



Knowle
West
Media
Centre



Credit: Bhagesh Sachania

28 NOVEMBER 2024

Annual Report: 2023/24

Prepared for the KWMC AGM 2024

Introduction

2023-2024 was a busy year at Knowle West Media Centre. Through arts, tech and care we worked deeply with almost 700 people across local green spaces, high streets and homes. Collaborating with communities and artists to co-create fairer and more thriving neighbourhoods for everyone.

Each week we regularly welcome almost 150 young people and adults into our spaces to develop their creative, tech and social action skills. Building their confidence and capacities and creating new pathways.

We continue to share our practice as part of global, national and local networks. Being an honorary attendee, in Nov 2023, at the first Canadian Living Labs summit, presenting our practice in Barcelona at EnOLL Open Living Lab Days, participating in the UK national Retrofit Reimagined Festival and working locally as founding members of the Knowle West Alliance.

We believe deeply in collaboration and partnerships and act as part of an eco-system of change makers.

Thank you to all that have been part of re-imagining and activating high streets, connecting green spaces, thinking differently about retrofitting and bringing your valuable know-how into the mix.



Credit: Ibi Feher



IN NUMBERS

698

PARTICIPANTS

270

SESSIONS

2625

ATTENDANCES

25

CREATIVES COLLABORATED WITH US

Our Team

With our founder CEO retiring at the end of March 2024, we went on a journey to create a new leadership structure. We commissioned 'Practical Governance Collective' to work with our board, staff team and others to help us transition towards a more distributed leadership model. From April 2024 we worked to activate these plans. We now have two co-directors (Creative Co-Director Martha King and Co-Director of Business Dev and Ops, Tom Newman) and are moving further on our journey towards a leaderful culture and more distributed ways of working.

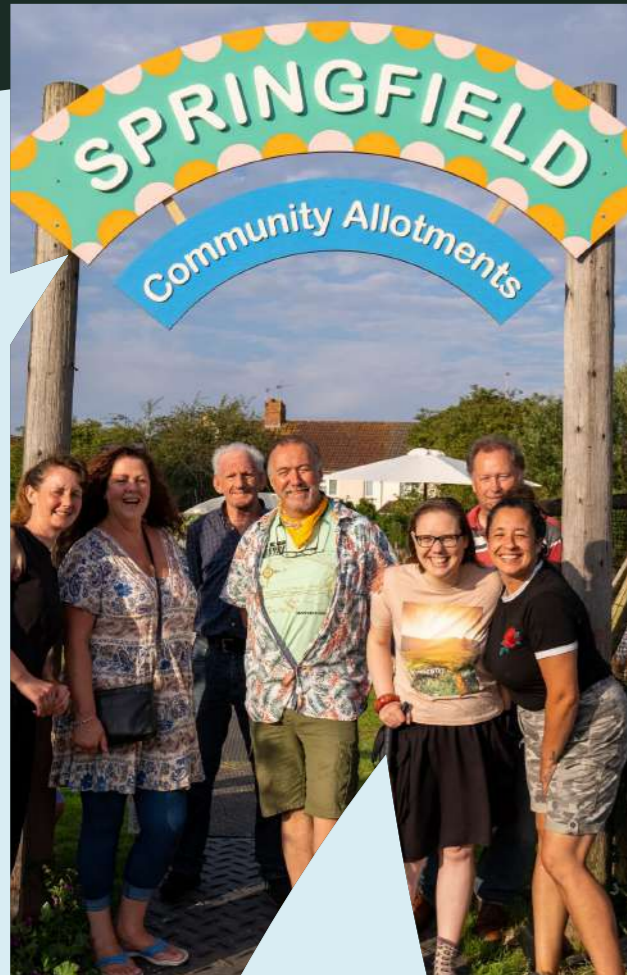


2023/24 Projects



Green Spaces

We brought together arts, DIY tech and citizen science to connect, value and access our local green spaces.



Make your mark

Through co-design sessions at Springfield Community Allotments and KWMC The Factory local people got hands-on and created signage and flags to increase accessibility at the allotments. People learnt digital fabrication skills, worked with artists and sowed seeds for more creative collaborations.



Credit: Ibi Feher

The Garden Lab team included; Paul Granjon, Ruth Hennell, Oliver Woods, Daisy Hvnter and local green groups. This project was possible thanks to support from Bristol + Bath Creative R+D's 'Grounding Technologies' and Impetus



Credit: Ibi Feher

Garden Lab Whispers Grow

Artists and local people explored how DIY tech, local wisdom, and more-than-human knowledge can be mixed together to further climate action. Through experiments with mud batteries, people co-designed robot snail cameras, and augmented mobility aids to build more connected relationships with nature.

"This project made me look at the world around me differently."
Participant

Collect to Connect

As part of an international movement of citizen science we supported artist residencies, community workshops, ecologist led walks and summer nature celebrations with Avon Wildlife Trust. We creatively collected data about our neighbourhood through nature diaries, explored how to connect green spaces and develop wildlife corridors.

"The importance of having diverse approaches is that not everybody has the same interest in nature [...] There are many ways we connect with nature. It's been great to let people see their agency in decision-making, knowing there are others locally who share their passion, allowing them to collectively drive research questions and decisions, making it more empowering than doing it alone."

Local resident and ecologist.

"The act of engaging together as a family in community was very important for our wellbeing."

Neighbourhood scientist.



Tay Aziz was the Collect to Connect artist in residence. Special thanks to our funders, Impetus



Credit: Ibi Feher



COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION CONVERSATIONS In Knowle West

2024

Co-ordinated by Knowle West Media Centre, reaching out through Knowle West Alliance network to speak with people who live, work and volunteer in Knowle West.

BACKGROUND

Over the last year, along with other community organisations in Bristol, we gathered ideas and aspirations for Community Climate Action in our neighbourhoods. We had lots of conversations, and this document is a snapshot of what we have learned in Knowle West.

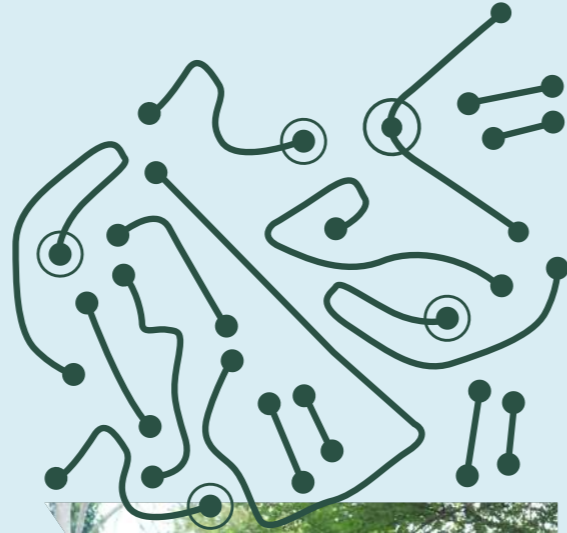
The project was funded by The National Lottery Communities' Climate Action Fund and with support from Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership, Centre for Sustainable Energy and Bristol City Council.

A full version of the Conversations will be available on the Knowle West Alliance website and on - www.Bristolclimatenature.org/projects/community-climate-action.



Community Climate Action Plan

In partnership with the Knowle West Alliance, we held community conversations towards a co-designed Community Climate Action Plan to address local environmental priorities. Through surveys and events, residents contributed to shaping a strategy aligned with Bristol's carbon-neutral goals.



SoundWave in Nature

In our young people's music and sound programme we took our young participants out into local parks and allotments to immerse themselves in nature. Young people collected sounds, learnt about local biodiversity and created their own soundscapes and stories. Enhancing nature connection, wellbeing and creativity.

"I think this (Springfield allotment) is an amazing place, it would be great if we can come here more often with the kids. I didn't realise they were going to be so happy and so interested. Especially the little ones."

Parent



Credit: Jack B Coll

Maker City

Young people were set a brief by our Bristol City Council's Strategic Partnership mentors (from Arup, Mott MacDonald & Arcadis) to develop ideas for inclusive green spaces being developed around the Bristol Temple Quarter area. Young people's innovative creations included a prototype for an eco-bench that collects and recycles rainwater.

High Streets

We brought together arts, culture, and community-building to reimagine, activate and connect our local high streets.



Credit: Ibi Feher

High Streets Culture and Events Programme

Supported by Bristol City Council we worked with Filwood Community Centre to produce a year of events and cultural activations on the Filwood Broadway. We held events including Easter trails, coronation celebrations and a larger than ever Knowle West Fest complete with parade.

Talkaoke

As part of the national 'Futures Festival' we commissioned artists The People Speak to bring their pop-up chat show 'Talkaoke' to the streets of KW. We created podcasts from these powerful conversations and shared them as a listening installation at Filwood Community Centre, alongside a heritage exhibition; remembering our past to shape our future.

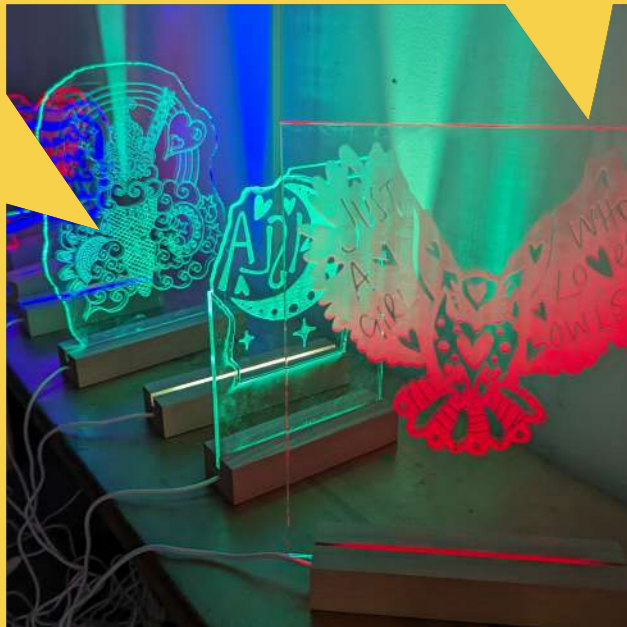
"that's important, libraries and culture, over a lot of years it's been quite grey on the Broadway but it's really nice to think about how we could bring colour in. I think art needs to be in the middle of what we're thinking about as well, because it can make peoples days better just by being colourful"
Talkaoke chat show participant



Credit: Ibi Feher



Credit: Ibi Feher



Noel West, Lights Lights Lights

We supported local artists Megan Clark-Bagnall and Claudia Collins to take their audio bus performance, Noel West to the streets of Knowle West, celebrating the cultural significance of lights in the neighbourhood in style. We hosted their Camp as Christmas micro commission installations at KWMC and the artists ran What Lights You Up? workshops for the community at KWMC in the dark winter months.

Future High Streets

As part of the Diverse Artists Network's Diaspora festival we commissioned photographer Myah Asha Jeffers to be in residence and explore the future of high streets. For the Diaspora festival she set up pop-up photo activities on the Broadway and continued her activities into 2024; working with local multicultural women to reflect on identity through storytelling, audio making and self-portrait cyanotypes.

"I feel like a sense of belonging in my neighbourhood now."
Local resident



Maker City

Young people were briefed to design high street interventions to improve Filwood Broadway, as it is transformed through the Levelling Up Funding. Bristol City Council officers and local architects attended the Maker City Showcase and were very interested in the thoughts and ideas young people had to share.



Homes

We explored energy-efficiency, community-led retrofitting and imagined greener futures for our homes.



Credit: Ibi Feher

WeCanMake, Home Grown Homes

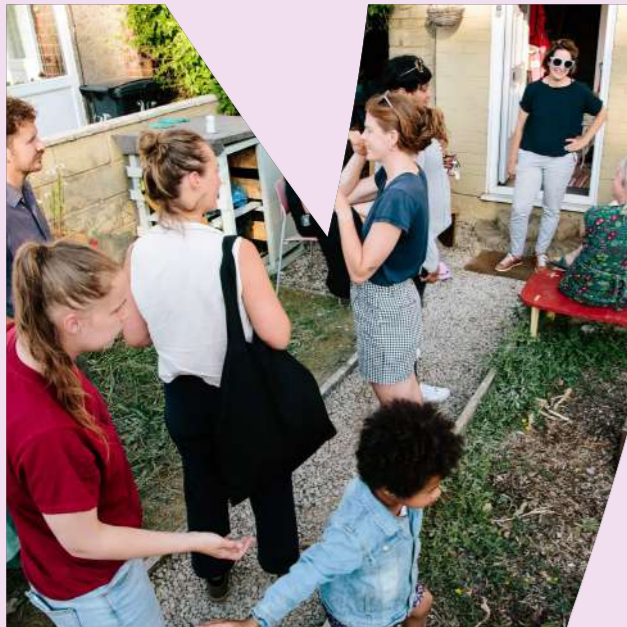
WeCanMake launched their Home-Grown Homes report, sharing the culmination of work exploring the question; "Can We Build Timber Neighbourhoods Across the UK?". Demonstrating the potential of sustainable housing materials.

Retrofit Reimagined Festival

We worked with WeCanMake to host a chapter of the national 'Retrofit Reimagined' festival. Over 500 people from all over the UK got the chance to be inspired by creative approaches to retrofitting homes and neighbourhoods, exploring topics from social infrastructure to timber-based housing solutions.

**HOMEGROWN HOMES FOR PEOPLE & PLANET:
A MASS LOCAL APPROACH TO BUILDING WITH
TIMBER IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD**





credit: Ibi Feher

WeCanMake, Front Garden Retrofit Kit

WeCanMake collaborated with Better Block to design a kit for communities to encourage neighbourliness and create space for nature in front gardens across the neighbourhood. The open-source kit, which can be cut on any CNC machine, features items including a bench, sharing library, bird box and planter, and has been installed in over 30 front gardens in Knowle West and elsewhere in the UK.

“Since hosting the front garden retrofit kit, we catch our neighbours more often... it’s meant we’ve engaged with people we haven’t necessarily spoken to, which is really good”
Front Garden Retrofit Kit participant

Street retrofit

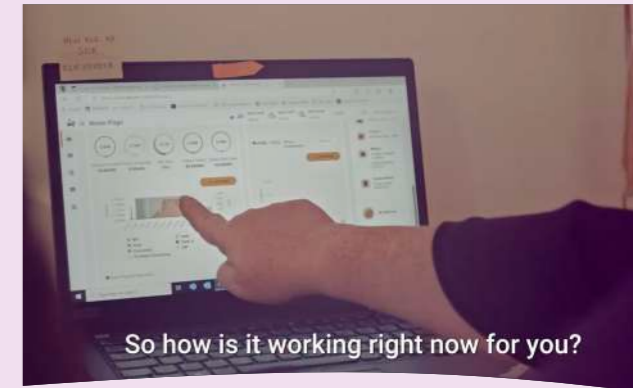
Through an exciting new ‘Retrofit Street’ project, in collaboration with WeCanMake, we are working with families on Andover Road to explore the question “What if the climate transition and retrofit of our homes and streets were designed, owned, and governed by the people who live there?” The street demonstrator project brings together residents, designers, researchers, and technical experts to explore ideas, try them out for real, and share the learning.



Credit: Ibi Feher

Twenergy

Through TwinERGY, a EU Horizon 2020 Research project, a few households in Knowle West were not only reducing their energy use and making savings on their energy bills, but were able to make an extra income from selling energy back to the grid, through the help of smart technology, data and automation. KWMC also co-designed digital information boards with the community to support local organisations to communicate general, but also energy related information to their visitors.



So how is it working right now for you?



Credit: Ibi Feher

Maker City

Young people were briefed by WeCanMake to create something to help retrofit a front garden; inspired by WeCanMake’s front garden retrofit project. Young people’s creations included windowsill flowerboxes and a laser-cut chess board with 3D printed chess pieces for front garden community chess.

“I wanted to have more nature and flowers when I looked out my window”.
Young person from Maker City

“I’m an engineer by trade and this is seriously impressive!”
Parent of Maker City participant



Developing skills, confidence and capacities

Empowering learning and supporting community members, young people and artists to develop the skills and confidence needed to make the changes they want to see in their neighbourhoods.



Credit: Ibi Feher



Credit: Cashell Smith

Factory Membership

At the Factory we are continuing to run a member's programme with 67 residents learning about and accessing digital fabrication equipment.

"I love the Factory. It just makes things more possible. The climate doesn't have to be all doom and gloom. I've had the kit and the support to design things and make things that improve my family's life and the planet."

Local resident.

Creative Cuppa

We host a weekly creative session offering accessible arts and tech activities to local residents plus clients and carers from Milestones and Silva Care. These sessions foster community connections and provide a safe space to develop creative skills and confidence. We provide hot meals and during holidays food bags were distributed, thanks to Feeding Bristol.

"On behalf of Silva Care we would like to express how much we appreciate the friendly welcoming group that the media centre run for us. Our clients get a lot from the community spirit and the great variety of activities on offer for them. Everyone looks forward to a Wednesday morning each week"



Credit: Ania Shrimpton



Credit: Ibi Feher



3D render of one of the sets of entrance gates



Factory Commission update

This year we started working with the production team for Boomtown Fair Festival. This involved taking on design work, CNC cutting and fabrication for a number of elements including large scale signage, light boxes, decorative pieces and the entrance gates to the entire festival! With over 280 sheets of plywood cut in a very short time this really put our CNC machine, and team, to the test. With sustainability taken very seriously for this festival the plywood of choice was Pine, a quick growing timber from northern Europe.

For a commission like this the majority of pieces leave the factory as bare plywood, to be transformed by a team of skilled set designers into one of the most creative and immersive festival productions around.



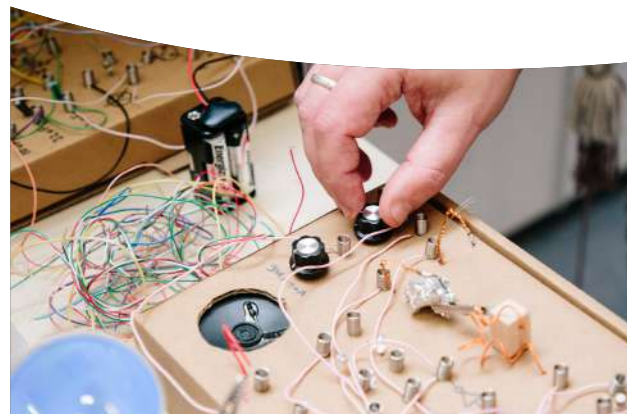
Credit: Pell Ensemble

Supporting artists

We continue to support artists and emerging creatives by providing space and community connections. Tomasin Cuthbert, Bristol Mural Collective, AR Layerable and Pell Ensemble shared work through public exhibitions, workshops and events. We mentored an underrepresented SW based artist through Arbyte Gallery's Hotel Generation programme and supported a creative tech MyWorld fellowship.

“The people here have been so supportive, and it’s really opened my eyes to the different things I could do.”

Volunteer



Credit: Ibi Feher

Community-Tech

It has been brilliant being part of the national Community-tech network, facilitated by Promising Trouble. We were pleased to be able to host the launch event for this community of practice and have loved being part of the Power to Change funded Makers and Maintainers project, sharing knowledges and unpacking our long history of community-tech.



Credit: MyWorld

We have been running up to 4 nights of weekly sessions in term time for young people, aged from 10-17. These include:

Maker City: social action and making

As well as being upskilled on digital fabrication equipment and industry standard software young people worked closely with professionals on social action briefs and had a special summer programme led by Move and Code where they learnt how to create immersive environments using physical computing; resulting in coded fantastical crazy golf courses!

“I have made many friends, seen many future career choices such as engineering and technology... If I wasn’t at Maker City on a Tuesday I would probably be at home bored and online too much.”

Young person



Credit: Ibi Feher

Immersive tech training

Through the MyWorld programme we have provided training opportunities for local people to access high-end media production equipment, such as 360 cameras and professional development opportunities for emerging creatives.



credit: Jack B Coll

SoundWave: music and sound

Through these weekly sessions aimed at empowering young people to express themselves and explore their voice through music and sound, young people have learnt podcasting and composition skills whilst gaining confidence.



Creative Hub: intro to creative tech and media

Young people learnt animation, stop-motion, photography, coding and film making skills. We welcomed visiting artists Air Giants to play with inflatable robots, Bristol Mural collective and design consultancy Layerable to create digital graffiti worlds in AR, worked on photography with artist Kirsty Mackay, hosted a comedy session with local comedian Amy Mason, developed short films with Pig Shadow Puppetry Workshops and more.

“My daughter has been given her the resources, support and inspiration to be creative, letting her try out different equipment and pursue her own ideas. It’s really got Leila inspired about a career in design and tech”.

Parent



Schools

Across the last year, we delivered Maker City and SoundWave programmes in four local primary schools: Holy Cross, Oasis Academy Connaught, Holy Cross Primary School, Parsons Street Primary. In Oasis Academy Connaught, Holy Cross Primary School, each school received weekly after school sessions, over a half term. In Parsons Street Primary, we worked with all of their Year 6 classes across a term. All schools took part in trips to KWMC: The Factory, where pupils created digitally fabricated community bunting for their classrooms. We also ran a half term of Maker City activities in KnowlEDGE for their Year 10 Art Class and 3 half day sessions at The Factory for local Home Educated young people and their home educators, introducing them to design and digital fabrication.

“I wish they had opportunities like this when I was at school - it’s a different way of learning and the young people need it - especially young people with SEND. They can actually learn with their hands and have a break from sitting down and writing all day.”

Teacher

Work Experience

We had a fantastic 2 weeks of summer Maker City Work Experience. Over 10 days, we welcomed 25 young people (for 5 days each) from local south Bristol state schools & colleges, from Year 10 & Year 12. The young people were offered an action-packed interactive week exploring STEAM skills, with a particular focus on the built environment and real-world application.

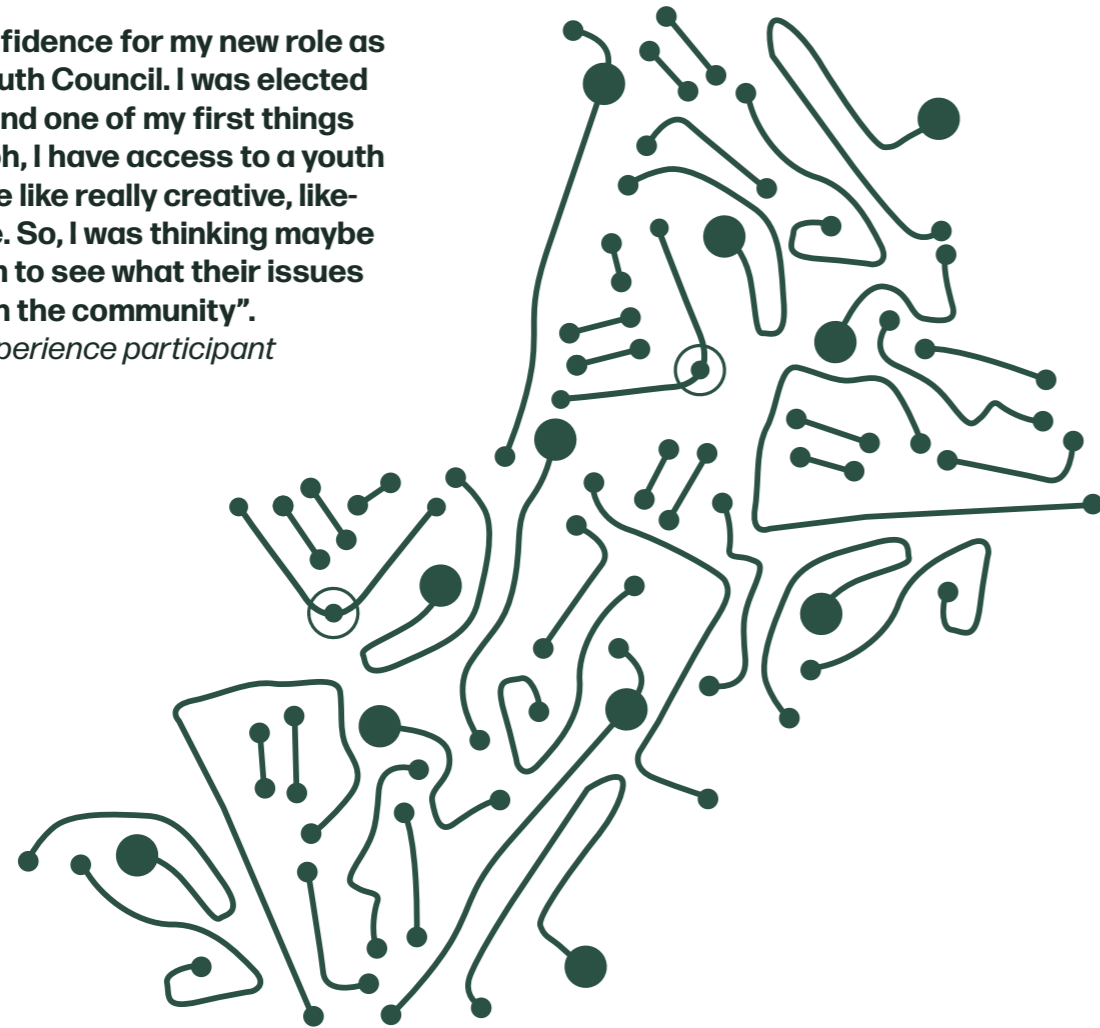


Credit: Ibi Feher

Young people were given insights into the work of all three Bristol City Council Strategic Partnership partners (Arup, Mott MacDonald & Arcadis), which ranged from engaging in tasks around flood defenses, consultation and ideas generation for the development of Castle Park and learning about the challenges of designing, project managing and building on an existing school site. The mentors offered powerful insights into the multiple job roles they have and also their personal journeys into their career.

“It gave me confidence for my new role as Bristol City Youth Council. I was elected in February and one of my first things was realising, oh, I have access to a youth group who are like really creative, like-minded people. So, I was thinking maybe I can ask them to see what their issues were in the community”.

Work Experience participant



Looking Forward

The last year has been both exciting and challenging. KWMC's founder director, Carolyn Hassan, announced in early 2023 that she would be stepping back after 28 years in Spring 2024. Since then, we have gone through a process of collective planning, reimagining the future, revisiting our values and mission and clarifying what we do and why.

We've taken time as an organisation to stop and think of what the future could and should look like, what changes we can make to the ways we work to ensure that we become more inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

We now have a new Co-Leadership model in place. Martha King as Creative Co-Director will focus on co-developing the creative vision and strategic direction for KWMC, ensuring that our strategy and creative programme brings alive and progresses our renewed mission for the organisation; 'Making fair and thriving neighbourhoods, through arts tech and care'

Tom Newman as Co-Director of Business Development and Operations, will work with our team and community to co-shape the renewal, growth and future sustainability of the organisation, with a focus on building community and generating wider social value, as well as financial resilience.

We are both thrilled to be part of KWMC's next chapter and are committed to building on KWMC's track record of excellence in creativity, innovation, co-creation and artist development. There is a real sense of possibility within the energetic team at KWMC. We are excited about doing things differently, strengthened by the achievements of the past, but with our eyes firmly set on the organisation's future.

We are on a journey to further distribute leadership across our organisation and to go even further in making it possible for community members, of all ages, to be at the heart of shaping, driving and participating in everything we do.

The coming year will see continued mission driven programming guided by community priorities. We will keep creating inclusive spaces for learning, for imagining and for making through our practices of co-creation, arts-led change making and care. We will be working across the Knowle West neighbourhood in homes, high streets and green spaces, and will continue to share our practice internationally as part of inspiring movements working towards more equitable futures"

Tom and Martha



Thanks

Finally, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us this year.

Everyone who took part in our activities and projects, and the fantastic artists, makers, young people, community groups, and individuals we've worked with.

Our trustees, volunteers and team for their dedication and creativity.

All those involved in the Knowle West Alliance: together we are stronger.

Our funders and everyone who has provided financial support.

Our partners who supported us to deliver our work: from local freelance creatives to collaborators in international partnership projects, researchers and Universities and the European Network of Living Labs.

Thanks to all the inspiring organisations we have connected with over the last year for their generosity in sharing learning and experiences.





enquiries@kwmc.org.uk
0117 9030 444
[@knowlewestmedia](https://www.instagram.com/knowlewestmedia)