

The Ladywell Commons - RUSS bid to restore the Playtower



RUSS (Rural Urban Synthesis Society) is a Lewisham-based Community Land Trust, the local charity behind 12 Church Grove – London's largest community-led, 100% affordable housing scheme. We believe local people should have a genuine role in shaping, delivering and managing the places around them, and that important community assets should be protected for future generations.

We've put together a group of social enterprises, charities and local businesses to transform the Playtower into a multi-use community space, shaped and owned by the people of Ladywell. A place to connect, create and thrive.

We're calling it The Playtower Commons, because not only will it be a shared space for our community, it will actually be owned by the community, for generations to come. Here's what it will include:

- Re-connecting the Playtower, Coroner's Court and St Mary's into one community commons, creating a new gateway into Ladywell
- Bringing the Playtower's magnificent Pool Hall back to life as a flexible event space, and filling the rest of the building with artist studios, work spaces, a community café and areas to just hang out.
- Reopening the Coroner's Court and Mortuary for affordable health, wellbeing and creative activities, alongside outdoor saunas and community gardening.
- A flagship nursery and training academy by the London Early Years Foundation, with 11 affordable homes for older people above, and...
- A new Village Green, with a water feature marking Ladywell's historic well. A public space for playing, relaxing, farmers markets and other community events.



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Community Benefit

We see The Playtower's restoration is an opportunity to create something transformational for our community. Lewisham's creativity and potential sit alongside real inequality, so the Playtower Commons will bring different people and opportunities together, such as:

A centre for young people, skills and opportunity
Youth arts, mentoring, work experience and training will help young people develop skills and access careers in the creative industries, early years, construction and hospitality.

Creating local jobs and helping Ladywell's economy flourish

The Playtower will create jobs, provide affordable studios for local artists and enterprises, and attract visitors who support Ladywell's existing businesses.

A healthier, more connected community
Affordable wellbeing activities and programmes bringing children and older people together will improve health, tackle isolation and strengthen community connections.

A greener place that everyone can enjoy
We will protect the central green and bring around 625 square metres of green space into community use for gardening, food growing, wildlife and relaxation.

Above all, the Playtower will remain shaped, used and stewarded by the community for generations to come.

