

Local Trust | Big Local



Sept 2024

Together We Can 2

Progress Report

Year 3



Together We Can 2

Year 3 - in Numbers

3 Local organisations - Worth Unlimited, Open Door Community Foundation and Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together

81

registered groups + activities

49

new groups + activities since Jul 21

12

community events

1

Vision

12

paid roles

183

young people attending TWC groups

242

adult participants in TWC-led activities

32

TWC Volunteers

63

young people receiving support

60+

Community Partners

150+

neighbours receiving advice and support

500+

attendees across our Community Events

Together We Can 2

Year 3 (July 23-June 24)

Together We Can (TWC) is a unique collaboration between 3 grassroots organisations in the Firs and Bromford estates, 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), 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. Building on the first phase of TWC (Jan 2017-Jun 2021), 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 neighbours connect with others, do things together and share their passions, gifts and skills, they grow in confidence, become more resilient and, in turn, are more able to encourage and enable others to participate in community life.

Two years from the end of TWC2, it is important to celebrate the difference TWC is making, to reflect on what we are learning and to shape our future plans - all done together with participants, partners and staff.

Join us on the journey...!



Our journey this year

Particular highlights have included:

WELCOME - Community Entry Points

- Seasonal events (Summer, Christmas, Easter, Eid) organised by local people, creating opportunities to come together for celebration and fun.
- Welcome Packs sharing vital information about our community, leading to new people engaging and getting involved.
- Collaboration with Community Organisers to invite residents to discuss the neighbourhood's future, but also to join in with our existing Places of Welcome.

In total, over 260+ adults and 180+ young people have participated in community events during Year 3.

BELONG AND SHARE - Spaces to Get Involved

- Firs Coffee Mornings fostering new relationships and linking with the Women's Group. along with continuing development of our Men's Group.
- Building our 'networks of support' including Hodge Hill Pantry and Open Door Tuesdays - seeing differences in how people cope with crisis, reaching out for help within the community as well as seeking professional support..
- Ongoing development of Green Spaces - enabling neighbours to participate in creating and caring for these spaces.
- NEET project supporting young people not in education, alongside our regular youth groups, with over 180 young attendees in the past year.

In total, at least 242 adults have participated in regular TWC Groups or activities during Year 3





GOING DEEPER - learning and developing

- Residential Activities - in May, we took 20 young people away to take part in team-building activities like caving and archery, led by senior youth connectors Jake and Chloe, alongside our young leaders.
- Learning Programme - focusing on Diversity and Equity training, and Young Changemakers.
- Leadership Development - seeing local people grow into leadership and confidence.
- Mental Health Capacity Building - increasing our ability to support neighbours to respond to distress, including training 12 local residents in mental health awareness.
- Levelling Up Programme - positive engagement with stakeholders, exploring enterprise, wider opportunities for young people and what an ideal economy would look like.



Through it all, our staff serve as ALONGSIDERS and ENABLERS - nurturing spaces where neighbours can come together, supporting them to participate and grow in confidence and mentoring them as they step into leadership.

Our Together We Can approach has always been to work towards groups being as neighbour-led as possible. However, a key learning from our work has been the significant ongoing role that paid staff play within our complex community ecology - offering stable foundations, a skilled and professional 'safety net' of support, facilitating reflection and learning, and strategic coordination.

Read on to discover more about how this contributes towards positive outcomes for our community as a whole and for our neighbours.

How we work

Working closely with residents, the Together We Can (TWC) team collaborates strategically with local partners to create 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 like street events and youth clubs to help neighbours feel WELCOME, along with places, groups and activities where they can feel they BELONG and SHARE the things they care about (passions), know about (knowledge) and can do (skills). We also create opportunities for deeper engagement, reflection and LEARNING, This empowers residents to take on ENABLING roles by connecting with others, leading activities, and supporting their neighbours..



TWC2 collaborates with Firs and Bromford Neighbours Together theme champions to ensure groups and activities are as neighbour-led as possible, promoting positive outcomes for the community (Section 3) and individuals (Section 4).

What we do

'Connecting' refers to our work of supporting neighbours to create spaces and places where community can come together and encouraging people to join in! Some of these 'Places of Welcome' - like our Tuesday Open Door Drop in and Community Lunch, Your Local Pantry, Women's and Men's Groups, as well as the various youth groups held at The Hub - are regular fixtures in the weekly diary. Other community events - community celebrations for holidays and festivals, and street-parties - are occasional.

Our Youth Connector team of volunteers and paid staff encourages and facilitates participation by young people, through detached youth work, regular groups and schools work.



Dan is on the coordination team for the Together We Can Project, leading the Worth Unlimited Youth team. While doing as much face-to-face youth work as possible, he also oversees The Hub!

Paul is also on the TWC coordination team, leading the Open Door Street Connector team and the Learning Programme. He is passionate about connecting with and enabling the community.



Chloe, a local resident, has transitioned from youth to employed Youth Connector Trainee. She is dedicated to amplifying young people's voices and engages with her community by supporting youth groups, activities, and events.

Clare joined as a Street Connector trainee in 2022, but her involvement as an active resident in Bromford started many years before. Clare is compassionate, always welcoming people and encouraging them to participate.



Stewart is another home-grown member of the team. Part of the Youth Connector team, he leads safe spaces and play sessions, allowing young people to connect with peers, while also enabling them to get creative in our Learning Hub.

Tiffany is our latest Connector trainee, but she isn't new to FaB community. A resident in the Firs, Tiffany is a passionate advocate for her estate. She excels at connecting with people from all backgrounds, building trust, and facilitating groups and activities with creativity and energy.



Our Street Connector team also brings together volunteers and paid staff in a range of adult-focused activities, including 'door-knocking' and coffee-mornings, aimed at building new relationships, listening to people and encouraging them to get involved.

The Green Connector Team

Cath has been our Green Connector since 2018, bringing a passion for gardening, green spaces and the environment. She has excellent planning and design skills and has organized various activities, spaces, and projects during her time in FaB.



Sam joined the team as a Green Connector in 2022. As a freelance worker, he collaborates with Cath and other Green Connectors, dedicating 8 days a month to his role. He is passionate about the power of green spaces and gardening to build community. He is good at getting alongside people and encouraging them to join in.

Support Work



Flo has two roles: as adult Livelihoods Support Worker (3 days) journeying with people through tough stuff and helping them get the support they need, and as Youth Support worker (2 days) working with the Youth Connector team to assist young people where they are at and in their next steps.

In Jan 2023 we said farewell to Gemma, who left to pursue her 'upcycling' business, started through our Changemakers program.

We are excited to welcome Claire, another local resident and entrepreneur, who brings amazing administration skills to the team.



Mental Health & Wellbeing



Jo and Nicola are our community guides for health and well-being. They have both been local residents for many years and actively engaged in many TWC activities. Both are passionate about supporting mental health and well-being, using their gifts and experience to develop new forms of support and signposting in the community.



Andy is the Co-Director and Founder of Space to Breathe, commissioned to work alongside Together We Can to develop our mental health support. Andy brings 20 years of experience in emotional support work, together with insights from his work in Sheffield and across the UK.



Towards a Flourishing Community



01. Partnerships

Building local partnerships - connecting and unlocking community assets through collaboration with local institutions - has become a key focus of TWC2's work.

Since July 2022, the number of local partners connected to TWC2 increased from 21 to 60, including 7 schools/colleges. A further 3 key external partners are directly contributing to the delivery of TWC2 - Central England Law Centre (legal advice), Birmingham City Council (welfare/housing support), and Space to Breathe (mental health support). TWC staff also engage with 18 other local community groups, churches, mosques, and businesses. This collaboration enables TWC to bridge external resources with the vision and enthusiasm of residents, empowering neighbours to take on connecting roles.

“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

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

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

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

Local institutions and organisations partnering to unlock and grow community assets.	18 - Definitely
There are local places, groups and networks to which neighbours feel they belong and can contribute to.	16 - Definitely 4 - Maybe
There are local accessible sources of support for neighbours in crisis.	14 - Definitely 4 - Maybe
There is an embedded local culture of connecting, mutual support, story-sharing and place-making.	14 - Definitely 4 - Maybe
There are spaces where neighbours can reflect, learn and develop as active and resilient participants in their neighbourhood.	16 - Definitely 4 - Maybe



02. Places to Belong

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

By June 2024, there were 81 active groups/activities in the Firs and Bromford area with direct connection to TWC:

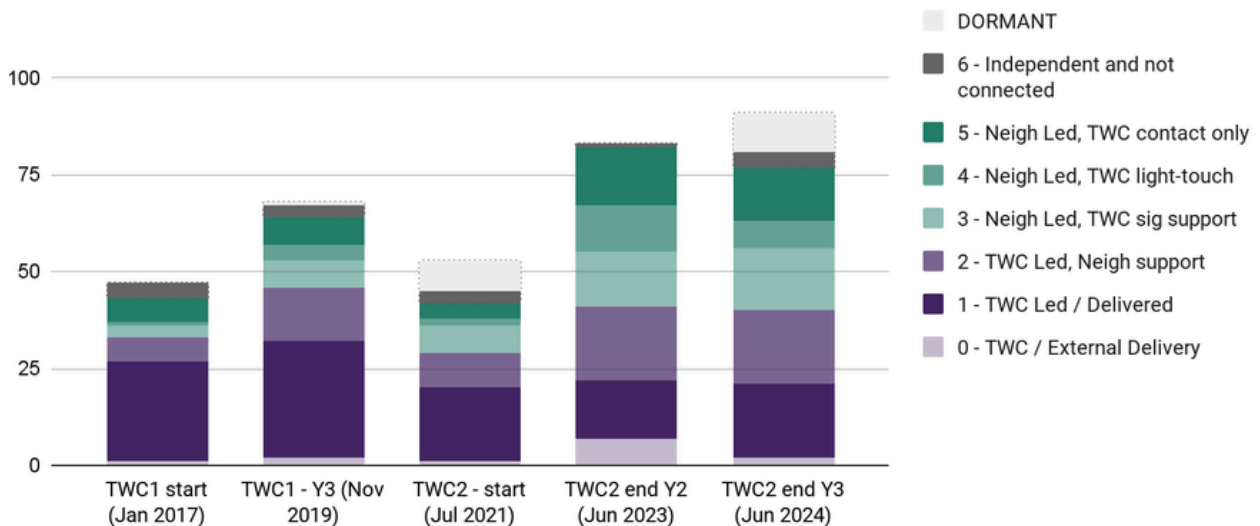
- 39 directly led by TWC (20 fully delivered by TWC, 19 with neighbour support, plus 2 by an external partner).
- 23 neighbour-led with TWC support (16 significant, 7 light-touch) - in such a way as it is unlikely those projects would exist in the same way without TWC.
- 14 completely neighbour-led groups in contact with TWC.

Some groups meet regularly (weekly, monthly), others are occasional.

The graph below charts the growth of local neighbourhood groups and activities from the start of the first phase of Together We Can 1 (Jan 2017) through to the present day (end of Year 3 of TWC2, Jun 2024). This documents the impact of the 2020-21 COVID Pandemic, but also the recovery and re-establishing of organised forms of gathering as a community. The expansion of the green areas of the graph, illustrate our move towards groups and activities which are predominantly led by local residents.

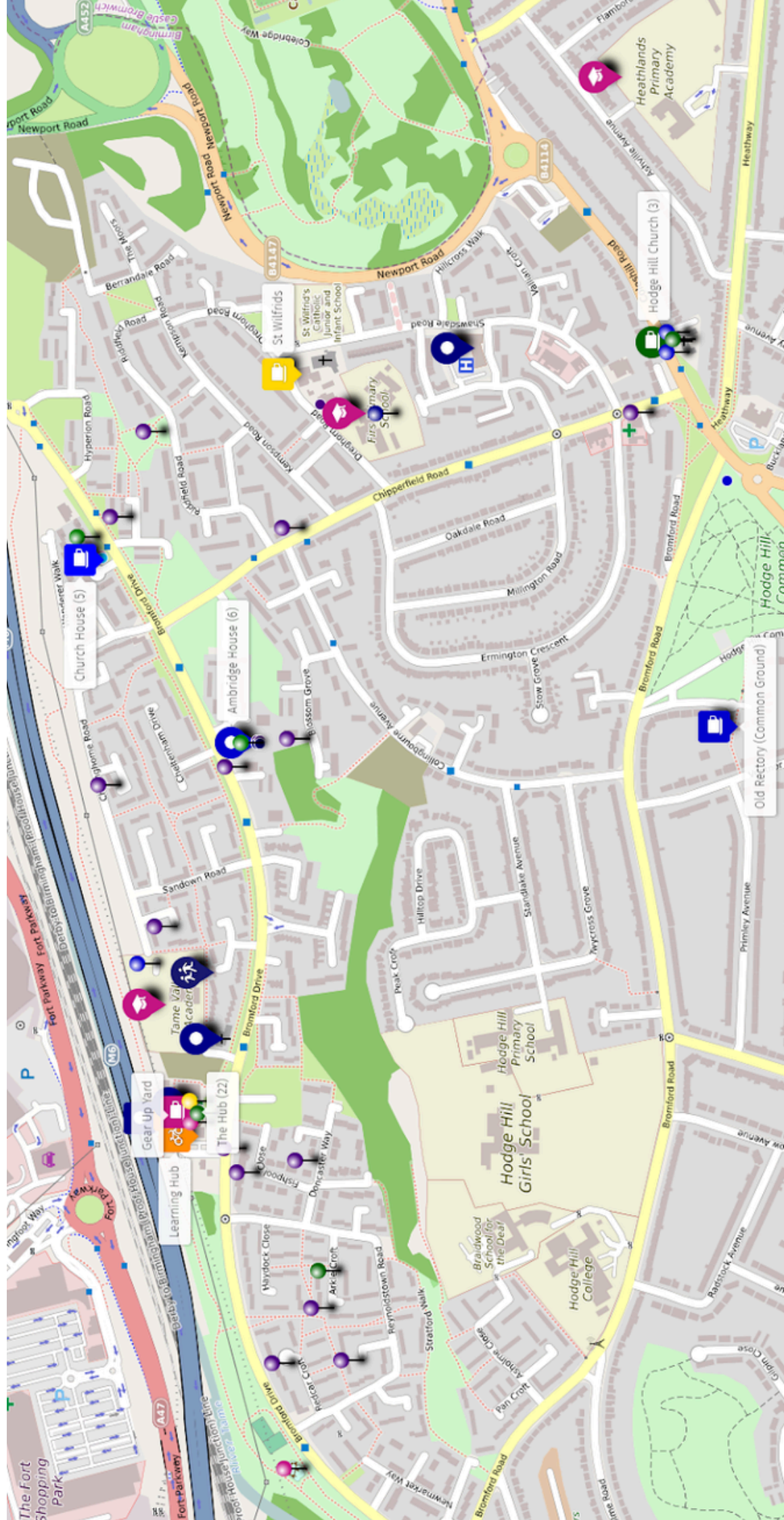
Inevitably, some groups/activities end for a variety of reasons. In total there have been 129 groups/activities since the start of TWC 1. The 10 dormant groups in June 24 reflect our new found confidence to put groups on hold when there is insufficient capacity for them to flourish.

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



NOTE: Active groups + activities at the time of recording

TWC2 Year 3 - Key Locations



This map shows the key locations for our TWC-led groups/activities (drops) and street events (pins). Numbers in brackets show multiple groups with the same location. 54 further groups and activities connected to TWC happen at various locations across Firs and Bromford, not shown here.

In our Year 3 Survey, our Together We Can participants told us about the difference that these spaces and places to BELONG make to them:

Helped with my confidence. Talk to more people and feel involved. Join different things.

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

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



It is a lifesaver, and so grateful for the whole team 🥰

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."

I ENJOY TALKING TO OTHER PEOPLE AND PANTRY HAS HELPED ME BUY FOOD CHEAPER WHICH IS HELPFUL AS I AM NOT WORKING

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

Meeting new people helps me get out of the house. Helps my mental health to be around others who can support me and also just to socialise

"IT ALLOWS A TOGETHERNESS"

I enjoy being a part of something and it being local and family orientated means we can all be involved like that every time I come.



Made me feel involved and gave me purpose, helps connect me with others, passion for green spaces increased.

Helps keep my children active. I know my children are safe and I feel I have someone to talk to about life



03. Local, Accessible Support

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

Our TWC pathway recognises that neighbours sometimes need help to face life's challenges and overcome the barriers which prevent them from getting involved in community life.

Spaces and Places for Mutual Support

TWC fosters a growing network of spaces for community members to come together to support each other, connect with specialist support from our staff, volunteers, and partners, and make referrals to external agencies when needed. This initiative, led by Flo, our Livelihoods Support Worker, relies on the entire team of volunteers, supported by Open Door staff, to succeed.

Relationships of mutual support are generated right across our TWC spaces, groups and activities:

- The Tuesday Open-Door drop-in, welcoming 15-20 people weekly (150 residents in total over Year 3), with 8-10 needing extensive support
- The relocation of the Friday drop-in to Hodge Hill GP Surgery in Autumn 2023 fostered community partnerships, but participation was low (about 2 weekly). This initiative was paused in May 2024, repurposing the capacity to focus on dedicated 1-2-1 appointments.
- Hodge Hill Pantry assists 25-30 households weekly with affordable food and offers a monthly Mental Health drop-in. During Year 3, 11 neighbours have connected with Flo for ongoing support through Pantry.
- The Women and Children's Group is thriving, with women taking ownership of the group. The Men's Group has faced challenges but is developing a clearer vision thanks to dedicated volunteers and staff.



The main focus of Flo's work is our Livelihoods Support Work programme (see below). 13 neighbours have engaged with ongoing Livelihoods Support 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.

Livelihoods Support Work

Our TWC Livelihoods Support Work (LSW) assists local adults and families during times of crisis by providing tailored programme of informal advice, advocacy, and resources around a broad spectrum of challenges, including finances, housing, and health.

"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."

Flo describes this work as: "being alongside people on a journey, working together to figure out how to make their livelihood more sustainable; so that they can better deal with shocks that life throws at us".

LSW employs a strengths-based approach to address life shocks or crises by helping individuals recognize their survival strategies and overcome barriers. This involves using various tools to reflect on their life stories, identify existing strengths and assets, and create an action plan for future development.

This in-depth work (focusing on long-term growth rather than quick fixes) is not for everyone - only around 1 in 10 people who approach Flo for support enter the LSW programme.

But those who are willing to take part in the hard work needed experience significant personal development, increased confidence, and enhanced community involvement, positively impacting their friends and neighbours as well.

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

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, enabling them to better understand their lives and identify their own solutions. This approach aligns with our broader professional transition from problem-solving for people to working with them to find their own answers.

"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"

The first year of our Livelihood Support Work has highlighted the need for clear boundaries regarding the assistance offered to recipients, so that those receiving support are clear about what sort of assistance is (and crucially, isn't) on offer. Flo has worked hard on clearly explaining the support to both potential recipients, staff and partners, resulting in a manageable case-load of 5-6 people at present (13 total over Year 3).

Youth Support

The youth team (Dan, Stewart, Flo) have continued to work with 3 local schools, providing 1-2-1 education-based support to 17 young people. Additionally, Flo and the Youth Connector Team have engaged with over 67 young people in the community through intentional 1:1 support. Our wider culture and practice of providing support through various "safe spaces" and drop-in sessions, enables young people to access help in a relaxed environment with their peers.

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

“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”

Our new NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) sessions provide a supportive environment for young people disengaged from education or work. These sessions are vital in preventing isolation and ensuring young people remain connected, while also offering local parents the necessary support to navigate relevant systems.

A successful trip to a regional apprenticeship event encouraged several participants to apply for courses, boosting their motivation for further education and careers.



Mental Health and Wellbeing - Capacity Building

The TWC Mental Health project had a successful first year in 2023-4, led by Andy Freeman (Space to Breathe) with Jo and Nicola, our local mental health and well-being guides.

After a period of active listening to community needs, the team launched several initiatives, including 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. Andy has also conducted 61 one-on-one sessions for 39 individuals, provided staff support and training and developed links with Birmingham/Solihull Mental Health services.

Awareness of the project is high, with 70% of participant survey respondents familiar with the training or support, and around half reported benefiting from discussions with Mental Health Champions or attending workshops.



The TWC Mental Health and Wellbeing capacity work continues our Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which asks:

- 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 ahead, there are a number of positive local dynamics that can help us build sustainable, community-based, wellbeing support into the future: the ongoing consistency of Hodge Hill Pantry and The Hub as trusted community spaces, potential work on youth mental health, and emerging new groups.

However, ongoing financial difficulties at Birmingham City Council appear to be affecting social care services which presents a considerable challenge. The TWC project may need to fill gaps in provision, as well as better connecting with existing services and raising awareness for improved assistance.



“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!!”

”



04. Community Culture

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

The key word in our fourth community outcome is 'embedded': we know our work is making a difference by the way that the work of building meaningful community increasingly comes naturally to local residents.

Connecting and mutual support continue to be foundational to our work. While often unnoticed, these elements have become integral to our community. During Year 3 we have witnessed the community spontaneously coming together to support those who have suffered bereavements and helping newly arrived families with furniture. Neighbours encouraging others to participate in, and access support through, TWC groups is another sign of an emerging community culture of care.



Story-sharing, intentionally making space to stop and reflect, then share stories to make sure they are not lost, is another key element. During Year 3, more than before, we have witnessed a shift to local people taking ownership of sharing our story with people from outside our community. A 'Treasure Tour', organised by Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC), brought interested people from across Birmingham to our neighbourhood (along with Ward End, Northfield & Weoley Castle) to hear our stories. It was a joy to see local residents taking the lead in this project. For those sharing, it really deepened the impact of the stories, and we are looking to build on this in year 4.

Our work of place-making continues - through development of the 'green' outside the Hub on Bromford Drive into a new Pocket Park (see below) and a strategic partnership with the new FaB Community Development Trust, consulting with the community to explore the future potential of the St Wilfrid's site. When people are asked about their dreams for St. Wilfrid's, as a reopened place for Firs, many have described what has happened in and around the Hub as something they wish for.

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

The Pocket Park

Co-producing a piece of the legacy

The green outside the Hub on Bromford Drive remains a significant place for the community to come together for events and celebrations.

During 2023-4, we collaborated with the National Trust and Intervention Architecture on the "Pocket Parks" project to take this to a deeper level. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, in partnership with Birmingham City Council, the Pocket Park initiative aimed to transform under-utilized areas, benefiting people and the environment while fostering local ownership and enhancing skills and interest in nature.

Our Green Connecting team engaged local residents in the co-creation of the Pocket Park from start to finish. Local residents, including young people, parents, and various TWC groups, contributed ideas during interactive design sessions, resulting in a community-approved masterplan. Local volunteers of all ages participated in activities like digging, planting, and painting, with additional support from students at Heart of Birmingham Vocational College and Birmingham City University.

Lets Build & Plant Our Pocket Park Together !

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BWT8MVV>

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

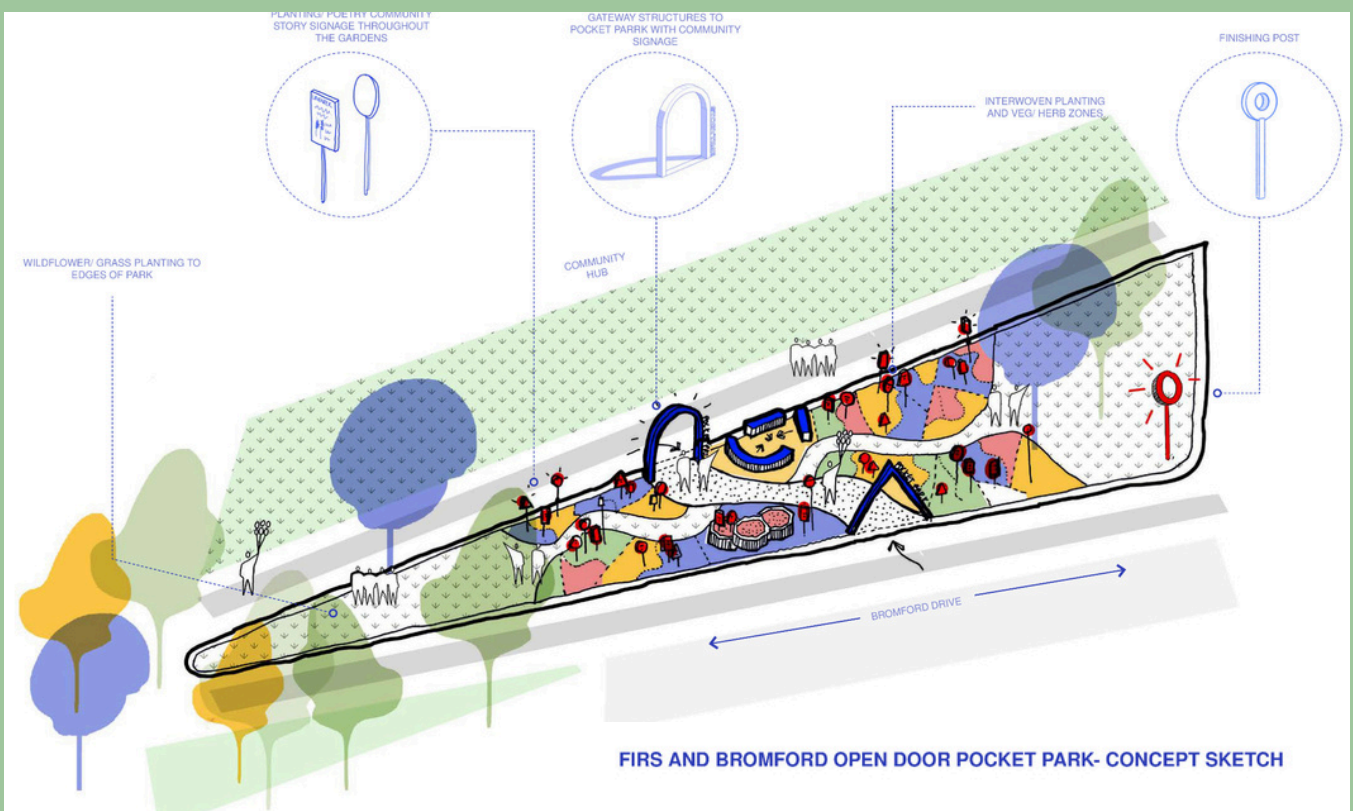


5

Enjoy the pocket park & help it grow!

April to forever!

Unfortunately we can't control the weather (yet!) and things may be a bit quicker and slower than estimated depending on how many hands that can help as the programme may change a little bit. We'll try and keep you updated as things progress. Please wear safety boots or sturdy trainers, warm clothes (if possible) and gloves. We have spare gloves for you to use too! Bring a spare can of paint if you have one.



FIRS AND BROMFORD OPEN DOOR POCKET PARK- CONCEPT SKETCH



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.

The Pocket Park project exemplifies how TWC works to facilitate partnerships, between organisations and with the community. For the Local Authority and the National Trust this was truly innovative and involved substantial risk taking (not something usually said about large institutions). The project 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.

We launched the park with a big celebration.



It is now a place the community gathers, plays, dances, weeds, connects, and shares in a heritage.

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

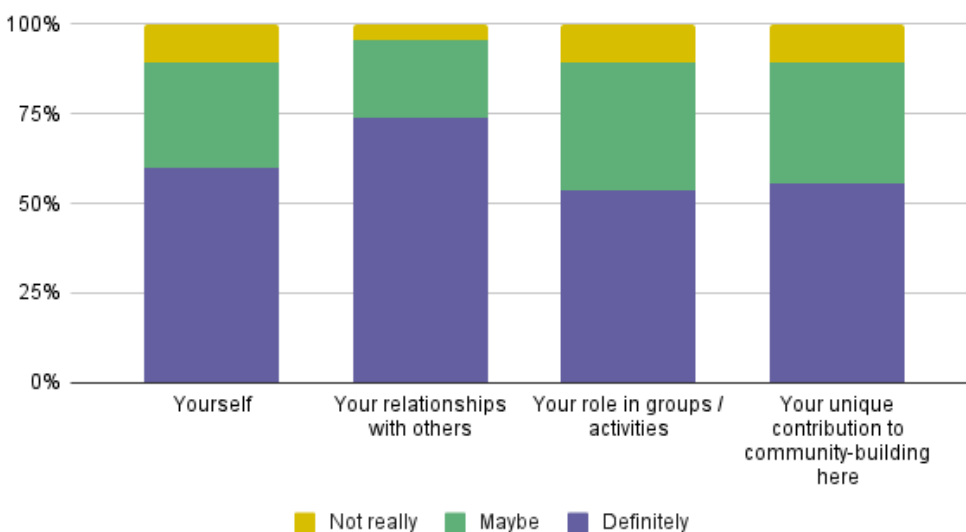
This year, our formal and informal programme of learning and reflection has focused on "deepening" learning, including:

- Extending our Diversity training to 6 further resident leaders.
- Strengthening our skills in hosting transformative meetings using the Thinking Environment framework - 5 people have undertaken this training this year, with 4 more scheduled for next year.
- Collaboration with BVSC Community Development Practice Hub for a "Community Treasure" tour, where 6 residents shared their stories.
- Mental health awareness training completed by 12 local residents and staff.

Much of our Learning Programme is delivered in collaboration with the Unity Hub in Ward End. There is a real appetite to do more cross-neighbourhood exchanges.

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:



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

Young Change Makers : A Retrospective

Starting in the October of 2023, 3 local resident young people have been taking part in Young Changemakers, a leadership course designed to get the participants thinking about themselves and what makes them so unique. Throughout the journey 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.



Young Change Makers involves two residential sessions, a site visit, and ongoing coaching. The first residential focuses on participants' identities and strengths. The second emphasizes their capabilities and passions, exploring their 'why', what they are passionate about and how they can grow with this in mind. The final site visit encourages big-picture thinking about their future impact.

Key moments included a timeline activity during the first residential that helped participants reflect on their life journeys, and a London trip that offered new experiences, such as a boat ride on the Thames.

Throughout the program, participants gained confidence and stepped into leadership roles within youth groups, supporting others on their journeys. Chloe, a former participant, now serves as a "Youth Connector Trainee," completing the circle of involvement.

Well done to our our 3 new Young Changemakers - we are so proud of you!!

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..."



SOURCE: TWC Participant Survey 2024
 Answer scale: Not Really (0) through to Definitely (5)

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:



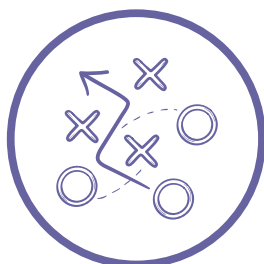
01. Further developing places and spaces for connection

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 of 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.

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

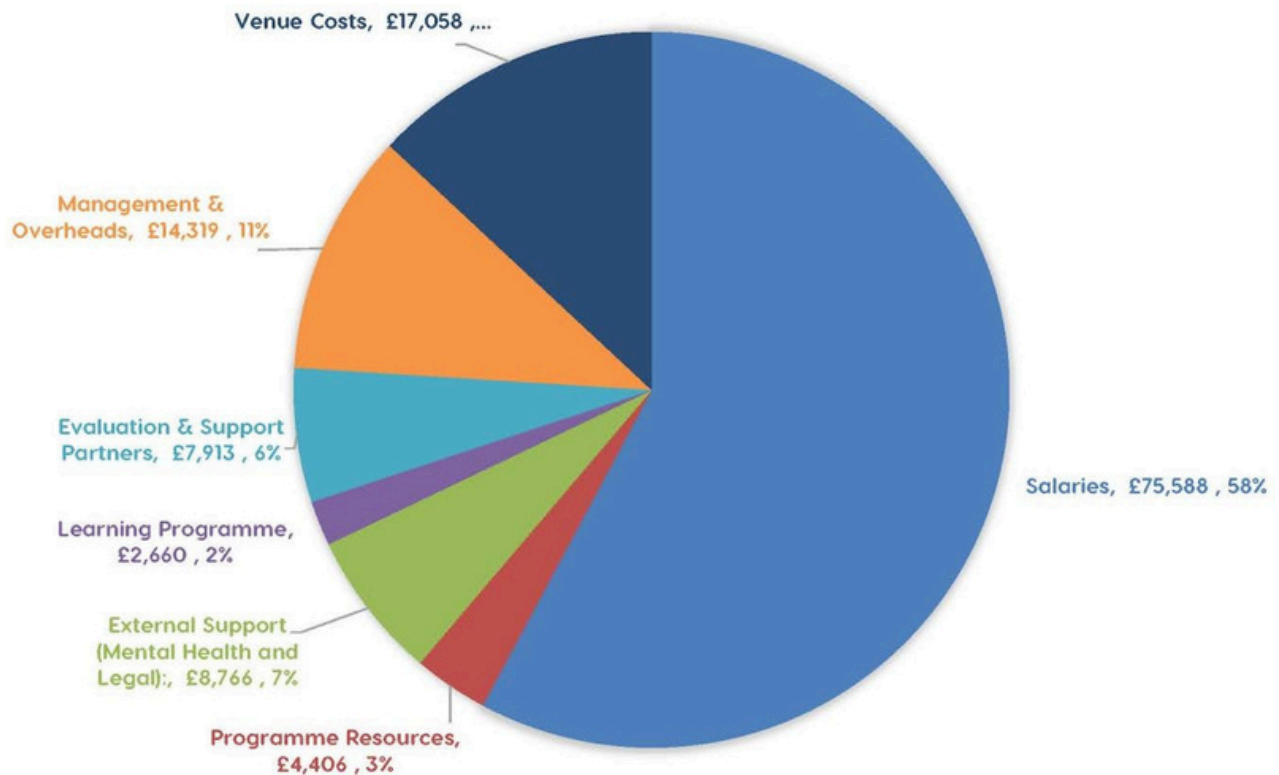
Acknowledging that we have been very fortunate to have sustained core funding over 9 years, we need to be thinking creatively about staffing capacity, fundraising and income models for this next phase. We also need to plan for St. Wilfrid's Community Centre being a new area of community building.



"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

What we've spent



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

Additional funds have come from 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.

Generally, our expenditure has been on track during Year 3. An underspend of £20,112 is mainly due to successful additional fundraising enabling us to cover some project costs from other funding streams, carrying money forward to off-set anticipated costs in Year 4.

A full budget report is available upon request.

We couldn't do it without you!

Local Trust

| Big Local



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

TWC2 is a collaboration of three locally embedded organisations:

- Worth Unlimited - A national youth and community organisation, based in 'the Hub' in Firs and Bromford since 2008. Worth Unlimited has a long track record as an established, trusted youth work organisation, staffed by local people.
- Open Door Community Foundation - established in 2015 to further develop the pioneering, locally rooted, community work of Hodge Hill Church.
- Firs & Bromford Neighbours Together - a board of local residents administering Big Local funding, developing a community vision and activities.

Over Year 3, TWC2 has also worked closely with the Firs and Bromford Community Development Trust, established to develop and further the legacy of community building in our area.

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, FaB Community Development Trust Board; ODCF Board; TWC staff, and our mental health/wellbeing support team.

The Thinking Environment is "a model for human interaction" developed by Nancy Kline (Time to Think - Listening to Ignite the Human Mind, 1999, Cassell Illustrated). We are ably facilitated in this model by Jo Bagby.

This report was compiled by Jane Perry (external evaluation support) with the TWC2 Coordination Group - Dan Sandford-Smith & Matt Perry (Worth Unlimited), Paul Wright (Open Door), and Al Barrett (Open Door & Hodge Hill Church).

Thank you for your continued support



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