MANCHESTER CHINESE CENTRE
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4 Dec 2023, the Ardwick community Christmas tree lighting event

Report by Jenny Wong MCC

Community Spirit

Ardwick Park Christmas tree lighting event was held on the evening of December 4th, 2023, successfully after weeks of preparation. Hundreds of participants joined the event. We would like to thank the volunteers as their effort has made this event special for the local community.



Organisers:

Ebi Wellington, Arawak Walton
Jenny Wong, Manchester Chinese Centre (MCC),
Joanne Casson, Neighbourhood Officer, One Manchester
Katrina Keane, Neighbourhood Officer for Ardwick, Manchester City council
Laura Jones, Arawak Walton
Lauren Wilmot Carter, Barnardos

Sarah Clements, Manchester City Council
Several charities organizations in Ardwick

Ardwick Park

Most of the residents of Ardwick are new immigrants with different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. The Manchester City Council and charities took this opportunity to send warm greetings to the Ardwick community. They hope that through this event, they can enhance mutual understanding and jointly build a harmonious and neighbourly community environment.



VIP visitors

Katrina Keana, an award-winning official of Manchester City Council, greeted visitors. It was a great honour that many Manchester City councillors and officers, came to support the Ardwick community event. Meeting the local children and parents. GMP (Greater Manchester Police) sent officers to support this event.



Food

Barnardo's provided hot chocolate, tea and coffee for the event. Beijing House Restaurant helped us prepare a wide variety of hot food: pizza, hot dogs, lamb rolls, spring rolls, vegetarian soup, Chinese Chow Main (noodles). MCC provided cakes, sandwiches, pies, snacks and fruit. Hot food is always important and always welcome, no matter where visitors come from. People got to know each other through this lovely Christmas event.



Barnardo provided children Art and Craft workshop after school

At 3:30pm, after school Barnardo's start the party with children's arts and crafts activities. Later when the nighttime, all participants walked to the park opposite Barnardo’s to join the main party watching Carol community Christmas lighting ceremony.



Carol from Manchester Chinese Centre

Anson Yu from the local Trinity High School played cello Christmas music. Christmas carols are indispensable for Christmas celebrations. MCC organized 15 children to sing carols under the leadership of Teacher Wang, adding a joyful atmosphere to the event. Unfortunately, the weather was not very good and most of the children got wet. Afterwards, Katrina lit up the Christmas tree, bringing a festive atmosphere to the community.


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Father Christmas

One Manchester donated a selection of gift boxes; plus, MCC prepared 65 children party bags. Torkild Smith dressed up as Santa Claus to welcome families and handed out gift bags to all the children who participated. `Children following Father Christmas and sing alone with Christmas songs. Such lovely community feeling. The kids laughed and said, “I love Santa!”



Volunteers

The MCC volunteers played a vital role in this event. Their to-do list was long: delivering fresh ingredients to the restaurant for cooking, preparing 65 party bags and picking some prizes for the arts and crafts group. In the early morning, the volunteers cleaned up the children's playground and cleared rubbish from the entire park. At noon, Winnie and Jenny conducted a risk assessment. Before the event, they checked the entrances throughout Ardwick Green to ensure safety.

At 2pm, volunteers set up tables, chairs and gazebo in the park. They picked up food from the restaurant and serving it to visitors. At 6pm, the party was over, and volunteers moved the tables, gazebo and litters back to MCC, cleaned up the venue.

Health and Safety

MCC public liability insurance covers this event. The public could use MCC toilets. MCC organizes volunteers to clean the whole Park and conduct Risk Assessment. Checked restaurant Hygiene certificate.

Grace quotes

“Most importantly, families were able to enjoy hot food at the event and the children had a blast playing on the playground at Ardwick Green.”



Katrina Keane quotes

“Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side, but the event still went on as planned. There were about 130 to 150 visitors. We still have a lot of food left and are looking for volunteers to help deliver it to some local organizations. We hope that community residents can participate in the event. “

John Halton quotes

“Despite the cold weather, the resilience and unity of the Ardwick community shone through. The tree lighting ceremony marked a successful start to the festive season, proving that community unity remains unshakable even in challenging conditions. We look forward to an even bigger celebration next year!”

Jenny Wong quotes

“We are so grateful to all the volunteers. Without their help, we would not have been able to organise any event. The clean-up was very hard work and most of the tables and clothes were soaking wet,” said Jenny Wong. “The biggest challenge for the Ardwick



community in organising the Christmas tree launch was the food. We had to cater to all ages and religions. In the end, we decided to offer vegetarian food. Most people enjoyed the Chinese noodles. The donation boxes provided by One Manchester were a big hit on the night. The prizes for completing the art and craft were also fun for children!”

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