



Gingerbread Christmas in Chester 2019

Community Engagement Pack Schools / Nurseries / Youth Organisations / Charities / Community Groups / everyone!

CH1ChesterBID is working with businesses and organisations around Chester city centre to roll out a brand-new theme for Chester at Christmas: **Gingerbread!**

This guide details all the ways you can take part in this initiative to make Chester the Gingerbread-iest place in the UK this Christmas! We would love for this to build year on year and grow as a joined-up vision of Chester city centre at Christmas. In order for that vision to become a reality, we need you to take part. The scope of this creative concept for our city depends on the community adopting and supporting it.

Ok, the sell is over. Phhew! But really, it's a bit of fun during the festive season and there are loads of ways you link this to lessons plans, use the theme to engage with the city centre and/or your beneficiaries', and even use it to raise funds for good causes.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

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Register your interest!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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More to the point, who is CH1ChesterBID?

We are the city centre's Business Improvement District (BID); a not-for-profit organisation which promotes a vibrant city centre on behalf of the businesses within a defined area of the city. We have been delivering a Christmas programme across the city centre for over 5 years now supported by our bespoke Chester elves ChELFie and ELFie. This year we are co-ordinating the Gingerbread Theme across the city to attract visitors and locals into Chester this Christmas. There will be a wide variety of engagement from a city-wide gingerbread person paper chain, gingerbread window competitions, building gingerbread structures and much more!



Easy guide to taking part in Chester's Gingerbread Christmas

We want this Christmas theme to be a memorable one for the residents of, and visitors to, Chester City Centre. Whether you are a school, nursery, charity or other community group, there is something for everyone. Do as little or as much as you like!

1. Add to the Gingerbread Paper Chain across the city centre

The traditional tale of The Gingerbread Man is a popular one with young children. Use this gingerbread person template (Appendix 1) or create your own and to encourage children to think about how they might want their gingerbread man to look. Maybe they would choose to make him look like a character from a modern story, like chELFie or ELFie, or perhaps it might wear their favourite football strip!

Where do we send our gingerbread people?

Send your gingerbread people to **Emily Ghazarian, 9 Lower Bridge Street, Chester, CH1 1RS**. We will arrange to display them in the city centre in various locations including The Forum Shopping Centre, Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Chester Market, selected city centre businesses, and in our Gingerbread House Hub.

We will let you know the location of your group's gingerbread people once they are on display. Unfortunately, we will not be able to return gingerbread people.

Key Dates:

We encourage you to send us your gingerbread people by **Saturday 16th November** which is when we will begin displaying the gingerbread paper chain across the city centre. We will continue to accept paper gingerbread people and to grow the city-wide paper chain up to **Saturday 14th December**.



2. Build a gingerbread display to exhibit at school or in the city

Create your school/building in gingerbread, your staff team/pupils/volunteers as gingerbread people or perhaps a Chester landmark in Gingerbread. We want to create a festival of Gingerbread to grow year on year to bring visitors from far and wide to admire these majestic creations.

This programme is open to all organisations, schools, charities and community groups. Send us photos of your display so we can share it. If you are keen to display your project in the city centre let us know so we can help secure a location.



Mad Hatters Window Display 2018



US Gingerbread Competition Winner



Duchess Bake Shop

Creating a gingerbread person or house incorporates several processes (STEM learning).

Baking: Include a cookery lesson for your pupils/beneficiaries/supporters. We will promote your bakes on social media and can help to find a place to display them in the city centre. Send us photos of your bakers, ingredients, bowls of dough and their finished products.

You can use your gingerbread decoration for any messages or topics your youngsters wish to highlight.

We have created a Gingerbread template in Appendix 1. You can use this to design your gingerbread man. BBC Good Food have a standard gingerbread house recipe and template that we have tested ourselves (Appendix 2 and 3). Or you can use your own recipe or come up with a variation!

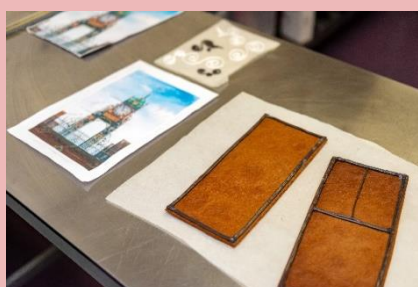
Of course, your design doesn't need to be a person or house. You can get creative with trees, elves, stars, rhinos, cats, anything you can shape!

Gingerbread Architecture

If you want to go BIG, you can create a gingerbread structure to be displayed in the city centre. We will be generating press coverage of the Ginger Creations displayed in the city and will promote locations and creators throughout the festive season.

This links to the STEM curriculum - educating students in the four disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics – enabling you to turn this into a larger project.

Mad Hatters have already started on plans to create a large-scale replica of Eastgate Clock in Vegan Gingerbread with moving hands!



The Chester Grosvenor Hotel have pledged to create a large-scale replica of the hotel itself!

Zugers of Chester have plans to create a festive Gingerbread Christmas market!



3. Organise a gingerbread themed performance

If your class or group would like to perform a play or musical performance which is themed to gingerbread we can help co-ordinate this.

We will have limited opportunities for this so the sooner we can make these arrangements the better. These performances can be in the larger stores in the City, shopping centre or on the street. We will help with the logistics and advertising.



4. Make gingerbread decorations to display on our tree at the Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival 2019

Every year CH1ChesterBID sponsor a tree at the Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival. This year we are asking our businesses and community organisations to help by creating gingerbread themed decorations. These can be on simple card stock, wooden cut outs, or even real baked gingerbread!

We will list all businesses and community groups who have contributed to the tree which will be on display from 30th November – 5th January. We will need the decorations by **Weds 27th November** in order to add them to our tree.



5. Integrate the gingerbread theme into your lessons plans

The Gingerbread connection with Christmas has long been linked with Grimms Hansel and Gretel Story, a story read to children in schools and performed by school children in plays. The classic story of the gingerbread man also has multiple lessons including: be careful what you wish for; brains over brawn; stranger danger; and small characters can make a big fuss to name a few.

Gingerbread is also easy to make and encourages children to get involved in cooking and baking. Home Baking is being encouraged as a way of reducing packaging and educating children on where their food comes from and how it is produced.

There is also the story of Ginger itself. The history of Ginger goes back over 5000 years when the Indians and ancient Chinese considered it a tonic root for all ailments.

Environmental link:

Saving the planet and reducing plastics is becoming a more critical part of education. As part of this we would like your class or group to get home or school baking. Obtaining ingredients in non-plastic containers or using refill businesses such as Just Footprints in the Forum Shopping Centre where non packaged ingredients, such as: flour, sugar and spices can be purchased is a great way to teach how small changes can have a big impact on the world.



6. Use gingerbread as a fundraiser

Ask your supporters to sponsor a gingerbread person! This could be using the template provided as an activity at a Christmas Fair, or you could come up with your own gingerbread themed fundraiser.

You tell us!

If you have any grand gingerbread plans or ideas give us a ring to discuss how we can support each other to make Chester the Gingerbread-iest place in the UK at Christmas!

How else can you engage with the city centre?

A Gingerbread House in the city center?

CH1ChesterBID are dressing an empty unit in the city centre to look like the inside of a gingerbread house! We will use this as a venue host crafts activities and events to raise money for Claire House Hospice, our charity partner. All activities inside will be FREE to the public with donations being accepted for Claire House.



If you would like to plan a visit to this space, please contact Emily Ghazarian to arrange.

The space is available for pre-arranged visits **Mon – Weds from 18th November – 18th December** (it will be open to the public for selected hours on Thursdays – Sundays from 16th November – 22nd December; if you would like to bring a group in on those days please enquire with Emily Ghazarian).

We will provide access to the space FREE of charge. If you would like a to arrange for a gingerbread workshop you are welcome to book someone yourself, or we can help book for you with an additional charge.



Images from 2016 Santa's Workshop Christmas Hub.

Would you like a visit from chELFie and ELFie?

Our Chester elves are very busy during the festive season but they love to visit schools to make sure the kids have made it on the nice list and to encourage them to make gingerbread biscuits from Santa. If you would like to arrange for a visit to your school or group please contact Emily Ghazarian to discuss.

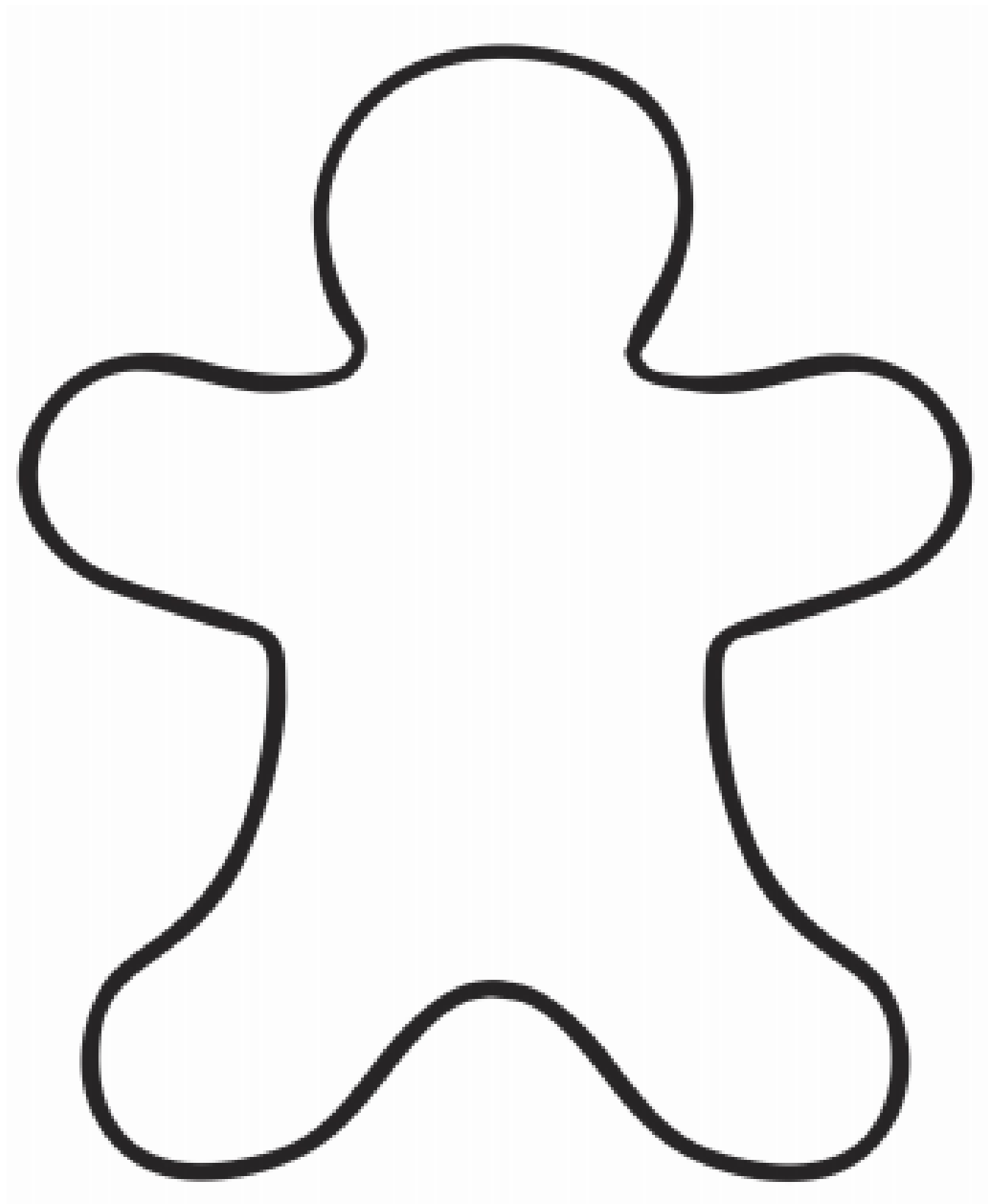


Register your Interest:

Please register your interest in taking part with **Emily Ghazarian, Events Manager, CH1ChesterBID**, emily.ghazarian@ch1chesterbid.co.uk or on 01244 403680.

Once you have registered, you will receive reminders about the initiative and can discuss ways you can get involved.

Appendix 1: Gingerbread person template (credit Twinkl.com)



Appendix 2:

Simple gingerbread house recipe <https://www.bbcgoodfoodme.com/recipes/simple-gingerbread-house/>

Ingredients

- 250g unsalted butter
- 200g dark muscovado sugar
- 7 tbsp golden syrup
- 600g plain flour
- 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 4 tsp ground ginger
- 200g bag flaked almonds
- 2 egg whites
- 500g icing sugar, plus extra to dust
- 125g pack mini chocolate fingers
- generous selection sweets of your choice, choose your own colour theme
- 1 mini chocolate roll or a dipped chocolate flake
- few edible silver balls

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Melt the butter, sugar and syrup in a pan. Mix the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ground ginger into a large bowl, then stir in the butter mixture to make a stiff dough. If it won't quite come together, add a tiny splash of water.
2. Cut out the template (see below to download). Put a sheet of baking paper on your work surface and roll about one quarter of the dough to the thickness of two £1 coins. Cut out one of the sections, then slide the gingerbread, still on its baking paper, onto a baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough, re-rolling the trimmings, until you have two side walls, a front and back wall and two roof panels. Any leftover dough can be cut into Christmas trees, if you like.
3. Pick out the most intact flaked almonds and gently poke them into the roof sections, pointy-end first, to look like roof tiles. Bake all the sections for 12 mins or until firm and just a little darker at the edges. Leave to cool for a few mins to firm up, then trim around the templates again to give clean, sharp edges. Leave to cool completely.

4. Put the egg whites in a large bowl, sift in the icing sugar, then stir to make a thick, smooth icing. Spoon into a piping bag with a medium nozzle. Pipe generous snakes of icing along the wall edges, one by one, to join the walls together. Use a small bowl to support the walls from the inside, then allow to dry, ideally for a few hours.
5. Once dry, remove the supports and fix the roof panels on. The angle is steep so you may need to hold these on firmly for a few mins until the icing starts to dry. Dry completely, ideally overnight. To decorate, pipe a little icing along the length of 20 mini chocolate fingers and stick these lengthways onto the side walls of the house. Use three, upright, for the door.
6. Using the icing, stick sweets around the door and on the front of the house. To make the icicles, start with the nozzle at a 90-degree angle to the roof and squeeze out a pea-sized blob of icing. Keeping the pressure on, pull the nozzle down and then off – the icing will pull away, leaving a pointy trail. Repeat all around the front of the house. Cut the chocolate mini roll or dipped Flake on an angle, then fix with icing to make a chimney. Pipe a little icing around the top. If you've made gingerbread trees, decorate these now, too, topping each with a silver ball, if using. Dust the roof with icing sugar for a snowy effect. Lay a winding path of sweets, and fix gingerbread trees around and about using blobs of icing. Your gingerbread house will be edible for about a week but will last a lot longer.

Appendix 3:

Click [here](#) to download a template (credit: BBCGoodFood.com)

