackled issues head on. This programme is without doubt GFM's anchor programme.

The Community Link Show broke the news before any other media organisation that Peter Thatchell would be the main speaker at Gloucester first ever rainbow day for Gays and Lesbians.

It is pleasing to hear from listeners who make a special effort to listen to the Community Link Show. Some of the topics covered so far have included, The Ryecroft Street Bail Hostel, Recycling, Planning, Screen Shift Arts, Tredworth Residents, PCT, The Police, Glos Links, A Level Results, The Olympus Theatre, The Jamaican Sports and Social Club and Community Centre, The Barton and Tredwoth Community Trust, Barton and Tredworth Streetcare Team, and Family Time.

Pastor Crawford with his special delivery of Family Time made Wednesdays on The Community Link Show compulsive listening. The Community Link Show also had the good fortune to interview Parmjit Dhanda MP and the Leader of Gloucester City Council Mark Hawthorne and the Cabinet member for each portfolio participate in the programme.

The board has delivered a vociferous platform for those who truly believe in empowerment and community cohesion to step forward and help to deliver the service that one believes GFM should deliver.

Community radio has given GFM an opportunity to seize that one could only have dreamt about. The first two months of broadcast was like a world wind, things were moving at a pace that I cannot describe. Volunteers, presenters and the board have given the community something I believe can only improve. I think all 59 of The GFM Family should be applauded for what we've achieved so far, well done to everyone. Every one of us has made a historical impact on the City of Gloucester that will never be forgotten, community radio has changed all our lives.

Nevertheless, we must all remember, the work has only just begun.

The Way Forward

It was quickly recognised that whilst we have secured the help of numerous volunteers, there is a need for specialist volunteers. GFM's website needs someone to manage and development it and an IT engineer who is able to respond as and when the need arises.

During 28 day RSL broadcasts, presenters were able to dedicate time to managing the website and IT. This is no longer possible or acceptable. In an attempt to secure volunteers with the skills required Sali Gray has been actively trying to secure a partnership with GlosCat.

Students who are in their final year of media and IT studies need practical experience, where better to get the experience than volunteering to help GFM. It is hoped that the students who express a desire to gain practical experience in media, broadcasting and IT can support GFM and get the practical experience they will need when applying for full time work. It has been accepted that their needs to be more local news and issues covered on GFM. However, until volunteers with the right skills to do the aforementioned come forward, things will remain the same.

Unfortunately, It has not been possible for GFM to meet some of its own members and member of the communities expectations, it is unfair to expect volunteers to be the same as professionally trained presenters and radio stations that have the resources to do what they like as and when. The time and commitment given voluntary by the board and the presenters is in some case not being recognised, it is far to easy to say GFM should be doing this or that.

I cannot state enough that mostly volunteers run community radio stations. Station who can afford to employ staff, have staff primarily to write and submit funding application for his / her wages and the station. The day to day running of the station is done by volunteers preparing and presenting programmes.

GFM members need to be more hands on and help if something needs to be done that will be of benefit to GFM and the community. The board needs everyone to help and support each other; it has become far too easy to leave things for the board to sort out, we are all volunteers.

Without the help and support of some members GFM might have folded, something that many are not aware of. The board's aim is for everyone to work together and support each other to deliver *music, news, information, and advice* to our community.

A voluntary run community radio station does not have the money or the resources to actively seek 50% of it income via advertising. I must re-iterate that GFM can only generate 50% of its income through advertising to ensure it stays

true to the ethos of community radio. The board needs your help with funding applications and fundraising.

Finally, on behalf of the board I sincerely thank all of GFM's presenters and volunteers from the past to the present for giving up their time and making the commitment to serve our community, and all the listeners for the continued support and suggestions.

D. C. Francis
Chairperson