

KWMC/**Backgrounder**

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a) What is Knowle West Media Centre?

Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) is both the name of the new centre for media creativity and enterprise at Leinster Avenue, Knowle West, Bristol, BS4 1NL, and of the social enterprise charity which runs it.

Work began on the new building following the demolition of the run-down former health centre in March 07, which had served as the charity's previous main base. The keys to the new HQ were handed over on 14th February 2008 during a visit by Chancellor the Exchequer, the Rt. Hon. Alistair Darling. During the building work, KWMC's work continued from temporary offices in Ruthven Road.

b) How will the new building be used?

The centre has been built to provide a broad range of new spaces and opportunities for media creativity and enterprise. The accommodation includes media production suites, sound studios, a digital darkroom, mini-cinema, exhibition space, training rooms and managed workspaces for creative businesses and business start-ups.

The centre will be used for a wide variety of cultural events, screenings, training courses, private and corporate hires and as the main base for KWMC's own programme, including its carbon reduction initiatives and its design, moving image, photography and other media-related projects for young people.

Current and recent media projects include:

- Film-making for broadcast
- Graphic Design – from brochures and websites
- Animation Media Labs
- Commissioned film projects
- *Digital Fish* - Young People's Film Club
- Educational arts workshops for schools – linking arts to the curriculum
- Community website and debate forum - www.knowlewest.co.uk
- *The Knowledge* - A community newsletter, and drop-in club
- *Mouth of the South* - young journalists group;

- *Archimedia* – young peoples group that has steered the design process and supports media bursaries for young people
- Design Workshops
- Nlarge - young people's photography group
- Keys commissions – artworks and essays
- Amazing Archive – young people's history group, creating a living community archive
- Carbon Makeover – 100 Knowle West households tackling climate change

c) A brief history of KWMC

KWMC is a social enterprise and was formally constituted as an independent charity and registered organisation in June 2002. Its origins date back to an arts and health photography project run by Carolyn Hassan (now the KWMC Director) at the Knowle West Health Association in 1996.

The first project's success inspired another, this time for over 200 young people and linking media arts to community development. Further projects followed and the decision was taken to unite them and run them from the former William Budd Health Centre, using the name Knowle West Media Project, and what is now known as Knowle West Media Centre.

Since then, KWMC's work has developed and expanded to take in design, film-making, sound production, journalism, photography, websites and related media activities. It now commands international respect as a producer of high-quality media work and as a provider of exciting, esteem-raising, experiences, skills and interests for young people in what is one of the country's most socially-disadvantaged wards.

d) Knowle West – a community profile

Knowle West lies roughly two miles south of the centre of Bristol, in the electoral ward of Filwood and the Parliamentary seat Bristol South. It was built in the 1930s to provide social housing for around 12,000 people - most of them white and from families with long and deep connections to the Bristol area.

Although there is a very strong local sense of community, the area is sometimes viewed negatively by outsiders. This is partly because of the ward's many social challenges. In official statistics, Filwood ranks among the worst wards in England for poverty, unemployment, smoking, fear of crime, mental and physical health, educational under-achievement and low levels of skills and training.

KWMC's aspirations include improving the image of Knowle West and community esteem by working with local people and organisations, publicising their success, and by offering young people access to new experiences, skills, thinking and opportunities. The work fits in with a number of South Bristol social and economic regeneration schemes.

Working in partnership with many other organisations, both in Knowle West and Bristol. KWMC's approach is grassroots, to respond to the communities needs, and facilitate residents taking the lead in improving quality of life and community regeneration.

e) Community-led design

From the outset, KWMC wanted to involve its community in the planning and design of the new building. So, it invited local young people to join the Archimedia Project - to gather ideas, consult with other residents, devise a project brief, recruit the architects and provide progress reports to funders and other stake-holders.

The first stage of the process resulted in White-Design, Bristol, being picked to be the centre's architects. Thereafter, the young people continued to work alongside the design and construction teams to secure a building which matched their aspirations for a modern, stylish, creative and climate-friendly KWMC HQ.

An added bonus is that members of the group gained many new and transferable skills as a result of their participation and increased their confidence levels while also keeping the wider community up-to-date with plans and progress.

f) KWMC's HQ is special because.....

1. The local community has been involved in every stage of the concept/ design/ build process;
2. It's Bristol's first purpose-built media centre since ITV West's HQ went up in the 1970s and the very first to be purpose-built for the digital media age;
3. The building's many climate-friendly features make it one of the region's most carbon-conscious workspaces in any business sector;
4. It is the largest building in the South West to use straw-bale building techniques;
5. The old has become part of the new - via the use of materials salvaged from the old building in the construction of the new one; references to local place-names in the specially-commissioned furnishings and fittings, and a tribute to transformational people that includes Dr William Budd, after whom KWMC's former home was named as part of a glass wall by artist Simon Poulter.
6. The building will house hi quality media facilities that will be used by both industry professionals, artists and the local community bringing a creative buzz that will be both unusual and exciting.

g) Funders

Financial support for the new KWMC building has come from:

South West Regional Development Agency
European Regional Development Fund
Objective 2 Bristol
Urban 2
SRB Regeneration
Knowle West Neighbourhood Renewal
Bristol City Council
Arts Council England

In addition many businesses and local organizations have sponsored and built straw bale panels for the building – for a full list of sponsors please see

<http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?project=22> and
<http://www.archimedia.org.uk>

h) Media resources

Photographs showing how the old building looked, what happened during the consultation process, how the straw bale panels are made and interior and external shots of the new building can be viewed/downloaded at:

<http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?article=183>

Broadcast-quality DVD footage charting the progress of the project is available for free t/x or use on websites. To order, contact Makala Cheung (see contact info below).

For more information on the building's **architecture and environmental features**, see: <http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?article=181>

For more information on KWMC's **artist-commissioned items**, see:

<http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?project=13>

For information on KWMC **awards and accolades**, see:

<http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?article=1812>

i. Key contacts:

KWMC

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White Design

Tel 0117 954 7333 <<http://www.white-design.co.uk>>

For a full list of contractors details

<http://www.kwmc.org.uk/index.php?article=181>

Main funders

SWRDA - Becky Humphrey 0117 9330232 becky.humphrey@southwestrda.org.uk
- Ben Murch, CHPR, Tel: 0117 944 1415 ben.murch@chpr.co.uk

Arts Council - Gillian Taylor tel: 01392 229 207 gillian.taylor@artscouncil.org.uk

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