

# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

ACTIVE  
AXIS



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MSA  
LIVE 26

## Team

**Maream Merza** (MArch1)

**Owen Bilby** (MArch1)

**Tailuu Robinson** (MArch1)

**Ziyu Liu** (MArch1)

**Menghan Qu** (MA AR)

**Qiwei Wu** (MA AR)

**Harry Bartholomew** (BA1)

**Ivan Broussy** (BA1)

**Lok Ho** (BA1)

**Nadia Shawky** (BA1)

**Zoya Khan** (BA1)

**Sushmitha Bascarane** (MLA1)

## Collaborators

Organisation: Life Leisure

Direct Correspondents: Lisa Arrandale

Life Leisure is a Community Interest Company (CIC) owned by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Their sole purpose of existence is "to improve the lives of others". Whether that be through mental, social or physical challenges, Life Leisure has the affordable facilities to cater to that. Running an extensive programme of sports and leisure activities, there is a place for everyone to engage and be part of the community in different Stockport locations.

Lisa from life leisure, highlighted the importance of nurturing a community and how to create an intergenerational space that allows social interaction through the provision of outdoor space. As part of our brief, we needed to embody the motto "to develop a healthier and more active community" and allow that to spill outside, extending to the outdoor area that currently isn't activated. The brief of the proposal has been left open, entertaining the ideas of mobility, adaptability and community engagement.

This collaboration has been a unique experience with Lisa understanding and being supportive of all the ideas we have come up with. It has bridged expertise and knowledge from the different years and has been a welcoming experience for each of us.

Understanding how Life Leisure tackles these social challenges through an architectural lense, has been enlightening to how we created the proposal for Active Axis. Our collaboration with Life Leisure has been invaluable in understanding how simplicity and mobility can encourage engagement on an intergenerational level.

# Introduction

## Active Axis

How does one nurture a community externally as an extension to what's already there? How do you address the intergenerational gap that forms unintentionally over time?

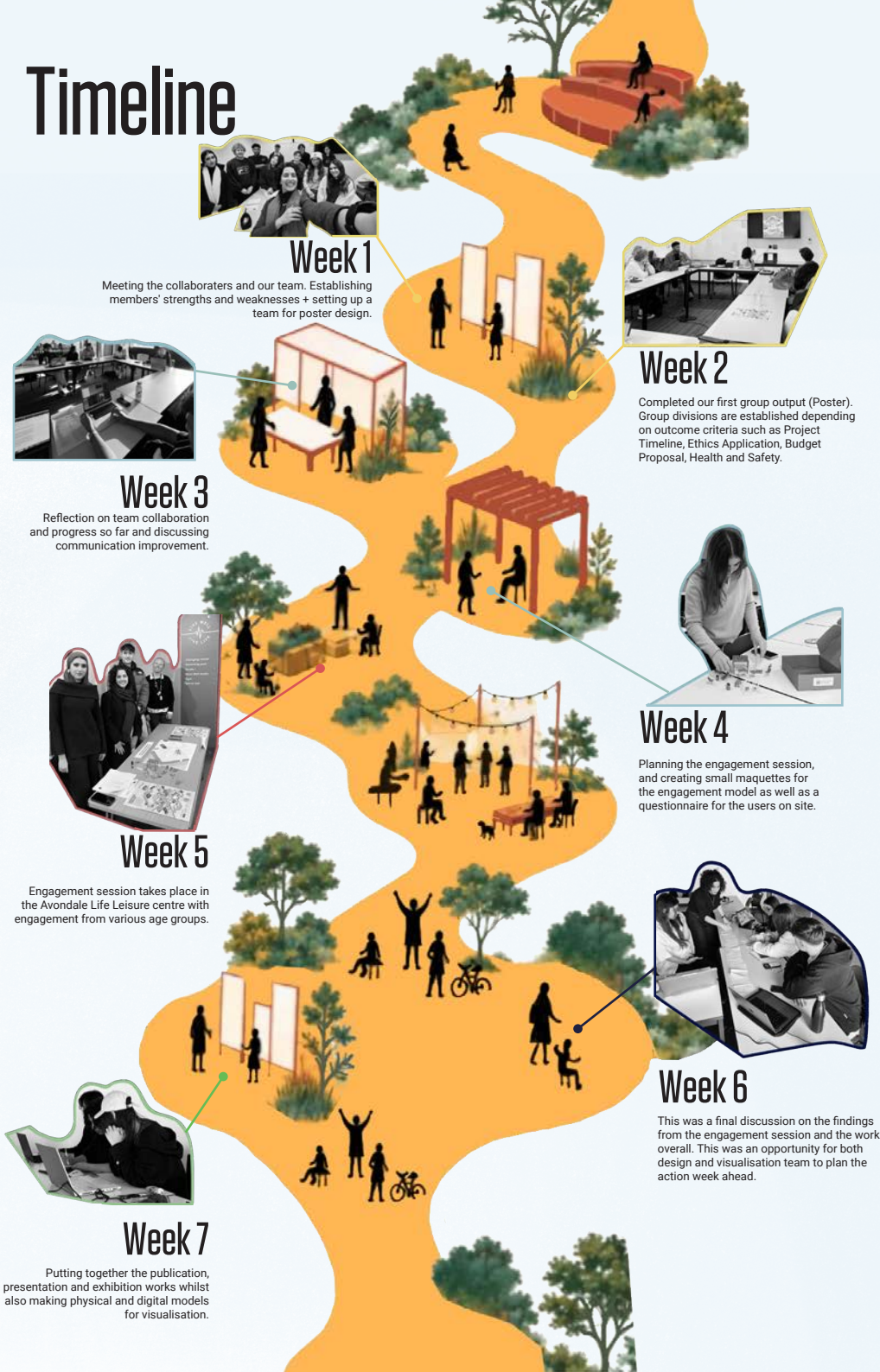
Active Axis is a cooperative of designers working alongside Life Leisure to develop a new community outdoor space on the Avondale Site. The aim of the venture is to create a multi functional learning and active space / classroom which adapts and responds to the use and abilities of all members of the community: giving pride and ownership of the project to the community across all generations and abilities.

The site is an area that is currently deactivated, located within the nook of the Avondale Life Leisure Centre. Following the engagement session, it's concluded to be a neglected area overlooked that has the potential to be more. It can become a place of passing. An in-between place where people can wait for someone to pick them up, a place of rest, a place to warm up, a place to relax, or even a place of play.

Our intervention is represented as a pavilion-like structure that brings two disciplines together; architecture and landscape to deliver an adaptable approach to design. A simple intervention that presents itself as open and welcome space which intends to bring bridge the intergenerational gap. Made of timber engulfed with greenery, these movable structures change with time as people come and go enjoy moments of an interaction.

The impact of this proposal would be evident in the way people start using the site differently, bridging the intergenerational gap of users of the site. Through this nurturing of an outdoor community, we invite people to be part of it and form amazing connections whilst maintaining their health.

# Timeline



# Client Brief and Values

Following our initial consultation with the collaborator, it became clear that they cater to a wide demographic, providing a diverse range of activities and classes that encourage people of all ages and abilities to engage with fitness. In response, we set out to design a multifunctional outdoor learning space centred around the introduction of greenery and natural elements into the environment. We aimed to create an adaptable space that reflects the organisation's inclusive values while supporting a wider range of outdoor activities, reimagining exercise. The proposed environment is intended to promote social interaction, well-being, learning, and community engagement, creating a welcoming and flexible space for all users. With this project, we aim to enhance the space through an affordable and practical design approach, creating a solution that is simple and cost-effective to construct while remaining adaptable and easy to maintain. By prioritising environmental considerations, we intend to utilise innovative and appealing materials that encourage curiosity and interaction within the space.

## Project Goals



Fluidity

Ease of Movement in the site.



Affordability

Cheap and simple to construct maintain, and change.



Innovative

The use of materials that are appealing brings entices curiosity.



Connectivity

Create an in-between place for people to connect.



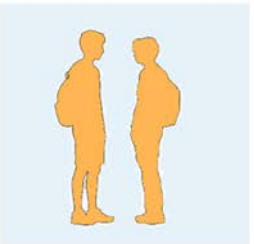
# The Site and Engagement



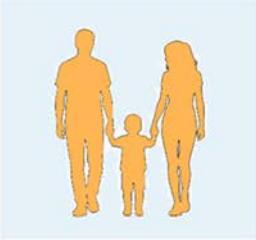
--- Car path    --- Pedestrian    Site    Design Area    School    Playground



**Elderly**  
 Age 70+  
**Motivations for Visiting**  
 1. Low-Impact Exercise  
 2. Health And Rehabilitation  
 3. Community Engagement



**Adolescents**  
 Age 0-18  
**Motivations for Visiting**  
 1. Exercise and Fitness  
 2. Social Interaction  
 3. Interest Development



**Parents&Children**  
 Age 20-49  
**Motivations for Visiting**  
 1. Children's Activities  
 2. Family Activities  
 3. Convenience and Supervision

## Engagement Session Part 1: State your challenges.

**WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE WHEN COMING HERE?**

- Female only gym areas
- More access to gym
- Cafe on Balcony first floor
- Foot path on left side
- More seating, so when elderly are waiting to be picked up, they can wait outside
- More events like brew and biscuit, and more than one time a week as it doesn't fit everyone's schedule
- Time constraints, opening and closing time.
- Full car park, maybe better arrows to prevent stuffy cars

## Engagement Session Part 2: Rearrange the site using small maquettes at 1:50.

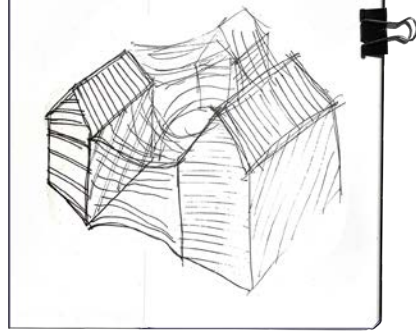
This is one arrangement made by the user.



# Design Development

Acknowledging our intention to create a multifunctional outdoor learning space that responds to the various needs of a mixed demographic, we began drafting a range of initial concepts following our engagement sessions' feedback. This information helped identify the key priorities and functions the space should address. After consultation, a recurring theme from all participants was their satisfaction towards the fitness facilities of the gym, as well as a desire for greenery spaces and outdoor resting areas. This, therefore, influenced us to focus on different needs for the surrounding area, prioritising nature, learning and creating a social environment. Furthermore, members of the gym assisted us with the layout process, where we provided moveable model parts on an untampered map of the site at 1:50, successfully giving us insight as to what aspects to prioritise over others. Our other engagement activity featured a Post-it notes board with the question "What challenges do you face when coming here?" Despite not being overly engaged with, it was useful to visualise and reinforce aspects of the area that needed improvement. Using this information, each team member independently explored different approaches to maximise the site's potential. After evaluating the strengths and limitations of each proposal, we collectively concluded that Owen and Tai's was the best approach.

Owen's Idea



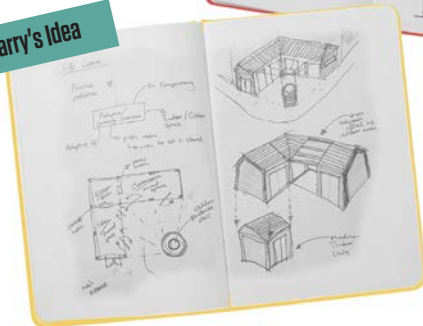
Merza's Idea



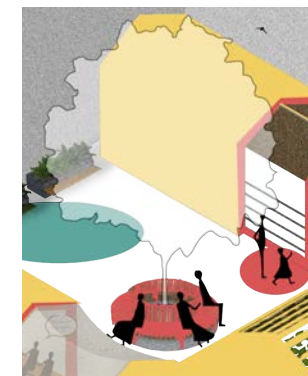
Tai's Idea



Harry's Idea



Outside Waiting Area to be picked up.



Resting Area under shade of the tree.



A passing by encounter and conversation.

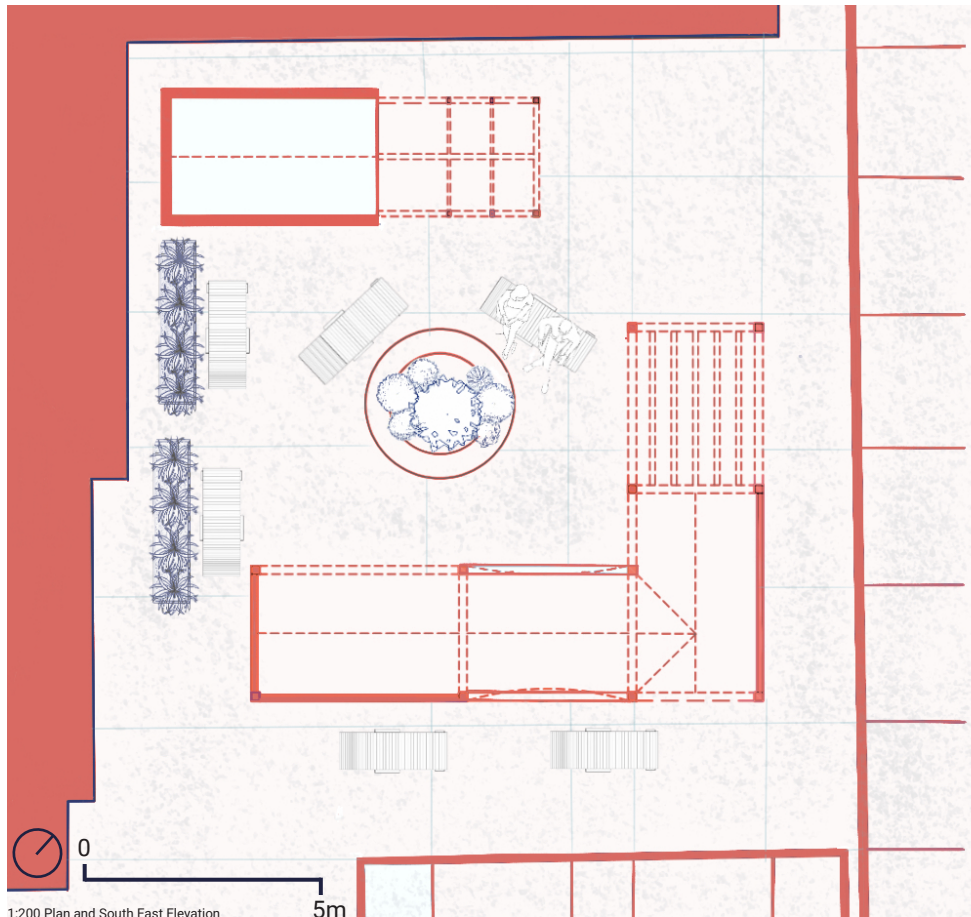
# Plans and Movement



Life Leisure

Active Axis

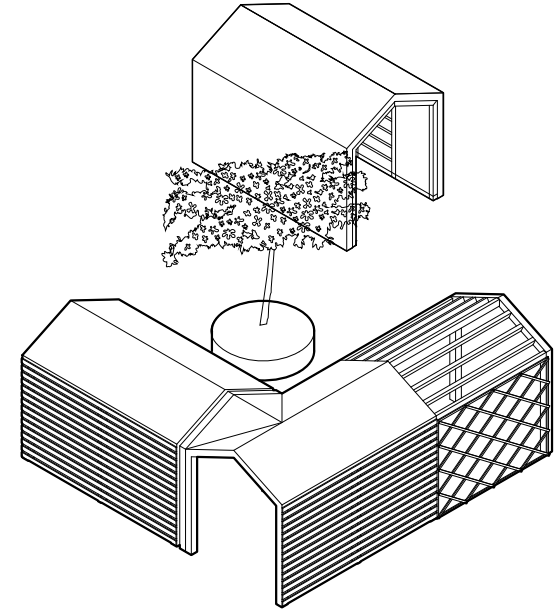
Car Park



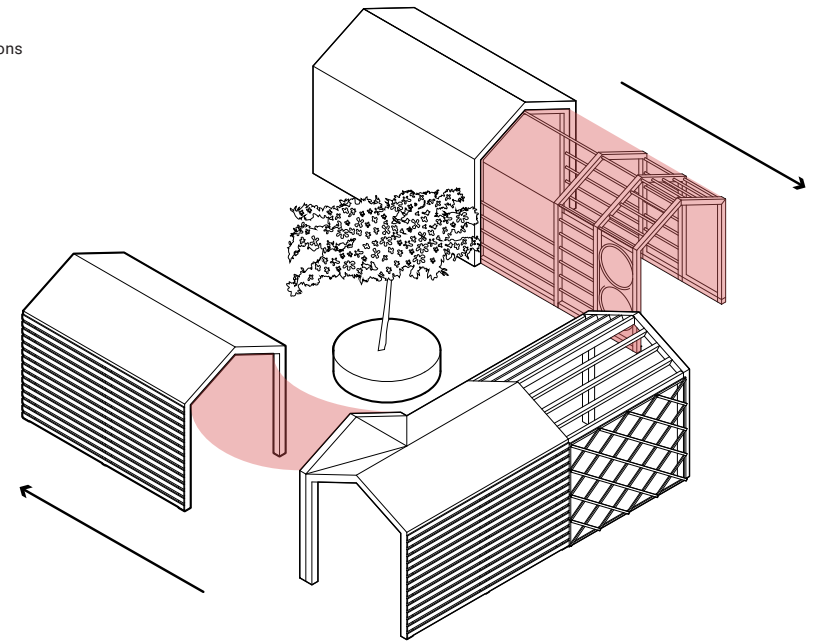
1:200 Plan and South East Elevation

5m

Active Axis Interventions  
when CLOSED.



Active Axis interventions  
when OPEN.



# Costing / Materiality



Timber Cladding      CLT Panels      Wooden Trellis      Plants and Greenery      Painted Timber for Play      Fabric Canopy

ACTIVE AXIS CONSTRUCTION COSTING			
Gross Floor Area			144m2
Location			Avondale, Stockport
Proposed Construction Start Date			August 26
Construction Period			8 weeks
Tender costing:			Approx costing
Site Clear and demolish existing			1,500
Foundation + substructure			5,000
Site resurface			7,500
Movement substructure			5,000
Structural Timber frame			30,000
Metal Climbing frame			10,000
Landscaping and vegetation			15,000
First and second fix electrical			10,000
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£84,000</b>
Adjustment for building works value	£84,000 x 0.97		£81,480.00
Adjustment for North West	£81,480 x 0.98		£79,850
Adjust for Increase Construction Costs, estimate: (August 26)	£79,850 x 1.6%		£81,128
Allow for risk	£81,128 x 12%		£90,863
<b>Indicative Construction Cost: (August 26)</b>			<b>£90,863</b>



1:200 North East Elevation



1:200 North West Elevation

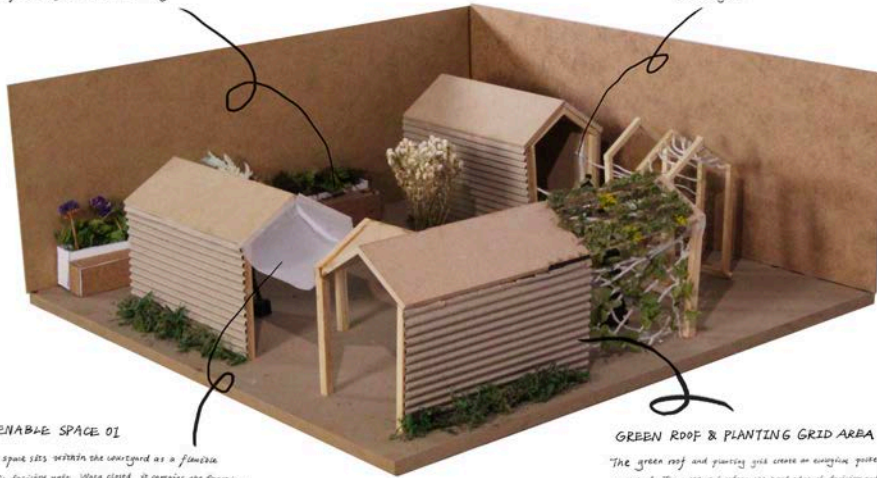


**PLANTER SEATING AREA**

The planter and seating area along the walls transform the hard courtyard edge into a place for rest and pause. The planting softens the walls and add a layer of greenery, while the seating provides space for sitting, chatting and observing.

**OPENABLE SPACE 02**

This space works as an activity facility with various equipment, similar to find-out outdoor fitness equipment. When closed, it is hidden inside the volume to keep the courtyard tidy. When pulled out, it provides simple facilities for exercise, stretching or outdoor's play, increasing interaction and using the outdoor space courtyard.



**OPENABLE SPACE 01**

This space acts within the courtyard as a flexible public facility unit. When closed, it remains the furniture within a compact volume. When opened, the panels extend outward to create an active interface for visiting, social interaction and temporary activities, making the courtyard use stand-out and acceptable.

**GREEN ROOF & PLANTING GRID AREA**

The green roof and planting grid create an engaging pocket within the courtyard. The green roof softens the hard edge of building and helps it blend into the landscape, which also providing shade and cooling. The planting grid adds a vertical layer of greenery, supporting climbing plants.

# Reflection

## How does it feel now that it's over?

**Merza**

"The entire process has been an amazing experience for all of us. There was an absolute joy in knowing that our team dynamic was very easy right from the start. This made it safe for us to be open about the ways that we work and for that, push the project to exceed Lisa's standards and in extension, Life Leisure. It has been a rewarding experience in terms of learning from each other, about working together and the connections we will have as a group for the long term."

**Tai**

"Our collaboration was successful from the very beginning as we established individual strengths solving challenges with diverse perspectives."

**Owen**

"During MSA live we all learnt and discussed and collaborated within the group and had fun designing together."

**Qiwei**

"Engaging and thought-provoking, MSA Live broadened my perspective on collaborative design."

**Charlotte**

"I really enjoyed working on this project and learned immensely from every member of my group. I am very grateful to have worked with such supportive and enthusiastic teammates, who were all willing to collaborate and contribute towards the same shared goal."



## ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1, Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse students, BA foundation and year 1 and Masters Landscape Architecture 1 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

## LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA LIVE projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

## SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA LIVE projects are for community benefit or have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

## EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

## STUDENT-LED

Our MSA students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. The projects are celebrated in presentations at the end of the academic year. .

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

## LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 400 students from 5 cohorts in MSA have worked on 34 projects with partners.

## QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team, Emily & Julie:

**[e.crompton@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:e.crompton@mmu.ac.uk) and [j.fitzpatrick@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.fitzpatrick@mmu.ac.uk)**

## BLOG

[live.msa.ac.uk/2026](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2026)

## SOCIAL

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