



PRESS RELEASE

2nd June 2013

Big Lunch Ambassador, Barbara Windsor MBE celebrates five years of The Big Lunch in London

On Sunday 2 June, Actress, Barbara Windsor MBE, Big Lunch Ambassador, joined the millions of people across the country to celebrate the fifth annual Big Lunch.

The Big Lunch, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is an annual initiative led by the Eden Project encouraging people across the UK to have lunch with their neighbours for a few hours of community, friendship and fun on one day a year.

Visiting the Cre8 Life Style Centre in Hackney Wick, London, Barbara Windsor MBE, who is also the Mayor of London's Street Party Ambassador for London, joined in the community's festivities, which were mirrored in gardens, streets and community spaces across the UK.

Cre8 Life Style Centre has taken part in The Big Lunch since 2012, with over a hundred people attending this year's event which included entertainment such as Olympic drummers, local theatre group performances and break dancers. Barbara Windsor MBE joined in the spirit of the event, watching the performances and talking to residents and organisers about how the event has brought their community together.

She says, "I always look forward to the first weekend of June when I am invited to a Big Lunch event in London. The events seem to get bigger and better every year and here in Hackney the Cre8 Life Style Centre definitely put on a brilliant show with everyone getting involved and having fun together. That's what The Big Lunch is all about and it's lovely to be part of it again in this The Big Lunch's fifth year."

Identified by The Big Lunch as an area that required support to develop a stronger sense of community, funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government paid for a community support officer to work with the organisers of the Cre8 Life Style Centre Big Lunch to help them take the lead in planning and organising their Big Lunch last year, which succeeded in bringing together neighbours who may not have previously known each other. The funding has since been renewed for this year's event, with the aim of ensuring that the organisers have the confidence and skills to go it alone in future years.

Ron Newman, Organiser of the Cre8 Life Style Centre Big Lunch, said: "Once again we've had a terrific day with more and more people coming along to join in the fun – even a special visit from Barbara Windsor! The community has seen a remarkable transformation following our first event in 2012 and we know this year's event will further strengthen relationships in an area that has since been lacking in community spirit. I hope Barbara enjoyed the event as much as we did. We can't wait for next year's Big Lunch!"

Sir Tim Smit, Co-founder of The Big Lunch, said: "It's amazing to see so many people across the country coming together, like The Cre8 Centre, for such a positive occasion."



“The Big Lunch really is a day to remember and a day that creates not only lasting memories, but lasting friendships and acquaintances that will be enjoyed for years to come.

“With millions of people taking to their streets, gardens and community spaces this afternoon for the fifth Big Lunch, today proves that we don’t need a big national event like the Jubilee or the Olympics as an excuse to get together for a celebration.”

The Lottery-funded Big Lunch, supported by MasterCard, Kingsmill, Asda and Halifax is an annual event led by the Eden Project.

Notes to editors

About The Big Lunch

- The Eden Project started The Big Lunch in 2009 in the belief that we’re better equipped to tackle the challenges we face when we face them together
- The Big Lunch is led by the Eden Project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and supported by MasterCard, Kingsmill, Asda and Halifax
- For further information or to request your free pack visit www.thebiglunch.com
- The aim is simply to bring as many people as possible together for lunch with their neighbours once a year and encourage the sharing of conversation, ideas, skills and resources
- The Big Lunch takes place annually on the first Sunday in June, but events can be held on another day if it works better for the community.
- On Sunday 3 June 2012, ‘**The Big Jubilee Lunch**’ formed part of the official programme announced by Buckingham Palace to celebrate The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and was a huge success
- The Duchess of Cornwall is Patron of The Big Lunch
- **8.5 million people** took part in Big Lunch or Big Jubilee Lunch events in 2012, an increase on previous years – the best part of **1 million people** in 2009 and 2010 and **2 million** in 2011
- The Big Lunch 2013 will take place on **Sunday 2 June**
- For further information or to request your free pack including posters, invitations, a planner and other materials to help organise your Big Lunch, visit: www.thebiglunch.com.

About the Big Lottery Fund

Bringing communities together, reducing loneliness and isolation and helping to make a difference locally is at the heart of the Big Lottery Fund’s mission. BIG is therefore delighted to invest Lottery funding into The Big Lunch which continues to help inspire communities and neighbourhoods to come together in the simple act of sharing a meal. Through this neighbourhood social networks will be strengthened, and a greater sense of community cohesion will be created and people will be motivated to take more of an active role on their doorstep.