

A Living Advent Calendar is a larger than life Advent calendar that is out in the street for everyone to enjoy. All you need are a map, some creativity and 24 different home owners willing to lend a window.

Each evening during Advent, a different house will reveal their Christmas picture, resulting in 24 different window displays in your area, to brighten up the winter nights.

Bringing Christmas cheer to your community

Covid-19 might cancel Christmas school plays and carol concerts, but it doesn't have to dampen our Christmas spirits. You could consider bringing the community festive cheer to your neighbourhood with a Living Advent Calendar and enjoy seeing what fun ideas your neighbours come up with.



*Photo credit: Whitehall Park, London
Living Advent Calendar (pre Covid)*

What is a Living Advent Calendar?

Each night during Advent, a new window decoration is revealed in your neighbourhood, like opening the window of an Advent calendar. The displays remain in place until 12th night (6th January). People can follow the festive trail on a map. You may even want to add a competitive element by asking neighbours to vote for the best window display.

How do you set up a Living Advent Calendar?

It is an easy thing to do and helps to keep the community spirit going during even the coldest, darkest nights.

Set your area - It shouldn't be too big as it'll be a cold walk! Consider just one street or a clearly defined residential area.

Recruit volunteers in Oct-Nov

Ask householders in the specified street/area if they will lend their window during Advent and if they want to make the pictures/decorations themselves or are happy to display someone else's work (see below for template letter). If you need more displays, ask local groups and schools to make some. You may want to choose a different Christmas theme each year.

Once you have got people involved, you can set up a Facebook group to share updates, news and to create a sense of community around the project.

Tell everyone about it so that they can enjoy the living Advent calendar. Who can help you to do this, e.g. your local residents' association, church, school, council, businesses etc?

Make a timetable & map – once you know who is taking part, give each house a number and make a map showing where the houses are and what their Advent number is. It doesn't have to be a fancy map. Print them off and ask volunteers to distribute them around the community or put them in a local post office/shop with a donations box if you want to fundraise.

Covid-19 considerations

Making displays – if you make a display with others, don't share equipment and materials. Observe the Government's social distancing guidelines.

Delivering and receiving posters – be mindful of the guidance: keep 2 metres apart, wear a facemask and wash hands frequently. To reduce the risk of cross contamination you may want to consider other measures such as double bagging posters and/or storing them for 3 days before opening.

Viewing displays – because of Covid-19, we don't recommend you have specific time for the 'grand reveal' (prior to Covid-19 people had music, mince pies etc). Please don't gather outside people's windows; move on if others are there and return when it's quieter.

Enjoy the display! Take your own mulled wine and mince pies. Take photos & share them with others on your Facebook group.

ACT champions community and rural issues

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria, Offices O - Q Skirsgill Business Park, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0FA
T: 01768 425 666 | www.cumbriaaction.org.uk | info@cumbriaaction.org.uk | Follow us @ACTCumbria and on Facebook
Registered in England as Voluntary Action Cumbria | Charity Registration Number 1080875 | Company Number 3957858

Example of a letter to neighbours

Dear Neighbour,

Daleside's Living Advent Calendar

Daleside Covid Community Response Group (DCC) is putting on its first Living Advent calendar this year and we wondered if you would be happy to lend us your window please? Because of Covid-19, it's possible that Christmas school plays and carol concerts may be cancelled, but having a street Advent calendar which everyone can enjoy will help to boost our Christmas spirits.

How it works: Each evening during Advent, a picture or display will be put up in a window of a different house and stay there until 12th night (6th Jan). We're looking for 24 windows on the Main Street where we can display a Christmas-themed picture or decoration. If you're feeling creative you can produce your own display, or we can provide one for you. If you are part of a community group, you may want to design something together.

We will allocate a number to each window. If your window is No 1, we'll ask you to put up the display on 1st December and keep it visible until 6th January (12th night). If your window is No 2, you will put up your display on the 2nd of December and keep it there until 6th January, and so on. If possible, we'd like you to keep your lights on in the evening so that people can see the display. If we provide you with a picture, we will ensure that they are created in advance and stored carefully in order to prevent any potential Covid-19 risk.

Once we know where the windows will be, we'll create a little map with numbered windows. The maps can be bought from local shops with donations going to DCC/the maps will be available on our Facebook site/posted to householders.

If you are keen to do your own display, things to think about are:

- The size of your window - the bigger the display the better
- The background to your picture/display. It might be more effective to use tissue paper so that light will filter through, or think about cut outs for example.
- Once you have been allocated an Advent number, don't forget to display the number in your window too.
- Please keep your room illuminated in the evening so that people can see your artwork from outside when it's dark.

We would be very grateful if you could fill out the attached slip and return it to X. Thank you very much. Even if you can't host a display, we hope you'll be able to enjoy the living Advent calendar.

DCC is here for you. We can help you with shopping, prescriptions, computer problems, keeping you company on the phone and anything else you can think of. Just get in touch and we'll do what we can.

Thank you very much.



Photo credit: Whitehall Park, London, Living Advent Calendar (taken pre-Covid)

House/Business name & street number:

Your name:

Your contact details (Email &/or phone):

PLEASE TICK WHICHEVER WORKS FOR YOU

I would like to create my own display/picture to put in my window.

OR

I would like to display someone else's work in my window.

If you've ticked this, we will organise a picture for you to put up in your window but please let us know the window dimensions.

My window dimensions are:

OR

No thanks, I won't be taking part in the living Advent calendar this year.

Please be aware that we will be publicising our Advent calendar e.g. on Facebook and possibly in the press.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR SLIP TO *X person at X address by X date*