Whitehall Park Living Advent Calendar 2015

What is it?

Living Advent calendars are a kind of community art project, originating in Sweden, that happen at Christmas time. This coming December is our first try at organising one for Whitehall Park!

The idea is that we'll get volunteers from 24 houses and hubs in the Whitehall Park community to illuminate their windows with festive decorations in December. One window is 'opened' each day from the 1st to the 24th December and remains illuminated until 12th night (6th January). The aim is just to have fun and create a nice way of bringing the community together.

How does it work?

We'll create a map of which houses will reveal their windows on which days, and share the map within the local community so that everyone can enjoy taking a tour of the decorated houses.



We'd also invite you to display a poster in your window so people know when to look out for your window display; and give you some maps to share with your friends, family and neighbours.

What's involved if I volunteer?

The main thing is that you decorate your window and then reveal it on your specified day in Advent. If you can remember to turn your window on during the rest of Advent (or ideally put it on a timer to come on automatically) that would be great - but if you go away or forget of course it's not the end of the world! Beyond that, it's up to you how much effort you want to make.

On your chosen day you could just do a simple switch-on of your lights, reveal your window and enjoy it with whoever happens to be passing by; you might want to invite some friends, family and neighbours for the occasion; or think even bigger - it's up to you. Some people might do mince pies and mull on the



doorstep; some people might sing a few carols; others might keep it low key. We'd ask that you do your switch-on at 6pm so it's easy for everyone to remember, but otherwise you can organise your own event as you like.

What kind of decoration do I need to do?

Let your creative juices run free! It's not a competition, and you can do any kind of festive decoration. The only rule is that it needs to be centred around a window that can be revealed or switched on.

There are lots of other Living Advent Calendars around the world that you could look to for inspiration - we particularly love the one in <u>Saltaire</u> in Bradford. We're collecting ideas for inspiration on <u>this pinterest</u> <u>board</u> and on our <u>facebook group</u>.

Will I end up with hordes of people at my house?

We're trying this for the first time so to be honest we can't say for sure - but hopefully that's quite unlikely.

The idea is that each volunteer takes the lead on inviting their friends, family and whoever else they would like to come to their own 'switch on' event. We'll do some promotion of the Advent Calendar overall (see below), but for your individual event you can get the word out to as many or as few people as you choose. If you volunteer, we hope you'd also welcome neighbours and local residents who would like to enjoy your decorations and get into the festive spirit together.

How will it be promoted?

We're aiming to bring together the Whitehall Park community, so we are going to keep it pretty local (especially seeing as this is our first year trying it). We're working in partnership with <u>St Andrews Church</u>, <u>Whitehall Park Residents</u>
Association and Whitehall Park School to spread the word about the project.



We'll use leaflets and posters to share the map of the Living Advent Calendar in the local area, and we also have a <u>facebook group</u> so we can share photos, updates and help people connect with each other. The map will also be available on the St Andrews, Whitehall Park Residents Association and Whitehall Park School websites.

A quick word on risks and mitigation

Hopefully inviting the neighbourhood to enjoy your Christmas lights doesn't count as particularly daredevil act, but just to say we are hoping that volunteers will take responsibility for taking any sensible precautions for safety and security.



We'd suggest, for example, that if you do want to provide hospitality, you do it on the doorstep (rather than inside your house) so that in the worst case scenario you simply end up running out of mince pies and have a few people spilling onto the pavement. Obviously we'd hope that you have the usual insurance in place to cover your home.

How do I take part?

If you'd like to volunteer to decorate a window, or if you're interested in collaborating on the project, please email Amy Pollard (pollard.amy@gmail.com).

Who's involved?

This project is being co-ordinated by Amy Pollard. Amy lives on Cressida Road with her husband Paul and daughter Bethany (2 ½), and she's expecting her second child this Autumn.

We have a mini-committee which includes representatives from St Andrews, the Whitehall Park Residents Assocation, and Whitehall Park School PTA.

The pictures on this leaflet are from the Saltaire Living Advent Calendar, who have some <u>fabulous photos</u> from previous events in their community.