

July 2024

# Together We Can 2 Progress Report Year 3



4

Local organisations - Worth Unlimited, Open Door Community Foundation, Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together and Firs & Bromford Community Development Trust.

81

registered groups + activities

49

new groups + activities since Jul 21

12

community events

1

Vision

12

paid roles

## Together We Can 2

Year 3 - in Numbers

183

young people attending TWC-led groups

60+

Community Volunteers

242

participants in TWC-led activities

63

young people receiving support

500+

attendees across our Community Events

150+

neighbours receiving advice and support

32

TWC Volunteers

# Together We Can 2

Together We Can is a unique collaboration between 3 grassroots organisations in the Firs and Bromford estates in East Birmingham. Working together with neighbours and partners, we are committed to a long-term, neighbourhood-wide journey of intergenerational community-building, seeking to root practical wisdom, connectedness and leadership among local residents. Our vision is shaped by that of Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together (FBNT) and the residents' group overseeing the 10 year Big Local funding for the area:

**“Developing our community into a place of creativity and compassion, where all feel welcome, all feel connected, all feel they belong and all feel that they can flourish”**

TWC2 refers to the second phase of our work, from July 2021 until June 2026. This builds on the 4.5 years in the first phase of TWC. TWC2 now supports 12 paid staff, of which 7 are local residents, including 3 who have been trainee connectors, and 2 mental health & wellbeing community guides.

Uniquely, TWC2 is not about delivering particular projects or services. Instead, our approach is to be alongside neighbours on a journey of involvement, discovery and growth. As they connect with others in their local area and participate in doing things together, sharing their passions, gifts and skills with others, neighbours grow in confidence, become more resilient and, in turn, are more able to encourage and enable others to participate in community life.

At this point just two years from the end of TWC2, it is all the more important to celebrate the difference TWC is making to our neighbours and our community, to continue to reflect on what we are learning, and to shape our future plans - all done collaboratively between TWC participants, partners and staff.

Join us on the journey...!



# Our journey this year

## Particular highlights of the year have included:

### WELCOME - co-creating entry points into community

- Summer, Christmas, Easter and Eid events - residents co-creating opportunities to come together for celebration and fun. In total, over 260+ adults and 180+ young people have participated in community events during Year 3.
- Welcome Packs - created by Tiffany and Clare to share vital information about our community, leading to new people engaging and getting involved.
- Worked with Community Organisers funded by FBNT revitalising our street connecting work, door-knocking to invite neighbours to participate in conversation about the future of our neighbourhood, but also encouraging them to join in with our existing Places of Welcome.

### BELONG AND SHARE - co-creating spaces for people to get involved

- Firs Coffee Mornings - encouraging new relationships and particularly linking with the Women and Children's Group. Continued development of our Men's Group. In total, at least 242 adults have participated in regular TWC Groups or activities during Year 3.
- Developing our networks of support, including Hodge Hill Pantry and Open Door Tuesdays - seeing differences in how people are coping in life when crisis hits, finding that although people still struggle, they tend to reach out for help within the community as well as seeking professional support.
- Continuing to develop our Green Spaces throughout the community - enabling neighbours to participate in creating and caring for these spaces.
- Initiating our NEET project, offering a safe space of support for young people not currently participating in education - alongside continued support offered by our regular youth groups and safe spaces. In total, over 180 young people have attended TWC Groups and Events during the past year.





## GOING DEEPER - learning and developing

- Residential activities for young people - in May we took 20 young people away to take part in team building, caving, raft building, archery, with the majority of planning and leading done by our senior youth connectors, Jake and Chloe alongside our young leaders.
- Our learning programme - which this year focused on Diversity and Equity training and Young Changemakers
- Seeing local people grow into leadership and confidence
- Continuing our Mental Health capacity building project, aiming to increase our ability to support neighbours to respond to distress - including training 12 local residents in mental health awareness.
- Through it all, our staff work as ALONGSIDERS and ENABLERS - nurturing spaces where neighbours can come together, supporting neighbours to participate and grow in confidence and mentoring them as they step into leadership.
- The Together We Can approach has always been to work towards groups and activities being as neighbour-led as possible. Over the past few years, however, one of our key pieces of learning has been about the significant ongoing role that paid staff play within our complex 'community ecology': offering stable foundations, a skilled and professional 'safety net' of support, spaces for learning and reflection, and strategic oversight and coordination.
- Our participation in the Levelling Up programme has been positive with good stakeholder engagement and an opportunity to think about enterprise, young people and wider opportunities and what an ideal economy would look like.



**All of this contributes towards positive outcomes for our community as a whole and for all of our neighbours.**

# Meet The Together We Can Team

Dan is part of the coordination team that oversees and helps develop the Together We Can Project. Dan leads the growth and development of the Youth Connector team whilst also doing as much face to face youth work as possible and overseeing The Hub!



Paul is also part of the coordination team that oversees the TWC Project. He leads the development of the Street connector team and the learning programme and is passionate about connecting with everyone in the community and enabling others to do so too.

Flo currently has two roles, one as our adult livelihoods support worker (3 days), encouraging people, journeying alongside them through tough stuff, and helping them get the support they need, and 2 days as a youth support worker, working with the wider youth connector team to support young people where they are at and in their next steps.



Clare joined as a Street Connector trainee 2022 but her journey as an active resident in Bromford began many many years before. Her first passion is young people and volunteers as a youth Connector for Worth Unlimited. Her 2nd passion is our community She is compassionate and is always wanting to welcome people and encourage them to participate.

Chloe is a local resident, someone who has gone through our whole pathway from being a young person to now being employed as a Youth Connector Trainee. Chloe is passionate about the voices of young people being heard and engaging with her local community through her work supporting youth groups, activities and events.



In January 2023 we welcomed Tiffany as our latest Connector trainee. Tiffany isn't new to FaB community life, having been involved for a number of years as a resident. Tiffany lives in the Firs and is a passionate advocate for her estate. She has an amazing gift of connecting with people from all backgrounds and can develop trusting relationships. She is a great facilitator of groups and activities, and brings creativity and energy to everything she sets her mind to.

Stewart is another home-grown Worth team member. He forms part of our youth connector team and leads on our safe spaces and play sessions – giving young people the spaces to connect with their peers, while also enabling young people to get creative in our learning hub.



# Meet The Green Team

Cath has been our Green Connector since 2018. She is passionate about gardening, green spaces and the environment. She has fantastic planning and design skills, and is well organised and planned in her approach. She has developed a whole range of activities, spaces, and projects during her time here..



Sam joined the team as a green connector in 2022. He is freelance and works 8 days per week here alongside Cath and the green connectors. Sam is passionate about the power of green spaces, gardening, and the environment to build communities. He is good at getting alongside others, and encouraging people to participate.

## Admin

Claire is the newest member of our team. In Jan 2023 we said farewell to Gemma, our previous admin support. Gemma left to pursue her own 'upcycling' business initiative, started through our Changemakers programme. We're thrilled to have Claire, another local resident and entrepreneur in her own right, bring such amazing administration skills to the team.



## Mental Health & Wellbeing



Jo and Nicola are our community guides for health & well being. They have both been local residents for many years and actively engaged in many TWC activities. Both are passionate and experienced in supporting friends and neighbours with their mental health and well being, and have brought those gifts to their role to develop new forms of support and signposting in the community.



Andy is Co-Director and Founder of Space to Breathe. This year, Space to Breathe were commissioned to work alongside Together We Can to co-ordinate and build up our mental health and well being support for people attending groups and events across the area. Andy brings 20 years of experience in emotional support work.



# How we work

Working closely with neighbours, our Together We Can (TWC) team plans strategically with other local partners towards a more CONNECTED neighbourhood. We believe that it is when people come together to share their passions, gifts and skills, in a supportive environment, that the magic of community happens.

TWC enables this connection through supporting 'entry points' such as street events and youth clubs which enable neighbours to feel WELCOME, along with places, groups and activities where neighbours can feel they BELONG and SHARE the things they care about (passions), know about (knowledge) and can do (skills). We also create opportunities for neighbours to 'go deeper': to reflect, LEARN and develop as active and resilient participants in their neighbourhood. Through this neighbours are enabled to grow into ENABLING roles in the neighbourhood (and its places, groups and activities), including connecting with new people, inviting people to join in, leading groups and activities and supporting their neighbours.



Across 5 workstreams, in dialogue with FBNT theme champions, TWC2 works towards groups and activities being as neighbour-led as possible, contributing to positive outcomes for our community (Section 3) and neighbours (Section 4).

# Towards a Flourishing Community



## 01. Partnerships

During TWC2, building local partnerships - connecting and unlocking community assets through bringing local institutions to work more closely together - has become an increasingly important part of our work.

“The project showed the value of collaborative working between different groups to deliver work in a different way. Open Door were vital to the project's success thanks to their established and trusted presence in the area and knowledge of local needs and strengths.” Alex Morton, National Trust - partner on Pocket Park

Our Year 1 (July 2022) report named 21 local partners. By July 2024, this has risen to 60, including 7 schools/colleges. A further 4 key external partners are directly involved in delivery of TWC2 - Central England Law Centre (legal advice); Birmingham City Council (welfare/housing); Andy Freeman, Space to Breathe (mental health support); and Tim Evans, Curating Connections (neighbour, youthwork/community-building training).

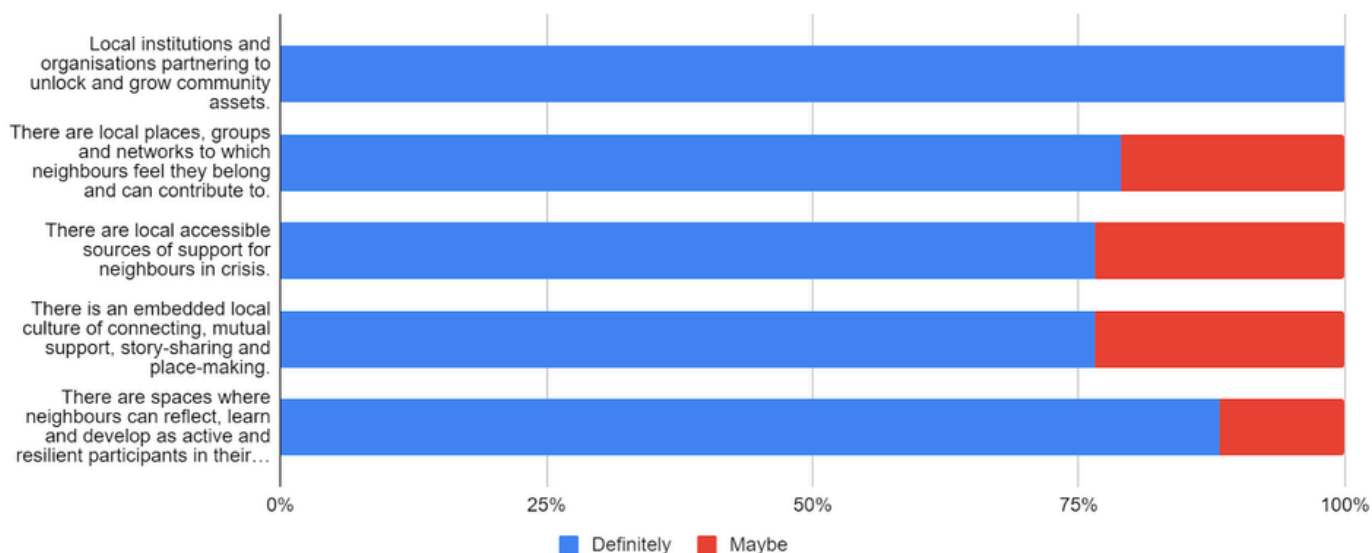
In addition, TWC staff are actively involved in mutually supportive relationships with 18 other independent local community groups, including wider Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together activities, other local churches & local mosque, community groups and local businesses.

TWC team have found themselves in a good position to bridge the gap between capacity and resources offered by external partners with the vision and enthusiasm of residents, offering opportunities for neighbours to step up into connecting roles themselves.

17 partners responded to our partners survey. Asked “..what has gone well?” partners mentioned good collaborative working relationships and communication, community connections and development, staff input and regular delivery.

“Good project and team effort - very closely aligned principles of practice” David Jones, Community Organisers - partner on St Wilfrids community consultation

### In your view, has TWC contributed to the following...





## 02. Places to Belong

There are local places, groups & networks to which neighbours feel they can BELONG and contribute to.

By the end of TWC2 Year 3 (June 2024), there were 81 active groups/activities in the Firs and Bromford area with direct connection to TWC:

- 39 groups or activities were directly led by TWC (20 TWC led and delivered; 19 TWC led with significant neighbour support) - with a further 2 delivered by a TWC external partner
- A further 23 local groups or activities were neighbour-led with support from TWC staff (16 with significant support, 7 light-touch) - such that it is unlikely those projects would exist, in the same way, without TWC
- 14 further local groups are completely neighbour-led but in contact with TWC

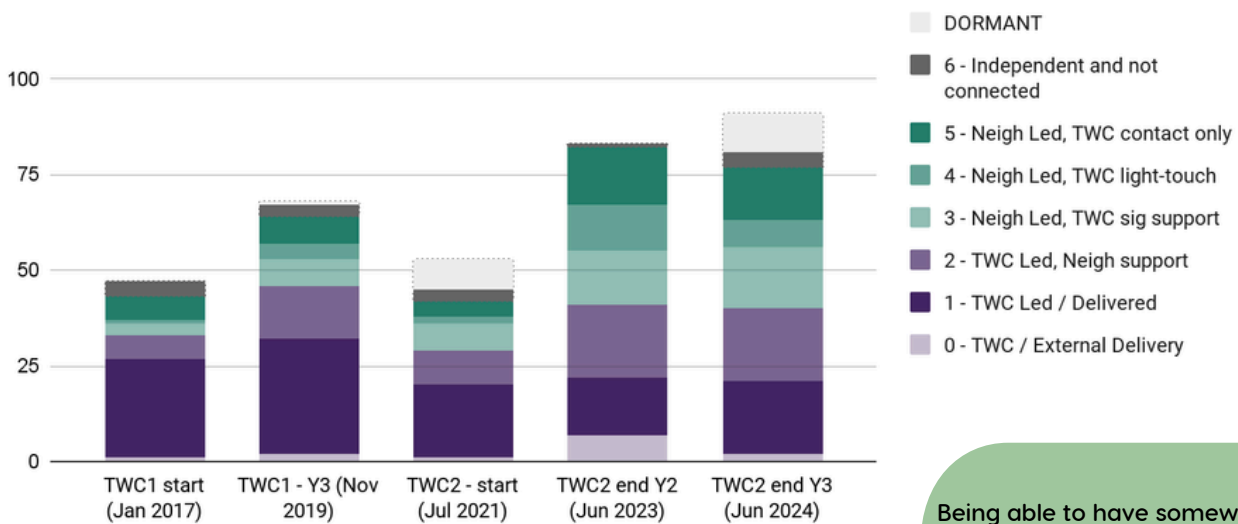
Some groups/activities have a regular meeting pattern (weekly, monthly etc), others are more ad hoc or occasional.

Made me feel accepted, helped me connect with a community project for when I left college, thinking about future employment.

It's good to be able to spend time with friends in a safe place

My first time here I felt a release of tension. I felt loved. And I feel like that every time I come.

TWC! Groups and Activities in FaB (2017- end Jun 2024)

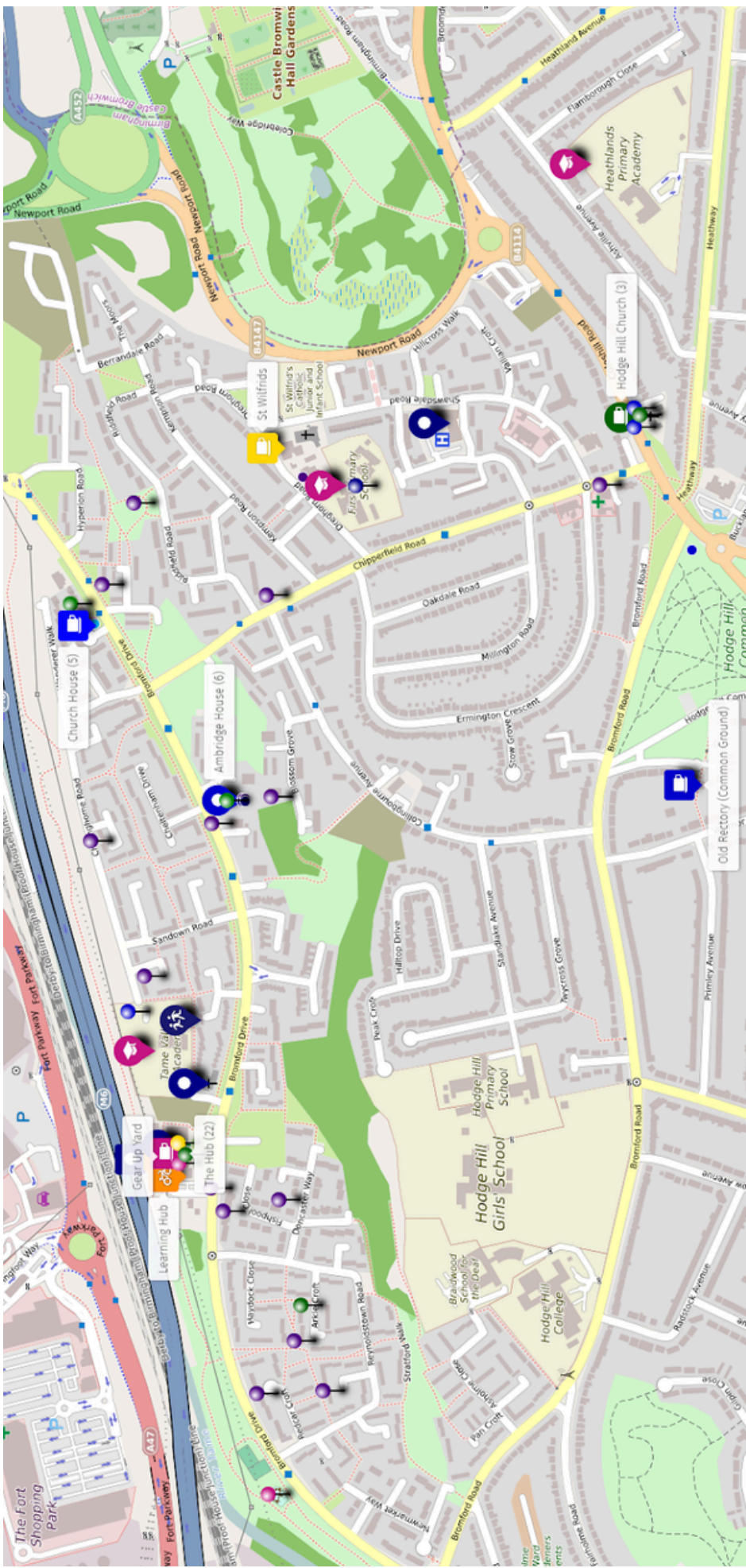


Being able to have somewhere local that I feel safe and heard. People listen to me and that helps a lot.

I have got to know more people living in the community and as a result feel more connected and more proud of where I live. Great community vibes.

Being able to have somewhere local that I feel safe and heard. People listen to me and that helps a lot.

# TWC2 Year 3 - Key Locations



Numbers in brackets show multiple groups with the same location.  
54 further groups and activities happen at various locations across Firs and Bromford, not shown here



## 03. Local, Accessible Support

There are local, accessible sources of SUPPORT for neighbours in crisis

Our TWC pathway recognises that our neighbours sometimes need help to deal with the challenges life throws at us and to overcome the barriers that prevent them from being active participants in the local community.

### Spaces and Places for Mutual Support

TWC supports a growing network of spaces where community members can come together to support each other, connect directly with specialist support provided by our staff, volunteers and partners and/or, where necessary, be signposted to external agencies. This work is facilitated by Flo, our Livelihoods Support Worker, supported by our other Open Door staff, but only possible because of the whole team of volunteers which make it happen.

Relationships of mutual support are generated right across our spaces, groups and activities, but with a particular focus on:

- Our Tuesday Open-Door drop-in welcomes around 15-20 people each week, with c.8-10 requiring in-depth support with housing, benefits, employment or other issues - 150 residents in total over Year 2.
- In the Autumn of 2023, we relocated the additional Friday drop-in to Hodge Hill GP Surgery. Whilst this was beneficial in further developing community partnerships, the numbers taking up support in this space were low (typically only 2 per week). We paused this work in May 2024, repurposing the capacity for dedicated 1-2-1 appointments.
- Hodge Hill Pantry supports 25-30 households each week with access to affordable food. As well as a monthly Mental Health drop-in at Pantry, our Livelihoods Support Worker, Flo, is generally available for Pantry Members to connect with for support. During Year 3, 11 neighbours have connected with support from Flo via Pantry, many on an ongoing basis.
- Our Women and Children's Group is going really well after a slow start - the women are taking ownership of the group - deciding a programme - deciding what to do. Similarly, although Men's Group has faced challenges this year, the continued commitment of key volunteers and staff is starting to see development of more shared vision and clarity around operation.

The main focus of Flo's work is Livelihoods Support Work with 13 neighbours during Year 3. However, Flo is also available to provide 1-2-1 support for neighbours experiencing one-off crises or requiring targeted assistance. Overall, Flo has supported 26 neighbours in this way over Year 3, over 61 appointments in total.



## Youth Support

Our youth team (Dan, Stewart, Flo) have continued to work with 3 local schools, providing 1-2-1 education-setting based support to 17 young people. Alongside this, Flo and the wider youth connector team have supported over 67 young people in the community through intentional 1:1 support. Alongside structured 1:1's we have established a culture of supporting young people alongside our various "safe spaces" and drop in's. These mentoring and support sessions enable young people to receive the support they need in a relaxed environment alongside their peers.

The hub team are great and the youth clubs give me a space to hang out with friends in a safe environment



Our new NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) sessions have offered a place of welcome, support and encouragement for young people who are currently not engaging in education or employment. A successful trip to an apprenticeship event saw several of our young people apply for courses and apprenticeships. This is particularly significant, as they previously had very little motivation and drive for a career or further education. These sessions became integral to ensuring these young people were not lost out of the system and also didn't become isolated at home, whilst also giving local parents the support needed to help with the systems they needed to work within.

The regular support i get from the Hub/Youth workers has got me through some really tough moments, and given me the confidence to go back to college for the first time in 5 years in September  
- CS age 16

**What difference has being part of TWC groups/projects made for you, personally?**

Help  
Confident  
People  
New Friends  
Community  
More Connected  
Safe  
A Lot  
Socialise  
Involved  
Meeting  
Support  
Know more people  
Gives me out of the house  
Learn  
Talk  
Work  
Look Forward  
Mental Health  
Cheaper Shopping  
Events  
Children  
Place  
Good  
Enjoy  
Manage Life

## Mental Health and Wellbeing - Capacity Building

2023-4 has seen the encouraging first year of our TWC Mental Health project, with Andy Freeman (Space to Breathe) working alongside Jo and Nicola, two local mental health and well-being champions.

After a period of active listening to neighbours and local service providers, we began to implement our action plan: We have launched a monthly Mental Health Surgery at Hodge Hill Pantry (typically, 5-7 Pantry members each month; 22 in total since the start), a Referral Form Process, a Mindfulness Group and a Bereavement Group. This is all alongside 61 one to one sessions with 39 people needing help, staff/volunteer support and training, and developing links to Birmingham/Solihull Mental Health workers and groups.

Awareness of our Mental Health project is high: 45 out of the 64 participants (70%) who responded to our survey were aware of our Mental Health training or support. Around half of survey respondents had directly benefited from Mental Health training or support - most commonly chatting to our Mental Health Champions, Jo and/or Nicola and/or attending Mindfulness or other Mental Health workshops. 16% had spoken to Andy Freeman (mostly informally) and 10% had been signposted to other services.



**In this, we'll continue with an Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) approach, where we'll ask:**

- 1. What can a community do for itself?**
- 2. What can a community do with a little bit of help?**
- 3. What should come in from outside?**



Looking forward there are a number of positive local dynamics that can help us build sustainable, community-based, wellbeing support into the future: the consistency of work at Hodge Hill Pantry, the ongoing networks through the Hub, the potential of new work with Young People's mental health and the plethora of new groups springing up. Challenges will include the wider dynamics of the financial difficulties at Birmingham City Council and its effects on social care and other services. This project might need to cover gaps, better connect with existing services and/or at times raise awareness and campaign for better help.



“At Pantry I have found in the midst of my despair somebody who has taken the time to listen to me and in doing so has dissipated my despair. As a result I am eternally grateful for potentially saving my life... and I am not kidding!!”

”

## Livelihoods Support Work

Our TWC Livelihoods Support Work actively supports local adults (including families) at times of crisis, including offering a tailored programme of informal advice, signposting and advocating, around a broad spectrum of challenges including money, benefits, housing, energy bills, debt, physical and mental health.

Flo describes the Livelihoods Support work as “being alongside you on a journey, working together to see if we can figure out how to make your livelihood more sustainable; so that you can better deal with shocks that life throws at us”.

Flo’s work takes an strengths-based approach which takes seriously the presenting life-shock or crisis, while also working with the person to identify what they are already doing to survive or get-by, how these strategies might be developed and existing barriers they face might be overcome. In practice this means Flo uses a range of tools and techniques to support individuals to reflect on their life-story so far, identify their full range of current strengths and assets (personal, physical, social and local, as well as financial), then make an action plan to develop these for the future.

**“TWC has made me feel involved and given me purpose, [it] helps connect me with others. Livelihood support has helped take pressure off me, helping with understanding of forms and systems and made me feel less alone.”**

These in-depth support conversations, intended as long-term support, not quick fixes, are not for everyone - only around 1 in 10 of people who approach Flo for support enter into the programme. But for those who are willing to take part in the hard work needed, Flo sees real results in terms of personal development and confidence, social connection and greater participation in community life - and not just for the individuals themselves, as the positive effects rub off on other friends and neighbours.

Flo identifies the key ingredients of this success as creating the right spaces for reflection and, crucially, giving people time and space to talk things through, getting people to understand their own lives and so identify solutions for themselves. As such this work is in strong continuity with our wider professional transition, moving from trying to ‘fix’ problems for people to creating space for them to work out for themselves.

**“It has helped make me more sociable and feel like there are people that genuinely care and want to help. I have also been able to manage to make phone calls myself”**

**Need a bit of support**  
WITH LIFE'S UPS & DOWNS?

housing   family & schools   benefits   money & budgeting   health & wellbeing

**We can journey with you!**

- offering practical support along the way
- helping you build your confidence, resources & connections
- going beyond 'just coping' with life

**Regular drop-in sessions:**  
Tuesdays 10-11.30 @ the Hub  
Thursdays 10.15-12.30 @ Hodge Hill Church  
Fridays 10-12 @ Hodge Hill Family Practice  
or **book an appointment** with Flo 07411 479 802

OpenDoor   Funded by UK Government   Delivered by THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND

This first year of trialling Livelihood Support Worker has produced clear learning including the importance of articulating clear boundaries, so that those receiving support are clear about what sort of assistance is (and crucially, isn't) on offer. Flo also worked hard on clarifying how she explained the offer, to potential recipients as well as other staff and partners. As a result, she has built up a manageable case-load of around 5-6 people currently (13 in total over Year 3).



## 04. Community Culture

There is an embedded local CULTURE of connecting, mutual support, story-sharing & place-making

Across Year 3, connecting and mutual support continues to be the bedrock on which so much of what we do is built. Much of this is 'unnoticed' because it has become part of our DNA, which is why we have intentionally made space to stop, reflect and share stories to make sure they are not lost. We have witnessed the community coming together to support families and individuals who have suffered bereavements, helping newly arrived families with furniture, neighbours being encouraged by other neighbours to access some support. We have also noticed that within teams or groups there can be high levels of fragility, and there are people who purposefully pay attention to the wellbeing of others. We see all this as signs that there is a growth in valuing connectedness and mutual support.



Our work of place-making has continued. The 'green' outside the Hub remains a significant place for the community to come together. This year the development of a new pocket park (full story attached to this report) took this to a deeper level. The park includes an archway, seating, wild flowers, flower beds and a finishing post celebrating the history of the neighbourhood all co-designed by residents. This increases the sense of 'ownership' alongside expanding the functionality of a truly communal space. It is now a place the community plays, celebrates, dances, grows and weeds, connects, and shares in a heritage. When people are asked about their dreams for St. Wilfrids, as a reopened place for Fir, many have described what has happened in and around the Hub as something they wish for.

Story-sharing continued to be at the heart of our work, helping us reflect and think about our community. This year, more than before, our story-sharing has also been with people from outside our community. We were part of a treasure tour organised by Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC), which was all about neighbourhoods telling community stories. They brought interested people from across Birmingham to here, Ward End, Northfield & Weoley Castle. We support neighbours to share stories of youth work, intergenerational activities, the Theatre Group, places of welcome & connecting. For those sharing, it really deepened the impact of the stories, and we are looking to build on this in year 4.

We have a lot to be grateful for with our little community because it's lovely that we do all help each other and we have places like The Hub or the worship centres that help the community."

Participant Survey Respondent

# Young Change Makers : A Retrospective

Well done to our 3 new Young Changemakers - on completing the program. Over the course of 2 residentials and a trip to London, they have learnt about themselves and their strengths, how to grow these gifts and most importantly how to change the world with them!

It's been a real privilege to watch them grow into who they are now and see a glimpse of who they could become.

Starting in the October of 2023, 3 of our young people, C, K and H - have been taking part in Young Changemakers, a young leadership course designed to get the participants thinking about themselves and what makes them so unique. Throughout the journey participants not only learn about their strengths, but also how to use them going forward in their futures.



Young Change Makers is delivered through 2 residentials, a site visit and regular coaching/mentoring in between. The first residential explores who the participants are and the events that have shaped them, after which the focus then shifts to their strengths and what makes them so valuable. The second residential is all about what they have in their hands and how to use it. Taking everything worked on in the first residential and building upon it, the participants explore what they are capable of. We then explore their 'why', what they are passionate about and how they can grow with this in mind. The final site visit focuses on big picture thinking, about both the future and what they want to achieve and the impact that can make.

The first residential was very significant as they really opened up about their lives as part of the timeline activity. This enabled them to see just how significant it was that they had come this far in their life and although difficult, became both reassuring and affirming for them. The site visit to London was also key as for these young people just leaving their city was a whole new experience. Some of the highlights include a boat trip on the Thames and a walk around the London Docks, seeing a few landmarks along the way.

Over the course of the program their confidence in themselves continued to grow. Off the back of the program, they have all stepped into leadership roles in our existing youth groups. They are now helping to set up and run sessions, as well as supporting other young people on their own journeys. Alongside Dan, helping lead the young people, was our very own Chloe, someone who has also been a part of Change Makers in the past and is now on a journey of seeing that come full circle through her role as "Youth Connector Trainee".

# The Pocket Park

This year we worked with the National Trust and Intervention Architecture on the “Pocket Parks” project, to create a new community green space in Firs and Bromford with local residents. The project was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and was a collaboration between Birmingham City Council and communities in East Birmingham.

The aim was to transform under-utilised spaces to bring benefits for both people and the environment, as well as creating a sense of local ownership and building people’s skills and interest in nature through the process.



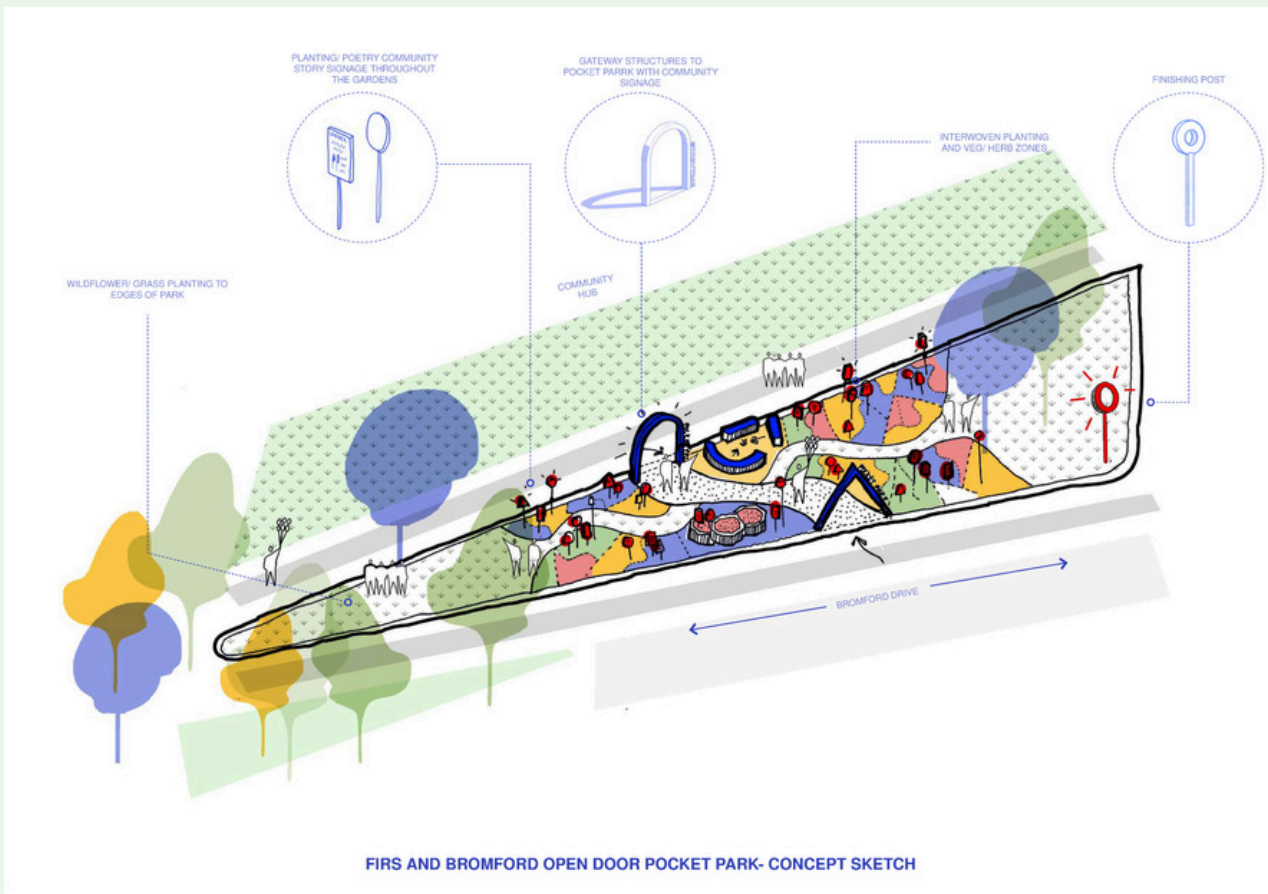
### Lets Build & Plant Our Pocket Park Together !

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BWT8MVY>

Make our community pocket park dream a reality!  
Follow the survey monkey link to keep updated and to let us know when you could come and help. Even an hour will make a such a difference!

- 1** Bromfords big dig week & path building  
Tuesday 27th Feb - Thursday 29th Feb  
9.30am-12.30pm & 1-4pm
- 2** Lets sow a meadow together!  
Saturday 2nd March 10am-1pm
- 3** Building, painting, planting & sign making  
Tuesday 12th March - Thursday 14th March  
9.30am-12.30pm & 1-4pm
- 4** Community pocket park planting  
Tuesday 19th March - Thursday 21st March  
9.30am-12.30pm & 1-4pm  
Saturday 23rd March 10.30am - 4pm
- 5** Enjoy the pocket park & help it grow!  
April to forever!

Unfortunately we can't control the weather (and) things may be a bit quieter and slower than estimated depending on how much rain that can help as the programme may change a little bit with it and keep you updated as things progress. Please wear safety boots or sturdy shoes, wear gloves (if length of possible) and gloves. We have spare gloves for you to use for digging or planting, if you have any.



## Co-Producing a piece of the legacy

Our green connecting team with support from the street connectors led on ensuring local people were involved in the in the creation of the pocket park from the outset through to completion. This involved working with Intervention Architecture and the local National Trust Team to undertake interactive design sessions, which led to a masterplan, which was signed off by the community.

A range of people contributed their ideas, from young people and parents to the men's group and gardening club. Local volunteers helped install the park, with all ages getting involved in different activities like digging, planting and painting. Students from Heart of Birmingham Vocational College and Birmingham City University also helped out on volunteering days.

We launched the park with a big celebration and it is already being enjoyed by the community.



This has been a really good example of working in partnership to co-design and co-build a park. For our local authority and the National Trust this was truly innovative and involved a huge amount of risk taking (not something usually said about large institutions). It had bumps in the road and there was a lot of learning along the way, but we hope this will be used as an example of how a national charity and a local authority can approach a community and truly work collaboratively.

Going forwards the pocket park will be cared for by the local community, thanks to the support of volunteers and stewardship by Open Door Community Foundation.



## 05. Spaces for Reflection, Learning and Development

There are spaces where neighbours can REFLECT, LEARN & DEVELOP as active & resilient participants in their neighbourhood

This year our formal and informal programme of learning and reflection has focused on 'deepening' learning, often in partnership with the Unity Hubb in Ward End:

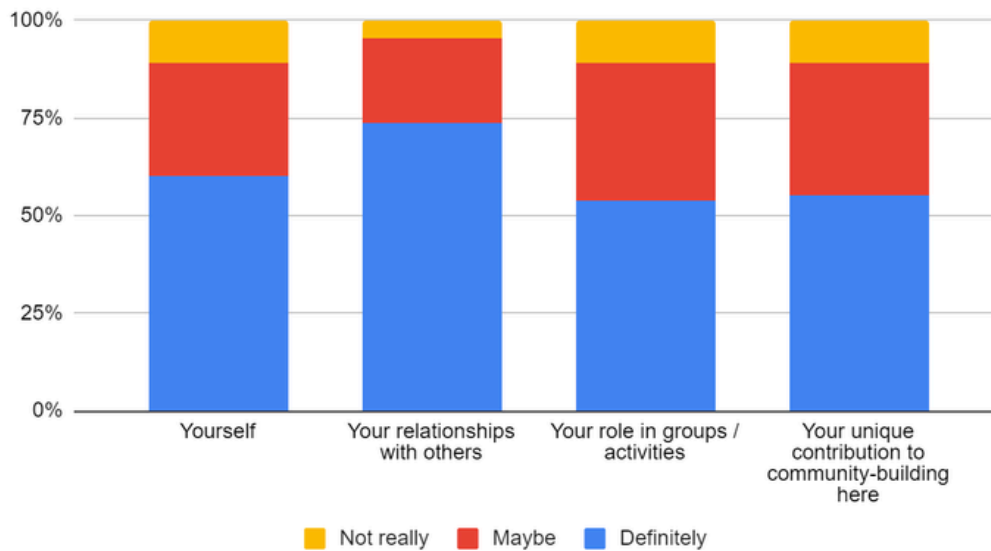
- Extending Diversity training to 6 key resident leaders with a diverse range of people involved. There is a real appetite to do more cross-neighbourhood exchanges.
- Strengthening our skills in hosting transformative meetings and good conversations, using the internationally recognised Thinking Environment framework. 5 people have undertaken the training this year, with another 4 booked for next year.
- Engaging in the BVSC Community Development Practice Hub, who facilitated a 'Community Treasure' tour of Birmingham, bringing people to Firs and Bromford to listen to our community stories. 6 residents received support to share their own stories and we then came together to share our experiences of being storytellers.
- Supporting 12 local residents/staff to complete mental health awareness training session

We asked all our participant survey respondents about their learning through TWC.

16 respondents to our participant survey had taken part in TWC2 learning:

As a result of being part of TWC, I have learnt more about:

As a result of being part of TWC!, would you say you have learnt more about....



More confident with team work, group activities and speaking out loud.

I've learnt how to go and talk better. I have more understanding of young people.

That I can include myself more in decisions and plans

"TWC is helping people to feel proud of this community and to have the confidence to make personal contributions to grow it further"

Participant Survey Respondent

# Towards Flourishing for All

At an individual level, the difference TWC2 makes to our neighbours is expressed in our 'Neighbour Outcomes'. In June 2024 we asked our participants "As a result of being involved in TWC, do you feel..."



# Next Steps

We are now just two years from the end of TWC2. As well as celebrating and learning from our journey so far, it is vital that we plan with increasing clarity, both for this final phase of TWC2, and for our work alongside our neighbours in Firs & Bromford beyond July 2026.

As well as continuing our work supporting neighbours with placemaking, connecting, welcome, support and story-sharing, enabling more local residents to participate, learn and grown into leadership, 4 priorities for Year 4 are:



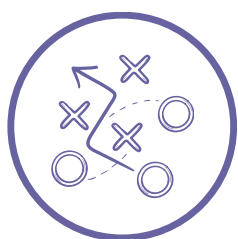
## 01. Further developing places and spaces for connection

Continuing to support the expansion of community-building work in the Firs area (particularly in and around St Wilfrid's Community Centre), exploring the possibilities in a mobile community venue, and reviewing and evolving our green connecting work across the neighbourhood.



## 02. Developing a new infrastructure for supporting mental health & wellbeing

Supporting the facilitation of (and contributing to) local strategic development processes. Working in collaboration with FBNT & FaBCDT, including developing plans for ongoing TWC staffing beyond 2025.



## 03. Supporting local strategic development

Continuing to support FBNT as the Big Local programme draws to a close, and FaBCDT as it develops its strategic leadership role in the neighbourhood.

Exploring a training programme for growing the effectiveness of our organisational boards, looking at how the Thinking Environment could enable trustees & directors to fulfil their duties and responsibilities with more confidence, clarity, inclusion and equity.



## 04. Supporting and developing our community leadership

Investing in our 'home-grown' staff, developing new opportunities for trainees (especially young adults), supporting group leaders to reflect and grow, and continuing to broaden the diversity of those in leadership roles.

"I would like it to continue in the future, I think the community would be lost without the hub and their staff and volunteers"

Participant Survey Response

## Looking beyond July 2026:

We are now beginning to look beyond the end of Together We Can 2, we see 3 priorities emerging:

### 1. Growing our neighbourhood economy

Developing bridges between local people and opportunities for employment and enterprise development, and nurturing a community economy that promotes the circulation of products, services and money within the neighbourhood.

### 2. Growing the collective and strategic voice of our neighbours

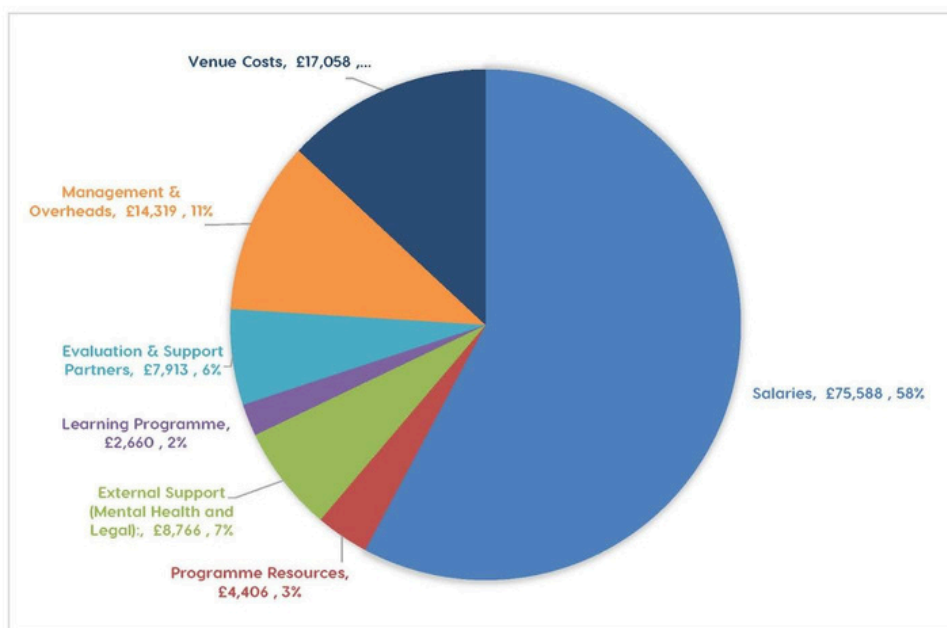
Developing new ways to bring neighbours together to share their experiences, identify shared vision and priorities, and use their collective voice and agency to seek change at local and wider structural levels.

### 3. Explore new ways of sustaining community building

Acknowledging that we have been very fortunate to have sustained core funding over 9 years, we need to be thinking creatively about staffing capacity, fundraising and income models for this next phase. We will need to plan for the possibility that St. Wilfrids Community Centre will be a new phase of community building.

# What we've spent

TOGETHER WE CAN 2 IS GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND AND FIRS AND BROMFORD NEIGHBOURS TOGETHER (BIG LOCAL)



The majority of the partnership is funded by a 5-year funding agreements with the National Lottery Community Foundation (£104,281 in year 3) and Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together from their Local Trust funding (£43,293 in Year 3).

At the end of this year we have an underspend of £20,112 from our revised Year 3 budget. This is largely due to success in fundraising elsewhere which has enabled us to cover some of the costs from other funding streams. This underspend will be carried over into Year 4 of the partnership which is helpful considering the NLCF grant falls year on year.

Additional funds for associated activities have been donated by Birmingham City Council, The National Lottery Community Fund (Awards for All & Cost of Living grants), Groundwork/HS2, Thomas Dole, Children in Need, Grantham Yorke Trust.

\*A full budget vs actual spend report can be provided on request. Generally, our expenditure has been on track for Year 3 of the partnership.

# We couldn't do it without you!

TWC2 is a partnership between 3 locally embedded organisations:

- Worth Unlimited - a national youth and community organisation have been based in the Firs & Bromford (in 'the Hub') since 2008. Worth Unlimited has a long track record here as an established, trusted youth work organisation, staffed by local people.
- Open Door Community Foundation - developing further the pioneering locally rooted community-building work of Hodge Hill Church.
- Firs & Bromford Neighbours Together – board of local residents, administering the Big Local funding, developing a community vision, and overseeing various ongoing community events and activities.

A big 'thank you' is due to all the people who work tirelessly to see our neighbourhood flourish: All our TWC2 participants, leaders, volunteers and partners; FBNT Board (Gill, Phil, Tim, Al, Clare, Amy, Elaine, Mary, Oliver, Soobie, Jake and Paul); FaB Community Development Trust (Tim, Amy, Elaine, Phil, Clare, Paul, Tiffany, Alan); ODCF Board (Al, Gloria, Jon, Penny); TWC staff (Paul, Dan, Claire, Flo B, Clare, Tiffany, Chloe, Stewart, Cath and Sam); our mental health/wellbeing support team (Andy, Nicola and Jo).

This report was compiled and written by Jane Perry, with the support of the TWC2 Co-ordination Group (Dan, Paul, Matt and Al).

## Thank you for your continued support

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