



The power of bringing people together

Webinar exploring findings from Belong Network's independent evaluation of The Big Lunch and the Eden Project's community programme

7 November 2025

Lindsey Brummitt
Programme Director, Eden Project





Webinar Programme

1. Welcome and introduction

Lindsey Brummitt, Programme Director, Eden Project

2. Building community cohesion

Professor Dominic Abrams, University of Kent

3. Evaluation of The Big Lunch and communities programme

Dr Jeni Vine, Belong Network

5. Addressing loneliness and social isolation with The Big Lunch

Helayna Jenkins, London Borough of Bromley

6. The Big Lunch in action – Nadia Speers-Robinson, The Hearth Network

7. Q&A

PLEASE SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS IN THE Q&A BOX THROUGHOUT THE SESSION





We demonstrate and inspire positive action
for the planet

Respect

Protect

Repair

Why working with communities is so important

Climate emergency, poverty, food security, equality, health - the problems we face may be global but our experience of them is local.

Societal responses in crisis are critical to our planetary health. It is through people working together that we will find the solutions we need to survive and thrive.

Through our work, we're building social capital for our collective future.



Our Work

The work of the Eden Project is grounded in our understanding of the importance of our connection with one another and with nature, in building our physical, mental and social health. This is critical to our ability to connect with and look after the world we live in.

Through our work with communities we aim to give people a sense of agency - so that everyone can feel hope for the future, wherever they live.

We believe in the power of community to shape a positive future for both people and the planet.



Our Toolkit

We design and deliver ideas and interventions that engage and excite ordinary people into taking small steps that make a big difference



The Big Lunch

The UK's annual celebration for neighbours & communities, the first weekend in June



Month of Community

Good causes come together to celebrate community & encourage action annually throughout June



The Network

Supporting people, organisations & groups to build relationships & work together at community level

ALL TOGETHER FOR A STRONGER SOCIETY

belong

THE COHESION AND
INTEGRATION NETWORK

Jeni Vine, Research & Development Manager

belongnetwork.co.uk



eden
project





- **Introduction to the Belong Network**
- **Key Findings**
- **Report Overview**
- **Recommendations**

Our research tells us

More socially connected, cohesive local areas bring individual and community level benefits:

- resilience against crisis, shock and change
- higher levels of individual subjective wellbeing
- increased levels of volunteering
- active social engagement
- More extensive participation



Key Findings

- **109 million Big Lunch participants** and over **1.4 million Big Lunch events** across the UK.
- On average, **£11 million pounds was raised for good causes** each year between 2015 and 2024.
- Since 2013, **over 2,000 participants** have attended one of the 28 Community Camps or 8 online courses, resulting in **1,100 new community projects**.
- For every £1 invested by TNLCF, **£13 is generated in fundraising for good causes**
- Cost per attendee 6 pence, and per event £4.95
- Cost of The Big Lunch per attendee reporting relief from loneliness - 10 pence
- **Volunteering added value to their communities of £2.6bn annually.**

Eden Projects Communities Evaluation Report

- **Early years (2010-2013)** - increasing participation, fostering a sense of community
- **Mid-Period (2014-2017)** - broader regional representation and greater inclusivity
- **Later Years (2018-2021)** - more nuanced diversity and inclusivity goals with an emphasis on reaching vulnerable communities and promoting awareness of TNLCF funding
- **Recent Years (2022-2024)** - added sustainability and environmental action goals



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reducing loneliness and improving sense of wellbeing
- Growing agency and community resilience
- Strengthening belonging and democratic renewal



Thank you!



belong

THE COHESION AND
INTEGRATION NETWORK

Contact us:

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website: belongnetwork.co.uk



@BelongNetwork



Belong -The Cohesion and Integration Network



INSPIRED BY EDEN

eden project
COMMUNITIES



THE LONDON BOROUGH

The Big Lunch

Helayna Jenkins IEng

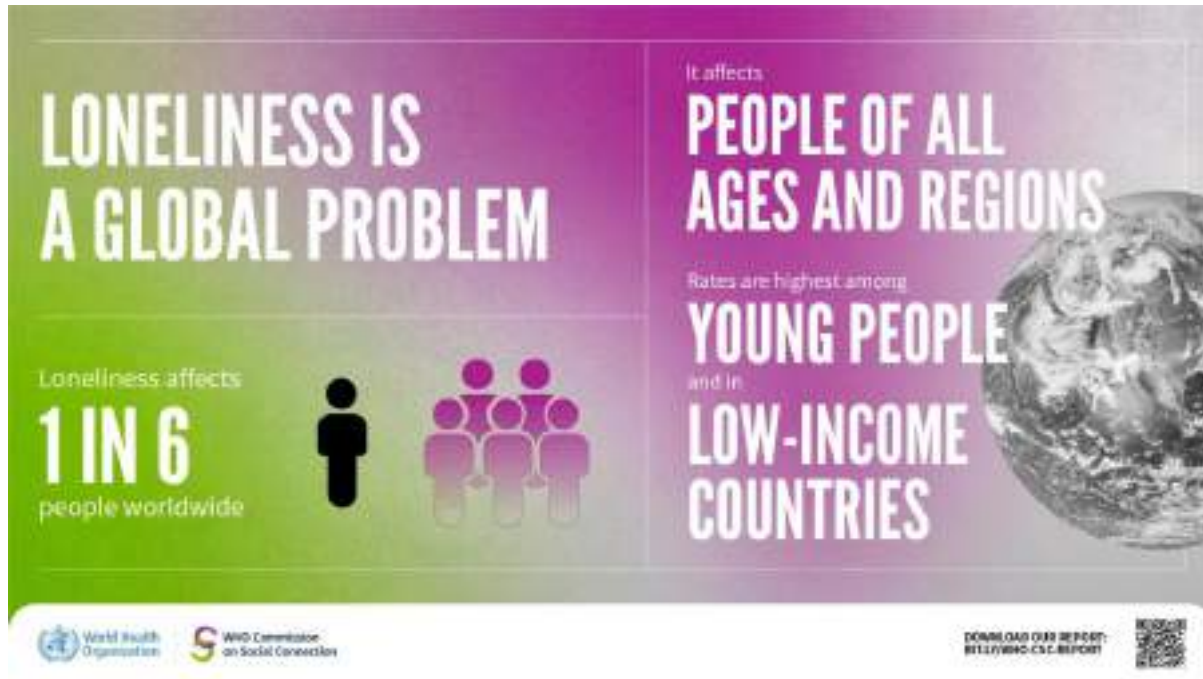
Principal Loneliness Champion

Adult Social Care

bromley.gov.uk/loneliness



The Challenge

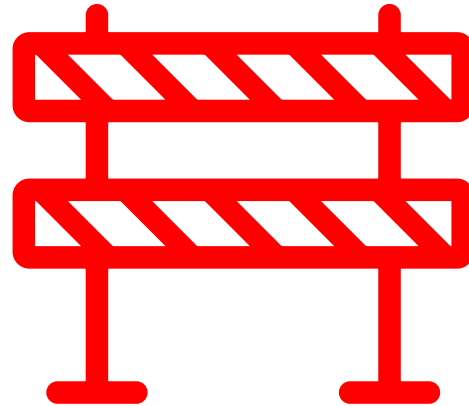


The Solution

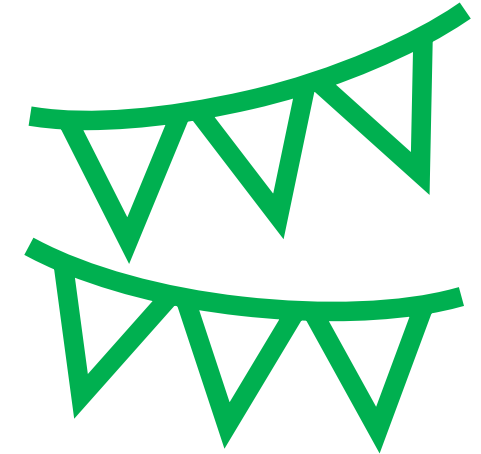


Running a Big lunch at a local authority

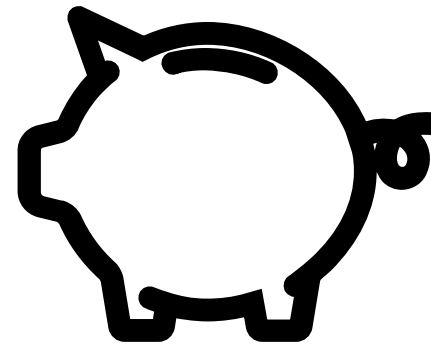
Easy & free Road closure process



Encourage people to create their own Big Lunches



Council run big lunches



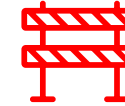
Provide community funding

Tackling loneliness in Bromley with The Big Lunch

Council Run Big Lunches



Easy & free Road closure process



Fees again waived for street parties in support of Big Lunch

Applications from residents and Street Friends applying to hold a street party in support of the Big Lunch 2025 on 7 or 8 June are again being processed free of charge.

Although some street party applicants have already been received, applicants for street parties are being reminded to apply in good time, with the closing date for applications being 2 March 2025. This allows for the application to be processed and potential road closure orders to be issued.

Whilst party organisers always need the council's permission to hold an event on the road or pavement, fees only normally apply if a road needs to be closed. The confirmation of road closure fees being waived in support of the Big Lunch follow the pattern in previous years and also support the council's Street Friends initiative.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett, Executive Councillor for Transport, Highways and Road Safety said, "I am pleased to confirm that the council is once again waiving all the administrative and legal costs for road closures in connection with the Big Lunch weekend. Many residents have used this time as an occasion to get together and we are strongly supportive of this and the community spirit it generates, which supports our partnership work with Street Friends."

By bulk processing the anticipated larger number of applications, efficiencies are made, enabling the potential associated road closures to be processed without the normal road closure fee, which is being waived in support of the Big Lunch on 7 to 8 June 2025.

Party organisers are not required to have public liability insurance cover for their event, but it is strongly recommended. However, they must ensure that certain conditions are met. These include having diversion and warning signs, with flashing lamps at each vehicle access point and being able to easily remove tables, chairs and other temporary objects to allow access for emergency vehicles. Similarly, barriers and bunting hanging across the road must be secured at a height of at least 7 metres.

Once approved, the council will inform the emergency services, public utility and bus companies of the planned street party.

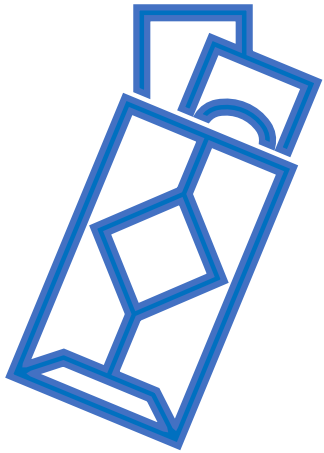
[Street party information and application forms](#)

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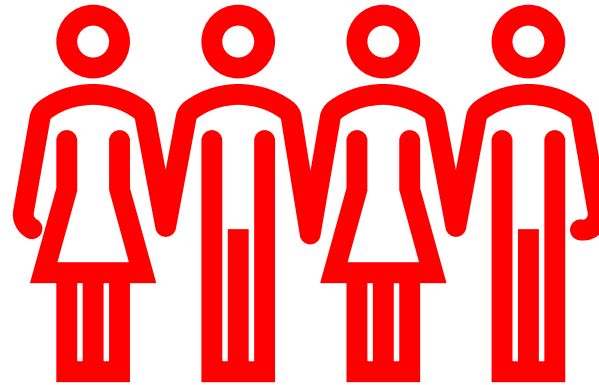
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[Street party information and application forms](#)

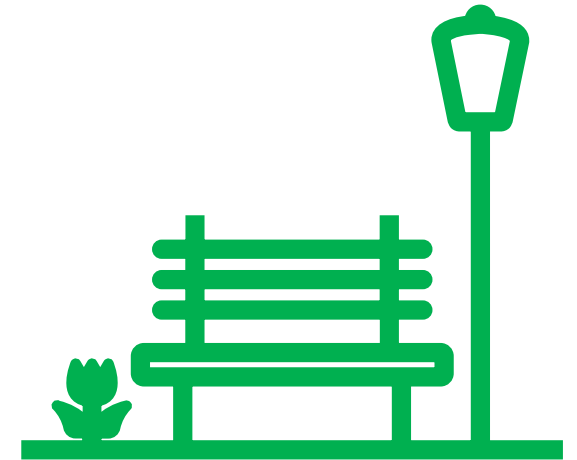
Provide community funding



**Vouchers for food retailers
Iceland**

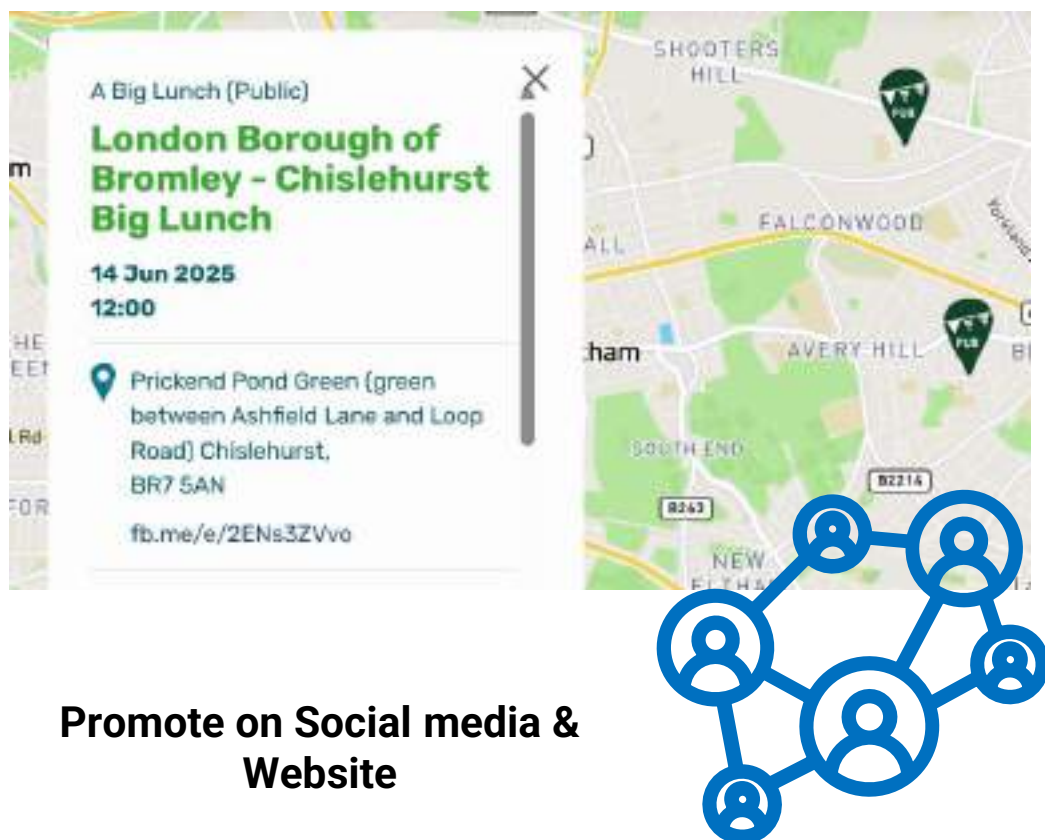


**Small funding pots through
community funding schemes**



**Incentives for Friends of
parks groups**

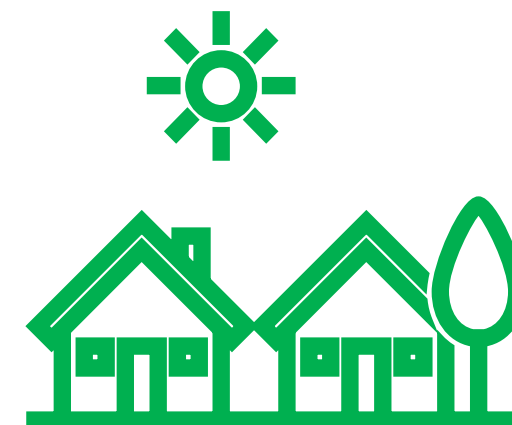
Encourage people to create their own Big Lunches



Promote on Social media & Website



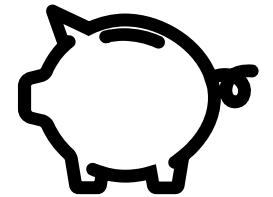
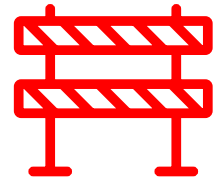
Promote/ print free packs for residents



Big Lunches can happen anywhere.
Think outside the box

Top tips for councils

- ✓ Promote The Big Lunch on social media/ press releases/ newsletter etc (Interactive map & free packs)
- ✓ Easy and free road closure process
- ✓ Get organisations, VCSE, community groups and residents involved. Work collaboratively
- ✓ Encourage people to make their own Big Lunches - share community stories
- ✓ Think outside the box – lunches can happen anywhere, at any time, with any theme





THE LONDON BOROUGH

Thank you

Helayna Jenkins IEng

Principal Loneliness Champion
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bromley.gov.uk/loneliness



THE HEARTH

IGNITING COMMUNITY-LED SUSTAINABILITY

SOUTHPORT'S
**GREAT
BIG GREEN
LUNCH**



Sefton CVS
Supporting Local Communities







A great lunch for great causes

Dozens enjoy Great Big Green Lunch for Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive

BY ANTHONY J. BOWEN

Local groups and residents have been invited to enjoy the 'Great Big Green Lunch' for Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive. The event, which is a fundraising initiative for two local charities, will take place on Thursday, June 28, from 12pm to 2pm, in the courtyard of the Southport Visitor Centre.



● Mrs. Elsie Bowden, 80, is the founder of Elsie's Story.



● People at the Great Big Green Lunch, which is a fundraising event for Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive.



● Chris Smith, who runs the Elsie's Story cafe, is seen here.



● Chris Smith, who runs the Elsie's Story cafe, is seen here.

The Great Big Green Lunch is a fundraising event for two local charities, Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive. Elsie's Story is a charity that provides support and advice for women who have experienced domestic violence. Bebe's Hive is a charity that provides support and advice for children who have experienced trauma.

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Stand Up For Southport

Whole town invited to enjoy green lunch event

EVERYONE is invited to gather and join Southport's Great Big Green Lunch for Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive. The event, which is a fundraising initiative for two local charities, will take place on Thursday, June 28, from 12pm to 2pm, in the courtyard of the Southport Visitor Centre.



● Sylvia Spence-Palmer, Barbara A. Palmer and Kyla Kelle Spence-Palmer (two) and a child (one) are seen here.

The Great Big Green Lunch is a fundraising event for two local charities, Elsie's Story and Bebe's Hive.

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Next steps...

To find out more about our programme:

- [Read the Belong Network report](#)
- [Sign up to our newsletter](#) - *for free promotional materials and opportunities to share*
- [Sign up for a Big Lunch pack](#)
- [Save the date for The Big Lunch 2026: 5 – 8 June](#)
- [Get in touch to arrange a meeting](#) - *with Tracey Robbins, Head of Communities: trobbins@edenproject.com*

www.edenprojectcommunities.com





Thank You