

Thwart crime - with a good old knees-up!



EAST Enders are being urged to help beat the villains and boost their community...by staging street parties.

The traditional Cockney knees-up is being revived in a year-long scheme aimed breaking down isolation and fear of crime in some of Tower Hamlets' most troubled estates.

Knees Up, the brainchild of Quaker Social Action, has been launched in Bow. "By working together to run street parties, residents will get to know each other and can then work together to reduce crime and improve the environment," said a spokesman.

"We hope the parties will be the first step in a journey to improve quality of life."

Celebrate

Quaker Social Action director Judith Moran said: "Our organisation have been working in East London for 140 years. In the national press, you rarely hear anything other than bad news about this patch. We think there's lots to celebrate and feel we can use these celebrations to connect people to their communities and make a difference to how people feel about where they live."

Project manager Edward Mackay said: "In

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the past, people and community came first. And now? Not many people know their neighbours and so don't feel safe in their streets. It's easy for roads to feel, not like places where anyone lives, but just thoroughfares other people use to get from A-B.

"A street party is a great way to get to know your neighbours and celebrate living in the vibrant, exciting place that we do. And after the party, who knows what might happen? We'll have made new friends, had a great time and seen our streets in ways we've not done before.

"Knees Up will still be around to enable communities to make permanent changes to their environment."

Pearly King John Walters said: "Using the old East End knees-up as a way of dealing with modern problems seems a great idea."

Quaker Social Action will work with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, dedicated to increasing personal safety, and Living Streets, who aim to improve the environment.

Residents in and around Bow who would like to have a street party, should contact Mr Mackay on 020 8983 9374, 07886014986 or edwardmackay@qsa.org.uk [590 words]

● Kneesy does it: Pictured, from left, are Neil Johnson, Quaker Social Action's Chair of trustees, Mr Walters, Judith Moran, Pearly Queen Lil York and Mr Mackay. Picture: Claire Haslam.