Ardwick Community Christmas Tree Lighting Event – 11th Dec 2024

Report by MCC Jenny Wong

The Ardwick Community Christmas Tree Lighting Event was a joyful and memorable occasion held on the evening of 11th December 2024, following weeks of dedicated planning. Hundreds of residents gathered to celebrate, share festive cheer, and enjoy an evening filled with warmth, music, food, and community spirit. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible volunteers whose efforts have helped this event grow year by year.





Event Organisers

This annual event was a collaborative effort, jointly organised by:

- Arawak Walton

- Barnardo's
- Manchester Chinese Centre (MCC)
- Manchester City Council
- One Manchester
- Various local charitable organisations

Ardwick is a wonderfully diverse community, home to many newly arrived families from different cultural and religious backgrounds. The festive season provided a perfect opportunity for neighbours to connect, foster understanding, and celebrate together in unity and friendship.

Festivities and Activities

Children's Arts & Crafts Workshop

The celebration began at 3:30 PM with an arts and crafts session hosted by Barnardo's, allowing children to get creative and enjoy an early start to the festivities.



Tree Lighting Ceremony

As evening approached, families gathered in the park opposite Barnardo's for the highlight of the evening—the Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Katrina Keana, a respected and award-winning officer from Manchester City Council, officially lit the tree, bringing a festive glow to Ardwick Green and uplifting the community's holiday spirit.



Carol Performance

Christmas carols added a magical touch to the evening, performed by around 30 children from Co-op Academy Medlock Primary School, led by Deputy Headteacher Ruth Nutton-Jones. Families and visitors joined in the singing, creating a heartwarming atmosphere.



Father Christmas Appearance

A special moment came with the arrival of Father Christmas, portrayed by dedicated volunteer Torkild, who delighted the children by handing out festive gift bags. Though demand exceeded expectations, volunteers quickly sourced additional gifts from the MCC to ensure no child left disappointed.





Party food and gift bags









Food and Refreshments

Delicious hot food and drinks were provided throughout the evening. Barnardo's volunteers making warm beverages, while House of Beijing restaurant kindly prepared a wide selection of dishes including pizza, hot dogs, curry, spring rolls, vegan soup, Chinese Chow Mein (Noodle), and baozi.

Thanks to Tony Chen from Living and Home Limited, additional kitchen staff were brought in to assist—especially generous since the restaurant is typically closed on Wednesdays.







Volunteers and Behind-the-Scenes Efforts

The event would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers. Their contributions included:

Yasmin Hanif from Barnardo designed poster. Cheryl and Nadine delivered flyers put through letter boxes across the estate and schools. Sarah Clements help out with social media team from Parks advertised.

- Preparing and delivering food
- Assembling 100 children's party bags
- Organising prizes for the arts and crafts workshops
- Cleaning and inspecting the park early in the day
- Conducting a full risk assessment of Ardwick Green
- Setting up gazebos, tables, and serving stations
- Packing down and tidying up the venue after the event

Special thanks to Cheryl Jackson from Arawak Walton for leading the event setup and to Winnie Tang and Jenny Wong from MCC for overseeing volunteers and risk assessments and safety measures.





Setting up tables for Party



Health and Safety

The Manchester Chinese Centre provided public liability insurance for the event. Public access to MCC toilets was available, and strict hygiene standards were ensured by verifying the restaurant's certification. Katrina Keana arranged for additional waste management, with pink bin bags collected the following morning.

Community Reflections

Torkild Smith: "The Christmas carols and the smell of good food attracted more visitors. More than 220–250 people attended the event."



Winnie Tang Quotes

"We prepared food for 160 people and 100 party bags. Hundreds of visitors showed up. We ran out Party bags, end up we used Christmas gift bags from our Chinese School, so no child went without. It was fantastic to see the community come together."



Jenny Wong Quotes

“Organising this event was a big challenge. Catering to people from different cultures and religions isn’t easy. But seeing the joy on the children’s faces made it all worth it. With help from Katrina and others, we accomplished what seemed impossible.**”**



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their contributions:

Organisers:

- Charmaine Hylton – Arawak Walton
- Cheryl Jackson – Arawak Walton
- Jenny Wong – Manchester Chinese Centre
- Jo Harrison – One Manchester
- Katrina Keana – Neighbourhood Officer, Manchester City Council
- Sarah Clements, Head Ranger, North Area, Manchester City Council
- Nadine Sharp – One Manchester
- Ruth Nutton-Jones – Co-op Academy Medlock Primary School
- Sarah Clements – Manchester City Council
- Yasmin Hanif – Barnardo’s

Special Thanks:

- Barnardo’s volunteers

- House of Beijing Restaurant
- Manchester Chinese Centre's volunteers
- Tony Chen – Living and Home Limited

The Christmas tree lighting event officially concluded at 6:00 PM, leaving behind fond memories, full hearts, and a stronger sense of community in Ardwick. We look forward to seeing this tradition grow even further next year.

— Ardwick Community Team
Published on Social Media – 24th December 2024





End