



YOUR GUIDE TO PUTTING ON A DO!

Bring people together for
friendship, food, fun and action



eden
project

Pears
Foundation

co
op



WE'RE TEAMING UP!



As the UK's annual get-together for neighbours and communities, since 2009 **The Big Lunch** has been bringing millions of people together to share friendship, food and fun.

Whether it's cake with a few neighbours, a bite to eat with a local community group or a party for the whole town, for those that join in, The Big Lunch helps to boost wellbeing, sparks community action and grows local connections – doing wonders for community spirit.



The Big Help Out is a weekend dedicated to encouraging everyone to lend a hand, get stuck in, and have a go at volunteering in their local communities. Since starting in 2023, tens of thousands of organisations and millions of people have taken part.

The idea – to make volunteering accessible, fun and enjoyable, showing that even small acts can make a big difference. By joining in, people can meet others, develop skills, and help create stronger, more resilient communities – all while being part of a shared national moment of positive action.



This year The Big Lunch and The Big Help Out are teaming up on 5-8 June for a weekend of friendship, food, fun and action. It's a chance to meet, eat and lend a hand locally as part of the UK's biggest celebration of community.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

You might decide to bring people together to share food and grow connections at a Big Lunch, or you could invite people to have a go at volunteering and join in with The Big Help Out. For many communities and organisations it will be a bit of both!

A cuppa with neighbours, a party in the street, a litter pick around the park, a friendly chat at a care home, or inviting people to a taster session to try something new – there's no right or wrong way to join in, each Big Lunch and Big Help Out will be different, just like the communities they're part of.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Once you decide what you'd like to do, a Big Lunch, Big Help Out, or bringing them together, thinking about who can lend a hand with the planning, when and where will it happen and how people will hear about it are good places to start.

LET'S PLAN
A DO!

→ DO IT TOGETHER

You can organise something on your own but it's often easier and more fun with a few extra hands. Whether it's neighbours, friends, colleagues, team members, or fellow volunteers, having other people involved can make planning and running your event much smoother.

Start by thinking about who you already know and who might like to join in. If you have a few people in mind, bring them together and decide who wants to take on which tasks – from sending invitations and spreading the word, to organising activities or helping out on the day.

Not sure who might want to lend a hand? You could reach out through a noticeboard, group chat, social media post, email, or by introducing yourself and the idea to a few people individually. Ask about – you'll be surprised how keen people are.

Sharing the planning makes it more enjoyable and gives you the chance to bring different ideas, skills, and energy into the mix. Even a small team can make a big difference.

→ CHOOSE WHEN YOU'LL DO SOMETHING

The Big Lunch and The Big Help Out are coming together Friday 5 to Monday 8 June, with most dos happening across these few days.

It's this shared moment, where millions of people will be doing something positive at the same time, whenever they are, that makes it a **big** do!



There are lots of opportunities to join in, so pick a day and time that works best for you and the people you're hoping will come along. Weekends can be good for families, while evenings might suit colleagues, volunteers or young people. What's key is choosing when would make it easiest for your community to take part.



→ DECIDE WHERE'S BEST TO DO IT



You may already have somewhere in mind, but where you host your event will depend on what you're planning. If you don't have a venue, shared community spaces that are welcoming, accessible, and free or low-cost to use are a great choice. This could be a community centre or hall, school, workplace, local park, or even someone's garden if you're doing a small Big Lunch!

It's helpful to think about practical details too, such as: Will people... need somewhere to sit? Does an activity require specific equipment or facilities? Are there toilets nearby? Can people get there on foot, or is parking needed? Will you need to change opening hours if you want to enable more people to come along?

If you're planning to be outdoors or on the move, it's worth considering how the weather might affect your plans. We know you can't control it, but a little flexibility and having a simple back-up plan goes a long way.



Don't forget to check if you need permissions for where your event is taking place, and whether there are any restrictions you'll need to think about too. If you're hosting a street party and need to close a road, apply as early as possible - some councils require up to 3 months' notice.

→ INVITE EVERYONE TO JOIN IN AND DO!

Once you've got the basics in place, it's time to let people know what's happening and how they can join in or lend a hand. Start by thinking about who you're inviting - is it just your street, a wider community, or a specific group? This can help you decide the best ways to spread the word.

Using a mix of approaches can help you reach different people in different ways. Friendly invitations help people feel confident about coming along, well-placed posters are great for raising awareness, and sharing details in a local Facebook or WhatsApp group can reach lots of people quickly without the need to print anything.

If you're inviting a whole town or wider area, you might also want to get in touch with local press or a community newsletter to help build interest and excitement.



MAKING IT MEMORABLE

You're joining in and have started to plan what you're doing, now it's time to think about what will help bring your event to life!

Whether you're sharing food at a Big Lunch, getting people together to Help Out, or a bit of both, a few simple extras can help create a welcoming atmosphere and give people easy ways to get involved.



This might be decorations to set the scene, activities to get people talking, or doing a practical activity together – all of which can help people feel connected and part of something bigger.

Everything in this section is optional, you don't need to do it all or fill the whole day. Choose a couple of ideas that suit your event, and pick what feels right for who you're inviting, the space you're using and how you'd like people to feel on the day.

MAKE THE INVITATION IRRESISTIBLE

When it comes to spreading the word, think about what people might like or need to know so your invitation feels clear, engaging and something they can't wait to attend! What activities or entertainment might there be? Will they need to bring anything? Is there a set time or can people drop in? Do they need to RSVP, or wear anything in particular?

➔ **We've got you covered with invitations, posters and social graphics, or use our templates on Canva to create your own!**

CREATE A WELCOMING SPACE

Creating an inviting space can make your event feel special and help people relax straight away. Little touches like bunting, flags, table decorations, flowers, handmade signs or welcome posters, and clearly marked areas for food, activities or quiet spaces help people feel comfortable and know where they can join in. To really make people feel at ease you can't beat having people to meet and greet as everyone arrives.

➔ **Want some easy ideas? There's bunting templates, party hats and food flags in your pack.**



SHARE FOOD WITH A BIG LUNCH

Food has a wonderful way of bringing people together. It doesn't need to be anything fancy and could be as simple as putting the kettle on and passing around the biscuits to say thanks for lending a hand, or inviting people to bring something to share for a Big Lunch. Having something to eat or drink together gives people a natural reason to pause, chat and get to know each other better.

➔ **To get your taste buds tingling and for great sharing recipes tuck-in to our Big Lunch recipes - YUM!**

DO SOMETHING TO HELP OUT

Taking part in a practical activity can be a great way to help people connect and feel a sense of achievement. It makes it easier to start conversations, especially for those who might be meeting for the first time. From litter picks, pruning and planting, to being citizen scientists for the day and taking part in a national wildlife count. Doing something side by side helps people feel part of the action and gives them a taste of whether they'd like to help out again in the future.

➔ **For more ideas visit edenprojectcommunities.com/blog/easy-ways-to-lend-a-hand**

ADD A BIT OF FUN

A little bit of light-hearted fun can bring energy to your event, encourage people to join in, or be a way to share information in an engaging way. This could be a quiz, a quick game, a story wall, music playing in the background, or something playful that people can dip into. It doesn't need to be organised or competitive – the aim is simply to create moments of enjoyment that bring people together.

➔ **Things like our Conversation Menu and Human Bingo game are great for sparking conversations, or making seed stars is an easy activity for people of all ages to try.**

SHOWCASE SOMETHING SPECIAL

Your event could be an opportunity to share a local story. If you're a community group or project you might like to showcase the work you do, highlight achievements, or how people can get involved. At a Big Lunch or neighbourhood gathering, celebrate where you live by inviting people to share old photographs, stories or memorabilia that reflect the area's history.

➔ **Displays like this can encourage interest, help people learn something new and create a shared sense of pride in the community.**



SHARE SKILLS AND LEND A HAND

The Big Lunch and The Big Help Out are great opportunities for people to share what they can do and support one another. You might invite people to share a skill, offer help with something they're good at, or connect with others who might need a hand. Creating space for people to swap skills, ideas or offers of help can spark new connections and inspire people to keep helping in their community.

- ➔ **There's some helpful cards you can use in your pack - set up an offers board, ask people to write down how they could contribute or host a skills auction.**

LEAVE PEOPLE WITH SOMETHING TO TAKE AWAY

A small takeaway can help people remember the day and keep the connection going. It might be a simple thank you, a way for people to share contact details, or information about how to stay involved in the community. It could even be something people have made together during the event. Little gestures like this can help people leave feeling appreciated and show that their time and contribution have been valued.

- ➔ **Why not hand out the thank you notes from your pack at the end of your do, or as a follow up to keep the community spirit going?**

The Big Lunch and Big Help Out are made possible due to the continued generosity of our funders and partners.

eden
project

Pears
Foundation

co
op

And of course, it's amazing people like you that make great things happen in communities...

THANKS FOR JOINING IN!

