



HOW TO PLAN AN EVENT

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS



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WHAT TO THINK ABOUT WHEN PLANNING AN EVENT

Good planning is vital to the success of an event; whatever sort of event you want to hold, the planning will often follow the same general pattern. You will need to be clear about what you want the event to be, what you want it to achieve (outcome/s), and the size of the event.

Possible achievements / outcomes could be:

- To raise money for a good cause
- To bring the community together
- To encourage a particular activity, for example, a sport

Below are several important points to consider:

- Who do you want to come to the event?
- Will there be activities for a range of different people? It is important, where possible, to make events accessible to people with a disability / access needs.
- Will you be providing food? If so, how many people are you catering for (think of a minimum and a maximum) and do you have suitable facilities?
- Will admission be free or will there be a charge? If there is a charge, will tickets need to be bought in advance or on the door? Advance tickets, even if admission is free, can help you assess the level of interest and the numbers to cater for.
- Bigger events require more time for planning and preparation. The bigger the event, the more people you will need to plan the event beforehand, plus you will need a larger number of volunteers on the day itself.



Plan and share out the work

If you are having a bigger event it is a good idea to form a working group and maybe consider having smaller task groups to look at each work area, such as marketing and promotion, safety, accessibility (these will vary depending on your event). It may also be a good idea to have one member of each task group in your core organising team. Keep workers and volunteers, and anyone else who should know, regularly updated about what is going on.

Think about asking other local organisations to get involved; they may have the expertise to help organise the event.

You can encourage more people to get involved in the planning by:

- Thinking about the timing and location of your planning meetings, and asking potential volunteers what suits them best.
- Advertising planning meetings widely and encouraging participation at the meetings.
- Publicising the event early and combining this with an appeal for people to help.
- Putting together a list of jobs that can easily be allocated to new volunteers, even if they are not able to attend planning meetings. Providing a rota where people can add their availability.
- Devising a list of what you need and asking people to pledge contributions of food and raffle prizes.

When deciding the date of the event, try to avoid clashes with similar events that may be taking place nearby.

If you are planning a bigger event, consider the impact of the event on the neighbourhood in which it takes place. This could include noise, increased numbers of people in the area, car parking. Make sure that residents and businesses are aware of what is going on and have the opportunity to let you know of any concerns they may have.

Find out what bookings, permissions and licences you need.

Many activities that take place during events do not need a licence; there is more information about this later on in the booklet.

When planning the event you will need to:

- Make sure the venue you will be using is booked and confirmed or, if it is free of charge, you have the necessary permission from the owner or organisation.
- Allow enough time in the day to provide access to set up before the event and clear up after.
- Think about any equipment you will need to hire and make sure you know how to use it, for example, microphones, PA systems, projectors.
- When booking entertainers / performers (e.g. musicians, magicians) find out:
 - How long does their performance last?
 - Will they perform more than once?
 - What is the maximum number of people they can reach in a performance?

Think about common sense safety, access issues and insurance

You will be responsible for the safety of volunteers and visitors at your event. Looking after people's safety at events is largely a matter of taking simple, sensible precautions that are outlined later on in the booklet.

You will need to consider the following:

- How will people get to the event? Make sure your publicity gives details of public transport and parking.
- Do you need to put up signs on the surrounding roads to make the event easier to find?
- Is the venue accessible for wheelchair users and people with other disabilities? Make sure your publicity is clear about the level of access visitors can expect.

If you are holding an open air event the weather can be changeable (at any time of the year). Have a think about the following:

- Any potential impacts from heavy rain, strong winds or hot weather.
- Is there shelter for visitors from extreme weather conditions?
- Are there measures you can put in place to stop cars getting stuck in muddy conditions?
- Is there a risk of flooding?
- Does any insurance for the event cover weather-related issues?

Decide on a realistic budget

All the following may involve costs you will have to meet:

- Venue hire
- Publicity
- Equipment hire
- Decorations
- Entertainers
- Prizes
- Buying refreshments
- Transport
- Phone bills, postage and other administrative costs
- Insurance
- Volunteers' expenses
- First aid equipment and provision
- Fees for licences and permissions



The following are examples of ways these costs could be covered:

- Entrance fees
- Grants and/or sponsorship
- Voluntary donations
- Raffles
- Selling refreshments
- Money-making sideshows and stalls
- Charging stallholders and/or catering suppliers

Be realistic. It's better to underestimate income and slightly overestimate costs; even if you are aiming to break even, do allow a Plan B to reduce the risk of making a loss.

Involving groups and organisations who have organised similar events can provide a really helpful indication of likely costs and income.

Identify how best to publicise the event

You will need to decide:

- Who you want your publicity to reach - think about where those people are most likely to see a poster or flyer, and what will attract them to the event.
- How much money you have to spend on publicity.
- Do you want to use local media, such as newspapers and radio?
- Can you use online media, such as websites or social networks?
- Include contact details on the flyers / posts so people can contact you directly.
- Draw up a timeline for your publicity; it needs to be distributed early so that people will see it. Do not wait until every last detail of the event is finalised; further information can be shared leading up to event.

Plan the event in detail

Shortly before the event, you need to run through everything in detail with the planning team. Ask yourself:

- Where will everybody be on the day? Does everyone know their roles and responsibilities? Is there a plan for if something goes wrong?
- Is the rota full or do you need to do a last minute volunteer drive to fill gaps?
- How will equipment and volunteers get to the venue - and away again?
- Will you be able to take hired equipment directly to and from the event, or will it need to be stored?
- How close to the event site can you park the organisers' vehicles? You may have to consider using a trolley or volunteers to help carry equipment closer to the site.
- Who is responsible for money on the day? If you think you may raise a large amount, consider arranging for someone to collect the money throughout the day.
- Will you need a lot of change? If so, contact your bank in advance and ask them to put some aside for you.
- If photographs are to be taken, have you arranged consent forms for people to sign and devised a way to ensure there are no photographs/videos of people who do not wish to be filmed?
- Will you have enough activities? Long queues will spoil people's day.
- Have you prepared adequate signage to direct people to the event and facilities?
- What will happen if the weather is bad?
- Do you have enough time, materials and people for setting up and clearing away?

“Mopping up” after the event

- Check the terms of your hire agreement to see exactly what the owner of the venue expects you to clear up.
- It's a good idea to count takings, ideally with two people, from the different sources separately, so that you know which activities made money and which didn't do so well. This will help you make a more accurate budget for your next event.
- Deposit cash at the bank as soon as possible after the event.
- It's always worth having a discussion with your organising team after the event, to talk through what went well and not so well on the day, learning lessons for the future.
- If the event took place to raise money for a good cause, find a way of publicising how much money was raised and thank people for their contribution.

LICENCES OR OTHER SORTS OF PERMISSION NEEDED

Many activities do not need a licence, but you should look into this early on, because if you do find you need a licence or other permission, this can take time, even months in some cases.

You may need licences and permission for the following activities:

Raffles and lotteries

Raffles, sweepstakes and tombolas come under the banner of “incidental non-commercial lottery”; you do not have to register these with the Council. Tickets for this type of lottery must be sold at and the winners announced at the event. Anyone at the event, including children, can take part in this sort of lottery.

The expenses that can be deducted from the proceeds must not be more than £100, and no more than £500 can be spent on prizes (not including donated prizes). See the section below on Providing Alcohol for information about alcoholic prizes.

Find out more with the Gambling Commission's guidance on running raffles and lotteries:

www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/fundraising-prize-draws-affles-and-lotteries

BINGO AND RACE NIGHTS

You do not need a licence to play bingo or run a race night as long as you are playing for 'good causes'. This means:

- It can only take place at events where none of the proceeds are being used for private gain.
- Players must be informed of the organisation or good cause that will benefit from the money raised.
- You can play either 'prize bingo' or 'equal chance' bingo.

For prize bingo:

- All the prizes are put up in advance and are not dependent on the number of players or amount of money collected.
- There are no limits on the amount of money you can collect for admission fees or ticket sales, or on the value of prizes paid out.

For equal chance bingo:

- The amount of money paid out in prizes is dependent on how much is collected in admission charges and sale of tickets.
- You can charge each person up to £8 for admission and tickets.
- The total value of prizes for one off events must not be more than £600.

Race nights that are run to raise money for charity, also may not need a licence if they are run on the same basis as above.

Find out more with the Gambling Commission's guidance on non-commercial and private gaming and betting:

www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/fundraising-and-lotteries

PROVIDING ENTERTAINMENT

The following events do not need entertainment licences between the hours of 8am and 11pm:

- Performances of live unamplified music for audiences.
- Performances of live amplified music in licensed premises for audiences of up to 200 people.
- Performances of plays and dance for audiences of up to 500 people.
- Indoor sporting events for audiences up to 1,000 people.

Other examples of performances that generally don't need a licence are:

- Karaoke – between 8am and 11pm in licensed premises for audiences of 200 or less if there is any amplification.
- Incidental music - live music that is incidental to other activities that aren't classed as regulated entertainment.

GOV.UK also holds more detail on entertainment licensing:

www.gov.uk/guidance/entertainment-licensing-changes-under-the-live-music-act

If you are planning on playing pre-recorded music at an event that is open to the public, check with your venue to see if it holds licences from PRS (Performing Rights Society) for Music:

www.prsformusic.com/licences and

PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited):

www.ppluk.com/music-licensing/

If your venue does not hold these licences you may need to put them in place. A fee will probably be payable.

PROVIDING ALCOHOL

You don't need a licence to provide alcohol at a private event, such as a street party, as long as it is not being sold.

You also don't need a licence if the venue has either of the following:

- A 'Premises Licence' and that there is a named 'supervisor' who holds a 'Personal Licence' to sell alcohol.
- A 'Club Premises Certificate' which includes the sale of alcohol.

This is something you can check with the owner of the venue where the event is being held.

You do not need a licence to offer bottles (or other containers) of alcohol as prizes in raffles and tombolas, provided the following conditions are met:

- The raffle must be promoted as an incidental event (i.e. it is not the main event) within an 'exempt entertainment' – this is defined as a bazaar, sale of work, fête, dinner, dance, sporting or athletic event, or other entertainment of a similar character.
- After expenses are deducted, none of the money raised by the 'entertainment' is used for private gain.
- The alcohol is in a sealed container, such as an unopened bottle.
- There are no prizes that are just money.
- Tickets are only sold during the event, not in advance.
- The raffle / lottery is not the main inducement to attend.
- You must not sell tickets that can then be exchanged for an alcoholic drink, or to ask for a donation in return for alcohol.

If none of the above apply and you want to:

- Have a bar where alcohol is sold.
- Sell alcohol in another way.
- Provide entertainment to the wider public.
- Charge to raise money for your event.

You will need a Temporary Event Notice; have a look at the following link for further information: www.bradford.gov.uk/business/licensing/temporary-event-notice/

HOW TO KEEP ORGANISERS, VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS SAFE

In order to keep your organisers, volunteers and participants safe, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the risks, high or low, of somebody being harmed by a hazard, and how serious could the harm be?
- How could accidents happen and who might be harmed?
- What do you need to do to control the risks and make the event safer?

You may also need to think about:

- The layout of the event to ensure people and vehicles can move about safely.
- The number of people attending the event, for example, managing entrances and exits to prevent overcrowding.
- Keeping the venue free from slip and trip hazards.
- Not taking unnecessary risks when putting up large marquees, tents etc. It may be sensible to have a large marquee erected and taken down by the company it is hired from.
- Making sure that structures like bouncy castles you hire have an up-to-date inspection certificate and that they are properly tethered and used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and guidance.
- If hiring a fairground ride, check that it has an up to date certificate of conformity; this is equivalent to a car's MOT certificate.
- Electrical safety: for example, if you are using mains voltage outside use a 'trip device' to ensure that the current is promptly cut off if contact is made with any live part.
- First aid arrangements.

If you are using a village or community hall or similar venue, the Health and Safety Executive has a checklist to help you:

www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/assets/docs/village-hall.pdf

You should also;

- Confirm that any actions needed are sensible.
- Deal with the risks in a proportionate way.

FIRE SAFETY

Anyone providing a venue for a public event must assess the risk from fire to those using the premises and ensure that the fire safety measures in place are suitable to protect lives in the event of a fire. Discuss with the venue owner what fire safety arrangements are in place and make sure you know what to do should a fire break out.

Questions to think about:

- Is the fire alarm working?
- Are the fire exits obvious and/or clearly signposted; are there enough exits to let everyone, including anyone who may be disabled or particularly vulnerable, leave quickly and easily in the event of a fire.
- Who will be responsible for evacuating the building, should it be necessary?
- Are any pieces of fire safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers or fire blankets, provided? Are clear instructions on how to use them provided?
- Is there suitable access for the emergency services?

Sensible precautions you can take to help minimise the risk of fire include:

- Don't let rubbish build up and ensure any flammables are used carefully and stored properly.
- Keep fire exits free from obstruction.
- Keep any gas cylinders upright in a safe, well ventilated space away from heat sources.
- If you are using a portable generator, read the user guide first, set it up in a well-ventilated area and be careful not to spill fuel when filling and refilling the tank.
- If you are planning an event that includes bonfires or fireworks, more information can be found in this link: www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm

HOW TO MAKE SURE FOOD IS SAFE

If you want to provide or sell food at an event, you need to consider the following:

- Are the food preparation, serving facilities and equipment clean and in good repair?
- Are they suitably situated so that the food does not become contaminated from pests, animals or waste?
- Are the washing facilities adequate?
- Some people have food allergies; is there someone who can answer questions about the origin of the food and its ingredients?

The Food Standards Agency has more information about food safety for voluntary and community events:

www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events

Bradford Council has more information on food safety for outdoor events:

www.bradford.gov.uk/environmental-health-and-pollution/food-safety/food-safety-guidance-for-outdoor-events/

Food labelling

Food sold for a charity or other community organisation only has to follow food labelling laws if the seller is a registered food business. This includes food sold at one-off events such as village and church fêtes and school fairs. This is a useful link regarding the law around this subject: <https://www.gov.uk/food-labelling-and-packaging>

However, labelling food voluntarily is helpful to prospective buyers, particularly if the food contains a food allergen that buyers may need to be aware of, such as nuts in a cake.

ROAD CLOSURES

Closing a street or a road for a community event, such as a street party, is easier than a lot of people think:

- It is legal for streets to be used for social events and it is reasonable for you to expect the highway authority to be helpful.
- All the council needs is a few weeks (usually around four to six) advance notice of where and when the closure will take place so they can plan around it (for example, so they can let the emergency services know) and put in place a traffic regulation order.
- Check early so that you know what the council's process is; some councils have set deadlines to help them manage their work, but there are no deadlines in law, so if they look unreasonable ask your council to be flexible.
- You can organise a street meet / gathering on private land (with the landowner's permission), such as a driveway or front garden, without any requirement to fill in council forms.
- For a larger scale event or for proposals to close a busy or main road you should contact the council as soon as possible, and at least several months in advance, to ensure there is enough time for your proposal to be properly considered by the highway authority and the police.

Have a look at this link for further information on street parties and road closures:

www.gov.uk/organise-street-party/closing-a-road

Also see the street party link in the additional information section.



INSURANCE

- There is no law that says you must buy insurance for a voluntary or community event but you might want to make sure you are covered in case something goes wrong and someone makes a claim against you. Having public liability insurance may give you peace of mind, but it's good planning, not insurance that stops things going wrong.
- Sometimes another body, perhaps the council or someone that you have contract with (such as a landowner if the event is taking place on their land), will require you to have public liability insurance. If this is the case you can ask why they are requiring this because it is not compulsory in law. Sometimes signing a disclaimer will be adequate instead of buying insurance.
- If you do decide you need insurance remember that before you buy it, you should check the terms of the policy carefully to make sure you know exactly what cover it provides and any requirements you may have to meet.
- If you are holding the event in your home or garden you may be covered by the public liability section of your own home insurance policy. You can check this yourself and talk to your insurer if you have any questions.
- If you are renting or using someone else's building, you may be covered by their insurance, do check to see if this is the case.
- If you are hiring equipment such as a marquee or bouncy castle check with the company you are hiring it from whether their terms of hire include insurance and read any conditions carefully (particularly any exclusions).
- If external businesses are providing services, such as food or rides, you should check they have their own insurance, and that it is in force on the day of the event.
- Many companies provide insurance for community groups. A quick online search for 'community group insurance' will produce a number of results.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

- This insurance covers the organisers of an event, providing them with financial protection if they are held to blame for injury to a person or for loss or damage to property and sued.
- You can buy different levels of cover, from £1 million upwards. This seems a lot but costs are relatively low, sometimes as little as £50 or £60. How much you need varies according to:
 - The type of event and activities you are planning
 - How many people will attend
- If you are unsure, talk to your own insurer or an insurance broker who will be able to advise you. You do need to be sure that the policy you buy covers all the activities you want included, so be open and clear with the insurer or broker you talk to. And make sure that you check the terms of the policy and in particular any exclusions.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following links contain further useful information and advice on running events:

Local Government Association's top tips for holding a public event in your community:

www.local.gov.uk/publications/top-tips-holding-public-event-your-community

Guide to organising a street party:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party

Further information on holding a street party:

www.streetparty.org.uk/

Information on The Big Lunch initiative:

www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch

Information on children's safe access to informal play in residential streets through resident-led street play sessions:

www.playingout.net

This booklet has been produced by CNet.
For more information visit www.cnet.org.uk.





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