COMMUNITY ACTION RESPONSE LAUNCHED IN THE FACE OF EMERGING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) CRISIS

In the wake of the £30 billion emergency fund announced in the Budget and switch to the delay phase of the Government four-part plan, leaders from different sectors are now joining forces to drive a crucial Community Action Response to encourage everyone to do what they can to support their communities and particularly vulnerable and isolated people during Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Launched by Eden Project Communities with partners The National Lottery Community Fund, Nextdoor, Neighbourhood Watch, Campaign to End Loneliness and Eco Attractions Group, the Community Action Response has been created because of the unprecedented challenge that Coronavirus presents for people in every neighbourhood in the UK. Eden Project Communities is a UK wide network that has grown out of community building campaign The Big Lunch, which reaches over six million people in communities every year. The organisations are calling for everyone to take steps that will help communities cope when the worst impacts of the virus hit.

Community Action Response - five things you can do:
1. **Think of others, consider your actions & be kind:** People in every community will face the challenges of Covid-19 in some way – from needing basic provisions to help while they are unwell.
2. **Connect and reach out to your neighbours:** as self-isolation increases, we need to find new ways to stay connected and check in on one another for our physical and mental wellbeing. Share phone numbers and stay in touch.
3. **Make the most of local online groups:** Keep up to date, share information and be a positive part of your local community conversations using platforms like Nextdoor.
4. **Support vulnerable or isolated people**: different groups in our communities are at increased risk and social isolation and loneliness are key concerns for all ages. There are things you can do like volunteering for local support services or donating to food banks to help.
5. **Share accurate information and advice:** Support anyone who may be anxious about Covid-19. Sign post them to the correct advice from Public Health England and encourage people to follow the correct hygiene practices.

Research from The Big Lunch shows nearly a fifth of us in the UK have no-one in our neighbourhoods outside our immediate family we could call on if we needed help or support. With the rapid spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) increasingly likely, this is a real risk and combined with the need to self-isolate this gap in our community connections needs to be closed. The research also reported that more than 36 million people feel distant or very distant from their neighbours, yet three quarters of us believe it would be better for our communities if we were closer to them. The Big Lunch commissioned independent research published in their Closing the Distance report to explore how connected people in communities in the UK feel to one another.

Bringing people together to advocate for community action, Peter Stewart - Executive Director of the Eden Project said: "Through our work with communities UK wide we see the difference that people working together can have. Neighbourly support can make a huge difference in a world fraught with challenge. The current threat is set to impact all of us in one form or another, and stronger local connections within communities are vital to see this crisis out. That's why we've joined forces with our friends and partners to call on people everywhere to take positive action to support and care for each other in the coming weeks and months."

Dawn Austwick, CEO The National Lottery Community Fund said: "As the largest funder of community activity in the UK, we know community life and connections can help to build bonds of support during difficult times. Being kind, offering support and thinking of one another makes neighbourhoods and

communities stronger together. This is particularly important for those who are more vulnerable and isolated. At The National Lottery Community Fund we support communities to thrive, this is why we're pledging our support for this call to action in the coming weeks and months."

Nick Lisher, Head of EMEA, Nextdoor, said: "Neighbourhoods, can be an essential source of support, information and help in challenging times. At Nextdoor, we see first-hand what's possible when communities work together. Let's use our resources collectively to help those who are vulnerable or isolated in this time of need. It's time for us all to create a neighbourhood we can rely on."

Ian Bretman, Neighbourhood Watch Chair said: "At this stressful time it is more important than ever that we come together to support our loved ones and communities, especially the isolated and vulnerable. We all perform different roles in our daily lives but we are also all neighbours and all have the ability to be a good neighbour at this crucial time. At Neighbourhood Watch, we are proud to be joining with our friends and partners to call on everyone to have a united community approach and be mindful of others through these five actions*."*

Kate Shurety, Executive Director of the Campaign to End Loneliness said: "For many people there will be a tough, but necessary period of social isolation. Many of us will miss family and friends and taking part in our hobbies, interests and activities. It shows how important friendship and connection are in our lives, and how difficult it can be when they're missing. This reminds us that for too many people their lives are often quite a lot like this. Research shows that half a million older people regularly experience these kinds of protracted periods of isolation, going at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all."

Eden Project Communities is mobilising their grassroots community-based network and launching #CommunityResponse on social media to help share the actions. They also intend to further support communities in the coming days, weeks and months as needs become clear.

ENDS
Editors Notes

About Eden Project Communities
Eden Project Communities bring people together to create happier and healthier communities, where people know one another and neighbourhoods thrive. We believe that stronger and more resilient communities will be better placed to face the social, economic, political and environmental challenges ahead.

About Eden Project
The Eden Project, an educational charity, connects us with each other and the living world, exploring how we can work towards a better future. Our visitor destination in Cornwall, UK, is nestled in a huge crater. Here, massive Biomes housing the largest rainforest in captivity, stunning plants, exhibitions and stories serve as a backdrop to our striking contemporary gardens, summer concerts and exciting year-round family events. Registered charity number 1093070 (The Eden Trust). Money raised supports

About The National Lottery Community Fund
The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK and proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since June 2004, they have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people.

About The Big Lunch
Every year The Big Lunch brings over 6 million people together in their communities to meet, share food, chat and have fun. The Big Lunch connects people and communities across the UK, encouraging them to make positive changes where they live; many people fundraise at their Big Lunch and last year £8.2m was raised by people for the things that matter most to them where they live. Started in 2009, The Big Lunch is idea from the Eden Project made possible by the National Lottery. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall is Patron of The Big Lunch.

Research from The Big Lunch conducted by Happy City can be found here:
https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/sites/default/files/closing_the_distance_report.pdf