

# 2008 Coleridge Advent Fair

## **Summary**

The Coleridge Advent Fair is an evening event, aimed primarily at adults (although children do attend). It is an opportunity to buy Christmas presents from stalls offering a range of gifts from handbags, to cards, jewellery, music, clothing, toys and plenty more. The event is open to Coleridge parents/carers and the public. For an entrance fee of £1, they can enjoy mulled wine, mince pies and browse around the stalls set up in the Infant & Junior Halls.

## **Date & Time**

The event has been held from 7 pm. - 9:30 p.m. for the past two years. We would recommend the timing remains the same given the large amount of time required to set up the stalls and decorate the Halls, as well as the clear-up time. The event is held at the end of November, traditionally the evening before the Christmas Bazaar, so that the tables can be left out.

## **Organisation**

The 2008 Advent Fair was organised by the Year 1 Class reps, so for the first time there were representatives from four classes, 12 individuals to help organise the event. Having a large team work with a broad variety of skills was a great bonus! Our suggestion would be to have at least two people with overall responsibility for the organisation and then allocate tasks amongst the rep team, supported by regular meetings. As a guide tasks were allocated as Overall Coordination/Communication ; Stallholder Bookings ; Raffle & Tombola; Volunteer Rotas ; Refreshments/Bar ; Sweet Stall.

## **Communications**

The Fair is promoted both within Coleridge and externally. All school communications should go out on orange Coleridge Families paper, with the CF logo (electronic version available) and must be approved by Mrs Boffey. It is advisable to have one person in the organising team responsible for liaising with the school (Sam in the office is fantastic and incredibly helpful!) on communication. We would recommend that the timing, frequency and method of communication is planned in advance - a large amount of time is required to set-up, photocopy and distribute notes, and there are other Coleridge Families and school communications being sent out at the same time. E-mail was used in 2008 with the Year 3-6 parents, using the class representatives as a channel to reach them. Class reps running the event also stood at the school gates and distributed leaflets. However, we would recommend that an eye catching note in the book bags is still the best form of communication.

## **Poster/Advertising**

Organize a poster to be distributed around the school, and in Crouch End close to

the event date. It is important to the stall holders that the fair is attended by lots of people, so posters should be put up around school (make sure both East & West sites are covered), on classroom doors, information boards, as well as externally in the library, Crouch End shops (particularly those who have kindly offered donations for the raffle hampers or prizes). You can venture out to Muswell Hill if you dare!

## **Stall Bookings**

It is very important to have one person taking stall holder bookings. Previous fairs have had 30 stalls, in 2008 we had 34 stalls (probably the maximum!). Floor plans are included in the binder, along with a list of previous stallholders, contact details and any specific requests. A deadline date is required for stall holder bookings to avoid a mass rush closer to the event.

The first communication on the Advent Fair should be sent out prior to the October half-term. The second goes out after half-term reminding people that you are taking bookings including deadline date and encouraging stallholders to book their places. (Priority should be given to stallholders with school connections where possible). This note generates some responses, however, it is advisable to contact previous stall holders from the 2008/7 list, or generate a new list by going to other craft fairs, or asking local shops if they would like to be involved. The third communication relating to the stallholder bookings is a final reminder prior to the deadline date.

In 2008 a booking form was introduced which stallholders completed and sent to the office with their cheque by the deadline date. No cheque - no stall! This helped considerably! Confirmation of their stall request was sent after the deadline date. It is important to ensure there is a good mix of stall merchandise to provide attendees with variety.

## **Stall Cost / Special Requirements**

In 2008 the cost per stall was £20. The stallholders will want to know the date, time and set up time (as well as parking facilities), size of tables (these vary) and cost. All this information is included on the booking form, and an e-mail prior to the event confirms parking, timing etc. The school makes money from the tables, the £1 admission charge, selling mince pies & mulled wine, and school tables (sweet stall, raffle, tombola).

There are many repeat stallholders who may have specific requirements i.e. Access to sockets for lighting (these are marked on the room layout), access to wall bars to display items, a preference for a particular Hall, or a need to be placed near or far from another type of stall! We would suggest not promising anything until all the stallholders requests are in, and the floor plan is finalised. In 2008 we were able to accommodate all requests within reason (you will need to bring extension cables).

## **Tables**

The stall holders tables are made up of the tables in the Halls - large trestle, red tables, hexagonal tables and supplemented by classroom tables (typically 2

classroom tables = 1 stall). A considerable number of classroom tables are required - please check with the appropriate teacher to ensure these can be used on the night. It may be useful to take a photograph of the classroom layout (so they can be returned to exactly the same place!), and also to label each table (underneath) with the relevant classroom.

### **School Run Tables**

The bar, tombola, sweets, raffle and clothing stalls are all manned by organizers with all money going to the school (there is no charge for these tables, so it's important that they generate as much income as possible on the evening). In 2008 there was no Home Produce stall but it may be worth trying the concept again.

### **Raffle**

The raffle makes a lot of money for the Advent Fair, especially if the tickets are sold before, during and after the event. During the event the raffle was set up in the entrance hall + roving ticket sales. Tickets were sold before and after the event on the bridge at the entrance. (The logistics of the East & West sites needs to be further explored to ensure all parents are being reached).

The raffle prizes were drawn after the final Christmas Show by Mrs Boffey. A list of raffle prizes are included in the binder. One person should take responsibility for approaching the Crouch End shops & businesses. In addition, organizers donated raffle prizes, and where possible used contacts to donate prizes (i.e. Tesco's vouchers).

### **Tombola**

The tombola stand is very popular. Prizes are donated by parents (see letters). In 2008, tombola donations were collected relatively early to avoid any confusion with the Christmas Bazaar donations (see letters). Organizers also donated additional prizes where required. Additional, small cellophane gift bags were made up by the organizers containing a sweet & gift which were dotted around the tom bola for the children to win. (Please note the Tombola is popular with children, hence alcoholic drinks which are won need to be monitored).

### **Sweet Stall**

Sweets are either donated (to maximize profits!) or purchased by the organizers from the Cash & Carry and bagged up into attractive packaging. There is detailed feedback on the Sweet Stall in the binder.

### **Bar/Refreshments**

The kitchen is the busiest area on the evening of the Fair. Both hatches are opened up. The bar sells mulled wine, mince pies, seasonal biscuits, soft drinks & water by the glass. To avoid a bar licence, you can sell mince pies for £2.50 each and "give away" a glass of wine. Mince pies are donated by parents/carers at the school a few

days before the Fair (see letters).

The kitchen MUST be manned by at least 5-6 people at one time, to serve and collect/wash up glasses. 2 people are required to set up and ensure that the gas is turned on & mulled wine is warmed up before the event. It gets very busy!

Wine was purchased from Majestic in Muswell Hill (see quantities sheet). In 2008, we ran out of wine during the evening, so additional wine (approx 6 mulled wine bottles) was purchased. A mulled wine syrup was used in 2008, which received very positive comments, and reduced time spent making the mulled wine. Fresh fruit and orange juice was added. Glasses were used. The wine and glasses should be booked (deposit required) just after half-term to ensure a good delivery slot. Delivery was made between 5-6p.m. on the evening of the Fair. Other supplies, such as biscuits and fruit juices (which were served from large jugs) were purchased from the supermarket. Napkins were in the Coleridge Families lock-up (check).

Permission to use the kitchen must be arranged in advance, check with kitchen staff that it's ok to use oven and gas hob. Also ask which pots can be used for mulled wine. Bring own knives, chopping boards, tea towels, spoons, etc as nothing is left out! Please remember the kitchen must be spotless afterwards!

### **Volunteer Rotas**

In order to man the set-up, collect donations for the tombola, sell raffle tickets, staff the entrance, bar, tombola, sweet stall, raffle and clear-up on the night, the help of volunteer parents/carers is vital. Having one person responsible for overseeing the volunteer rotas is key, combined with class representatives encouraging parents/carers to sign up. It maybe worth enlisting the help of some men to help with the set-up and clear-up as there is a considerable amount of manual labour required to move all the tables (as well as move and return the existing equipment in the Halls).

### **Set Up**

Check with the office if any after school activities are planned the afternoon of the Advent Fair (gymnastics, football, or play rehearsal). It is worth approaching the teachers and kindly asking if these could be postponed or relocated. Whilst we do not want to disrupt the school activities, a considerable amount of time is required to set-up the Hall.

(Note: the stage for the Christmas show needs to be dismantled on the evening, also, it is worth checking where all the bags for the Christmas Bazaar are going to be stored for the next morning so that additional work moving/storing these is not necessary).

Most of the existing equipment in the Halls which was not used for the Fair was stored in the changing rooms in the Junior Hall. The tables used for lunch do not fit, so were stored in the corridor outside the (old) Reception & Year 1 classrooms.

## **Floor Plan**

A few nights before the Fair the final stallholders floor plan should be created (see plans in binder). One organiser should be on hand with the plan, and list of names to ensure that no “swapping” goes on! Each table should be marked with its number & stallholders name. If the Fair starts at 7 p.m., most stall holders will want to start setting up from 6 p.m., so the tables must all be laid out by then.

## **Decoration of the Halls**

The halls were decorated for Christmas by the school. However, it is worth adding lots of fairy lights and tinsel in the hall. The Tombola was moved to a different location in 2008 (see layout), and a large disco ball (donated by an organizer) used, which added to the light and atmosphere. Please note: no candles can be used inside the building, and no fire exits can be blocked.

The entrance area was decorated with draped fabric (from the art cupboard), and holly/foilage. Fairy lights were put around the outside of the main entrance. Nothing can be pinned or stuck to any surface in the foyer. In 2008, we had a group of carol singers (pupils who kindly volunteered), organised by a year 5 teacher. This was a lovely festive touch, however, additional lighting is required outside for them to see their hymn sheets. They sang from 7 to 7:30 p.m.

Covers are required for the school tables (from the lock-up or art cupboard). A festive room spray was used to create atmosphere and was well received!

Music is usually played throughout the Fair, organizers provided CD's (stick to the traditional Christmas pop songs!). The school has a sound system (in the Junior Hall) and an ipod was used in the Infant Hall.

If parents need to bring younger children and if the weather is unfavourable, a buggy park was set up (along the corridor to the Year 4-5 classrooms).

## **Banking**

Request a float for the bar/sweets/clothing/tombola/entrance from the school's treasurer. At least 2 volunteers should get together after the Fair to count and bag the money and fill coin bags (available from the school) accordingly. All monies should be noted and handed in to the Office, including all cheques, these will be passed on to the Coleridge Families treasurer.

Any questions!

The previous organisers will be happy to help if you need any more information :  
Check with Reps Co-ordinator for names to help in mentoring