



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

COMMUNITY



The Active Wellbeing Society working with Birmingham City Council

Reclaiming the Commons

The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) is a community benefit society and cooperative working to tackle inequality and promote community wellbeing. TAWS work with communities and councils across the country, in areas of high deprivation, to provoke system change and address barriers.

The disruption and change in our day-to-day lives, over the last few years, has created an opportunity for communities to rethink and reimagine how we engage with the public realm. As people became better acquainted with their local parks and canal paths, and streets were transformed for outdoor dining and activity, we began to see the benefits of doing things differently. At the same time, the inequalities that have been so starkly illuminated by the pandemic, are yet again reinforced in the inequitable access to good quality outdoor and greenspace across our cities.

In Birmingham, where over 40% of the population live in the most deprived households nationally, access to greenspace is amongst the lowest per person in the UK. Over the last year TAWS have been working with Birmingham City Council and the Birmingham Growing Network to redress this inequality and improve access to – and ownership of – greenspace within our most deprived communities.

The Birmingham Growing Network emerged from the city's Covid-19 Community Response, which brought hundreds of partners together to distribute food to communities during lockdown restrictions. Now a standalone group in its own right, with 170 members, the network is supporting communities to reclaim and activate greenspaces across the city for community benefit.

In partnership with Birmingham City Council, the Birmingham Growing Network are developing a new process to support communities to use public land for growing and exploring community land governance models. TAWS are working with communities to promote food skills including growing, cooking and composting and are committed to working cooperatively with partners across the city to ensure everyone has access to greenspace.

For further information contact:

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