

# The Big Lunch was eaten in Edinburgh today!



## Communities take part in Big Lunches across the city

Earlier today many people across Edinburgh sat down with neighbours and residents in their communities for the sixth annual Big Lunch. They joined an estimated 4 million people across the whole of the UK, as The Big Lunch seems set to establish itself in the nation's annual calendar on the first Sunday every June.

The Big Lunch, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the Eden Project, encourages people across the UK to have lunch with their neighbours once a year, for a few hours of community, friendship and fun. The simple act of chatting to neighbours can make a real difference in communities and can help tackle isolation say organisers behind the initiative.

One of the Edinburgh Big Lunches took place on Summerside Place where approximately 50 neighbours got together over a bite to eat at their first ever Big Lunch street party. Lou Kiddier, one of the organisers commented: "Our street was really excited in the build-up to today, being our first ever Big Lunch. We took over Summerside Place for the day and enjoyed a day filled with fun, food and blether with everyone – it was a great chance to catch up with neighbours that we don't always have time to in our busy day-to-day lives. I would definitely recommend others getting involved next year – whether your Big Lunch is for 5 or 5,000 it is the perfect excuse to get together with the local community. We can't wait for next year and make it a regular event for our street!"

Other lunches taking place across the city included another street party in Gorgie as well as the second Big Lunch at the

Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre.

Robert Scott, manager at the centre and one of the organisers of their Big Lunch said: "We started holding Big Lunches back in 2013 as a way to get to know our neighbours better and welcome people into the centre.



It was another fantastic day for the community and for the centre this year and it was great to see everyone just coming together and getting to know each other or catching up with old friends. Gathering people together can have so many benefits, from chatting to neighbours people have not met before to helping people come out of their comfort zones and try something new, especially for those who may be living on their own, or who are socially isolated."

Emily Watts, Communications Manager at The Big Lunch in Scotland, said: "Year after year, I never fail to be impressed by the sheer number of people who get involved and take the time to hold a Big Lunch in their community. The Big Lunch is always a great success and the perfect excuse for people to get together. While on the surface, it's a day of laughter, friendship and fun, if you look deeper than that, these get-togethers are having an enormously positive impact on communities. Big things come from Big Lunches and what they each have in common is they all start in the same way – with small talk.



After six years, it's amazing to see so many people taking our simple idea and really making it work wonders for their communities. We've heard so many inspiring stories already and know they'll be plenty more to come. Roll on The Big Lunch 2015..."

Inspired by this Sunday's Big Lunch celebrations? There's

still chance to take part as you can organise a Big Lunch on a date to suit your community. Free packs including posters, invitations, an inspiration booklet and other resources to help organise your Big Lunch are available from [www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com) until the end of June 2014.

Photos Phil Wilkinson