17th October 2026

THE GOOD TIMES

Knowle West Media Centre

30 years of shaping fairer futures, together with arts, tech and care.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF BIG IDEAS

In 2025, as Filwood Broadway entered a new chapter of change and transformation, artists Rachael Clerke and Linzy Na Nakorn were invited to explore local stories, memories and hopes for the future through the Filwood in Motion residency. What they uncovered was something extraordinary: a time machine.

Hundreds of Knowle West residents witnessed its remarkable powers during *Filwood on Broadway*, a theatrical journey through local history - from the Jurassic period and Romans to a future where the estate triumphs in an intergalactic egg-and-spoon race.

Now, to celebrate the 30th birthday of Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC), we're taking it for another spin.

Over the next few pages, you'll journey through three decades of creativity, community action, digital innovation, learning, making and imagining better futures together. Along the way, you'll meet some of the people, projects and ideas that helped shape KWMC into what it is today.

Then, before we return to 2026, we'll set the dial one final time and take a glimpse at what the future might hold.

Hold on tight. Our journey begins in 1996...

→ Photographed by Ibi Feher.



↑ KWMC team, Great Oak Tree Hub and Knit & Natter celebrating KWMC's 30th Birthday in 2026. Photographed by Ella Chedburn.

1996 → 2026 → 2056.

→ *Filwood on Broadway (2025)*. Photographed by Diego Maeso.



↓ *SoundWave Festival 2025.* Photographed by Ibi Feher.

TELLING OUR OWN STORIES

What began with cameras, community stories and a refurbished darkroom grew into an organisation working with thousands of people, including residents, artists, researchers and young people. Discover how local people took control of their own stories and challenged stereotypes along the way... Pages 4-5

THE COMMUNITY ARE THE EXPERTS

For three decades, KWMC has explored how technology can serve communities, not the other way around. Discover the projects that helped residents shape conversations about data, energy and the future of tech... Pages 8-9

FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

From designing the KWMC building to launching multiple making spaces and creating community-led housing, local people have helped turn big ideas into reality... Pages 10-11

WELCOME TO 1996

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT PUTS KNOWLE WEST IN THE PICTURE

Photographer Carolyn Hassan has recently joined us here in Knowle West as part of a Arts and Health residency hosted by resident-run Knowle West Health Association. The residency will explore whether arts can make an impact on the shocking health disparities between areas such as Knowle West and Clifton.

Through photography and storytelling, the project is working with local people to explore wellbeing, challenge negative perceptions of our area, and celebrate the creativity, talent, knowledge and stories that exist within our community.

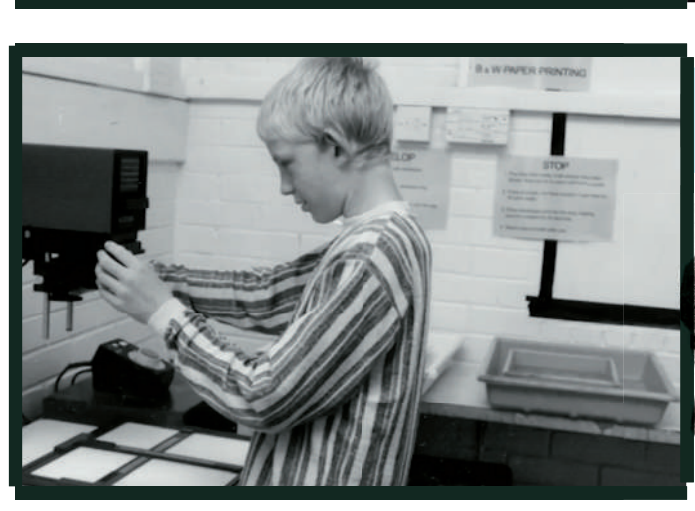
Community arts is one of the most overlooked and underfunded areas of the art world. But art isn't just for wealthy people and galleries. This residency is starting to bring together local people, organisations and artists around a simple belief: creativity should belong to everyone and no one's story should be ignored.

knowle west MEDIA PROJECT

↓ The darkroom was refurbished by KWMC founder Carolyn Hassan and local young woman, Tanya Griffin.









DON'T PANIC! IT'S ONLY A COMPUTER

Have you seen that mysterious machine popping up in your workplace or even your home?

Join us to learn the basics of your personal computer: using Windows, writing documents, connecting to the internet and sending e-mail.

Come and have a go, computers aren't as frightening as they look!

PICTURE THIS! A CAMERA WITHOUT FILM?

It sounds like something from the future, but digital cameras are here!

Forget paying for your photos to be developed. With a digital camera, your pictures can be viewed straight away and stored on a floppy disk. You can even make films with them too – better quality than your VHS or Hi8 Camera!







← Penny and Carolyn with a local car enthusiast.







Nobody knows it yet, but over the next 30 years that small photography project will grow into Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC). Starting as a darkroom it will go on to making films and developing web-based projects. Later, it will progress further into building a media centre, reimagining high streets, experimenting with new technologies, supporting new careers and even creating homes - working with tens of thousands of residents, artists, young people, makers, researchers, activists, businesses and partners along the way. As technology rapidly evolves and transforms everyday life, KWMC will ensure the people of Knowle West are not just consumers of new technology but active participants in shaping it and questioning it.

Hold on tight as we journey through 30 years of stories, projects, experiments and big ideas in the pages ahead...

Before we set off, don't leave empty handed!
Write down your first memory of KWMC.
Tear it out, keep it or share it with someone...

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

KWMC has always worked from the premise that there is already knowledge within the community to be nurtured, revealed and valued.

The University of Local Knowledge (2000 onwards) explored the knowledge and experience of local residents over almost a decade. The project created more than 900 short films of people sharing their knowledge, organised into courses and faculties that mirrored a university. The aim was to challenge what knowledge is valued and promote the abundance of community-based know-how.

Explore it for yourself: *ulk.org.uk*



← *ULK* came about through a long-term partnership led by Penny Evans (former Assistant Director of KWMC) with artist Suzanne Lacy, the University of Bristol and Arnolfini. Supporting partners: Bristol City Council, BBC, University of the West of England and the Arts Council England.

COMMUNITY STORYMAKING

CELEBRATING KNOWLE WEST

KWMC has long worked with local history groups and residents' memories to explore the area's past and imagine its future.

The project *100 Years of Knowle West Style (2019)* celebrated what local people think is iconic and special about their community. Drawing on 100 years of archives, local history and residents' experiences, it asked:

"What does it mean to make, build, dress, speak or do things Knowle West Style?"





↑ *100 Years of Knowle West, Open Doors Day (2019).* Photographed by Ibi Feher.

MAKING THE NEWS

In 2001, KWMC launched the community newsletter The Knowledge. Since then, 104 editions have been produced, all distributed to more than 5,500 households! The aim was to challenge stereotypes of Knowle West by promoting and celebrating the good things happening in the neighbourhood. The Knowledge explored questions about who controls the news, what stories should be covered and how information is shared. It is the only free locally delivered newsletter, encouraging community journalism and welcoming contributions from across the community.

↑ The Knowledge newsletter is now led by Knowle West Alliance (KWA), which was co-founded in 2019 by KWMC, Filwood Community Centre, The Park, Re:work and Knowle West Health Park. Today, KWA brings together residents, community groups, organisations and local services to identify shared priorities and take collective action on the issues that matter most to Knowle West. Each year, members shape a programme of work based on community needs and opportunities. Current priorities include strengthening community cohesion, supporting food justice initiatives and helping local people influence decisions about the future of their neighbourhood.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know? Knowle West was once home to a Roman settlement, a medieval manor house and pear/apple orchards! Later, it was developed as a Garden City estate for people returning from the war.

TELLING OUR OWN STORIES

KWMC started as a photography commission and the refurbishment of Filwood Community Centre's darkroom in 1995-96. Access to cameras (at a time before we all had one in our pocket!) enabled local people to shift stereotypes and tell stories about their own experiences, knowledge, history and dreams.

An early film, *YOUR Video Letters from Knowle West (1998)*, was made with groups of young people sharing their experiences and hopes for the future. The project led to the funding that established KWMC as a charity and helped shape an approach centred on supporting people to tell stories in their own voice.

As technology evolved, cheaper and better film cameras and software became available to us. This meant we could produce high-quality content which could be edited in-house in Knowle West, so our community had full control over their own stories.

Scan the QR to watch!

tinyurl.com/videoletters





↑ *YOUR Video Letters From Knowle West (1998).*

IDENTITY, CLASS AND CULTURE

In Night Walks with Teenagers (2015), young people guided audiences through public spaces in Knowle West, asking questions about what space young people are "allowed" to occupy and the challenges they face as society controls how space is shared.





↑↓ Collaboration between KWMC, Mammalian Diving Reflex and In Between Time.

Stars ↑ *The Walk of Hearts & Stars (2020)* celebrated and remembered local people during the COVID-19 crisis. Collaboration between KWMC, Filwood Community Centre, Knowle West Alliance and Re:work. Funded by Creative Civic Change.



In collaboration with Stand + Stare and Play Nicely, KWMC created a *Mobile Tattoo Parlour (2014)* that travelled across Knowle West collecting photos of local tattoos and the stories behind them, creating a digital archive of personal stories carried on people's skin. KWMC also paired artists and local residents to produce *Objects of Desire (2015)*: a range of beautiful objects inspired by local tattoos, created using digital fabrication kit like 3D printers and laser cutters. This project was revisited in *Artificial INKtelligence (2023)*, using the database of tattoos to explore how AI works.

With huge thanks to Marked Up Tattoo Studio.

View local tattoos and add yours: *knowlewesttattoos.org.uk*

EMPOWERING LEARNING

BREAKING BARRIERS

Women are often underrepresented across the creative and digital industries, so KWMC developed *From Her (2016-19)* to create meaningful opportunities for women and non-binary people to build skills, confidence, networks and careers.

Through a series of four programmes in film, music, photography and digital, participants gained hands-on industry experience alongside professionals, such as creating original films as part of a film crew and curating public exhibitions of their own photography. Programmes also provided specialist training, mentoring and professional development opportunities, including intensive courses in website design, coding and graphic design.

These initiatives have enabled participants to transition into industries they had previously been excluded from by supporting them to develop professional skills and grow their creative practice.

To find out more about our offers for young people in 2026, head to *kwmc.org.uk/youngpeople*



↓ *The Seekers* podcast by Wardrobe Ensemble in collaboration with We Are More at Springfield Allotments. Photo by Ibi Feher.

THE POWER OF RETREATS

We recognise that people learn in different ways, so KWMC has explored a range of approaches to learning and participation, including residential retreats. By stepping away from everyday routines, young people are given the time, space and support to build relationships, develop confidence, reflect on their experiences and explore new possibilities for their futures. Away from the pressures of school, work and home life, retreats create the conditions for deeper learning, connection and personal growth.

Retreats create clear pathways into creative jobs. One participant went from joining *SoundWave: Retreat*, to becoming a volunteer, to then being a paid staff member and youth facilitator with us at KWMC, supporting and inspiring the next generation of young people.

Retreats act as a bridge between first engagement and longer-term involvement. They give people the confidence, networks and sense of belonging needed to take the next step into volunteering, training, leadership and employment.

Since 2018, KWMC has delivered six retreats for more than 120 young people focusing on creating safe spaces and recognising gender stereotypes.



It's one of the most amazing experiences of my life, as you get to meet new, kind people and learn life-changing skills. - Future Legacy Project participant.



↑ *Future Legacy Project (2019-22).*

INTRODUCING DIGITAL CREATIVITY IN SCHOOLS

KWMC's first after-school projects in the 90s and 2000s evolved into groups including *Mouth of the South*, *KW Eye*, *N'Large* and *Digital Fish*, providing opportunities in journalism, photography and film.

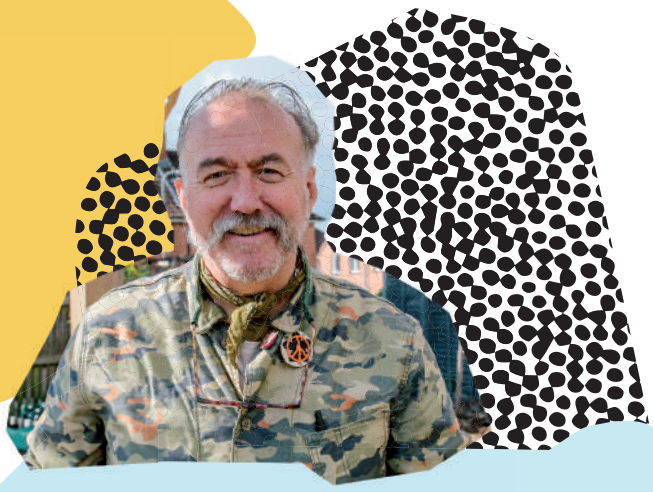
Through *Blueboard (2004-06)*, KWMC worked with local schools to introduce film, photography, animation and puppetry. These workshops encouraged new ways of teaching and learning while encouraging pupils and staff to experiment with creative technology. This project came at a key time when the government funded artists and arts organisations to work in schools to improve educational experiences for young people.

This work continued over the following years, leading to the development of *Makerlab in a Box (2015),* which brought digital making and hands-on technology activities directly into schools. This was later evolved into *Maker City*, our flagship STEAM (putting the "Art" into Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) programme that has been running since 2018, in schools and at KWMC, engaging young people in digital fabrication, social action and hands-on making for real.

→*Tech on the Table (2017).*



At KWMC, we believe in creating opportunities for adults and young people to learn through creativity, collaboration and experimentation. For the past 30 years, we have delivered workshops from photography and filmmaking to coding, robotics and digital making. Our programmes have always prioritised hands-on alternatives to traditional classroom learning.



Local resident Frank said:

"If you'd told me two years ago I'd be thinking about starting my own business I'd never have believed you! The people here have been so supportive and it's really opened my eyes to the different things I could do."

Frank is now one of our volunteers, gaining continued experience and skills through live projects.



← *Our Space (2022).* Photo by Ania Shrimpton.

ROUTES INTO CREATIVE CAREERS

KWMC has consistently worked to address barriers that prevent many people from entering the creative, cultural and technology sectors.

Adult programmes including *Do What You Love (2013-15), Network for Creative Enterprise (2017-2019), Future Makers (2021-22) and MADE (2020-22),* gave people the space to experiment and come up with new ideas, whilst learning new skills and building confidence. We have worked with over 2,500 adults who have gone on to access further jobs, education or training. This includes supporting 934 new businesses or enterprises.

Alongside this, *Junior Digital Producers* (2013-15) provided practical experience and training, leading to the creation of *Eight*: a digital production agency offering emerging talent paid opportunities to work on live projects, build portfolios, expand networks and receive mentoring and support. One JDP, Samantha Payne, went on to co-found Open Bionics, which provides 3D printed robotic hands for amputees.

In 2020, *Eight* supported trainees Mevis and Dee through the *Creative Workforce for the Future* scheme, supporting them to gain experience and build sustainable creative careers. Following their placements, Mevis went on to become a Senior Editor, while Dee secured a role at a production company.



Foot in the Door (2025) - a 17-minute film about how KWMC has supported young adults to get their foot in the door of the creative sector.

Since 2021 over 200 local young people have attended our 5-day work experience for our *Maker City* programme. This gives young people hands-on experience of the built environment and digital fabrication, developing practical STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) skills, working on live briefs and learning from professionals from the engineering sector, developing confidence and employability skills through creative projects, industry insight and supported workplace learning.

←*SoundWave Sessions.*



LEARNING THROUGH MUSIC, MAKING AND TECH

After moving into its purpose-built flagship eco-building in 2008, KWMC further expanded opportunities for young people to engage with emerging technologies. Through the *Jump Into...* programme, participants explored coding, robotics, computer building, photography, film, animation and music, while developing problem-solving skills and creative confidence.

Music has always been an important part of learning at KWMC. Knowle West's rich musical heritage inspired programmes including *4NINE Records*, *XLR*, *SoundWave*, *Hack a Heckle* and *From Her Tracks*, creating opportunities for young people to express themselves, learn music production, develop their talents and build pathways into the wider music industry.

Listen back to music made at KWMC over the years: *tinyurl.com/kwmc-music* or scan the QR!







↑↓ *Maker City x Pell Ensemble.* Photos by Ibi Feher.

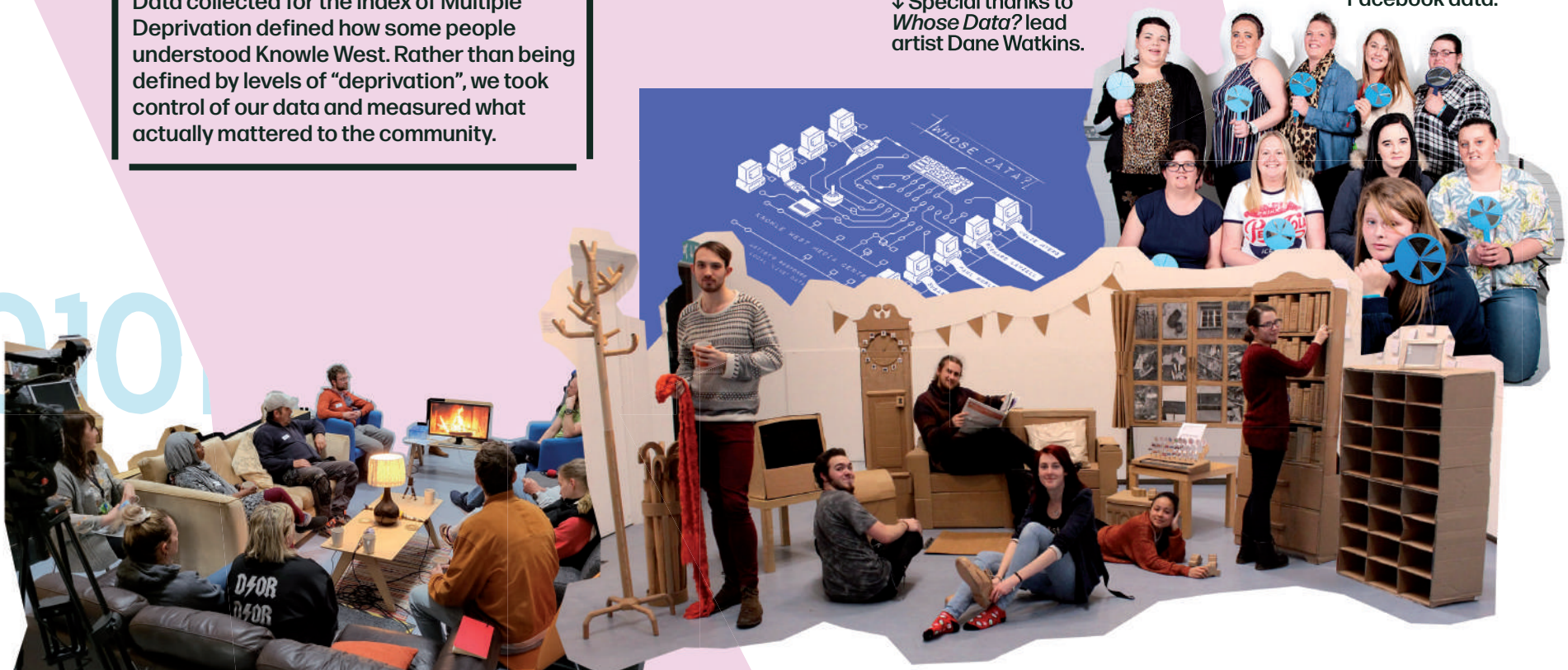
DATA PUBLICS

"Data is the new oil"
Clive Humby (2006)

Data collected for the Index of Multiple Deprivation defined how some people understood Knowle West. Rather than being defined by levels of "deprivation", we took control of our data and measured what actually mattered to the community.

↓ Special thanks to *Whose Data?* lead artist Dane Watkins.

↓ *Women, Data and the Future (2017).* Mirrors representing Facebook data.



"I think the integration of KWMC within the community was such that it was almost impossible for our work not to reflect and respond to the community's needs."

- Artist Chris Chapman

SoLa Bristol supported 26 homes, five schools and an office block in Bristol to benefit from solar energy and battery storage. Working with artist Dane Watkins, participants created a playful digital interface that visualised energy generation, storage and savings through a family living in a boot.



USING DATA FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

KWMC explores how data can be used by communities to tackle issues that matter to them. From energy bills to air quality, we work with resident, artists and researchers to make data more accessible.

In Whose Data? (2011), Knowle West residents and artists worked together to identify what data would be useful to the community and explore innovative ways to visualise it. The project also examined people's rights over the data they generate and how it can be used for community benefit.

Projects including *DHEMS (2009), 3E Houses (2012-13)* and *SOLA Bristol (2012-2013)* explored how people can visualise and understand their energy use in their everyday lives to save carbon emissions and money. More recently, *TwinERGY (2021-2023)* explored the use of digital twins and tariff switching as ways of helping residents take more control of their energy use and bills.

MAKING DATA CREATIVE

Creativity has played a critical role in enabling people to understand and question data. By working with researchers, creatives and young people, KWMC has explored ways to make information more playful, personal and accessible.

KWMC's first cohort of Junior Digital Producers created *Data Patchwork* and *The Living Living Room (2013-14)*. Recognising that not everyone would be able to access an online survey, they created a 3D gaming room to bring the survey to life. Residents answered questions by interacting with eight full-size pieces of cardboard furniture connected to sensors and computers. When people moved and played with them, their answers were recorded.

Creativity has continued to shape how data is shared and understood at KWMC. Through interactive exhibits and artworks, *The Commons Sense Test Space (2018)* explored how sensing data is collected and shared. In *Women, Data and the Future (2017)* women worked with artists to transform their experiences and personal data into new artworks, helping make complex ideas about data more visible, creative and easier to discuss. They became particularly passionate about the risks of sharing photos of their children on Facebook, leading to strong local advocacy for data privacy.

→ *Garden Lab Whispers Grow (2023).* Photographed by Ibi Feher.

← *Collect to Connect (2023).* Photographed by Ibi Feher.



THE COMMUNITY ARE THE EXPERTS

From 2016 onwards, KWMC developed The Bristol Approach, a way of working that starts with the issues people care about. Rather than "pushing" technology or pre-determined solutions onto people, it supports communities to work together to "pull-in" the knowledge, technology and resources needed to tackle a problem.

One of the first applications of the approach was *Citizen Sensing*, where people build, use or act as sensors to gather information about issues that matter to them and use technology for social good.

The Bristol Approach to *Citizen Sensing* was first explored through the Damp Busters pilot with partners Ideas for Change and Bristol City Council. Over 700 people took part in workshops and meetings to develop and test a damp-busting system, including a frog-shaped temperature and humidity sensor. Designed to be simple, engaging and co-created, the sensor offered an alternative to the kind of "black box" monitoring systems that are often imposed on communities.

GROWING THE BRISTOL APPROACH

The Bristol Approach later informed many other citizen science initiatives, including international projects such as *ParCos (2020-2023).*

More recently, projects such as *Slow the Smoke (2021-22)*, Collect to *Connect (2023)* and *Garden Lab Whispers Grow (2023)* have built on this approach, using low-cost sensors, open-source software and community knowledge to better understand local environmental issues and explore ways to address them.

By being involved from the start, residents have become active participants in shaping change. The Bristol Approach is a key practice that informs how KWMC works today, and continues to be developed through new projects, partnerships and community-led action.

↑ Check out Bristol Burning: a dub-influenced music track that transforms a year of city air data into sound. Created as part *of Slow the Smoke (2021-22)* - *tinyurl.com/kwmc-sts* Photo of T. Relly.





MAKING REAL



↑ *Innovate UK Workshop (2021).* Photographed by Ibi Feher.



↑ *Archimedia Team.*



FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

KWMC works with residents, artists, makers and specialists to turn ideas into reality. Whether creating a community building, a manufacturing space or new homes, the aim has always been the same: giving local people the tools and support to shape the future of their neighbourhood.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY DREAM

KWMC's building is itself an example of how it makes community-led ideas real.

Through *Archimedia (2004-08)*, more than 80 young people helped design and build a bespoke community media centre using eco-friendly materials and techniques. After six years of planning, designing and campaigning, the purpose-built Knowle West Media Centre opened in April 2008, when the keys were presented to the young people by the then Chancellor of Exchequer.

The young people specified they wanted the building to be a welcoming and safe space, a beacon of environmental design, accessible to all, an adaptable media production space and, importantly, it should truly belong in Knowle West.



CREATING A FACTORY FOR MAKING

KWMC has long explored how communities can use making and manufacturing to create opportunities for local people.

An important step was the Eagle House *Furniture Factory (2014-15)*, which transformed a disused youth centre into a temporary furniture factory. Using CNC and laser-cutting machines, local residents trained and worked alongside artists and makers to produce almost 500 pieces of furniture for Filwood Green Business Park.

When the project ended, the team moved into Filwood Green Business Park and established KWMC: The Factory - a space for digital fabrication, product design and community making.

MAKING HOMES

WeCanMake grew from an arts project at KWMC exploring questions of home and neighbourhood in 2017. Over the following decade, it evolved into an independent Community Land Trust, building community-led, low-carbon homes that demonstrate how neighbourhoods can play a leading role in addressing the housing crisis.

KWMC and WeCanMake continue to collaborate closely. Through projects such as *Retrofit Street (2023-current),* residents, makers and housing organisations come together to explore how homes and neighbourhoods can be improved for people and the planet.

17-minute film about WeCanMake: *tinyurl.com/wecanmake-film*

REIMAGINING PLACES TOGETHER

Knowle West residents have been involved in reimagining Filwood Broadway for many years, contributing to neighbourhood plans designed to breathe life back into what was once a busy high street nearly 100 years ago. KWMC has always brought artists and creative practices to this community regeneration effort.

Filwood Fantastic (2018-22) was a locally led programme which reinvented community spaces and brought art onto the high street through co-created festivals, parades, trails, events and even a crazy golf course.

Pop-ups became a powerful way to test ideas and spark conversations. Some favourites include *The Artist Hotel (2017)*, which questioned where artists live and work in the city; *The People Speak's Talkaoke (2023)*, a pop-up street chat show; and Uninvited Guests' *Future Places Toolkit (2021),* where people shared their dreams for future high streets and watched them being drawn live.

More recently, the year-long *Filwood in Motion (2025)* project brought artists and residents together to create artworks, events and podcasts celebrating local stories during the £14.5 million transformation of Filwood Broadway. Explore more: *filwood-in-motion.com*

↓ Artist residency with Charlotte Biszewski which WeCanMake grew from.



↑ A new home for John in Bill's garden (2021)

In 2026, KWMC moved its digital making kit to all be under one roof at Leinster Avenue in Knowle West, while WeCanMake took on The Factory as its base for co-designing and making components for creating new community-led low-carbon homes and the retrofit of existing homes.





↑[1] *Retrofit Street (2024).*

↑[2] A new home for Toni and Amancia in Toni's parents' garden (2021).





↑ *kwmc.org.uk/talkaoke*



↑ *The Artist Hotel (2017).*

COMMONS CHEST

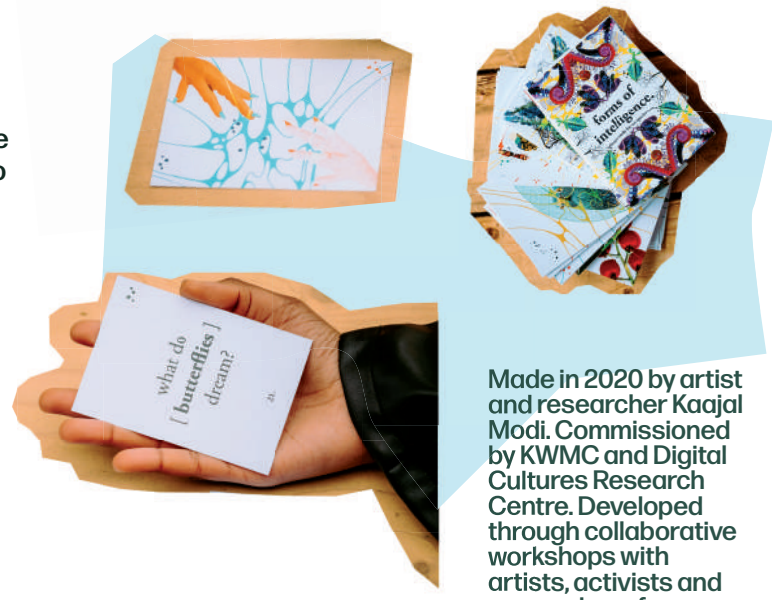
Over the last 30 years, KWMC has developed a wide range of creative tools and resources that are free to use and share. Many have emerged from collaborative projects that bring together different forms of knowledge, explore technology in accessible and imaginative ways, and amplify voices that are too often overlooked. They are the result of co-creation with artists, researchers, and local communities.

Below are just a few of our favourites. Use them to reimagine, create, and connect in your own unique way. These resources are open-source as part of the Commons: a movement dedicated to shared ownership and collective care.

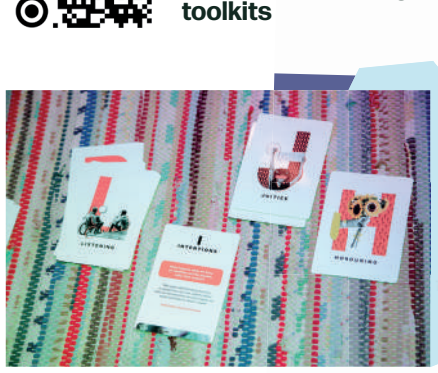
Dive deeper into our tools and use them yourself: kwmc.org.uk/toolkits

FORMS OF INTELLIGENCE CARDS

Prompts and provocations inspired by animal, plant and microbial intelligence. Use them to spark new conversations and perspectives for anything you are working on.



Made in 2020 by artist and researcher Kaajal Modi. Commissioned by KWMC and Digital Cultures Research Centre. Developed through collaborative workshops with artists, activists and researchers from Knowle West, Bristol, Kent and Colombia.





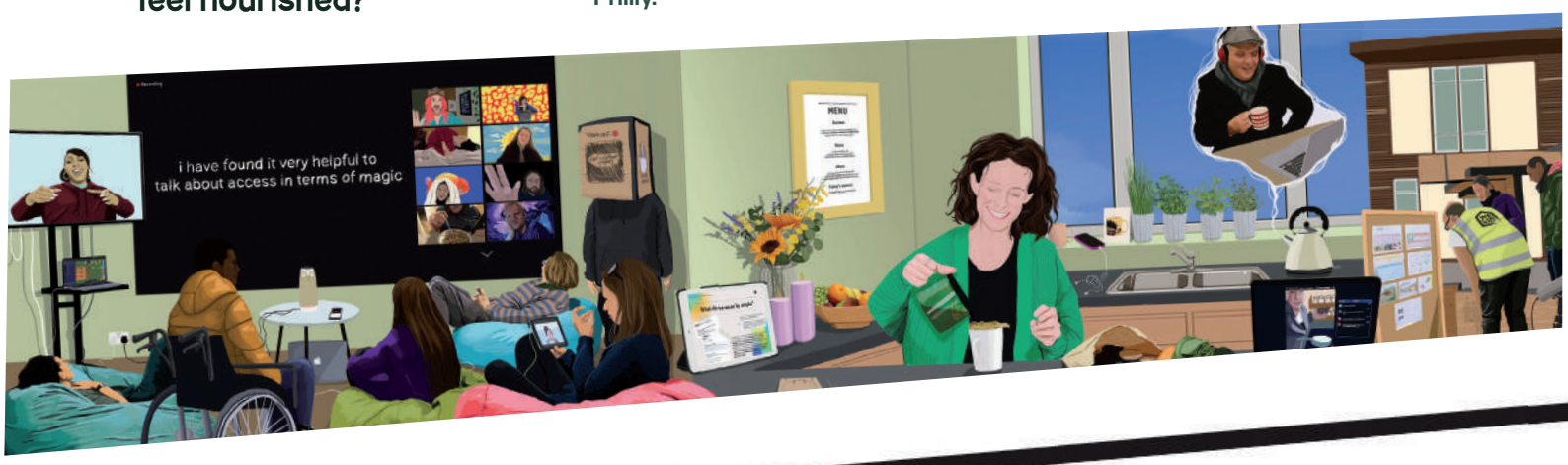
A-Z OF CARE CARDS

Inspired by pleasure activism and radical rest, use these cards to seed new thoughts and grow deep practices of care. Each card features a letter of the alphabet paired with a care-related word. On the reverse side, you'll find a prompt and quote to reflect on.

"What practices, spaces, objects, things make you feel nourished?"

Created in 2022 as part of the *Creativity + Care (2021-22)* programme at KWMC, commissioned by KWMC and led by Roseanna Dias and Josephine Gyasi. The cards were developed in collaboration with several creatives and designed by Designer Philly.







TIPS AND TRICKS CARDS

A series of thought-provoking recommendations for collaboration, innovation and action. Use them as tips and discussion-starters to reflect on your work and explore new possibilities. A range of card packs are available for artists, community members, researchers and others interested in meaningful collaboration.

Developed by KWMC from 2014 onwards. Co-designed with community activists, academics, artists and Living Lab practitioners.

KWMC also shares its work internationally through the European Network of Living Labs, connecting with organisations across the world to tackle real-world challenges through collaboration and experimentation. As Bristol's Living Lab, KWMC centres local people to test and develop ideas in everyday settings, ensuring innovation is shaped by the communities it serves.

European Network of Living Labs

BRISTOL APPROACH

the BRISTOL APPROACH

A framework and way of working that puts communities and their needs at the heart of innovation.

Developed by KWMC in collaboration with Ideas for Change and Bristol City Council.

See more on page 9.

COME TOGETHER WEBSITE

An online resource documenting *Come Together (2021)*, a programme of events, training, co-creation and commissions exploring how digital and physical spaces can be combined to connect and collaborate. Discover project learnings, practical resources and inspiration for creating inclusive hybrid experiences.

cometogether-kwmc.org.uk



↓ Illustrated by Mary Flora Hart



Letters to Knowle West Media Centre

Over the years, lots of people have come through KWMC's doors: residents, young people, artists, makers, researchers, community organisers, partners... Some stayed for a project, some for a job, and some found opportunities that changed the direction of their lives.

We asked some of the people who have been part of our story over the years to share their thoughts. Here's what they had to say...

"KWMC have a huge body of work around arts, tech and community that they have carefully honed and crafted over many years. The co-creation and participatory approaches they have long worked with, including around the Commons and the Bristol Approach, are agenda-setting and provide exciting, thoughtful and rigorous models for people across academia, policy, industry and culture."

Rebecca Coleman, Professor of Digital Futures at the University of Bristol and KWMC's first Researcher in Residence.

"**...I think that points to another of KWMC's great strengths: it's never been possible to pigeonhole what it does. It would have been relatively easy for the project to draw a box around itself and continue to identify as an Arts and Health project, but instead its focus is multi-faceted. KWMC is about many, many things: housing, and making, and digital inclusion, and science, and the environment, and community cohesion... as well as health and well-being.**"

Ruth Hecht - An experienced arts manager, producer and consultant, championing equality and diversity. Ruth project managed the very first Knowle West photography residency and produced one of the early reports on health and arts. Since then, Ruth has worked with KWMC supporting several programmes.

"Working at KWMC at a young age was a dream because it taught me the power of inclusive practices early. KWMC championed co-design thinking; you built nothing for the community without the community. It feels like it should be common sense but it isn't and that is why so many products, projects, and businesses fail. Part of the training at KWMC was to demonstrate how community engagement and collaboration had power. You cannot affect change alone, and you cannot affect the right change without insight and engagement from your community. The co-design practices I learnt at Knowle West Media Centre informed the co-design practices central to R&D, clinical, and community processes at my startup Open Bionics."

Sammy Payne MBE, a Knowle West girl and former Junior Digital Producer.

"KWMC pulled me out of an awful situation, it helped me build my confidence and meet new people. It was also a steppingstone into the media world which I found myself in later in life"

Chris Foster, Contributor to Your Video Letters and former Trainee.

"**...Meanwhile, over all those years, places and organisations like KWMC [...] quietly, consistently and determinedly do what they do, with what they can; weaving a resilient and flexible fabric from what they find around them.**

These places help make sense of the passing semi-ideas of Ministers, managers, Directors, funders, stakeholders, policy advisors and foundations, they ground the projects and initiatives and turn them into meaningful experience for people like you and me (even if they still have to take a deep breath, get a coffee and translate their efforts into outputs and outcomes once a quarter.) They assimilate whim and make it last and stick. They take long term - not 3-4 year - responsibility for sustaining and supporting fundamental aspects of life (creativity, hope, learning, potential...) that matter more than politics and related fashion."

Matt Little, Matt worked for Bristol Regeneration partnership in the mid-90s managing a scheme called *Youth Owning Urban Regeneration* and was an early supporter of the then fledgling Knowle West Media Project. In the early 2000s he led the influential Bristol Creative Partnerships scheme supporting partnerships between schools and the cultural sector. Matt has been a hugely important advisor and critical friend to KWMC - quietly encouraging, offering sound advice in all situations and helping to steer a path through the highs and lows. Formerly a Trustee of KWMC, he is now a Director of We Can Make, an independent CIC that developed from KWMC's earlier homes and making arts projects led by Melissa Mean.

“I have been an independent artist for 14 years and I have had a lot of residencies and commissions across the world. On average these take about three months and then I move on to the next thing. There are several key differences between KWMC and other art organisations I have worked with.

For example, KWMC is interested in the practical applications of art. This intent can often reduce visuals to a bare functionalism whereas KWMC still encourage and support creative visual experimentation. Working at KWMC has been a unique experience because of the freedom and support they have offered me as an artist.

Furthermore, the context of the KWMC has informed the development of my work. [...] Because of the freedom I have enjoyed experimenting with the technology and my technical ability has grown to such an extent that I have been able to help Siemens with ways of aggregating data feeds. My work at KWMC has massively developed my skills and opened up new opportunities.”

Dane Watkins, an artist who worked with KWMC over several years.

“We had an exhibition and it was the first time I’d done something I was really proud of and I could say ‘I did that’. [It] made me realize I wanted to go somewhere, travel, do something; up to that point I’d never left the estate. After college I got an apprenticeship here and I was able to do a lot of photography and journalism and a bit of graphic design and it showed me I was a creative person.”

Terri Ann McKenny, N'Large member and former Trainee, now Teacher.

“KWMC and The Knowledge helped me break into a career I once thought was out of reach - the power it can unleash in young people is truly remarkable.”

Charlie Watts, Community Journalist, Reporter for BristolWorld.

<u>YOUR STORY</u> - Write a letter to KWMC.
Tell us about a favourite memory at KWMC - something that made you think differently, learn something new or feel part of something bigger.

STATS

Although we've been based in Knowle West for 30 years, we've only had our digital record-keeping system since 2009. Our finances have been recorded digitally since 2005. Below are a few highlights since our records began:

Participants: 27,566

Visits: 158,719

Artists & Associates worked with: 1,554

Employees: 271

Volunteer hours: over 10,000 in the last 10 years

The Factory* Commissions: 715
The Factory* Members: 168 since 2019
Current Members: 59

Films made: 308
Website visits: 63,000+ since 2016
Podcasts made: 54 since 2018
Editions of The Knowledge: 104

Low-carbon community-led

Houses built through WeCanMake: 2

Front Garden Retrofit Kit installed in local gardens: 30

Money spent on freelancers: £3,504,706

Money spent on young people: £3,381,697

Social value created*: £15 million

Projects run: 467

Sessions run: 12,524

South Bristol schools worked with: 39

Work experience placements: 281

Young people taken on retreats: 120

New businesses/enterprises supported: 934

Number of times KWMC collaborated with a different county: 21

*At the start of 2026, KWMC moved its digital making kit from The Factory into a new Digital Making Space at KWMC. KWMC's memberships and commissions now mainly take place in the Digital Making Space, while The Factory becomes WeCanMake's base for building and retrofitting homes. More on page 11.

TIMELINE

The Short Version of a Very Long Story.
It's impossible to fit every twist and turn of KWMC's journey onto this timeline. Instead, we've selected just a few moments that offer a glimpse into the many projects and achievements that have shaped KWMC into what we see today.

1996





A photography project led by Carolyn Hassan at Knowle West Health Association evolves into Knowle West Media Project.

Carolyn is joined by Penny Evans and other freelancers who go on to run other projects in the Knowle West area, and the decision is taken to unite the projects and run them from the former William Budd Health Centre.

2002

KWMC - then called Knowle West Media Project - is formally constituted as an independent charity and registered organisation.

2006

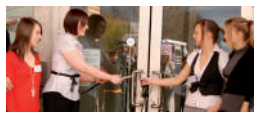
Knowle West Media Project is renamed Knowle West Media Centre.

KWMC receives the *Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service* by groups in the community.

A group of young people form *Archimedia* and recruit architects White Design Associates to begin designing a new Media Centre building together. Through this, young people gain hands-on experience in construction processes, local architecture, and civic engagement.

2008





The KWMC building officially opens with a visit from Chancellor the Rt. Hon. Alistair Darling.

2012

KWMC becomes an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation.

2013

KWMC becomes an active member of the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), supporting diverse communities in addressing social challenges through innovation.

2014





Pop-Up Furniture Factory opens at Eagle House, providing training and producing furniture for Filwood Green Business Park.

2015





The Furniture Factory moves to Filwood Green Business Park and is renamed KWMC The Factory, receiving the *Alfred Telling Award* for its contributions to training and manufacturing in Bristol.

2016

KWMC celebrates 20 years of the Knowle West photography project with a year-long programme, culminating in a community birthday party and exhibition reflecting two decades of change.

2017



WeCanMake Housing, a community-led housing initiative which began life as a KWMC arts residency, launches its prototype home on the site of Filwood Community Centre.

KWMC is recognised as one of the *Intelligent Community Forum's Smart21 Communities of 2017,* highlighting Knowle West's innovative use of digital tools to strengthen local economies and societies.

From Her POV produces two films with a crew of 14 women, Black Cherry & Blood Warriors.

2018

KWMC is named in Creative England's CE50 list for driving local community innovation.

Director Carolyn Hassan is appointed one of Bristol's first International Ambassadors by Mayor Marvin Rees.

WeCanMake Housing led by Melissa Mean is recognised as one of NESTA and the Observer New Review's New Radicals for tackling major societal challenges with creativity.

2019

KWMC co-founds the Knowle West Alliance, alongside Re:work, Knowle West Health Park, Filwood Community Centre and The Park. The Alliance brings together residents, businesses, and organisations to create positive action in the area.

2020





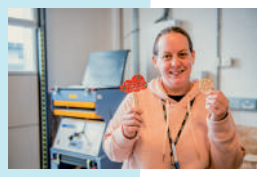
WeCanMake submits plans for its first two affordable homes in Knowle West, co-designed with local families and architects Studio Bark and Agile Designs.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, KWMC and WeCanMake collaborate with residents and AUAR to explore modern construction methods, resulting the in the Block West pavilion outside KWMC.

2021



KWMC doubles the workshop space at The Factory, upgrades its digital fabrication kit, and improves accessibility – supported by funding from the Open Programmable City via Bristol City Council.





KWMC launches *Come Together,* a programme of public events, training, co-creation and commissions exploring how we stayed connected through the COVID-19 pandemic.





WeCanMake completes construction of its first two low-carbon homes while training 30 local people to use their creative co-design approach. The initiative establishes new planning precedents influencing wider housing policy and practice.



2022

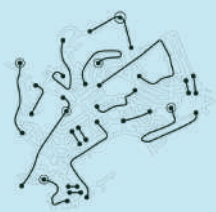
KWMC's young people's programme delivers their third *Future Legacy Project,* part of the Maker City programme, in collaboration with Stemettes and UCL.

2024

Knowle West Media Centre

KWMC Founder Carolyn Hassan retires as CEO. Her position is filled by a collaborative leadership structure, marking an exciting evolution in the way KWMC operates and reflecting its values of collaboration.

KWMC launches a new website and visual rebrand.



2025



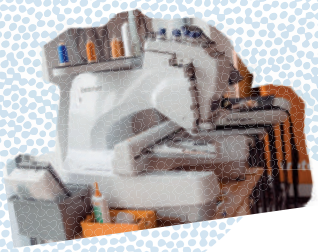


KWMC presents the *Foundations for the Future exhibition*, co-created with Carolyn Hassan. The exhibition reflects on nearly three decades of KWMC's work across changing social, political, environmental, and economic landscapes. Framed as a 'usable past', it highlights key practices, reflections, and moments of impact, while inviting others to add their own stories and visions for what comes next.

Having been successfully incubated within KWMC, WeCanMake grows into an independent Community Land Trust.

2026







KWMC brings its digital making kit all under one roof at Leinster Avenue in Knowle West, while WeCanMake takes on The Factory as its base for base for co-designing and making components for creating new community-led low-carbon homes and the retrofit of existing homes.



THIS YEAR AT KWMC 2025-26











2025/26 has been another busy year at KWMC, shaping fairer futures together through arts, tech and care.

Despite a challenging funding landscape, we continued to deliver a wide range of opportunities including creative development, community storytelling, digital making and environmental action. We created spaces for people of all ages – especially those local to Knowle West - to learn new skills, share ideas and shape the places they live.

Through after-school and holiday programmes, young people explored music, digital making, creative technology and environmental action. One standout moment was *SoundWave Festival,* designed and delivered entirely by young people and welcoming more than 200 people for an evening of music and creativity.

We also supported artists and creative practitioners through residencies, fellowships, commissions and networking opportunities, supporting people to develop new work and build connections. One highlight was welcoming Mother Cyborg from Detroit, USA, as an artist in residence. She worked with local community groups to explore questions about technology, creativity and the future, using collaborative quilting workshops to ask: "What does the future need from us today?"

As Bristol's Living Lab, KWMC also shared learning nationally and internationally, contributing to global conversations about creativity, technology, climate action and community-led innovation. The culmination of the GREENGAGE collaboration led to a mobile Conversation Station.

A major highlight this year was Filwood in Motion, a year-long artist residency on Filwood Broadway that brought together local residents, businesses, schools and community groups through workshops, performances, podcasts, artworks and events.

This year also marked two important milestones: WeCanMake became an independent organisation after a decade of development at KWMC, and we opened our new Digital Making Space at Leinster Avenue, bringing our digital making activities together under one roof.

Read our full Annual Report:
kwmc.org.uk/annualreport











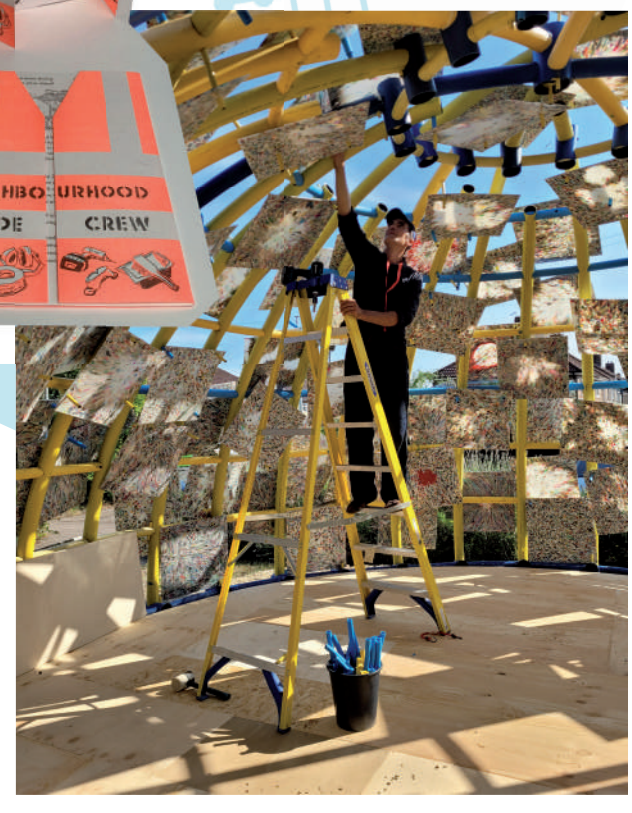












This year, we welcomed 2,514 individual community members through our doors, taking part in at least one of our 225 sessions and events. We've delivered 600+ hours of workshops and supported 25 young people in work experience placements.

We've worked alongside 100 freelancers, 26 staff, eight volunteers and three interns.

↑ Photos in this spread taken by: Diego Maeso, Ibi Feher, Mereida Fajardo and Ella Chedburn.

YOUR TURN:
LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

WHAT DO YOU THINK KWMC WILL LOOK LIKE IN 2056?

DRAW OR WRITE

YOUR VISION INSIDE THE CRYSTAL BALL.

Every Resident Has Access to Creative Spaces

Community-Led Technology Powers Local Change

WHAT'S A HEADLINE YOU'D LOVE TO READ ABOUT KNOWLE WEST IN 2056?

WRITE DOWN ONE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

Cut it out,
keep it somewhere special,
or pass it on to someone who can help make it happen.

NEXT 30 YEARS

ONE LAST TRIP

Throughout this newspaper, we've travelled back through three decades of stories, projects, experiments and big ideas. But before we return our time machine back to the storage cupboard, there's one final stop to make...

Set the dial to 30 years into the future: 2056.

What does Knowle West look like? What are people making, learning and imagining? What role does KWMC play? What kind of future do we want to create together?

THE FUTURE STARTS HERE

We asked members of our community what they envision for KWMC in 2056. Here's what they saw in their crystal balls...

2056

Everyone can tell their stories and have a voice



People **making** things for themselves and their community

Shared creative spaces to make things

Support to understand tech

Everyone is an **artist**

Fruit trees and lots of free food growing.

KWMC is still a **safe** space, it's busy with lots to do

Tech does the jobs we hate

Local community-led opportunities





Special thanks to everyone at Creative Cuppa.

2056

We've spent the last 30 years asking questions, trying things out and imagining what could be different. The next 30 years are unwritten. What happens next is up to all of us...

OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES...

We've got all sorts of FREE regular programmes to get involved with, as well as special one-off workshops and events. All of these take place here at KWMC, Leinster Ave, BS4 1NL. Why not try:

CREATIVE CUPPA

For adults and families, particularly those from Knowle West and nearby. Free lunch, friendly chats and creative activities. Join in or do your own project or just have a cuppa. Everyone is welcome, whatever your experience level.

DESIGN & MAKE

For adults. Learn new computer design skills, try the kit in our Digital Making Space, and take home something you've created yourself.

COMMUNITY X ARTS X TECH MEET-UP

For local adults plus creatives and technologists from Bristol and beyond who already work with communities, as well as those who are curious about getting started. Meet-ups vary from talks to sharings to hands-on making. Dinner included.







YOUNG PEOPLES PROGRAMME

For ages 10-17 living or studying in BS4, BS3 5, BS13 & BS14. Get hands-on with KWMC's digital fabrication kit like laser cutters and 3D printers in *Maker City*. Explore digital media like digital drawing, 3D scanning, VR, animation, photography and more in *Creative Hub*. Try out a fully equipped music studio to build digital music production skills or jam with others in *SoundWave*. Or join our next Work Experience programmes and explore the immense range of creative and engineering job possibilities in Bristol and beyond.

MORE INFO & FREE TICKETS

The easiest way to see what's coming up and book your place is through the What's On page at *kwmc.org.uk*.

If you'd rather book through us directly, or if you have any questions, we're always happy to help. Our friendly Front of House Team are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Email: enquiries@kwmc.org.uk
Call: 0117 903 0444
Chat in-person: KWMC, Leinster Ave, BS4 1NL.

STAY CONNECTED

Keep up to date with events, opportunities and news by signing up to our monthly newsletter and following us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram: @knowlewestmedia

This is just a start, visit our website to see everything else going on!

tinyurl.com/kwmc-newsletter





A NOTE FROM ALL OF US AT KWMC:

At KWMC, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to shape the future they want for themselves and their community. We know that people and communities are already full of knowledge and they should have the power to address the things that matter to them. Everyone should have the freedom and resources to express their creativity.

Keeping our programmes free is a vital part of ensuring that everyone can take part. To continue this, we depend on funding and donations. Your support will help us reach more people and keep our programmes accessible to those who need them most.

If you're able to, please consider donating. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps support life-changing experiences in our community. Thank you for being part of it.

THANK YOU

And finally: thank you! To the thousands of people who have been part of KWMC during the past 30 years: thank you for your ideas, energy, creativity, trust, courage, curiosity and care.

And to the many funders, collaborators, partners, supporters and champions: thank you. Your belief in our work has helped turn countless ideas into reality and bring community-led visions to life. We couldn't have done it without you.

Here's to the next 30 years!

tinyurl.com/donate

Special thanks to our current collaborators and funders below for supporting our work in 2026:

Designed by Jakub Vronsky