

## **General Advice On Organising An Event.**

Voluntary and community events are an important aspect of everyday life that help encourage people to play a more active part in society. They may celebrate a particular occasion, raise funds for a good cause or simply bring people in a community closer together. Organising a successful event is really all about good planning and taking sensible precautions where necessary.

The purpose of these notes is to:

- help you to plan and run successful events
- if you are holding a particular type of event, help you to find the specific advice you need

### **1: What do I need to think about when planning an event?**

Good planning is vital to a successful event. Whatever sort of event you want to hold, the planning will often follow the same general pattern. You need to be clear about what you want the event to be, what you want it to achieve, and its size and scale.

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

Discuss with your fellow organisers what you want the event to achieve - will it:

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

If you are raising money for charity, you can find the good practice standards you should aim to meet in the Institute of Fundraising's Code of Fundraising Practice.

You will also need to decide:

- who do you want to come to the event
- will there be activities for a range of different people
- how many people are you catering for (think of both a minimum and maximum) and do you have the right facilities
- will admission be free or will there be a charge; if the latter, will tickets need to be bought in advance or at the door - advance tickets (even if admission is free) can help you assess the level of interest and the numbers to plan for

The bigger the event, the more people you will need to plan and organise on the day itself, and the more time you will need give yourself to plan and prepare. If you are having a larger event you may want to form a small working group, to plan all the main dates and deadlines and help clarify how much work there is to do, and when. 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.

If it is a larger event, it is sensible for 1 or 2 members of the organising team to keep an overview of the entire event to ensure that the different teams' plans are joining up and keep records of the planning arrangements.

Think about asking other local organisations, including event organisations, to get involved. They may have the expertise to take a major part of organising the event off your hands.

Keep people involved in organising the event, and anyone else who should know, regularly updated about what is going on; if it is a larger event, this may include the local council, police and/or emergency services. This can stop an individual or an organising group from making mistakes that may be expensive. Also, if it is a larger event, consider the impact of the event on the neighbourhood in which it takes place. 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 voluntary and community events don't need any licence. There is more information about licenses later.

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 in Part 3.

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 fickle. So ask yourself:

- what impact heavy rain, strong winds or very hot weather could have
- is there shelter for visitors from both heavy rain and/or strong sunlight
- are there steps you can take to stop cars getting stuck – particularly as they enter or leave the car park
- is there a risk of flooding

You should also consider whether you need to get public liability insurance.

Shortly before the event, you need to run through the day (or days) in detail with the organising team. You can ask yourself questions like:

- where will everybody be on the day - does everyone know their roles and responsibilities, including if something goes wrong
- 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
- what will happen if the weather is bad
- do you have enough time, materials and people for setting up and clearing away
- how close to the event site can organisers' vehicles get, you may have to consider using a trolley or volunteers to help carry equipment closer to the site

## **2: Do I need any licences or other sort of permission?**

Many activities don't need a licence. However you should check the situation early on, because if you do find you need a licence or other permission, this can take some time, even months in some cases.

You will need a TTRO for an event on the highway.

## **3: How do I keep organisers, volunteers and participants safe?**

In most cases, all you need to do is consider realistically what could potentially go wrong, what effect this could have on those present and what you need to do to prevent it. For many events all that is required is to follow a basic series of steps. Ask yourself:

- what are the risks, high or low, of somebody being harmed by a hazard, and how serious the harm could 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

These are some of the things you may 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
- 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

## **4: Can I close a road?**

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

- it is common and legal for streets to be used for social events and it is reasonable for you to expect your local highway authority to be helpful
- all Central Bedfordshire Council needs is a few weeks advance notice (a minimum of 12 weeks is required) of where and when the closure will take place so we can plan around your event (for example we may need to let the emergency services know) and put in place a traffic regulation order

For a larger scale event or for proposals to close a busy or main road you should contact your 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.

## 5: Do I need insurance?

You might want to make sure you are covered in case something goes wrong and someone makes a claim against you. Central Bedfordshire Council strongly recommends that you have 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, and 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.

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. You can find a specialist insurance broker on the internet or on the [British Insurance Brokers Association \(BIBA\) website](#).

## 6: is specialist guidance available elsewhere?

There is a lot of good guidance available for particular types of event. Some of it is linked to below.

The [Local Government Association's top tips](#) for holding a public event in your community.

[Your guide to organising a street party](#) on GOV.UK.

[The Street Party Site](#)

If you're planning an event, from a family fun ride to a challenging sportive, [British Cycling can help you](#) organise and publicise it, and provide event insurance.

You can find out about organising road running races with [Run Britain](#).

Find out more about event insurance with the Association of British Insurers' ['Celebrate – An ABI guide to planning an event'](#).

Please note the above is for guidance only organisers should check specific websites or seek DfT or legal advice to ensure they are operating safely and within the bounds of the law.