



Unity Streets

Sunday 26 July 2020

Inspired by the national 'Great Get Together', and Jo Cox's words - "we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us" - neighbours in streets across the area connected with each other in different (socially distant) ways and still had fun.

"It's been ages since we've done anything like this
- I think it was the Silver Jubilee!"

Unity Streets was staged on Sunday 26 July 2020 by the people of Broadgate and Hartington and Christchurch. Physically distanced activities included a Broadgate bake off, quizzes, boot camp exercise, best dressed competition, a resident's talk, communal food and refreshments, 'go find who' games to initiate conversations, choosing the music on the jukebox, games such as kiddies cricket and Jenga, fancy dress starting with wearing masks and evolved into a fun masked parade! People assisted with providing tables, food, refreshments, speakers, drawing materials and lots more. Mugs with the Community Connectors logo were distributed to mark the celebrations. Streets and houses were festooned with handmade Unity Street bunting and other decorations. One street created a chalk communal art wall and children made colourful drawings on pavements across the area. There was a vintage themed street and a very popular ice cream man, Andy Pratt (Community Connector's Treasurer) on his vintage ice cream bike delivering free ices.

Participation far exceeded our expectations with more than 400 people getting involved in some way, and on some of the streets enthusiastic neighbours rallied together. In some areas, adjacent streets with just a handful of neighbours joined forces and visited each other's streets. A total of 13 streets took part with upwards of 150 households from the area participating and learning about each other, generations mixing and sharing experiences and stories of present and times gone by whilst living on the street. One street's two hour planned activities continued on for four hours! Bootcamp activities on the day offered residents keep fit activities and information about keeping fit, having fun and creating healthier habits. Many people enthused about the day:

“It was an amazing day. We managed to put names to the many new faces on our street. My little lad has made some new friends and thoroughly enjoyed the day.” (neighbour on Cliff Street)

“In this COVID-19 period it was just wonderful to see people with their ‘heads-up’ and speaking to neighbours they hadn’t really spoken to before. My overall impression was of people’s smiles and laughter.” (ice cream Andy)

‘Bringing neighbours together’ is the core aim of Community Connectors, which recognises the many health and wellbeing benefits from good connections and closer neighbourhoods. Neighbours feel a greater sense of belonging and purpose when friendships, trust and social relationships are built. Understanding that there is help nearby provides the stability needed by old and young. As a resident who took part in Unity Streets explained, she now feels reassured that she can call on her neighbour if she needs anything, and a little girl commented:

“It’s great because I now have a new friend who I can call for down the street... and I now talk to aunty across the road... and us kids play together and look after each other.”

Unity Streets cut through cultural, age and racial boundaries and prejudices by helping neighbours get to know each other better. Its effects will be long lasting.

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www.instagram.com/community.connectors.2019