

Great Get Together 2025

We have more in common than that which divides us



THE GREAT
GET TOGETHER
INSPIRED BY JO COX





The Great Get Together, inspired by the late MP, Jo Cox, brings people together every year to **celebrate what they have in common.**

This year marked the ninth Great Get Together since Jo's murder in 2016 and the spontaneous gatherings that followed—a journey that will reach its 10th anniversary next year.

It's everyday acts of neighbourliness and community spirit that make the difference and shape what it feels like to live in Britain today. **In times of division, these moments show that we truly have more in common.**

A huge THANK YOU to everyone—individuals, groups and communities across the country who made this year such a success.



OVERVIEW

Across the UK, hundreds of events brought neighbours together, from street parties and garden picnics to kabaddi showdowns, refugee-led cooking, colourful parades, and storytelling. These moments didn't just put smiles on faces—they broke down barriers, built trust, and **turned strangers into friends.**

Events filled streets, parks, schools, and faith centres. Neighbours who had barely spoken before shared food and stories, young people connected with older generations, and new arrivals felt welcomed.

The results were clear: more connections, greater trust, a stronger sense of belonging, and richer mixing between ages, cultures, and faiths—**laying the foundations for stronger, more cohesive, communities.**

NATIONWIDE REACH

Communities across the UK came together, **stretching from Northern Ireland to Scotland, with most events in Northern England**, the Midlands, London, and Wales.

OUR DEDICATED ORGANISERS

Most of our organisers have run **four or more Great Get Togethers** (many celebrating their ninth!), and the movement is still growing—**17% ran their first event** this year.

COMMUNITY COHESION: **BUILDING CONNECTIONS**

EVENTS ENABLED PEOPLE TO MEET, MIX, AND MAKE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

From small private gatherings to street parties and festivals, events helped neighbours meet—often for the first time—sparking new friendships. **In Nottingham, people joined Chatty Cafés and Knit & Chats; in Neath, a picnic in the park brought neighbours together; and in Harrogate, a Family Fun Day** connected families through creative workshops, circus skills, ukulele sessions, and dance.

Attendees described how these moments have led to greater mixing and a stronger sense of community, inspiring ongoing connections that continue well beyond the events, such as street supper clubs and neighbours befriending and supporting older residents.

88%

of people felt a greater connection to others in their community

“It gave my neighbours a connection with each other the next time they met.”

“Where people didn’t necessarily talk to each other much before, **now there are friendships that have formed that started during these events.**”





COMMUNITY COHESION:

INCREASING OPENNESS AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

Events across the country brought together people of all ages, ethnicities, and faiths, creating opportunities to connect and gain new perspectives.

In Epsom, refugee families took centre stage, sharing music and food at a family celebration. **In Manchester, students hosted a Great Get Together and culture evening, showcasing their school's rich diversity through art, literature, poetry, and Muslim heritage with the message 'Spread Honey Not Hate'.** In Belfast, arts and crafts activities connected people from different religious backgrounds.

Participants told us how, by bringing diverse communities together, these gatherings have made a real difference locally:

79%

of people said the event gave them the **opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds** (such as those from other neighbourhoods, faiths, ethnicities, ages or walks of life)



Hearing first hand experiences of a refugee makes it more understandable for some. ”



It showed that no matter what our background **we all have something in common. We are all human.** ”

EVENTS ENCOURAGED INTERGENERATIONAL MIXING

In communities, colleges, universities, and care homes, events brought younger and older generations together to share stories, experiences, and perspectives. **In Cheshire, a community party in a school yard sparked new creative community projects; in Giggleswick, a Coffee & Natter helped older and younger people chat; and in Dewsbury, the charity Kumon Y'all ran an accessible Boccia tournament** for all ages alongside multicultural food-sharing.

Attendees described how these moments challenged assumptions, deepened empathy, and created new opportunities for learning and connection, helping to build friendships and stronger links between generations.

86% of people said that as a result of attending a Great Get Together event, **they are more likely to help neighbours** or people in their community (nationwide Month of Community Poll)

“Older generations came together with the young, which benefited both—**they all learnt new ideas and overcame old stigmas / prejudices.**”

“We connected different generations and it **helped open people's minds.**”

“The wisdom of older folk and the enthusiasm of youngsters works well together.”



INTERFAITH AND DIALOGUE SESSIONS

Events helped build empathy and trust, leaving people feeling that their communities are places where people from different backgrounds can get along well.

From **interfaith gatherings in South Kirklees to dialogue sessions on the theme of “more in common”** held by the Muslim-Jewish women’s network *Nisa-Nashim*, people shared their experiences, built mutual respect, and discovered common ground.



We have developed mutual respect and are friends – we would never have met otherwise. ”



By sharing stories and food people learn about different communities—**through knowledge comes understanding and empathy.** ”



So many from different sections of the community coming together... chatting away with each other. ”





A GREAT GET TOGETHER STORY: **REFUGEE FAMILIES TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT EPSOM'S GREAT GET TOGETHER**

Over 400 people joined Epsom's Great Get Together in June, co-hosted by *Good Company* and *Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network* as part of Refugee Week.

Refugee families brought the day to life with crafts, cooking, and music, creating a vibrant celebration of culture, connection, and belonging. Families shared Turkish gözleme, Afghan biryani, and homemade treats, with free ice cream for children. Entertainment ranged from a Ukrainian choir and refugee brass band to a Disney sing-along.

"For refugees who have left behind family, friends and culture, building community again in a new country is difficult," said organisers at Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network.

"Our values align so closely with Jo Cox's 'more in common' message that it made sense to be part of the national programme."

"There is nothing quite like sharing food, music and sport for people to realise how much they have in common. **When different groups come together to share a good experience, it makes everyone realise they can connect with people from very different backgrounds.**"

The event created a **deep sense of safety and inclusion**, as described in a heartfelt message from an Eritrean refugee supported by the network:

“Today was truly unforgettable, filled with love, warmth, and a deep sense of safety. It was inspiring to see so many vulnerable refugee families brought together with the wonderful Epsom community.”

A key success of the event was giving refugees the chance to take the lead, actively shaping the day and feeling valued. **Many supported the event by running craft tables, cooking, or performing**, which organisers said was “really important to them.”

The event sparked enthusiasm and confidence among the refugee community to get involved in more local activities. Several participants have already said they are keen to support future events.

“We are looking for opportunities for the Ukrainian choir and some of the ladies who do craft to attend other local events. The Great Get Together has definitely given them more confidence to be seen at other community events.”

Read the full story [here](#).



A GREAT GET TOGETHER STORY:

WALKING TOGETHER, STITCHING MORE IN COMMON

Refugee Week was full of activity in Worcester this year, thanks to *Worcester City Welcomes Refugees* and *Worcester Amnesty*. Organisers told us how linking these activities to the Great Get Together was the perfect fit—building on last year’s events and a chance to remember Jo Cox.

Vale of Evesham Welcomes Refugees’ tapestry project, brought together women from Malaysia, Namibia, Kurdistan, and Cuba. Together they hand-sewed translations of Jo Cox’s words “We have more in common than that which divides us”—into tapestries, which were then displayed in community spaces across the city.

A woman from Kurdistan who is part of the group shared:

“ I used to work in sewing back home, but I’ve learnt new skills like crochet and knitting. **I’ve made friends here, and that has helped me feel more at home. The sewing group has given me purpose.** ”

Another highlight was a walk in the Malvern Hills for a group of men waiting for leave to remain, originally from Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Eritrea, and Thailand. The walk offered a chance to connect, share stories, and enjoy the landscape. One of the men summed up his experience:

“ It was a great experience to spend time with friends, get some fresh air, and enjoy the beauty of nature. **I will always remember this special day.** ”



COMMUNITY COHESION: INCREASING VOLUNTEERING & PARTICIPATION

Events inspired people to get more involved in local life—joining clubs and courses, volunteering, and taking part in community projects. People shared examples such as:

- Volunteering with local groups, such as joining a **soil improvement group**, a **local nature reserve**, or **helping children learn to read** at a local school.
- Taking on organiser or leadership roles in community organisations, including the **Safer Neighbourhood Team** and the **Royal British Legion**.
- Joining or creating new community groups and activities, such as **creative projects**, **art therapy classes**, and **yoga sessions**.
- Becoming more aware of local services and expressing intentions to get involved, including joining the **women's centre** or the **WI**.

30% of organisers reported that they had already noticed an **increase in people volunteering** or getting involved in community projects since the event

89% of attendees said they **signed up to or joined a new activity** in their local area (nationwide Month of Community Poll)

“ Helping hear readers at a local school. ”

“ I will join the women's centre and see how I can get involved and support. ”

“ It's encouraged me to put on a community event at least twice a year. ”



A GREAT GET TOGETHER STORY: **CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND SERVICES AT HARLOW'S GREAT GET TOGETHER**

Rainbow Services transformed Harlow Town Park into a vibrant hub of community spirit with their family-friendly Great Get Together. Designed to tackle loneliness and social isolation, the event embodied Jo Cox's belief that we have more in common than which divides us.

The gathering featured live music, colourful children's activities, and a diverse programme—from picnics and musical theatre to uplifting faith group performances. Children took part in face painting and relaxed family activities, creating a welcoming space for all ages to come together and celebrate.

Local charities and community organisations hosted a variety of stalls, providing information about support services, volunteer opportunities, and access to help.

As organiser, Kelly Tarling, shared,

“The stallholders found it useful to promote their services and support offer. And attendees left more aware of what's available in the voluntary sector to improve the lives of our communities. It's always an opportunity to recruit volunteers.”

A key highlight of the Great Get Together was the **positive impact on young people**. Rainbow Services shared its youth mentoring project—an initiative which supports those disengaged from school or at risk of criminal activity associated with drugs and county lines gangs through hands-on learning in a wood workshop. The event inspired several more young people to sign up to the project.

Meanwhile, the Harlow Youth Council successfully recruited new members, strengthening young people's voice in community life.

Direct support was provided on the day to help make the event inclusive and welcoming for everyone. **The Community Hub team, who support people in crisis, were on hand and assisted several people, while Our Health Matters offered tailored support for neurodiverse individuals**—ensuring attendees could access practical help while enjoying the celebration.

Partnership working was another major success. Local charities, youth groups, faith groups, and businesses came together, strengthening community networks and laying the foundations for future collaboration.

Organisers said **the day not only reduced isolation but also built pride, belonging, and awareness of local support**—leaving people with stronger connections to each other and to the key services in their community.



COMMUNITY COHESION: **STRENGTHENING BELONGING & TRUST**

Many people who took part in Great Get Togethers described feeling a real **sense of belonging** by coming together with their community to do something positive.

Attendees also said it gave them a **greater sense of community spirit**, providing safe, welcoming, and non-judgmental spaces where they could relax, meet others, and feel supported.

79%

of attendees felt an increased sense of belonging in their community

“ Builds a better sense of hope, community and belonging. ”

87%

of attendees said the event created a stronger sense of community spirit (nationwide Month of Community Poll)

“ A place to make new friends, feel safe, not be judged. ”

Spectrum Centre Belfast 'Craft and Craic' event

“ As a street we work really well together... I live next to friends not neighbours. The street get together solidifies those feelings. ”





◀ Spectrum Centre Belfast
'Craft and Craic' event



61%

of attendees felt more trusting
of people in their community

The events increased people's trust in their community, leaving them **more hopeful and confident** in others. Simple acts of **friendliness and teamwork** helped build trust among neighbours who might not otherwise have met:

89%

of attendees felt safer in their community (nationwide Month of Community Poll)



You are able to find similarities and **this gives hope and trust for the future.** ”



People are **more open.** ”



HOW WE KNOW GREAT GET TOGETHER EVENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We use established outcome measures to understand how events strengthen community cohesion. Our evaluation framework is informed by the University of Kent's 2023 review of social cohesion, which you can view [here](#).



Belonging & Identity

People feel a stronger sense of connection to their local area and community



Building Trust

People feel more comfortable with and trusting of others in their community



Social Mixing & Connection

Events create opportunities for people from different backgrounds to meet, chat, and form positive relationships



Openness & Understanding

People feel more willing to connect and build friendships with people from different backgrounds, and there's a perception that groups in the community get along well



Volunteering & Participation

Events encourage people to get more involved in local life, from joining clubs and courses to volunteering and taking part in community projects



LOOKING AHEAD:

THE 10TH GREAT GET TOGETHER

In June 2026, we'll mark ten years since Jo Cox's murder and the national response that brought people together. This tenth anniversary will be a poignant moment for Jo's family, friends, and for all of us who believe in kindness and community.

This will be the most important Great Get Together yet—and we want you to be part of it. In June 2026, we're asking communities across the country to come together and **show that we have more in common than that which divides us.**

This report reminds us how even the simplest moments—sharing food, stories, or music with people from different backgrounds—can build understanding, openness, trust, and a stronger sense of belonging.

When these moments happen everywhere, they help communities and the whole country feel stronger, happier, and more resilient.

Get-togethers don't need to be big or complicated—just welcoming. A small gathering can be just as meaningful as a festival, a street party, or a community celebration.

On the weekend of what would have been Jo's birthday, help us come together to celebrate what we have in common.

For more information visit
jocoxfoundation.org/greatgettogether



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