

Sun 20 Mar
3-4.30pm

Repair and Remediation

with Wild.NG and Asad Raza, moderated by Theo Reeves-Everson

Live transcript

While every effort has been made to provide an accurate written record of this event, some errors may exist in this transcript.

If you require further information please contact cmasters@nottinghamcontemporary.org

SPEAKERS

Theo Reeves-Everson, Trish Evans, Tim Allman

00:28 Theo Reeves-Everson

So it's my pleasure to introduce first Wild.NG which comprises of numerous people, who we have four of them here, two of them joining us on the stage. So Wild.NG is a project founded by residents living in Carrington, Sherwood, Basford and Mapperley areas of Nottingham city who are passionate about the importance of connecting nature and connecting communities street by street. The aim of aiding nature's recovering and growing wilder futures across neighborhoods. Wild.NG together with communities and affiliated advisors, programs inspiring events, leading on creative campaigns, scientific research, positive action. First of all, we have a video by the artist Asad Raza who also by the way has some work upstairs in the current exhibition, you can check it out. Asad was hoping to join us via video link

01:30 Theo Reeves-Everson

today but because a combination of travel and technological difficulties have conspired to mean that's that's no longer possible. But we will be screening his short film. So I'll read his bio nonetheless, Asad Raza born in Buffalo in the USA, creates dialogues and rejects disciplinary boundaries in his work, which conceives of art as a metabolic active

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experience. Absorption, in which cultivators create artificial soil was the 34th Kaldor public art project in Sydney, shown in Gropius Bau Berlin, in the Ruhr triennial. In Untitled (plot for dialogue) 2017, visitors play tennis in the 16th century church in Milan. Root sequence, mother tongue, another work of his at the 2017 Whitney Biennial combines 26 trees, caretakers and objects. Schema for school was an experimental school in the 2015 Ljubliana graphic art Biennial, and Raza premiered Minor History, a dialogue with his 91 year old uncle at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam in 2019. Raza's works often inhabit intimate settings such as the bedroom at the 2018 Lahore Biennial. For Home Show, which took place in his apartment in New York Raza asked artists and friends to intervene in his life. While Life to Come, at Metro pictures featured participatory work and shaker dance. Raza was artistic director of the Villa Empain in Brussels 2016 to 17. With Hans Ulrich Obrist he curated a series of exhibitions inspired by Eduard Glissant, including mondialite, Trembling, Thinking at the Americas society in New York, and Where the Oceans Meet at MDC Museum of Art and Design Miami. Of Pakistani background, Raza studied literature and filmmaking at John Hopkins and NYU where he helped organize a labour strike.

01:14 Theo Reeves-Everson

First of all, we have a video by the artist Asad Raza who also by the way has a work upstairs, in the current exhibition, so please check it out. Asad was hoping to join us via Zoom today but the first combination of travel and technological difficulties have conspired to mean that's that's no longer possible, but he will be screening his short film. So I'll read his bio nonetheless. Asad Raza born in Buffalo in the USA, creates dialogues and rejects disciplinary boundaries in his work, which conceives of art as a metabolic active experience. Absorption, in which cultivators create artificial soil was the 34th Kaldor Public Art Project in Sydney (2019), shown at Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020) and Ruhrtriennale (2021). In Untitled (plot for dialogue) (2017), visitors played tennis in a sixteenth-century church in Milan. Root sequence. Mother

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tongue, at the 2017 Whitney Biennial, combines twenty-six trees, caretakers and objects. Schema for a school was an experimental school at the 2015 Ljubljana Graphic Art Biennial. Raza premiered *Minor History*, a dialogue with his 91 year old uncle, at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2019. Asad's works often inhabit intimate settings such as *The Bedroom*, at the 2018 Lahore Biennale. For home show (2015), which took place at his apartment in New York, Raza asked artists and friends to intervene in his life, while *Life to come* (2019) at Metro Pictures featured participatory works and Shaker dance. Raza was artistic director of the Villa Empain in Brussels in 2016-7. With Hans Ulrich Obrist, he curates a series of exhibitions inspired by Édouard Glissant, including *Mondialité*, *Trembling Thinking* at the Americas Society in New York and *Where the Oceans Meet* at MDC Museum of Art and Design, Miami. Of Pakistani background, Raza studied literature and filmmaking at Johns Hopkins and NYU, where he helped organise a labor strike. It's a real shame not to have the Q&A, but I would urge all of you if you're interested in his work to follow up some of those projects and some really inspiring work. So first of all, we can I think seamlessly transition to his film.

04:01 Film

My name is Asad Raza, and this is a proposal for your city called Department of Absorption. Let's take a look. You may have seen the project Absorption in cities such as Sydney, Berlin, or Essen. In the piece, we collect waste products produced by a city or region to make an artificial soil called Neo soil. These include sand, clay, Metropolitan compost, dried cuttlefish, spent barley from breweries, cardboard and wood from packaging and shipping cacao husks from chocolate factories, iron oxide from water treatment plants, bones and ash from restaurants and butchers, pigeon droppings from pigeon fanciers and human hair from salons and barbers. With the help of a team of soil scientists, we mix all this material into a neo soil that is fertile and healthy. Diluting toxins and keeping it moist and aerated in a museum

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or gallery, which is filled to a depth of 30 centimeters. The whole thing is free and open to people to walk on it, interact with it. Inhale the smell of fresh Earth. Meet the team of cultivators who make it and finally take as much as they want to use for their own projects. Department of absorption will help your city set up a branch of city government creating 20 permanent sites of absorption. This will produce several 100 tons of Neo soil every month. By the way, soil is not compost. Organic stuff like compost is only one company of Neo soil, about 25 to 30%. People in 20 neighborhoods can benefit from a local experiential site to interact with fresh Earth. Meet cultivators learn about living materials, stage performances, let kids play and take some for their own pots, balconies and allotments. It will also produce jobs for soil scientists and graduate students studying what they call urban techno Sol's and teams of cultivators at each site who will be raking, turning, watering, adding to and testing the soils toxicity, pH, moisture, etc. To make sure we have a clean, healthy Neo soil, urban planners can use it to accelerate the return of unneeded structures to a forest environment. Right now in Birmingham, we're remediating a toxic site by adding Neo soil in a specifically tailored recipe and sequence, diluting the heavy metals and making them less bioavailable. You might ask, what's the difference between Department of absorption and a good old Department of Sanitation? Well think about what sanitation means cleaning, with sterilization, the elimination of trash and germs, and the ideal of living in a sterile environment. Meanwhile, all the material of the ecosystem is left behind in toxic landfills. With absorption, we add attention and care to waste products, mixing them back into immediately usable landscape. It's the difference between cooking a meal with your groceries and dumping them on the kitchen floor. From a wider perspective, the proposal aims to reverse the usual movement of an industrial society. Instead of taking the landscape and separating it into different components, which can be toxic. We take the separated components and recombine them into a holistic world building material Neo soil. Most human endeavors use

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up potential energy stored in the land and water escapes, department of absorption creates potential energy and stores it back in the landscape. At the scale of your city, will be able to process your industrial waste products and turn unneeded portions of the urban fabric into fertile Neo soil. Mayors, city council members and civic leaders are welcome to get in touch. Thanks.

08:51 Trish Evans

That was really interesting, it is quite funny but a quite serious message. I'm Trish Evans this is Tim Almond. We are a part of wild.NG. We've got a couple of other of our representatives with us in the crowd there as well. We are a group of about 10 of us in Nottingham City. And we're really proud to be representing the city at this global event. This seems to be a great sort of collection of really diverse perspectives and studies, and creative work happening. And it's really nice to bring it onto a local level. And we are very much a local level. We're going to just introduce a little bit about who we are as wild.NG as was Theo's just mentioned, where we are a project at street by street based. We're all voluntary-based in Nottingham. And our sort of philosophy really is about connecting communities through nature, but also connecting nature through communities. And it's a really interesting networking idea. And that's very much inspired by the idea of seeing that there's an opportunity for a Nature Recovery Network. Now that is pretty much what it says on the tin. But it's about how we cannot have a defragmented environment and a city and green spaces. It is about joining the dots. And there's various ways in which we can achieve that. And actually within an urban environment, there are plenty ways so there's things such as canopy connections, hedgerows, if we do have hedges, of course, our waterways, but our gardens, and those green spaces that do exist within our infrastructure, they can also connect and they need to connect. And actually, if we don't have connecting areas of green space, they don't thrive. It's very much like a community setup. It's exactly the same. We might feel with development

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that actually if we do have a little bit of green infrastructure, it means great, we've got some green infrastructure in there, fantastic. But actually that tree that's alongside that building could be incredibly squeezed, and actually is starving of its biodiversity. And actually, we need to think about how that tree can connect to the next tree or the next habitat. So it's very much looking at opportunities within our urban environment to do that. We saw an opportunity there. But just to give you an idea of how we were founded, we're only a year old, we're really, really young. Myself and Nick, we are artists and we're called INSTAR and our work is all about creating deeper connections to the natural world through contemporary art. And but we're also naturalists, we work professionally within the conservation sector, as well as professionally as artists. And we often get involved and seek out and look for nature with all the work we do. But one thing we really wanted to do is set up something called Swift Street, which was about five years ago and Tim has been a huge contributor to that project. And that's a street by street approach, where the idea is that we want to work with a street together to install swift boxes in our urban center, and in our community, and we have three swift streets currently. And we're looking to get a fourth swift street installed. Hopefully, if we've got the capabilities this year, we've got a street lined up. Brilliant, yeah, boxes ordered. But it's really about connecting our communities now just to sort of give you an idea of Swift Street and the success of it. We haven't had any swifts take our boxes yet. And while that might sound very disappointing and unsuccessful, it's actually incredibly successful, because you've tuned our community into the importance of swifts where we live, and the biodiversity conservation effort that's required for swifts and we do know we're going to be getting swifts this year. We had a very near on successful year last year. So it takes time to build but it's that approach. So we wanted to work with that street by street idea. Think about the Nature Recovery Network, and that's where wild.NG started. Now I'm saying wild.NG, you could say wild 'ungh' which is the postcode for Nottingham, for those who are from Nottingham

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in the crowd - I'm sure there's quite a few of you. But it is obviously a play on wilding. But also we have debated rewilding, as one. I think Tim might mention a bit about that later on the presentation. But yeah, so we were founded a year ago. And we wanted to look at these nature recovery networks. We are a group of artists, residents, first and foremost, but also we are conservationists, and also ecologists. I just keep moving through these slides, and we can revert back to them. But we are made up of a diversity of people really, but ultimately, we're local where we can be. But we've created this model for wild.NG, which is very much about a model that is quite fluid, and allows for a range of different ways that we can all connect and work together. So we've come up with a sort of model, which has drivers, there are those who take forward ideas and drive on maybe those speculative concepts. But we have the advisors, those who want to dip in and advise and share their expertise and knowledge. And we have those forums for that. We have the champions, we are volunteers. So we if you want to champion a project, you can come to us and we will enable you and support you in doing that we really encourage that championing of an opportunity, and then volunteers. And the idea is that we can dip in and out because we are volunteers ultimately, and we are all working, we're super busy, we have lives that we've got to live. And so we're not putting pressure on ourselves to sort of fulfill everything immediately, and now, and have that rush on. That's really, really important. Now, to give you an idea of our locality, if you live in Nottingham, you'll know some of these areas. But we're trying to keep it in a local environment at the moment. Because we're looking at nature recovery networks, we can extend them we don't expect not to. We're in the North of the city. This idea of being on the doorstep is really a very deliberate one, because actually, it really helps to engage our residents and our communities and thinking about that street by street approach. Often broad campaigns, global concerns are really difficult to connect with - many speakers have mentioned this in the talks. And sometimes opportunities to connect if it's on our patch are

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much easier than if it's just over there, or it's somewhere a bit further afield, and you're more disengaged. So, you know, for example, we are now currently in something that was labeled as and is really building as being the Green Quarter of the city, which is a fantastic campaign that's pushing for better green infrastructure in this area of the city. But unless it's directly on your patch, it's still a bit of a barrier, or even perhaps less of a concern to you to act upon it immediately. But if it's on your street or even in your back garden or you know, outside your front door, you're gonna have more of an opinion about it for sure. So it's really interesting for us to sort of look at that and consider whether that approach will ignite a connection and ignite a stronger network. And so we're looking at ways that we can build on that momentum. There is something as well about thinking about those sort of global concerns that we believe as well, whilst we are local is that we are still global. And actually, there's no reason why something local doesn't have a global impact, our networks can be significant. And we do sort of share ideas about how we can connect and think about mycorrhizal, for example, and, with a fruiting bodies and our ideas of the spores. Individually, we can share, but we can reach and have a far bigger reach than just a local one. But also, you might feel that doing something local isn't really that significant. Is it really going to make a difference to the problems we're facing? But actually, there is a real logic in thinking locally as well as globally with action. There's a great quote from Edward O. Wilson, which is 'it's the small things that run the world'. And when you think about biodiversity in the natural world, that's so so true. You know, we're thinking about sort of the microscopic, you know, sort of like plankton, or, you know, mycorrhizal, or very small insects; they really do make up the ecosystem that we thrive on, and we rely upon, and so whilst we are small in this global world, our sort of local and individual work is really, really important. We're not bounded, in that sense. We have got this local pinpoint. And if you see our logo, we're thinking, oh, you know, we've got a dot in there with thinking about, you know, where do we draw the line. And when we first got together, we were

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thinking, you know, we got to start somewhere, but we don't exclude that's really important, we don't have an exclusivity and that we invite broader communities and anyone to get involved if they wish to, but we had to start somewhere. So whilst working with our advisors, and we are affiliated to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in terms of them working closely with us, we're working with their mapping, to see how we can perhaps start mapping on Nature Recovery Networks and our green spaces and activity and where it's happening. And then start from there. And then and then grow it. So just going back, actually, just just to this image here, just about thinking about our projects, we are one year old, and we are superduper young. But quite a lot has happened with being asked to speak at things like this, which is really fantastic, and quite humbling, to be honest. But we have made some traction, we have had quite an impact really, so far. And it's been really exciting for us to see the responses. And one of those particularly is Poison Free Pavements campaign. So again, street by street, we're trying to work on a glyphosate free approach, where we're detoxifying our streets and conveying that to the community. And we did a really great series of workshops last year, and events where we did that classic thing, I'm sure you've seen it, where you labeled street botany and plant life with chalk. The great thing about that is it sort of had a very immediate response to those who engaged but then that chalk graffiti was left on the ground. And then that was photographed and then people walked by, and they saw it. We had a strategic approach for being around schools, so families could see them as well. But that's really great imagery. But what happened is pick the ears of the council. And that really influenced them to think about, well didn't influence them, we actually inspired them to, well, maybe we forced them to sort of not use glyphosate. So what's happened is that positivity of that program has resulted in now the council coming to us to say we need to work with you. And because we put a little bit of pressure on them good. We don't want glyphosate, we don't want to stop beautiful wildflowers from growing. So it's been a really interesting

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project. And Tim will share a little bit more about that process in a moment. We've had other projects like that Super Flyway, which is installing bat boxes and doing bat ecology where we live. And again, the visualization of that and having maps having flyways being graphic, so the idea of identity with everything we do is very, very important. So we've thought very carefully about our branding, and how we come together with thinking about our identity there. And all of this you can find on our website. But yeah, I'll end it there. And then Tim can carry onto the next section.

20:11 Tim Allman

Thank you. Is this working here? Can you hear? Great. Okay, so obviously, we're here in the context of a symposium on post-capitalist imaginaries. And that begs the question is what is wild.NG's vision if we can be said to have a tight vision, and we certainly do have a vision, but it's, um, it's very much a conversation. We're a very broad network. We aim to grow and to include, part of our raison d'être is to include people that wouldn't necessarily think of themselves as conservationists, sort of nature conservation is often seen as something that's not really for people in cities, despite good efforts by the Wildlife Trust and others. It's something out there in the countryside. And it's a separate concern to city dwellers. And we reject that. We think that nature is absolutely where we live, and we want to be a core thing for us, I think - isn't it? - is getting people on a street by street basis, to know and love their local nature and to advocate for it and to therefore change the landscape of a city street by street hopefully. So what do we want for our very urban city in 500 years or a shorter time? It begs questions like that, and we're keen to have those conversations, a few ideas for us to kind of throw out there. And we'd be interested in the question & answer, later to talk to hear some ideas from you, you lot and to have a bit of a discussion around this. Anyway, we see things we see what we want to work towards a defragmented neighborhood, led by communities, we've no isolated pockets of nature. In other words, nature runs through the city literally,

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and sort of metaphorically, if you like, and the while the dots join together and are resilient, so spread out from the middle. Also, this is important that we, for us, we want the equality throughout our community, both in terms of between humans and nonhumans, or more than humans. We've talked of recognizing some of the creatures, that we share our city with as our neighbors are more than human neighbors or non-human neighbours, that can be a tree on your street, or it can be a swift we've talked about and we need to love swifts. And every year I really like swifts and every year when the swifts come back on our incredible flight from Africa, 8000 miles, something like that. It's ridiculous. They're currently thinking of leaving sort of Central Africa around the Congo and flying back, which I'm looking forward to. But it's like, it's like seeing an old friend again. And for me, maybe I'm an old hippie, but it's like, that's how I personally would like to promote the view of nature in the city, essentially, that we all see these our non-human neighbours as valuable as anyone else in the community. And so therefore, human and environmental justice have to work together, nature must exist, thrive and grow in a city with an equilibrium and balance of power, both in terms of human power and power between humans and non-humans. We want equitable access to wilder spaces and connections with nature. We don't want nature just to be something for those with big gardens or the ability to drive out to Peak Districts every weekend, connection with nature should be everywhere. And I've mentioned before the kind of binary idea that nature is in the countryside and the cities for humans and you know, that's something we definitely want to promote most of the country live in urban areas. And so if urban people can't connect with nature, then there really is no hope. So rewilding, oh, yeah, sorry. I just want to mention something that Trish picked up on which is the sort of analogy we see is something like a mycelium, fungal mycelium, which grows in unpredictable ways around, in our case, the city of urban areas, and mycelium when it reaches a barrier. It finds a way around it. We'll talk more later with me about some of the barriers we found with some of our projects and ways we've

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hopefully getting around them. But that's what mycelium does, and it's unpredictable. And it pops up in fruiting bodies. And we see people active in the network as acting like fruiting bodies to spread ideas. So that's a kind of a metaphor, we're kind of driven by in a way. So anyway, but back to the sort of vision stuff: rewilding, Trish mentioned the wild.NG. It kind of echoes deliberately the sort of idea of wilding-rewilding, and which is obviously a very, it's a very hot topic at the moment. And but what do we mean by rewilding in an urban context? It's often thought about as, you know, the sort of gold standard of bringing wolves back and lynx and stuff and we have to wonder, can we have wolf and lynx in Wollaton Park? That's again, something we might like to bring out in the conversation later. But for me, I mean, I would like wolves in Wollaton Park, but for me, it's just as much rewilding if you walk along your street and you notice bittercress or ragged Robin growing along the street verge, and you recognize it, and it wasn't there before because the council no longer spray the streets with poisons to kill everything. That for me is just as much rewilding as lynx in Cotgrave Forest or whatever. Yeah, so that did inform a dialogue that was had at the very start. There was a suggestion to maybe call it rewild.NG. Sorry these are visions from the Wildlife Trust. Recently that's revision of have a Broadmarsh could be in a wilder green in Nottingham.

25:48 Trish Evans

And there is also this vision actually where we are in Nottingham Contemporary on the left, but it's that green infrastructure in the city.

25:54 Tim Allman

Yeah. So imagine that rather than what's there now. I mean, for me, that's, that's an incredibly positive vision. So again, we'll be bringing this out, hopefully in the discussion more. And another question is, how much do we seek to manage nature, again, the Poison Free Pavements campaign, that's all about deciding how weedy we want our streets to be and

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again, opinions will vary on that greatly. But it's like, so that's why the vision the idea is so important. It's like how much management do we need to put in? If a council don't spray with glyphosate? Are we going to have to go out there and do a bit of hand weeding or, you know, whatever. So there are lots of questions around that. So now hand back to Trish for the next section.

26:45 Trish Evans

Great thanks! So one of the things with wild.NG is: we want to connect our community to nature. But we're going to ask ourselves, really? What is our connection to it? And how can we actually create that connection? And what is connection anyway? I mean, just go back to Instar's strapline, which is like, creating deep connections to the natural world through contemporary art. It's all relative and comparative, and personal, isn't it? So it's sort of like really important for us to think about, what do we mean by that? And how can we have that moment where we connect, but we believe that those connections are really, really important through our process. Now, we're going to ask for a little bit of audience participation here now. And we want you to sort of take yourselves to a place where you felt really connected to nature. So for a moment, can you all close your eyes and find yourself to be in a place where you felt really, really close and connected to nature. Think about how you feel when you're there and where you are. But importantly, think about what's transformative about it. Why was this particular place instantly sprung into your mind now? And you can open your eyes again. What's really interesting about that, as you might have really struggled to find a place we don't know. But hopefully you all went all over the maybe UK or even planet to think about that connection. But it's really important to think about that. And we want to sort of resonate and create those profound epiphany moments. And there's plenty of national and international pioneers in the natural world who have utilised these moments or responded to these moments to really spear on their connectivity and also respond to that by

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actually taking action. There's no other route to a response to this moment, than to, to care and to do something for nature. And, you know, within our group, we've had those moments, we wanted to share a few of those right now. Back in, if you're from Nottingham, imagine yourself back in the 1970s in a really sort of tough part of Nottingham called Wollaton and Nick, when he was eight, find himself with his mate on the street, it was also 8 really appreciating nature for two very, very different reasons. Nick was really into learning how to identify every UK British species of bird. And Lawrence we lived on the street was really interested in shooting them. So Lawrence thought Nick would be brilliant to help him identify what the hell it is, he's actually shooting. So he invited Nick up onto the hill, which is this like woodland area in the area where he was brought up. And then Lawrence shot a Robin and Nick thought it'd be brilliant to take part in this exercise, because you get closer to the birds that he's trying identify to get up close and to see the bird you know, but the moment that happened, it changed everything. It was just like this is this isn't good. And, you know, that really is his moment when we asked him about, about that connectivity, and that really realisation in nature and importance to him about caring and protecting and helping nature. Bring it forward a little bit to 1990s and myself, probably a few of the group as well and probably a few of you out there. A few sort of like all night parties and festivals raving, nothing on my feet watching the sunrise, you know, and just really, really feeling the earth underneath my feet. And actually, I'm from a rural part in Wales, I've been brought up around the countryside, albeit very much a farmed one. But I left mid-Wales to come to a city and I came to Nottingham, hoping for a place that was just full of concrete. I just wasn't interested in anything that hills anything that had any green space and the surrealism now them for bring green spaces into Nottingham City is really quite funny to me personally. But actually, I was not interested in nature at all. But that time for me, when I actually felt really connected to nature really did have a massive, profound effect on me. I started to see the sunrise and started feeling

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the energy of a new day, you know, understanding and appreciating nature close up, and spending time out in nature. More recently, another member of our team reflects on their moment that is currently really inspiring them to think about the natural world where they live is in a very built up street in our project area. And there's an old retired couple who have made the effort to put birds, sorry bird feeders on the tree. So I've got a few pictures here to share. And basically, they with real commitment, fill these birds feeders, with bird feed all the time, and they want to see bird life from their window. And they really rejoice in this wonder of wildlife on their doorstep. And not only have they really enjoyed it for themselves, but they've given that gift to their community. And so it's really, really beautiful to think how something very small, can really have an impact on us, that can then spread an impact on much greater things. And so as wild.NG we want to ensure that we create those moments that we give an opportunity to enable our community and our neighbors to connect to nature in very different ways. And through doing that, we are wanting to sort of find ways to connect people through things such as the wonder of the natural sciences, you know, the science of the experience, it could be the creativity and the activity, that they take part in. I'm just here to show you some of the activities that we have. We've got, we do a lot of things with free, everything we do is free. But we're trying to involve our community in multiple levels along. For example, the bat Super Flyway, we've got the bat boxes, which were funded by participants who have attended a free bat walk by us who are volunteering and leading that session. The materials were then sourced from that funding, and then a local carpenter built the kits and cut them ready, free of charge as a volunteer, then we got our local community to build them, led by us leading those volunteers sessions, but they volunteered their time to build them. And then just last week, we voluntarily installed them. And that is just a really nice example of how actually we can incrementally have an impact involve people in that story and in the emotive process through the project. So yeah, we try to find those projects. And this like was Swift

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Street, you know, having the swift alongside our urban setting and our houses and they're living in the same homes as ourselves. They are our neighbours, opening up that story. And the what we call a superhero of the bird world to our community is really helping to convey the wonder that we witness and motivates us as a group to participate in such project. I think now I'm on to the motto sort of tree hugging, which is sort of moved on from my dancing days. And I do wonder, wow, you know, that's a really rejoicing thing for me, but it probably is cringe worthy of my children. But actually, my love of trees has sprouted from a personal loss. And when that tree was planted, it really gave me a lot of honor profound and really meaningful things for me as an individual to know that that tree is going to outlive all of my immediate family in that time. And that felt very important to me. We're just going to show you a little film now. I don't know if Jim you can just quickly show it that'd be great. So this is a tree that was been admired by our community in Sherwood for many, many years. And this is filmed from the bedroom of a resident just last week. And it got felt. And it was there was a campaign to try and save this row trees and it failed. And this was shared on our social media. Anybody go okay development you know so be it, the odd tree has to go there'll be trees planted. You know, mitigation will include opportunities to grow trees locally, but this field It was actually shared by comments of like, that personal relationship that she had with that tree. And as a response, it was huge locally, people were angry. They were, they were stressed, they were upset, they were mortified. And it's just interesting to know that our relationship with trees alone, like something like that, to know that the birds won't be nesting there this spring now, will they, so it's just sort of like really interesting triggers. And there are those triggers of loss, like with neck with the bird, and then there's as triggers of happiness, or just moments of wonder at nature. And so we're not going to be going out killing animals to get support for a project, that's for sure. But we will be sort of looking at those really positive opportunities to sort of encapsulate that emotion to grow our network. So yeah,

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that's, that's basically on my bit. Now, I'm gonna hand over to Tim, who's going to carry on talking about the care.

36:39 Tim Allman

Okay, yeah, thank you. Um, so yeah, caring for nature is key. It's like we want people to care for you know, every little tree. Trees aren't that little, all over every tree every we want the sort of people to notice all the little things in their, in their local environments in our streets, and to value them. That's one of our key missions. And here's another example of a activity we did, which was very popular. Trish mentioned it earlier. It's a pavement botany. So what we do is we go out, we walk around our streets, and we label we identify and label all these weeds, but otherwise, people might just walk past and the idea is to engage people, both during the event but afterwards because the chalk stays there until it rains next time. And people people go past and go oh, Ivy-leaved Toadflax. That's an interesting name and they might look at it closer. That's the sort of attention and care we want people to. We want people lots of people sniggered at Nipplewort That was a, that was quite a one that lots of people remembered. But it's like, they've all got amazing names, lots of our wild plants, you know, Ivy-leaved Toadflax, it's an amazing name, dandelions, less common, but we want to sort of get that get the stories and get the interest and people to recognize these non human neighbors as they walk along our streets. But the big question is, what does a cared for urban street look like? And we are very conscious that opinions will vary greatly in every street, let alone across the city as to what that means, actually means. As you may know, one of Nottingham City council's big themes is 'clean'. They're very into Nottingham has apparently for years had a reputation as a messy, dirty city. And so the council have in the last five or so years, I think, put a lot of store into into making making the streets cleaner. But we need to ask, what does that include, obviously, moving dump fridges off payment is a good thing. But spraying poison, doing this sort of thing. Overtidiness is not in our view, at least. And we want to kind of share and spread that point

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of view and have debates around that. And we acknowledge it's a debate. Lots of people really do like, you know, sterile streets, and we want people to learn well, we want to have discussions that would encourage people excuse me, encourage people to care for nature in all its kind of messy, inconvenient glory sometimes. You know, you can't have swifts if you haven't got you can't have wonderful swifts flying over your house if you haven't got enough insects them to eat, which, along with lack of nesting sites, which we're also addressing is one of the big factors in their decline. And we're not going to have insects for them to eat if all the leaves were all the invertebrates over winter are cleared up aggressively, or the streets are sprayed with poisons. So the investments haven't got the plant life to feed on. So there's a question here, which again, we'd like to pick up in the discussion which is: On the streets where you live, which may be in Nottingham or elsewhere, if plantlife burst through the cracks, and there was a noticeable increase in that. How would you feel? Would you have mixed feelings? Would you view it as an uncared for streets? It's that word care again. Are you honestly secretly concerned with it lowers the cleanliness and the status almost of your street? Is that poppy a bonus or a problem? That's that's the sort of question. Do plants cause damage or obstacles? So yeah, there's a spectrum of views there which we want to unpick. So we think that our understanding of a cared for street and therefore a cared for and thriving city needs to be reimagined. This links to what are called shifting baselines, which is an ecological concept you may or may not be familiar with. But shifting baseline is the idea that we think we If we judge normality, based on how things are usually in our kind of youth. Early adulthood, so for instance, to sort of thought experiment, if it were possible to, if I, if I had a TARDIS, and I could transport someone from my grandparents generation into a British countryside, now, they would be appalled. Because like, they'd say, where were all the birds? where all the butterflies? were all the hedge? the hedge wildlife and the, and the flowers for crop flowers, because they've all gone and now we just think it's normal.

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Because that's our baseline and, worryingly, the younger generation now if, if trends go in a way, they're going by diversity, that that process goes and erode goes on, and erodes all of our understanding of what nature should be like, whatever that means, whatever, whatever nature should be. So that's something we really want to reimagine we want to say, where we're actually living now the situation we're in is a very depleted extremely depleted biodiversity, both in the countryside and in cities. And we want to challenge and reverse that. So as we've said, plant botany or bought streets, plants on the streets, has a bad reputation, invert, invert, it's seen, almost like dumped sofas and, and fridges, and we need to challenge that. Great, okay, I think that so yeah. Oh, yeah, just last point. We want to open up that space for conversation and have those debates, and they weren't always be comfortable conversation, some people will go, I hate the weeds. I'm all for the glyphosate. And that's something we need to engage with, because we need to, we need to change opinions on a sort of for everyone really?

42:28 Trish Evans

Yeah. And I think you're sort of following on from that the sort of like, where do you sit on that spectrum? You know, this apocalyptic Japanese van Ventana couldn't find one in Nottingham of the same caliber, but the fear factor of that is what determines people's decisions around glyphosate use in their street. But actually, there's a lot more understanding and reassurances in the way that we can manage, you know, sort of like natural habitat on our streets without killing everything in the process and actually spraying something that's carcinogenic, you know, it's actually quite serious stuff. It really does obliterate, but you know, it doesn't have to be like that. But it's just understanding in our minds what we believe to be something that's cared, it's just really interesting debate. And we'd really like to talk with you about that at the end of these possibilities. This is just a sort of summary of the plants that we surveyed when we just did that street feature, and just one one session. And we got 44 species, which is

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just really great. Just goes to show about the diversity of what we've got on our doorsteps, and

43:27 Tim Allman
Lovely names again.

43:29 Trish Evans
Beautiful, yeah, really inspiring, actually great way of engaging people in understanding botany. But yeah, really important as well, to sort of understand that, you know, nature, like what Tim was saying isn't in the countryside necessarily is actually very rich, where we live. And although we're living in this very developed urban environment, we may feel that those sort of networks for nature can't occur in the urban environment as much as they can in the sort of rural environment, when in fact, it's actually more like the other way around, you might think the concrete is preventing our wildlife from connecting. But actually, compared to some of the landscape of the UK, in terms of rural landscape, it's incredibly difficult, it's a monoculture. And it's actually really deplete and very poor when it comes to biodiversity. So to convey things like this, about what we've got on our street is a really great way of conveying that message that actually, there is huge potential in urban environments. And it could be said that the wildlife movements of the UK have focused much more on saving and securing green space outside of cities. And I've only, I would say relatively recently picked up the idea that actually our cities have been forgotten. And actually they are where we need to really be putting our focus. So it's really interesting for us to look at ways that we can do that in Nottingham. Just to finalize, our project is based on sort of like gift economy, really, we are volunteers. And there's a real exchange of knowledge and time between ourselves and our neighbors and our group and our community. And we really pride ourselves on that. And we don't put pressure on ourselves to work beyond that. But actually, through that, we like to make sure, of course, that we deliver educational and creative opportunities through that. And we, ourselves

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are learning all the time about approaches, and knowledge about species from experts and so forth. And just people who live in the community know a lot more about their area than we do. So it's really, really fascinating stuff. But obviously, we appreciate that, you know, volunteering, labor isn't always equitable. And we're thinking about this idea going forward and thinking about growth. You know, we know it was really brilliant to hear some of the conversations yesterday about what our understanding of what the word growth is. There not all growth is bad and of course we're networking so we're going to be growing right so we want our nature to grow etc etc. But with that comes actual, how are we going to resolve that we're at a bit of a pivotal point of like, you know what steps we need to take to formalize things a little bit more than us all doing this together. So we're really at that stage, and perhaps even conversation today could inspire us to think about a model going forward. But it's a really exciting phase nonetheless. And, you know, like I said, we've actually achieved quite a lot so far. But going back to that sort of 500 year plan, and that model of how we can have an environment that is networked, is really where we want to be thinking and giving our attention to. One thing is that when we launch ourselves as volunteers, we are often potentially in the firing line for a negative opinion, or that's not gonna work, or, you know, good luck with that, but, or you didn't do this, you said you were, but we are really not going to be put down by that we've really believed that we want to work by our motto, which is that we believe that we want to, we want to try, we want to learn when we try, but one thing we're not going to do is not try. And that's really what we're here for. That's the end of our talk. Thank you.

47:01 Theo Reeves-Evison

Yeah, it feels like a an important conversation to be having here and now in Nottingham. Which, if anybody's traveled up on the train, today, you will have walked past a big sort of gaping sore in the city centre, which is a kind of crumbling shopping centre that was semi demolished during the

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pandemic. And then the company that were due to rebuild it as another shopping centre went bust. And it's kind of kickstarted a lot of conversations about what the city centre does for wildlife for people, people's engagement with different ecologies. So I think it's really important to have this link to those sorts of initiatives in Nottingham. But also because of the pandemic and the way in which for a lot of people, their local parks were allowed to grow in much more unruly ways than they used to, and the kind of different modes of attention that that encouraged. So it was really great to kind of have those things come through. I'm going to start with a question. And I think it would be good to kind of have a broader conversation. But if I could start with a question that links your work, to Asad's, and maybe some of the discussions on the previous panel, around the difference between cleansing and detoxifying. So also kind of, Ama talked really eloquently about the kind of mutant, the fantasies of living within kind of mutant ecologies of toxicity and the limits of that kind of discussion. Although they might be a good corrective to other fantasies of pure nature, and rewilding initiatives. So yeah, really just this question around, cleanliness, detoxifying Asad also talked in his video about sanitation, the role of sanitation in the city, do you have a kind of ideal state that you're aiming to encourage the kind of flora, fauna to reach? It seems like to reference the theme of the panel, it's not repair as a return to a particular baseline. It's a kind of future facing. So I realize that's a lot of things...

49:26 Tim Allman

Yeah, that's very interesting. And you mentioning, which, we don't have an idea of return to a shifting baseline like you could say, imagine what the streets of like of Nottingham were like, I don't know, 150, 200 years ago, there were probably lots of weeds there. There was also lots of cholera and horse crap. You know, we're not aiming to go back to anything like that at all, obviously. And one thing I found interesting in Asad's talk, which echoed something here for me was he talked about the difference between sanitation and detoxifying in terms of like,

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sanitation is where you kind of clear something away and put it out of sight. And in a way we're kind of I don't know if you'd agree Trish but with the poison free pavements campaign to stop routine spraying of glyphosate it's kind of the opposite of that, because that is actually what we're aiming for, I should say is the opposite of that, we want to see the kind of the issue of greenery in our streets addressed head on, at the moment it's very easy to forget about it. The council come along however many times a year it is and spray it probably when not many people are around or not many of us might notice and then the weeds die and we don't notice so that's in a way, that's for me sort of a bit like sanitation, and what we're talking about is more these green things want to grow in our streets, we'd like to welcome them in, at least some of them, you know, if they're growing into a drain or undermining, and you know, compromising safety, then they need to be removed by hand or whatever. But so see what I mean, we're aiming for a more visible approach to street maintenance in that campaign, I would say. Does that make sense?

51:12 Trish Evans

Yeah, I mean, I think this sort of, you know, yeah, the application of glyphosate is a very toxic thing, but it's there to cleanse. And you know, the council at the moment, they very much group cleansing and clean city and pride all together in one nice, neat bundle. And that means basically, when you think about cleansing, it's essentially stripping. Yeah, and that includes, it's grouped in with flytipping, and litter. So are street plants, so it's an idea that the street is unloved, and there's a massive fear that it's not loved. So in terms of removing that glyphosate, that toxicity is a real step in that sense. But also, it doesn't end there because when you have a glyphosate applied, then that plant has a runoff, and that runoff then goes into waterways, and then that then goes through various other routes and doesn't disappear. And actually, the extension of an application of a chemical like that is very serious in talking about soils, that's the, you know, I think that there's sort of like that relationship with

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understanding that that journey that something has, when it starts on your streets is a really, really important one to convey. But yeah, I think the sort of, the removal of the toxicity is very much where we're at but also as well, plant life does purify. You know, we've got trees, and we've got plants, you know, and they purify our air. So they detoxify that. So I think there's a sort of like, there's a multiple, very important role that our plant life and our wildlife as a whole ecosystem plays in terms of that detoxification, even thinking about ecosystem services and how plants and various things clean our waterways or our soils. Naturally, they provide a very important service, the only fear we've got to be careful of is seeing nature as a commodity in this debate, but

53:07 Theo Reeves-Evison

Leads seamlessly onto my next question which is around yeah, the framing of ecosystems as services, or as commodities that can be turned into credits, which can be offset. So you work as artists, but you also work with kind of wildlife trusts, the National Forest, I think you did a project with

53:29 Trish Evans

The National Forest and National Trust yeah. Yeah.

53:33 Theo Reeves-Evison

So I guess the question is, what does that, in the context of a conservation movement that's increasingly financialised, that has bought into this logic of selling nature in order to save it as it's been formulated, turning it into kind of discrete commodities, that can be swapped, moved around, sold. What does an artistic approach bring?

53:56 Trish Evans

Oh, I thought you were just gonna ask what the problem with that was? Got plenty to say on that. Well, what does that bring? Well it brings, I mean, I think really, I mean I've worked in the conservation sector for quite some time, not

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anymore, but did professionally leading on various projects and campaigns. One of which was Nottingham for Nature on a big billboard campaign with young people looking at manifesto for nature and the city some years back now. But when you work in a conservation movement, like this, these sort of commodities can be really helpful, because the problem is that they help give value to something that you tried to convey, and the Wildlife Trust movements, the ones that I'm familiar with, and also those I've worked with myself in and Nick with INSTAR, they struggled to convey the value of nature. It sort of, it seemed that they yeah, the mitigation approach, the legal approach, the loss approach, of course, but what art brings, and what we really believe in, I think all of our project members do actually is that the arts plays a really, really great role in in communication, and to convey ideas in innovative and new and more contemporary and relevant ways. And if I'm honest, I find it very frustrating that that isn't adopted, and it's not adopted enough. There needs to be a lot more creativity in the way that we engage our communities and our audiences, and the arts plays a huge role in that and there's a huge opportunity for the arts to really embrace that opportunity. And I think, you know, you just have to look campaigns, even placards and street art and various activism art over many decades. It's really poignant and really strong and you don't see the movements, the conservation movements having a space for that. So I think they're opening up to being more diverse in the way that they approach their message. They know they need to, I think, I don't know if that answers...

55:59 Theo Reeves-Evison
Yeah.

55:59 Trish Evans
Tim, I don't know if you wanted to...

56:00 Tim Allman
No nothing really to add to that. Yeah.

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56:02 Theo Reeves-Evison

I think I think we'd better open it up if anyone has any questions from the audience. Yeah. Yeah. In the middle.

56:14 Audience member

Hello. Not just a question, I just want to speak in defense of my council. I'm a councillor, I'm chair of Environment and Climate Change at Broxtowe and I think my council's doing a really good job. And it's not easy because like you say, you have to reeducate your workforce who are used to keeping things cut and neat and tidy, but you've also got to persuade the people who pay the council tax that when you don't mow the grass verge because you're waiting for the dandelions to feed the bees that you're not neglecting it, some of them come out with their lawn mowers and do it themselves, because we haven't. So it's not dead easy. The other thing I wanted to just observe was, I wonder if the swifts have got the right things for making their nests because my sister lives in Bedfordshire and there was this great big area of mud and clay, I think, and for hundreds of years, the swifts came flying back, collected all this mud and made their nests and then one year, there was a housing estate there and they couldn't do it. So I think eventually, we'll have found a way around it. But the Swift need mud as well, I believe,

Tim 56:54

I think that's house martins.

57:40 Audience member

Oh is it?

57:41 Trish Evans

Yeah, yeah. But they're often confused. So I think that's...

57:43 Tim Allman

They're very, very similar. Yeah.

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57:45 Audience member

So you know, sometimes just the box isn't enough is it?

57:48 Trish Evans

Well, yeah, I mean, the whole ecosystem, you brought up a couple of points there that are really important. And we are working with Nottingham City council so whilst we're sort of saying it's frustrating with the cleansing, we really are working collaboratively with the City Council now and that's really great. I mean, okay, it came through a little bit of pressure from us. But there's not a not a desire to change, I think that there's a real feeling that this has got to happen, we want to work on change. But like you said, it's systemic, sort of in terms of the way that they council's worked, and people have worked, cleaning and tidying our streets for many, many years, and to change, that overnight isn't gonna happen. But it's really great to know that we can do a street by street approach and to test that out, and we're doing this pilot for the first time this year with 40 streets. So that is a real collaboration. And that's going to be a really great opportunity to see how we, as a neighborhood and community can work collaboratively with the council and understand their challenges. So we are very much listening to each other about the approaches. So that'll be an interesting one to follow on that front. But in terms of going to your question about swifts, house martins you're talking about, but yeah swifts are in decline, not because of just their lack of housing, which has been changed because of the way that we've improved our buildings in terms of, you know, doing them up and fixing them, that means that swifts can't, no longer have their specific nests that they've been nesting in. But it's also about the habitat in which they need to feed on to survive. So when they migrate here, there'll be needing all of that habitat and the insects to live on. So it's not just one thing. It's a whole. So talking about your idea about yeah, how do we make sure it's not just a nest and with Swift Street and with wild.NG, we talk about that whole all the time. So encourage an opportunity to understand the different levels in nature and what's

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required for the sustainability of each of those. And actually, as residents, we have a real opportunity to improve that and really make a difference.

59:48 Audience member

I really enjoyed the presentation and the ideas that you're bringing forward. I was reflecting on my own experience in Sherwood, of having a lot of drug dealing going on. And one evening, we had four or five police cars and mayhem along the street. So we organised a meeting in the community center. But after that meeting, people reflected that is the first time they'd met most of the people on the street. We've not actually been together as a group before. So there was a kind of positive out of that process. And I think that is something that's missing, generally. So this especially after COVID, so we've all been stuck in our houses, you know, in isolation all getting a bit depressed and all the rest of it. And the idea of some sort of collective identity, I think could be really powerful. Now, one thing we did do was we established a community co op in the old bus depot, I think that's become like an art center. But I think it's lost a bit its purpose, as being a community co op, of bringing people together. And I mean, it struck me that your project, I mean there's Sherwood Art Week, and maybe there could be a Sherwood Nature Week or whatever or Sherwood Art and Nature Week, or something like that, that brings not just streets together, but the whole shebang, and helps build this collective identity. So that was really good. And finally, yesterday, I was outside Aspley Library, because people are really worried that the library's going to close. And I was amazed at the architecture. So the library wasn't simply a box, like the one they're gonna put in Sherwood, it was a beautiful building, with amazing architecture with a dome, and all the rest of it. But outside, there was a green patch, big green patch all around it. So you enter into this space, that was a public space, but also quite a beautiful space with a, you know, integral green aspect, and if we're not careful, we're going to lose that, you know. So that was from 1937. You know, and perhaps there are linkages with

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the time that we're in now. So just that idea of architecture, designing in this sense of nature.

1:02:03 Trish Evans

There is quite an interesting point just around planning and you know, how planning departments are always talking to, you know, the sustainable teams. I think that's happening a bit more in Nottingham now, but there is that, you know, that idea that we need to have a green infrastructure for the city, and that, you know, the mitigation question that you asked, you know, about, if you're going to develop an area, or you're going to build a building, what you're going to do that's going to be green, that's going to, you know, fulfil that justification of putting that there. And, you know, it might be, you know, I know, there's over a certain footage in Nottingham that you'd have to have a green roof, for example, or so many trees or bird boxes, or whatever it may be. But the problem is that that doesn't always transpire. And there's not necessarily the authorization or the analysis to know if it's really happened. So there's a little bit of a missing link there. And, you know, the idea that we've got a sustainable city and thinking much more about planning agreements for the city going forward is really crucial for that to be successful. We used to have something in Nottingham as well called breathing space, which is for every child born, there'd be a tree planted. And that was great. But then no one actually checked. And so, but that's only because of just that little missing link again. And so it's trying to sort of find routes, where these things can actually really happen, you know, and architecture and infrastructure is really important. And what's also very important is that we go back to that nature recovery network vision of wild.NG is that putting a tree on a street, which is quite squeezed, and quite isolated, is okay, but it's not great, really, in fact, it's quite starved. And we really need to be inspiring more of a wilder network and that can bring innovation and really interesting design, I guess, the Broadmarsh vision, looking at the ideas and the vision of outside this building, for example, they're all networking, it's thinking about some real creativity in the

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way that we approach these things. It's sustainable, but does connect nature, because when you do connect it, it's got a far greater chance of surviving, than if you've got the odd plotted green, you know, if you looked at architectural drawings it's quite common, isn't it? You get the lovely tree that's colored in green, and there's a bird flying there and families walking by looking happy. But actually, it's the reality that isn't always followed through. And it isn't. But you know, there needs to be a bit of linkages going on there. And we hope that perhaps, you talked about Sherwood, there's quite a community there, that we hope that will help grow that connectivity and linkage and challenge when it's not fulfilled as well.

1:04:43 Tim Allman

Can I just quickly pick up on your comment about the library? I don't know Aspley library, but buildings like that, that are very well, you know, very beautiful and well designed. Often they for me, they show a certain, it's about pride and optimism, isn't it? When it was built, in the time it was built. We live in times where optimism can be quite in short supply, particularly around well, about lots of things, but certainly around the natural world, and biodiversity and threats to biodiversity. And I think designing and incorporating space for nature in our cities is an optimistic act. It's important for that reason alone, I think and that's something for me. I hope wild. NG does on a street by street basis, being optimistic about connection with nature where they live, that's as important as in some ways as the actual outcomes in terms of whether the swifts nest is there or not. It's about the optimism and the hope and the sort of antidote to eco despair.

1:05:48 Theo Reeves-Evison

Ama, thank you, yeah you've had your hand up for a while.

1:05:50 Ama Josephine B Johnstone

Thanks. Thanks. Hello. Yes, thanks Theo. And thank you both. I have a couple of quick questions. I really was trying to take on your challenge to think about, like, where are you really

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on the spectrum of thinking about streets. And so I've been really thinking about that, I was thinking a lot about Atlanta, which is a city in Georgia, in the United States of America, which is incredibly overgrown, it's an incredibly green city. But one of the reasons it's really overgrown is because there isn't city wide support for people to like, deal with trees that are potentially, you know, damaging their houses, there are a lot impoverished communities. I think we can't kind of run away from the fact that certain kind of greener spaces, or like, spaces where nature's taken over tend to be spaces where people have less access to support from the state, right? And that leads to all kinds of other problems, which might be really great in that they're green, but then, you know, there's health care and so on... And it's been kind of really good to hear how you're like dealing with those difficult combinations of things. Especially, I was also thinking about those pavements, not being necessarily wheelchair accessible. And those tricky complications, it'd be great to hear about that. And the second was just an offering, which is that one of the ways that I've been really inspired by working around weeds is by the kind of herbalist and medicinal naturopathic workers who are looking at the medicinal properties of weeds, and really using that to work with communities who see weeds as weeds and being like, actually, they have all these incredible properties. And you can make tea and you can make poltices and kind of running those workshops has really helped to honor the kind of quote unquote, weeds in like community populations. So, I don't know if that might be useful, something you're aware of, but that's been really helpful in transforming that natural hierarchy. But I think has also been, yeah, that is prevalent. Thank you.

1:07:59 Tim Allman

Yeah. Yeah, thanks for that. Yeah, that's a really good point about how, yeah, in lower income areas, or whatever, often, things are more neglected by default, not by design. And so all the all the resources get pointed towards making the nice streets clean. And that's something that's really

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important, and one of the many contradictions around the whole poison free pavements concept potentially. And that's why we're very, very clear that it has to be a street by street conversation, where people say, how do we want our street to be? What's the balance between, you know, letting you know glyphosate get sprayed on it or not. And one thing that I don't think we did mention in the presentation, but is an important, and potentially slightly awkward point is, if we do want our streets, if I want my street to be wilder to have all the you know, have all the Ivy-leaved Toadflax growing in the gutter and all rest of it and not to have glyphosate sprayed on it, then it might well be I along with my neighbors need to get out there a few times a year, and help maintain it. And actually go out there with a you know, with a hoe or whatever, or a trowel, and move stuff that is going into a drain or whatever or is impeding. The point about pavements, and accessibility is a point. There was in Brighton, I think during the last year, I think it was 2021, they did ban glyphosate from at least certain areas of the city. And they appointed a team, a council paid team, to keep the streets maintained without using chemicals. But unfortunately, all the team happened to get COVID. And so there was no maintenance done for I think, more or less two months. And there were complaints about people, you know, tripping over weeds, and they were accessibility issues around that. So there is a balance and brings up stuff around like should it be the council's job to employ people with trowels and hoes? Or should that be a voluntary thing? Not everyone has the capacity to get out there in their spare time and have these conversations even, let alone. So there is a lot there, that we do need to, as we develop the idea which is still in its early stages, isn't it, that we need to be very aware of and test out but it is a dead important point.

1:10:23 Trish Evans

So it was sort of looking at this as a pilot this year. So we've got about 40 streets, hopefully. But those questions that you mentioned are very much on the mindset of those who are very fearful or scared about what the street might look

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like. That's where we posed the question in the presentation because there's a sense that if you leave something to go wild, it looks abandoned or it looks messy, and then it looks unloved and then that means the council aren't doing their job. And then there are complaints. So there's lots of things like that. So it's about changing firstly, the mindset of what a healthy and cared for street looks like. And can we work towards engaging our community to see how wonderful some of those plants are? But that hand pulling approach with a street by street conversation is definitely key. And also your mention about herbalism. We've actually got that programmed in, Becky who spoke earlier, who facilitated one of the conversations, that's her practice and area as an artist. And so we're programming that exact same thing. So it's broadening that understanding of a certain species and seeing where that helps us in terms of nutrition or health benefits and the story of plants. So it's basically I think, opening up that dialogue and conversation, which aren't always easy. And we know that when we work with the council, like was just mentioned, you know, there's a real need to make sure places are safe, that they are healthy or untidy for certain needs and certain things to function, you know, but it's the use of the poison that we really want to ban. And if we're going to go back to your original question where you want to go, personally, me, we shouldn't be having any chemicals, you know, they should be banned. That's my personal take on it, how we manage plants, there's lots of options. So it's just thinking about the impact of a glyphosate is so serious. It just needs to stop. And so we need to find a pilot through our city to see what that brings. We're also looking at the idea of leaving a street, well, in COVID, our streets weren't sprayed. And so what really happened in that year? Was it really that bad? There are certain needs to compare the certain people within our community naturally, who see it as untidy and they don't like it, they want to improve it before it gets worse. So it's thinking about how our community can help and work with us to do that. But yeah, it's a collaboration. And it's not a simple solution. And there's

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been plenty of mistakes through the glyphosate campaign nationally and in other countries. So it's just finding a way that we can resolve that and think about it street by street. And we are going to need to find an equilibrium.

1:13:11 Theo Reeves-Everson

I think that's our cue to wrap up. Thank you very much for sharing the work that you do. And as you say, it's a pilot year, it's going to be interesting to see.

Colophon

Curators: Canan Batur and Theo Reeves-Everson

Assisted by: Helen Hamilton

Technicians: Jim Brouwer, Tom Harris and Craig David Parr

Assisted by: Neil Dixon and Tom Chamberlain