

How to...

Organise and host a Community Event

Introduction and ideas

Events are an important aspect of everyday life that encourage people to play a more active part in their local area. They may celebrate an occasion, raise funds for a good cause or simply bring people in a community closer together. Events attract visitors, which brings extra money into the local economy.

It is important that individuals see a need for the event in their community and have confidence that the event would meet that need. This tool kit, consisting of information, links, phone numbers and templates that will help you to plan and run an event.

Some of the information in this document may not apply to your event, however it will guide you how to start. Organising a successful event is really all about being creative, good planning and taking sensible precautions where necessary.

Establish the basics

- **What is the aim of your event?** Are you trying to raise awareness about a cause, fundraising for a charity or showcasing local businesses and talents?
- **Choosing a date/time.** You probably have a rough idea of when you plan to hold your event, but it's important to consider the following:
 - Other events in the area – make sure you check out what else is happening on the same date or weekend. Sometimes it can be helpful to hold complementary events at the same time, but if your target market is the same, you could end up competing for visitors.
 - Season – if your event is an all-day, outdoor event, will it be warm or dry enough? (Think about the organisers, volunteers and stall holders as well as the visitors).
 - School holidays – will your target audience be away on holiday?
 - Bank holidays – would it help or hinder your event for it to be on a bank holiday?
 - Weekends – think about the business of the town, parking charges (often free on Sunday) bus routes (some don't operate on Sundays – this makes it difficult for those wanting to travel your event by bus, but makes it easier to close roads)
- **Have you identified a suitable venue for your event?**
 - Type of the event and therefore the facilities required
 - The number of visitors expected
 - Will the visitors need tickets? If so consider how you will manage entry.
 - Budget – some venues will incur a hire fee.
 - Will the landowner realistically give you permission? (Who is the

- o Landowner?)
- o Is there parking nearby if it is required?
- o Is the venue accessible to wheel chair users / buggies etc.?
- o What contingency provision for venue in the event of rain or extreme weather?
- o For community halls and venue in the district visit our [directory](#)
- o Outdoor venue options could include Recreation Grounds, open spaces and High Streets. These options tends to be free, but you will need to seek permission from either Parish/Town or District Council or other landowners.

Planning stage

- Once the event aims and ideas are defined, the event team can draft an event plan and start delegating individual tasks. It is advised to have a core-planning group to organise a larger events, with additional volunteers to help on the day.
- For larger events consider having small groups to look at each area, such as marketing, safety and logistics (these will obviously vary depending on your event). It may also be a good idea to have one member of each group as your core organising team.

Event plan

- Start planning your event well in advance to give yourself enough time to organise everything. Working together on a plan that includes all the main dates and deadlines can help clarify how much work there is to do, and when each bit of work needs to be done. You may want to establish a core planning group to organise the event, with additional volunteers to help out on the day. Be clear about what the roles and tasks are, and who is doing what.
- Most events are too much work for two or three people. A clear event plan will outline what needs doing, when it needs to be done by and who is going to do it.

Budget and cash flow

- Budget management is essential for successful event management. It helps you think and plan ahead. Depending on the type of an event to deliver – guest invitation, fee paying only, sponsorship driven, or a combination of all the above. Your budget will look very different for each event model type so ensure you are clear about which option you are working towards. It is better to underestimate income and slightly overestimate costs. Make sure you have a ‘contingency’ in your main budget – this is money set aside to cover unexpected costs during the event planning process. The contingency usually makes up 10% of the overall budget.
- To help with budgeting have a look at the [Budget template](#)

Licence and other permissions

- Some community events may need to have a licence if the event held in a public space or provide entertainment play music, do raffles, lotteries, sell alcohol etc. to

find more information about the licences and how to apply please visit https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/directory_record/146/temporary_event_notice

- Small events of 499 persons or less can be dealt with by way of a Temporary Event Notice, whereas larger events will require a Premises Licence. Typically event organisers must apply for a Premises Licence at least three months in advance of the date of the event as it may take up to several weeks to process the licence.
- If you hosting an event in public place you need to apply to The Safety Advisory Group for an approval of your plans. SAG is made up of the Council, emergency services and other organisations. It meets to review every event applications in the Sevenoaks District, to ensure the event run safely. Please remember to apply at least 12 weeks in advance of your event as you may need to apply for a temporary road closure or other licenses and permissions.
[https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20038/licences_and_permits/390/apply to ho](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20038/licences_and_permits/390/apply_to_ho)
[ld an event](#)
- As part of the documents submitted to the Safety Advisory Group you will need to submit a risk assessment for your event. You can use [Example Risk assessment](#) document to get you started.

Public Liability 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. Public Liability insurance covers you for any claims of injury or damage which happens to the public at your event.
- It is quite reasonable with costs start from as little as £50 for cover up to £5 million of damages. 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.
- Visit <https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/public-liability/> for further details.
- As part of the King's Coronation celebrations in May 2023, The Big Lunch (<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/organise-big-lunch>) has negotiated some good deals for street parties.

First Aid and Risk Assessment

- A risk assessment is a list of all the dangers people may face at your event, at a certain venue or whilst using equipment.
- It doesn't have to be complicated. You just need to be aware of what is happening at your event.
- Ask yourself- what could go wrong? What is in place to prevent this from happening?
- Having a written risk assessment shows you have put consideration and thought into the health and safety of your event.
- Whatever the size of event you are planning, you will likely need to consider what your first aid requirements will be. Depending on the size of your event, ensure someone is a trained first aider.

- If you use volunteers for your event, they are classed as employees, and you still need to undertake the same steps and precautions.
- Emergency services will need to be able to get access to the event if they need to.
- To prepare a risk assessment for many events all that is required is to follow a basic series of steps:
 - o what are the risks, high or low, of somebody being harmed by a hazard, and how serious the harm could be
 - o how could accidents happen and who might be harmed
 - o what do you need to do to control the risks and make the event safer

Please refer to our [example risk assessment template](#) (to include a link to risk assessment template)

Road closure

- Closing a quiet street for a small community event, such as a street party, is very common and it is reasonable for you to expect KCC, local highway authority, to approve the request to put in place a traffic regulation order. Applications need to be made at least 8 weeks in advance. It will be easier to close a cul-de-sac than a main through route, but emergency services will always need to be able to get down the street. [Apply to close the road, Kent County Council](#)

Food safety

- It is important that you consider all the food safety implications of the event to keep everyone as safe as you can. Allergies and hygiene would all come under this.
- Food sold for a community event only has to follow [food labelling regulations](#) 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.
- However, labelling food voluntarily may be helpful to prospective buyers, particularly if the food contains a [common allergen](#) that buyers may need to be aware of, such as nuts in a cake.

Entertainment

- If you are planning to play pre-recorded music to anyone beyond immediate friends or family, then you need to contact the [Performing Rights Society \(PRS\)](#) and the [Phonographic Performance Limited \(PPL\)](#). These are commercial organisations and will usually charge a fee, although it may occasionally be waived for small events celebrating things like the Diamond Jubilee.
- Organising a firework display can liven up events significantly, but also brings with it some additional hazards. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) has produced a simple guide to help.

Safeguarding and Photo Consent

- Safeguarding is about protecting everyone from harm, abuse or neglect. We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults and we must ensure that we are doing all we can to ensure this.
- It may be useful to take photos and videos of your event, but it is important to let the people know you are photographing know they are being captured and understand how the images will be used.

Marketing and Promotion

When planning your event, remember that promotion needs to take place at least 3 weeks beforehand to make sure people have enough notice to attend. Make sure that the promotional channels you choose to reflect the audience you are targeting.

- Place posters up in local shops/cafes/community centres to promote your event – think about where they are going to be visible.
- Consider doing letter-box drop leaflets to households in the area. This works well for a smaller community event, especially those taking place on estates. Promotion from someone you know means you are more likely to turn out at an event. WhatsApp is also very effective.

Tips for Posters and leaflets

- Use clear fonts which can be read easily like Calibri, Arial, Century and Georgia.
- Make the date, address and time clear to read.
- Make sure it can be read from a distance.
- Make it eye-catching, to grab attention. For example, a catchy slogan, or fun picture.
- Leave a contact number or email for any enquiries.
- On the day, attract attention by sticking up banners, balloons or bunting around the venue.

You could also promote your event through social media channels such as local Facebook groups, Instagram, twitter, event listings and more. As well as via register the event on our Better Together portal? Maximise your local coverage by circulating a press release to local papers. (Make sure to include images in this)

Event day

Here are some tips you might find useful on the event day itself:

- Get to the venue, along with anyone else who is helping you to set-up, at least an hour and a half before the event starts. Give yourselves plenty of time to get everything ready and allow for those last minute challenges.
- Get your staff/volunteers ready: Equip your team and volunteers with all the information and resources they need for the event. Things you can cover include:

- o **Task distribution:** Let everyone know where they are working and what activity they will be working on. Let your staff/volunteers know when they will be having their breaks, as well.
- o **Alternative plan:** Ensure everyone knows what will happen if something comes up, such as heavy rain for an event that is scheduled to be outside.
- o **Emergency contacts and Emergencies:** Share the contact sheet you have created of important contacts for the day and explain what to do in an emergency; outlining any specific protocol you have drawn up.
- Take photos and record feedback from participants/public and volunteers.
- Give volunteers support and encouragement, and make sure everyone gets a break.
- Keep track of money in and out.

Post event

- **Clean Up:** The event isn't over when everyone goes home. Almost any event will involve cleaning up and on the same day, removing rubbish, storing/returning any equipment and finally, making any payments of invoices or fees.
- **Send 'Thank You's:** It is important to let everyone who was involved in the event know that their time and energy is appreciated. Saying thank you is a great way to acknowledge all the people that participated. Make sure you include your staff, volunteers, performers and any vendors or suppliers; in short, make sure everyone who contributed feels valued.
- **Encourage Feedback:** Feedback is critical if you are planning to host a similar event in the future. Most attendees will be happy to provide feedback during or at the end of your event, using either a paper-based survey or an online equivalent.
- **Debrief Meeting:** Once the dust has settled, it is a good idea to debrief as a team. Do this as soon as you can after the event while the information is still fresh.
 - o Assess whether your event met the stated objectives.
 - o Evaluate what worked and what you can improve on for next time.
 - o Discuss feedback that you have been given by attendees.

Further resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events/the-can-do-guide-to-organising-and-running-voluntary-and-community-events>

<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/organising-events-and-activities/planning-and-organising-events/>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events>

<https://www.allergyuk.org/>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/guide-health-and-safety-for-events-ds00/>