

## **Civic Voice National Design Awards** Application Form

### Entry Procedure and Deadline

The closing date for entries for the 2015 Civic Voice National Design Awards is 31 March 2015.

Entries must be submitted with the form below unless other arrangements have been made and agreed prior to the closing date.

### **Your name \***

Tim Mars

### **Organisation Name**

Stroud Civic Society

### **Position**

Committee Member

### **Name of scheme**

Gloucester Services Northbound

### **Building owner**

Gloucestershire Gateway Ltd

### **Name of architect**

Glenn Howells Architects

### **Scheme Address**

Gloucester Services Northbound  
Brookthorpe  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire GL4 0DN

### **Local Authority Area**

Stroud District Council

### **Email address \***

tim.mars@yahoo.co.uk

### **Telephone number**

0797 452 0774

### **Type of project/scheme**

New buildings

### **Describe the project (500 max)**

Gloucester Services is a motorway services area between junctions 12 and 11a on the northbound carriageway of the M5. It is unique in combining the local/farm/family model of Tebay services in the Lake District with a social/charitable/community dimension represented by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. It is Tebay with a twist.

Gloucestershire Gateway Trust is based in the Matson area of Gloucester—one of the poorest areas in Gloucestershire and in the top five percent of most disadvantaged communities in the country. Chief Executive Mark Gale came up with the revolutionary idea of building a motorway services on the M5 immediately adjacent to Matson as a means of providing income, training and employment for local people and communities.

Around 28 million vehicles a year stream past Matson on the M5, carrying some 50 million people. Previously they came into Gloucestershire at one end and left at the other, with nobody in the county benefiting. Mark's idea was: let's turn that around and make the motorway an asset. Instead of being

a purely negative channel sweeping past Matson and offering nothing in return, why not turn it into a positive asset for local communities by building a very special kind of service station?

To deliver this vision the Trust teamed up with Westmorland, which owns and runs Tebay in the Lake District—the only independent motorway services in the country. Tebay is famous for the quality of its food, which is predominately locally sourced, providing an invaluable outlet and income for local farmers and food suppliers.

At the heart of Gloucester Services is a commitment to supporting the surrounding communities: 300 jobs will be created, the restaurant and farm shop showcase local, artisan-made produce, and sales from the site will generate around £10 million over 20 years for residents' groups, community projects and local charities in Gloucestershire.

Glenn Howells Architects were presented with the formidable challenge of inserting a sustainable 60,000 sq ft motorway service area into a Cotswold landscape adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To mitigate the impact on the immediate environment and avoid impinging on long-distance views, the main building is embedded in the landscape, its roof hunkering down below the horizon, its profile (and that of the petrol filling station) softened by its organic form and grassland covering. Drystone walls built with Cotswold stone sourced from a nearby quarry form the entrance and garden façades.

The fully-glazed entrance opens onto an airy sky-lit interior with local ash and chestnut timbers, together with sustainably sourced spruce, contributing to a natural, organic feel. At the back a fully-glazed wall opens onto a peaceful, sheltered patio beside a pond and cascade. It all adds up to a tranquil haven sheltered from the mayhem of the motorway.

The landscaping includes ponds, picnic areas, three acres allocated to a Growing Communities edible garden space, and a sustainable urban drainage system that leaves the biodiversity of the site significantly enhanced from its previous use as a field devoted to monocrop production.  
(498 words)

### **Why is group nominating this project (max 500 words)**

Gloucester Services is an outstanding candidate for the inaugural Civic Voice National Design Award. It scores highly for design and construction, appropriateness, innovation and sustainability—but above all for community participation and engagement. Except that in this case it is not just participation and engagement but community control. Here for once the community is in the driving seat

Designed by Glenn Howells Architects, the main building is embedded in the landscape, its overall shape calling to mind local Neolithic barrows and tumps—a singularly appropriate evocation for its location in an undulating Cotswold landscape adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its 4000sqm state-of-the-art green roof successfully integrates the new service station with the landscape. A bespoke seed mix mimics the natural vegetation of the surrounding countryside, with species such as Birdsfoot Trefoil and Yellow Rattle included to attract UK bees, butterflies and other native pollinators.

Architecturally its flowing organic forms and use of sustainable local materials are a world away from the mostly undistinguished genre of motorway service areas. The project also sets a new sustainable standard for a difficult typology, internally and externally. The landscaping includes ponds, picnic areas, three acres allocated to an edible garden and a sustainable urban drainage system that leaves the biodiversity of the site significantly enhanced from its previous use as a field devoted to monocrop production.

But more than anything, Gloucester Services is a story of community empowerment. The entire project is the brainchild of a local community trust, regeneration agency and social enterprise, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. This is no mere sop to Corporate Civic Responsibility. Here for once the community calls the shots.

Even before building work started on site in March 2013, the project was supporting two community hubs, Matson Gateway and Stonehouse All Pulling Together. Matson Gateway incorporates a

community café providing affordable food for local people and pre-employment training opportunities for residents interested in working at Gloucester Services. People living in Stonehouse/GL10 in Stroud District or in Matson, White City, Podsmead or Tuffley in Gloucester are offered a free pre-employment training course which, if completed successfully, guarantees a job interview with Gloucester Services.

Matson Gateway also ran the on-site canteen for construction workers during the northbound build. Through these projects six additional local jobs were created and three residents secured permanent employment at Gloucester Services.

When the northbound services opened in May 2014, over half of the 150 staff employed came from the Trust's target communities and/or were long-term unemployed. Over 80 per cent of staff came from within 2.5 miles of the site. In addition, two prisoners from Leyhill Open Prison were taken on for work experience, one with the main contractor and the other with the drystone walling subcontractor. Both have since been taken on as full-time employees.

In sum, Gloucester Services is both an outstanding design on a sensitive site and a model of community empowerment.

It doesn't just talk the talk, it walks the walk.

It ticks all the boxes.

(497 words)

I confirm that the information supplied in the application is accurate