

Knowle West Food Network: Terms of Reference

Who we are:

We are an active network of residents, groups, businesses and organisations (interested in food), working together to plan and make locally led change happen in Knowle West. Everyone is welcome.

Facilitation: Network meetings are facilitated by the Knowle West Alliance

Vision – what we want to achieve together:

This group aims for everyone in Knowle West to have access to good quality affordable food; for everyone to have the confidence, skills, knowledge and equipment they need to prepare a healthy diet of food that they enjoy.

Agreed values for the food network:

- **Connection:** We believe that food brings people together. We are building stronger links between residents, projects and businesses, collaborating, linking resources and assets
- **Togetherness:** We value fun, trust, listening, changing together, partnership, lived experience, and collective mutual support.
- **Celebrating and acknowledging differences:** We recognise that everyone is in a different position, some are in food crisis, some just about managing, some people are thriving. Everyone has a different food culture, and we will journey together.
- **Learning together:** We acknowledge there are no easy answers, however we presume good will as we learn together, working together for locally led change.

Co-designed priority areas:

Developed through a series of community conversations, deep engagement and focussed workshops we have agreed our priority areas as:

1. Access to food
2. Building food knowledge/food education
3. Food as a tool for connectivity, fun and joy

How We Work

We have developed a way of working together that builds on many years of work, relationships and collective wisdom. The four main pillars that underpin our approach:

1. Asset Based Community Development

2. Network/Partnership Approach
3. Grassroots action AND Systems Thinking
4. Learning Approach

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD):

We believe that our local network is rich with knowledge, skills, and activities. Residents hold critical knowledge, and we find it mutually beneficial for groups and organisations to work alongside. Our philosophy is to work WITH people, not DO THINGS TO them.

Network/Partnership Approach:

Our hypothesis is that building a strong collaborative network helps us understand what else is happening, get to know each other's interests and expertise, identify gaps and opportunities, and reflect on what works well. This approach creates the conditions for positive action, allowing each of us to play a role in supporting and making change happen.

Grassroot Action AND Systems Thinking:

Some aspects of our work are best initiated through grassroots action, where individuals act based on their interests ("going where the energy is" in Asset-Based terms). Additionally, we face shared overarching challenges related to food and health inequality, which intersect with many systems (e.g., planning policy, benefits system, transport, access to healthcare). This requires Systems Thinking, and our approach here is to use our collective voice to identify and influence levers of power.

Our Learning Approach: We understand that this is a complex, multi-layered topic with no single solution. Change will take time. By adopting a learning and iterative approach, we are laying strong foundations for progress. This involves:

- **Building Solid Networks:** Creating supportive connections within the community.
- **Learning by Doing:** Gaining insights through action and reflection.
- **Following the Energy:** Focusing on areas where there is enthusiasm and momentum.
- **Challenging When Necessary:** Addressing issues thoughtfully and constructively.

At the heart of our work are generosity and kindness. By learning together, we can build the future we want to see.

Funding

The Food Network is facilitated by the Knowle West Alliance staff team, roles which are currently funded by the National Lottery Community Fund; taking an enabling approach to partnership work. We are grateful that this also includes room bookings and refreshments.

Wherever possible KWA staff seek out and signpost the membership to additional sources of funding for individuals, groups and organisations to (individually or in partnership) draw in to the area to enable additional activities that support this wider work.

REVIEW: Terms of Reference to be reviewed in March 2025