

BA Summer Party 2026 Report

Prepared by: MQ

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1. Attendance and Registration

The Welcome Desk recorded approximately **200 Barbican residents** who stopped to register. The breakdown by estate/building was as follows:

Building / Group Registrations

Andrewes	27
Ben Jonson	12
Breton	6
Brandon Mews	0
Bryer	3
Bunyan	3
Cromwell	24
Defoe	15
Frobisher	3
Gilbert	5
Golden Lane	3
John Trundle	8
Lambert	2
Lauderdale	15
Mountjoy	3
Postern	5
Seddon	10
Shakespeare	14
Speed	16
Thomas More	18
Wallside	2
Willoughby	15

New BA members registered: 9 new members signed up. 4 others currently being processed (they couldn't attend on Saturday as prior engagements)

The actual attendance was considerably higher than the number recorded at the Welcome Desk, as many guests walked past without registering. Overall attendance appeared to be greater than in previous years, estimated at approximately **600 people**.

There also appeared to be **significantly more families with children** attending than in previous years.

2. Stalls and Community Organisations

There were **22 stalls** representing Barbican resident groups and local cultural and community organisations.

Barbican Resident Groups

- Barbican Art Society
- BGLNF / Decades of Us
- Barbican Wildlife Garden
- Barbican Jigsaw
- City Carer Community
- St Giles Church 60th Anniversary
- Barbican Craft and Natter
- Barbican Bike Group
- Barbican Horticultural Society (2 stalls)
- Jewish Square Mile

Local Organisations

- Age UK City of London
- Holy Sepulchre Church – activities for the local community
- Healthwatch
- Barbican Centre
- London Museum
- London Model Club
- MARSM
- City Police
- City Recycling Team
- City of London Primary Academy

3. Activities

A range of activities was available throughout the event, including:

- Teddy bear zip wire
- Veggie planting activity for children
- Face painting
- Button badges
- Backgammon
- Henna
- Bike and phone marking

The range of activities, particularly those aimed at children, contributed to the family-friendly atmosphere of the event.

4. Charity Fundraising

A total of **£1,040** was collected for **City Food Club**, a local charity run by Family Action. This represented a 20% increase on last year. However, there was an additional cake stall and teas offered by the Church.

The City Food Club operates every Thursday and Friday at **1 Artizan Street, E1 7AF**, providing affordable food to people experiencing the cost-of-living crisis. Membership costs £1 per year, with approximately £15 worth of food available for £4.

The service is open to anyone who lives or works in the City and requires support, with access available to people living within 15 minutes of the club.

Contact: londonfoodclubs@family-action.org.uk

5. Costs and Sponsorship

The event was sponsored by the **City of London Stronger Communities Fund**.

- **Sponsorship received:** £3,000
- **Total event cost:** £2,994.69

6. Observations

Welcome Drinks

The allocation of tokens for welcome drinks worked well. It enabled tighter monitoring of who was claiming welcome drinks and helped prevent individuals from claiming multiple drinks.

Use of St Giles Church

The use of the inside of the church and the adjoining terrace worked well. This arrangement allowed a larger number of people to attend while also addressing the issue that an indoor-only event can become very noisy.

The additional indoor space provided a useful alternative to relying solely on outdoor areas and offered some protection against poor weather.

Community Picnic Area

Guests did not make full use of the outside community picnic area. This may be worth reviewing when considering the layout and use of outdoor space for future events.

7. Points for Consideration – 2027

A. Communication and Marketing

1. **Broaden communications beyond posters and flyers.**

The event currently relies heavily on posters and flyers, kindly provided by BEO. This could be significantly improved through greater use of BA's online channels and the various Barbican WhatsApp groups.

2. **Dedicated communications support.**

Having a dedicated person, or closer crossover with the BA Communications Group, to coordinate event communications would be hugely beneficial.

3. **Communicate the role of BA more clearly.**

The pivotal role played by the Barbican Association should be better communicated as part of the event publicity.

4. **Use the party to strengthen the wider resident network.**

Communications around the party have the potential to provide a unifying voice for resident-led groups and activities. This could also be an effective way of introducing residents to the work of BA and encouraging more people to become members.

B. Location and Timing

1. **Timing of the event.**

There was some negative feedback about holding the event on the second weekend in September. However, this timing was largely dictated by the availability of St Giles Church: the church is not available on the first Saturday in September and has limited availability on the first Sunday. In addition, the church's tables are not available until September as they are in use for the Book Fair.

2. **Religious and community calendar.**

This year's event unintentionally clashed with **Rosh Hashanah**. Dates should be checked against major religious and community events when selecting the date for future parties.

3. **Returning to the Gardens.**

There have been requests to return to using the Gardens. This would be attractive in principle, but there would still need to be access to an indoor space in case of wet weather. The successful use of St Giles Church this year demonstrates the value of having such a facility available.

Question for 2027: Are there alternative venues or arrangements that could provide a suitable wet-weather contingency while allowing the event to return to the Gardens?

4. **Length of the event.**

There have been requests to extend the event beyond the current **2–4pm** format.

However, the relatively short public-facing period needs to be considered alongside the significant amount of time required for set-up and take-down. The current arrangement effectively requires a full working day, approximately **10.30am–6pm**, for volunteers.

Extending the public event further would therefore place an additional burden on volunteers, who were already exhausted by the end of the day.

8. Overall Assessment

The 2026 BA Summer Party was well attended and appeared to attract a larger and more diverse audience than in previous years, particularly families.

The combination of resident-led groups, local organisations and children's activities created a strong community focus. The use of St Giles Church and its adjoining terrace was effective in accommodating the larger attendance, while the token system for welcome drinks provided a practical way of managing refreshments.

The **£1,040 raised for City Food Club** was also a positive outcome.

For 2027, the main opportunities are to strengthen communications and promotion, improve coordination with BA's communications channels, carefully consider the event date in relation to other community and religious events, and explore whether the Gardens can be used while retaining a suitable wet-weather option.

A key consideration will be balancing any desire to increase the length or scale of the event with the availability and wellbeing of the volunteers required to deliver it.