

# Community events

A councillor handbook



# Foreword

Britain's street party tradition has been well and truly resurrected. There is a growing recognition of, and enthusiasm for, the value that they bring to communities and local areas.

Councils have a key role in supporting, promoting and encouraging these events and, despite the challenging financial situation, it is encouraging to see how many councils have waived fees, provided grants to support events, or offered to cover insurance costs over special occasions such as the Royal Wedding, Diamond Jubilee and 2012 Games. For the 2012 Games, councils are engaging with their local sports clubs to develop a lasting and sustainable legacy. Sports facilities, both public and private, are being refurbished and communities are coming together through sporting activity.

I am delighted that the publication of this LGA handbook for elected members gives well deserved recognition to councils for their hard work in supporting residents and removing barriers to events. I hope this will serve to inspire you and your officers as you develop and test new approaches in your own areas.



**Councillor Flick Rea**  
Chair, Culture, Tourism, and Sport Board

It can be daunting for the first time organiser to identify what needs to be done to ensure public safety and the advice councils provide is welcome.

Generally councils work hard to offer alternatives and suggest safe ways for organisers to run events, but there may be occasions where we genuinely have to say no for public safety reasons and this should be avoided if at all possible. This sometimes leads to misrepresentation in the press about councils blocking events. We all need to work hard to dispel these myths and ensure that all residents are aware of and feel comfortable in accessing the help that councils can provide.

I feel that councils have excelled themselves in identifying ways to streamline their application processes, ensure transparency over licensing applications, and simplify the work needed to hold a community event.

This handbook is a timely celebration of the work councils are doing to reduce red tape without losing sight of the value that a regulatory perspective can bring. There is much that we can learn from each other, and share with other parts of government.



**Councillor Nilgun Canver**  
LGA Licensing Champion

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# Introduction

Fetes, carnivals, fairs and street parties – whether run by local residents, charities and community groups, councils or businesses – have a long and proud history of bringing people together, breaking down barriers and celebrating diversity.

If we ever doubted their survival in the busy, modern world, the sheer volume of events taking place for the Royal Wedding, Diamond Jubilee, and 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games must surely have convinced us otherwise. Councils provide crucial support for all events and have responded to the growing interest of communities by waiving fees, providing signage, and even offering party boxes complete with bunting, balloons and flags.

We see bringing communities together as one of our core purposes and we have certainly shown that we can do so. There is not a single council that has not taken action to encourage community spirit during the special occasions of 2011 and 2012. We now have an opportunity to learn from our experiences, harness this enthusiasm and continue the positive momentum.

The purpose of this handbook<sup>1</sup> is to help councillors think through how their council has responded to these events, hear about some of the new ways of working that have come about as a result, and consider the

<sup>1</sup> Councillors may wish to read this in conjunction with the Licensing Act 2003 Councillor's Handbook available in the 'Publications' section of [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

future. For instance, with the renewed vigour of street parties, is now the time to consider permanently relaxing our usual rules and charges for this type of event? How can we encourage these types of community activity at all times and not just wait for the special occasion?

We can also begin to think about the long-lasting beneficial effects that a well-run event can inspire. Following on from their successful Royal Wedding party, one road in Wyken subsequently held a carol concert in the street, with the Police Band playing for them, and neighbours have now set up a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

The focus of this handbook is on the smaller community events, such as street parties, small charity fundraisers and village fairs. Although an important part of community and economic life, larger corporate events and festivals are outside the scope of this handbook.



# Advice

Councils have a regulatory role for licensing the sale of alcohol, raffles, regulated entertainment and, for large events, food hygiene and safety. They also believe that supporting communities to come together, support each other, and celebrate is absolutely at the heart of the council role. Together, these roles can create a thriving and vibrant community.

There are a variety of ways that councils can be as accessible and helpful as possible to those organising community events. The simplest way of doing this is for councils to promote the information developed by specialist organisations such as Streets Alive, Community Matters, or the local council for voluntary services.

Displaying this information clearly will help your residents understand what support is out there and when it is appropriate for the council to become involved.

This can be built upon by setting set up your own webpage highlighting your support for communities and providing advice on what licences and permissions they may need.

Bristol City Council, routinely in the top five cities for numbers of street parties, has used its experience to identify three common types of community event, each of varying complexity. These are communicated through a simple webpage<sup>2</sup> to help residents understand the different conditions that apply to events of different sizes. The council also welcomes calls to discuss specific issues further.

Traditional Street Party	Enhanced Street Party	Street Event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a road closure and no other licence.</li> <li>No alcohol to be sold and no regulated entertainment.</li> <li>Expected attendance will be low as residents, close friends and family will be invited.</li> <li>Simple tables and chairs on the road.</li> <li>Minimum six week deadline to apply for the road closure</li> <li>No other costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a road closure</li> <li>Requires a £21 Temporary Event Notice (TEN) as there may be some on site alcohol sales via a pop up bar and some regulated entertainment (live music or performance).</li> <li>Expected attendance will be low as residents, close friends and family will be invited.</li> <li>Very little event infrastructure</li> <li>Minimum six week deadline to apply for the TEN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be more than one road closure.</li> <li>Will require a £21 Temporary Event Notice (TEN) and a £100 Site Licence</li> <li>500 or more people expected to attend</li> <li>Significant event infrastructure on site such as portaloos, generators and lighting</li> <li>Possible procession, alcohol sale and regulated entertainment.</li> <li>Minimum six week deadline to apply for road closure(s), TEN and site licence</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/street-parties>

Essex County Council has sought to achieve the widest coverage possible across residents and has brought together all their information on running events into a high profile, accessible web offer designed to reach all residents.

“With less than 2 months to go, excitement is already building for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and Essex County Council is encouraging residents to get involved and hold street parties to mark the occasion. We want to make it as simple as possible for people to organise their own street parties.”

**Councillor Peter Martin, Leader of Essex County Council**

At [www.essex.gov.uk/streetparties](http://www.essex.gov.uk/streetparties) there is a helpful guide to organising a street party, but the support doesn’t just stop when applications are approved. All residents can visit [www.goodforessex.org/streetparties](http://www.goodforessex.org/streetparties) which contains information to help people promote their parties, such as the ‘post your party’ facility and the opportunity to request a free pack of information including posters, invites and a bunting template.

As well as the Good for Essex website, if residents are stuck for ideas and want to share top tips or stories or want to ask a question about street parties they can also visit [www.facebook.com/StreetPartiesInEssex](http://www.facebook.com/StreetPartiesInEssex)

Social media is something that has yet to be fully tapped by councils, but already examples like Essex show the value of harnessing it.

Councils can provide a range of advice to help people run events, from advice on funding to use of council premises, to provision of road signs and finding volunteers. These are valuable services that are really appreciated by residents and community groups – so make sure they are aware of what you offer!

For instance, East Devon Council held a seminar explaining to community groups how to apply for grants, how to run a street party and how to apply for road closures. Over 150 people attended, showing the serious appetite for this kind of support.

Many councils have also chosen to produce their own events guide, tailored to the local community. Newham Council has produced what is perhaps one of the most impressive of these guides to launch their ‘Lets Get this Party Started’ campaign around the 2012 Games.

Containing advice and guidance at every stage of the way, from road closures to promoting the event, Newham also offers small grants to cover some of the costs.

“This year is set to be an amazing and special time in Newham’s history. To celebrate the London 2012 Games and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, I am organising an exciting programme of events and activities and I want to encourage all residents to get involved by either being part of one of our events or organising their own community celebration.”

“Newham has the enviable reputation of delivering a fantastic annual series of events that bring people together. We are the most diverse place in the country and we celebrate this through exciting and entertaining local activities that are open to all.”

**Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham<sup>3</sup>**

The LGA, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Cabinet Office, Volunteering England and other partners are all working together to pool knowledge and create a simple ‘How to’ guide for communities, complementing the simple DCLG guide designed for street parties.<sup>4</sup> The guide will be ready for use by councils, or can be adapted to recognise local circumstances and will be available on the LGA website.

Whatever you decide on, make sure that any information is in a manageable and easily digestible format for people who may not be used to forms and regulations. Advice is hugely valuable, but on occasion councils have overwhelmed residents in their desire to help, and made the headlines as a result.

One council recently in the spotlight provided a healthy and safety booklet over 30 pages long for a simple street party. After reading it several times, though the resident found that it contained helpful information, they flagged it up to their local newspaper as an example of confusing town hall bureaucracy. Mistakes like these can be easily avoided with a little councillor input.



<sup>3</sup> [www.newham.gov.uk/EntertainmentandLeisure/Letsgetthepartystarted.htm](http://www.newham.gov.uk/EntertainmentandLeisure/Letsgetthepartystarted.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/streetpartyguide>

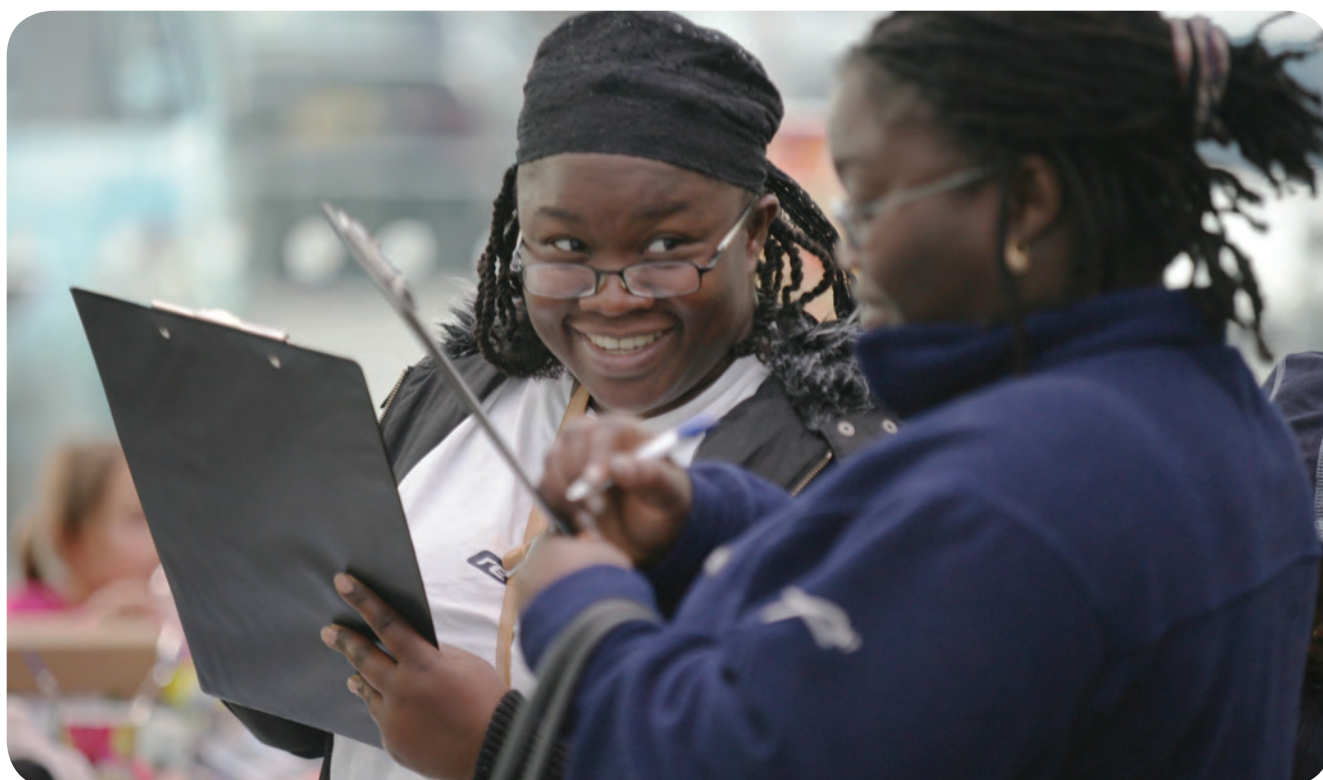
# Applications

Councils have made big progress in simplifying the application and notification forms that need to be completed before an event can take place. This has had clear benefits for communities, charities and residents, and we should be proud of this work.

The DCLG have produced a template form that reduces red tape to a minimum and is easily accessible, though councils can adapt this if they can make it more accessible or to respond to local need.

Remember that the questions should always be suited to the type of event. The questions designed for a large, professionally organised festival complete with funfair rides and food stalls will be much more in depth than are needed for a small street party or many charity fundraising events. This could be indicated by providing accompanying guidance, advising organisers which questions may not be appropriate, or by producing several event specific forms.

It takes a little more effort in the short term, but both you and the residents will reap the rewards later on, as Westminster explains in the next section.





# Notification and timing

Councils have a responsibility to make sure any residents or businesses that may be affected by events, such as through any changes to the road network, are clearly notified in advance. However, there are many myths about the amount of notice required and how this information should be communicated.

If, like Westminster, you are host to international concerts and events, it is clearly vital that as much notice is provided as possible. But there is a big difference between an international concert and a street party that residents may wish to hold at relatively short notice. In these instances, it can be very frustrating if the council states that it requires a 12 week notice period.

Westminster recognises the importance of a graduated and flexible approach when considering applications. Full details are set out on its website and include the ability to skip the pre-application process for short timescales.

“When you think of events in Westminster it’s tempting to think only in terms of Royal Weddings and Olympic Live Screens and their supporting fund-raising pop concerts and our share of the Notting Hill Carnival.

But we never lose sight that a quarter of a million people live here, a large number of them in the areas of the West End like Soho and Covent Garden and they like to celebrate royal occasions as much as people in any remote village.

We publish easy-to-access guidelines and our special events team are available to support people in putting on community events safely.

To ensure it’s open to all, we have simplified our application system and when the event isn’t commercial, we are generally able to waive the administration fee.

We are proud of our local community events and we have to ensure that our policies and operations don’t lose sight of our residents’ civic rights and pleasures.”

**Councillor Audrey Lewis,  
Westminster Council’s Licensing  
Chairman**

Councillors will wish to be clear about why they are requiring a certain length of notification, and whether this is proportionate to the type of event. Again, it may be useful to vary the length of notifications required according to the event.

For road closures, the actual legislation<sup>5</sup> is not specific on this matter and we go into this in more detail later. While most road closures by law require publicity and a set amount of notifications, special events are not covered and it is up to the council to decide what is proportionate.

Other permissions, as for licensing, have specific deadlines that must be met if a licence is to be refused. All of these are designed to provide a quick turnaround for applicants, and new changes to Temporary Events Notices (TENs) will allow for as little as five days notice. The relaxation in rules has been introduced specifically to make it easier to hold smaller, low risk events.

Many smaller events should therefore be able to take place with relatively little advance warning, but there is no denying that the more time there is to plan, the better and safer an event can be. Councillors may well wish to take this into consideration if requiring a specific notice period and ensure support and advice is as easily accessible as possible to encourage early contacts from events organisers.



<sup>5</sup> Section 16A of the Road Transport Regulations Act 1984

# Road closures

Along with health and safety and insurance, problems with closing a road are one of the main barriers cited by groups wishing to run an event. The fact that road closures are often the responsibility of a different council from the one issuing licences and temporary event notices further complicates the matter in the eyes of the organiser.

In legislative terms, Section 16A(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 enables authorities to make orders to restrict or prohibit temporarily the use of a road by vehicles to facilitate any sporting event, social event or entertainment which is held on it. The power can be used to close roads for both large and small events, including processions and street parties. Some authorities make orders under section 21 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to control traffic in connection with parades and events taking place on roads.

There is no statutory requirement to publish a notice of making an order in a local newspaper. Nevertheless, councils will wish to satisfy themselves that the power is exercised in a reasonable manner and that, as in the case of other events that require traffic restrictions, proper consideration is given to traffic management.

Councils may use their own judgement in deciding what constitutes adequate consultation and notification of proposals to make orders for Diamond Jubilee events. For example, closing a residential street or cul-de-sac for a street party would not have the wider traffic impacts resulting from closure of a main through route.

When considering 'proportionate' notifications to those affected, you will want to recognise that street parties will have needed to ensure that there is demand within the street. As such, they will have gathered evidence and advertised the activity well in advance of the council's consideration. There will be little need for the council to require further work after this, although it will wish to ensure this has been carried out properly.

In two-tier areas, you will wish to ensure that your local policy is supported by that of the County highways department, or vice versa, and that event organisers can easily navigate their way between the two.

It is not the difficulty of applying for permission, though, that is the main barrier to holding an event. Instead, it is the charges associated with closing a road. This has been such a significant barrier that in 2011 Communities Secretary Eric Pickles MP persuaded the Department for Transport to retract the guidance that was felt to be responsible for councils charging for road closures.

The subsequent statement provided clarification on the legislation covering road closures and urged councils to charge only in exceptional circumstances. Councils do, of course, need to consider the administrative charges associated with supporting road closures. It is also worth considering the view of the charity Streets Alive, which has found that charges over £30 are a major deterrent to many street party organisers.

Brent, Cambridgeshire County and Camden Councils are among the many that have chosen to completely waive all fees associated with street parties over the Diamond Jubilee period.

Signage, such as ‘road closed’ signs, can also cost a lot of money. In some cases, charges for providing and placing signage can reach up to £2,000 which is clearly beyond the reach of almost all small events.

There are ways around this though, and a number of councils have taken action to ensure that it is not a barrier to events. Coventry City Council will be paying for barriers, as well as delivering and collecting them to each street, and will be advertising road closures on its website this year, saving money on a public notice in the local newspaper.

Nottinghamshire County Council has also arranged to deliver traffic cones and road signs to organisers during the week before the event, and arrange for subsequent collection.

Government said to councils last summer that:

“Neither are specific signs or other traffic management equipment required. Local authorities should act proportionately, wisely, and in the public interest – and highways law do not present any barriers to that.”<sup>6</sup>

This has been the subject of much debate and is something on which councils will wish to form their own views. A number have responded by either leasing signs to organisers on a refundable deposit basis, or by purchasing their own stock purely for use at community events.

Bristol City Council uses the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 for about 150 events a year. It makes a clear distinction between public events and the private street party and requires only six weeks notification. It does not charge for the closures as it calculates that each application takes less than an hour of officers’ time. Advertising purely on the council website also keeps costs to a minimum.

Anything bigger than a street party, especially those involving high streets, will of course require greater publicity and consultation, and can therefore appropriately be required to give more notice.

<sup>6</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/DCLGstreetparty>

There are other ways of tackling street closures. Central Bedfordshire Council have made a traffic order covering the whole area which means that any charges that would normally be incurred for road closures for street parties have been waived. The council also has made available lots of help and advice to local people to make local parties go with a swing.

“The Diamond Jubilee is a great opportunity for communities to get together to celebrate this occasion. The council wants to make it as easy as possible for residents to organise their event but also to ensure that they are safe for everyone taking part. Depending on the type of event different rules may apply so it is worth checking first.”

**Councillor Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Services, Central Bedfordshire Council**

In addition, the council has run a series of roadshows across the area for event organisers to discuss their proposed events and get free advice and guidance on organising and running them safely.



# Insurance

Insurance is one of the most discussed topics when it comes to events. Councils will of course want to ensure that residents can be adequately compensated if the worst happens, and councils should not have to pick up the tab on behalf of taxpayers where damage is caused to streets or other public property.

We all recognise the value that community events can bring; not just in terms of a sense of ‘togetherness’, but also in practical manifestations such as reduced crime, littering and support for neighbours. So there can be a very valid financial reason for supporting them, as well as our genuine desire to support the communities we are elected to serve.

However, a resident wishing to hold a small event can instantly become discouraged on being told that they need to obtain £5 million public liability insurance. So we, as elected representatives, need to consider if there is a better way to handle this.

Councils are, as always, already considering how they can balance these two important responsibilities. At the heart of the decision is recognising that there is no ‘one size fits all’ and doing what councils do best, which is identifying local need and responding to it in a proportionate and risk based manner.

At a minimum, every council can be transparent about why it feels insurance is appropriate and why that level of insurance has been selected. Typically, £5 million has been the default amount, but following on from the experience of the Royal Wedding there may now be a case for reducing the cover required for the very small event, such as a street party limited to the residents of only one or two roads.

Councillors should feel confident in requiring officers to explain how they have decided on their figures. In the street party example, critics claim that £5 million will cover the cost of two deaths, and full resurfacing of the road. There have been no examples of this being needed, and some councils have worked with Streets Alive to place the emphasis on risk management. This enables them to be sure that everything reasonable has been done to make things safe and they feel able to waive the requirement of public liability insurance.

In order to promote the city and closer community ties Oxford City Council has exempted small street parties from the need to obtain public liability insurance, provided that:

- The event is not publicised for the general public and therefore will not draw in people from the wider area.

- The event applies to the residents of one or two streets only and not to larger areas of the City. Therefore attendance will generally involve less than 150 people.
- There is no amplified entertainment which may cause nuisance to the wider area.
- There is no alcohol or food being sold.
- The organisers agree to and sign the disclaimer on the application form.

For anything larger than a very small, private event, public liability insurance is going to be needed, but does this always have to be taken out by the event organiser?

Following the success of the Royal Wedding street parties last year, Hillingdon Council has decided to again cover the cost of public liability insurance and road closures to enable residents to hold street parties at no cost to them. To manage risk the council's Special Events team, working with departments across the council, formulated a set of procedures and protocols that residents agree to meet when applying to hold a street party. They have had 102 Diamond Jubilee party applications to date.

“As a council we support our people, environment and heritage, and with the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee we are able to do all three at the same time. There will be a range of events for residents of all ages to enjoy and take part in.”

**Councillor Ray Puddifoot, Leader, Hillingdon Council<sup>7</sup>**

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council believes that it is in the interest of street party organisers to have public liability insurance in place for their street parties. While the risk may be low there is always the chance of something going wrong and this insurance will provide both the organisers and the wider public who might be affected with some financial protection if the unthinkable happens.

The council is also very keen to encourage the community to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee and does not want there to be any financial constraints that might prevent them from organising street parties. It has therefore, taken out a public liability insurance policy which will enable all parties on the highway or council land that have completed the simplified application process to be covered by the policy at no cost to themselves. Party organisers then have the option of taking out an ‘all-risks’ cover for a small premium.

The costs to the council are minimal. While it will depend on the final number of parties that take place the maximum cost that Basingstoke and Deane is expecting to pay is £5,000. Compared against the amount that staging a large scale public event would have cost it would seem to be well money well spent.

<sup>7</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/hillingdonjubilee>

“Our approach to celebrating the Diamond Jubilee has centred around the community and encouraging them to feel empowered to get together and organise their own events. Paying for insurance seemed like a great way of supporting them to do this while still ensuring that everybody is properly protected. We have also run a series of workshops and produced a simple street party guide to help people along the way. It has been very well received and everybody is really looking forward to the Jubilee.”

**Tony Curtis, Chief Executive,  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough  
Council**

It will not be appropriate for every council to either absorb the cost or waive the need for insurance in these ways. That is why the LGA has been working closely with the Association of British Insurers to identify the most appropriate packages for small events. Insurers are increasingly offering tailored packages designed for small events and the charities Streets Alive and The Big Lunch have negotiated favourable rates with insurance firms for private street parties. Information on these is available on [www.streetparty.org.uk](http://www.streetparty.org.uk) or [www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com) and councils are welcome to signpost people to this information.

Once you have decided on your approach, it is worth providing people with guidance on the amount of cost that they might incur. It is a truism that people always assume the worst and we can make a very positive difference by informing people of their options. Generally speaking, £5 million public liability insurance can cost as little as £50, which can be recovered through donations at the event, or through a small raffle on the day.





# Landowner's liability

The majority of land in the UK is in private ownership, and it offers an unparalleled and often untapped resource. Councils will welcome private landowners opening up their land to either sustainable or one-off public use.

Although it will be important for landowners to seek their own advice, councils can encourage this by addressing concerns about being held liable for an accident.

A useful information source is the Sports and Recreation Alliance, which has offered advice to public landowners in the approach to the 2012 Games. The Alliance has explored the Occupier's Liability Act 1957, which provides the legal framework for this situation. Following this, they have advised landowners that:

“If you allow your land to be used by the community you only owe the same ‘duty of care’ as to all other visitors. This does not impose an obligation to protect participants from risks inherent in any activity willingly undertaken.”

The Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group<sup>8</sup> website is another source of information, covering situations in both rural and urban environments, and explains the guiding principles of the law. The Group includes Cheshire East Council, which has contributed its practical experiences in managing public risk.

Councils may wish to signpost to these sources of advice, with disclaimers, as part of their licensing policy or events pages.



<sup>8</sup> <http://vscg.co.uk/guiding-principles/risk-control>

# Licensing

Licensable activities are set out in Schedule One of the Licensing Act 2003. They include activities such as selling alcohol, music and dance performances, and putting on plays. These are applicable to all events regardless of size, although the introduction of the Live Music Act 2012 in October 2012 will relax the regulations for the playing of live and recorded music at events with fewer than 200 people.

Councils have considerable experience in licensing these activities, and further support for councillors is available in the Licensing Act 2003 Handbook produced by the LGA. However, there can be confusion among event organisers about the types of licences that are appropriate.

The recent Cabinet Office publication, 'Unshackling Good Neighbours', found that:

“For a fund raising event at which music was to be played, a sporting event shown on television and alcohol served, over 10 separate licences could be required...It is clear that this is much resented by the public.”<sup>9</sup>

In actual fact, this is a misunderstanding and, while each of those activities is indeed licensable, a single licence could enable all those activities to take place; although it is also true that activities such as playing recorded music or running a raffle in advance of the event would require separate licences.

It is clear from this that there is still work to be done in making the licensing process clear and accessible to the general public.

The Cabinet Office report goes on to recognise the work of Brighton City Council and the charity Brighton Resource Centre for putting together:

“excellent basic guidance about when [civil society organisations] are likely to need licences and signposts where [civil society organisations] in Brighton can find more detailed information.”<sup>10</sup>

You will wish, as elected members, to consider how you can make licensing information readily accessible. Although most council websites contain a clear breakdown of licensable activities, it may be less clear that it is not necessary to obtain a separate licence for each activity. Members of licensing committees, in particular, will be able to play a major role in addressing this issue.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/unshackling-good-neighbours>

<sup>10</sup> [www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/events/index.asp](http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/events/index.asp)

It is also worth noting, as you consider applications for temporary events, the European Services Directive 2009. The Directive<sup>11</sup> requires that all licence applications, authorisations and administrative procedures to be completed by businesses within the service sector must be processed as quickly as possible and, in any event, within a reasonable time period which is fixed and made public in advance.

In essence, any requirements imposed on organisers must be:

- necessary for public safety
- proportionate
- made public in advance.

The implications of this are that it would be disproportionate to apply the same requirements for large festivals and corporate events to smaller community events. Councils' experience of issuing Temporary Event Notices (TENs) will mean this is not an unfamiliar process to them, but we have evidenced where recent experience with smaller events has enabled councils to go still further in applying proportionality to activities. The example from Bristol City Council, cited earlier, is a case in point.

The Electronic Licensing Management portal has been established by Government, with the support of the LGA, to help councils interpret the Directive and to implement it effectively. Your officers will be familiar with it, but it can provide helpful background for any councillor involved with regulatory services.<sup>12</sup>

Councils will also wish to consider the impact of the licensing reforms introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011; in particular, the introduction of the Late TEN, which requires a minimal amount of advance notification.



11 Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market  
<http://tinyurl.com/EUServices>

12 <http://elmsportal.businesslink.gov.uk/>

# Maintaining public safety

Health and safety is frequently cited as a reason for preventing events, and one that the popular press delight in covering. It is therefore important to ensure that any guidance issued by the council is both clear and proportionate.

We have cited earlier the example of the council that over enthusiastically provided a 30 page health and safety booklet to support a simple street party, and anecdotal evidence from other incidents suggest that many arise from a well-meaning, but misplaced or disproportionate, desire to ensure public safety.

Councillors have a key role in ensuring that frontline staff, including those in schools, street services, and community development roles, are properly trained in assessing risk. Limiting miscommunication from the start will go a long way to establishing a culture of community activity and resilience. The European Services Directive, referred to in the licensing section, underlines that the approaches to service delivery must be reasonable, and these are valuable regulations to keep in mind when determining if conditions imposed on events are suitable.

Health and safety is an area where councils do not have to operate alone. Other statutory and voluntary organisations can provide support to event organisers, and we cover some of the main bodies below. Councils will have established links with their local bodies, but you may find it reduces the burden on all authorities if effective signposting is available on relevant websites.

## Police

There is often confusion by communities on the role of police in approving public events and so it is useful for you as their elected representative to be able to clarify this misunderstanding with your residents. The police are a responsible authority under the Licensing Act, but their ability to make representations is strictly limited to the four licensing act objectives.

In fact, the police have no general duty to preserve public safety at any public event, except where there are imminent or likely threats to life. The responsibility for public safety rests with the organisers of an event, the owners of the land on which it takes place and the relevant council if the event takes place on a public road.



When planning a public event, organisers should consider the likely implications for crime and disorder. For small community events, these are not likely to be significant. However, neighbourhood policing teams will be happy to contribute their views.

For larger events, the police advise that organisers create an action plan to counter these, and inform the local police of their intentions. This could form part of a wider risk assessment covering health and safety. The goal is not to introduce a tick-box exercise but to ensure organisers have properly considered the implications of the event.

Depending on the size of the event, and the level of potential risk, organisers may be charged for policing costs. West Oxfordshire District Council has produced an excellent guide for members of the public, and councillors may wish to consider developing their own equivalent.<sup>13</sup>

Events with the police as partners are slightly different; organisers might invite the police to participate (eg have a stall or an engagement presence) which is different to actually policing the event. In this instance organisers should contact their local neighbourhood policing team, details of which can be found on [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)

For the third year running Derby's Multi-Faith Centre and the University of Derby's Islamic Society, supported by Derbyshire Police, organised a Community Cup six-a-side football tournament to break down barriers and promote community cohesion. The local police entered a team to compete along with teams from many of Derby's diverse communities such as Afghan, Christian, Kurdish, Muslim, Sikh and Somali.

<sup>13</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/Oxonevents>

Police Constable Stephen Gregory from the Prevent Community Engagement Team and President of the university's Islamic Society, presented the winners with prizes. PC Gregory said: "Events such as this play a key part in community cohesion."

## Fire services

The fire and rescue service is not yet a 'responsible authority' under the Licensing Act but they can still play an important role in ensuring safe public events. Many councils already have informal ways of working that allow their fire authority to comment on event proposals.

In London there is a more formalised system and council officers can input information about the event onto the London Events Co-ordination Calendar which the London Fire Brigade access.

There is not a requirement that individual organisers or community groups themselves must contact their local fire and rescue service to make them aware of any community event they are holding, but it is good practice for them to do so and the council can encourage this discussion through the guidance and information it provides to event organisers.

However, organisers must carry out fire risk assessments and fire management plans in accordance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If residents or community groups need help with the risk assessment they should contact their local Fire and Rescue Service who will advise.

Alternatively, organisers may also consider employing a fire safety specialist to assist. If organisers fail to carry out a fire risk assessment or fire management plan then the fire brigade would be the relevant enforcement body.

Firework displays and bonfires naturally fall within the remit of the fire authority and councils may find it helpful to signpost to their local fire brigade on this issue. Detailed advice is available from authorities, and the London Fire Brigade is just one example of many.<sup>14</sup>

Fire authorities can also have an active role in contributing to community events. 'Play it Safe' was an initiative funded by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Community Interest Company aiming to reduce anti-social behaviour, deliberate fires, and improve general health, wellbeing and community cohesion amongst local young people.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service were key partners in making this four week project a success; delivering sports and games sessions and teaching about the dangers and consequences of lighting fires and so on. Over 1000 young people attended over the four week project held in the Hednesford Hills area of Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.

## Ambulance services and first aid services

While not all events are large enough or high risk enough to require a team of first aiders, it is advised that any event a specific individual is appointed to deal with any injuries or emergencies on the day.

During national celebrations, ambulance services can experience increasingly busy periods. To reduce the strain on your local ambulance service, there are some minor injuries event organisers or volunteers can treat themselves, without the help of a medical professional. St John Ambulance has produced an excellent document giving first aid advice for street parties which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/SJAmbulance>

Some larger size or higher risk community events where certain activities may be taking place will require specific first aid cover to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those attending. St John Ambulance volunteers are trained in advanced first aid and lifesaving skills and attend thousands of events each year. Organisers can contact **08700 10 49 50** to find out the type of first aid cover their event requires and be put in touch with their local St John Ambulance branch.

## Voluntary and community sector

As councillors, you engage with residents and voluntary groups on a daily basis and together you can create a thriving and vibrant community.

We have discussed partnership throughout this document and many of our case studies have shown us how invaluable community partnerships have been in developing their approaches.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/bonfiresandfireworks.asp#events>

Eastbourne Council, for instance, has worked with local charity Eastbourne Cultural Communities Network to organise a three-day free festival containing: competitions, food, live music and dance, beacon lighting, and much more. The collaboration between both partners will ensure that there is something for everyone to enjoy.

As well as frequently being event organisers themselves, local voluntary and community organisations have a wide range of resources, knowledge and skills to contribute to any community event and it is recommended organisers engage them at the earliest possible stage of planning an event, to ensure that local people and community groups are involved as active participants in the process rather than as passive recipients of someone else's initiative. This will help ensure success and community cohesion.



Members of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) (Councils for Voluntary Services, Voluntary Action groups, voluntary sector forums and equivalent bodies) provide support and resources to over 160,000 local frontline organisations across England.

Your local NAVCA member is a useful resource to both yourself as a councillor and your residents to identify voluntary organisations with whom to work in organising community events, forming groups and committees and identifying possible sources of funding. NAVCA maintains an online directory of local NAVCA members which you can search by name or by location to find the one that covers your area<sup>15</sup>.

If the organiser is seeking to involve faith communities and faith-based organisations, it is always worth contacting them to ensure that the event will not coincide with important festivals or observances. It may be easier to approach an interfaith group. The Inter Faith Network for the UK maintains a directory of local groups<sup>16</sup> and the BBC website has a calendar of all major religious dates<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.navca.org.uk/directory>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/members.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>

# What else can you do?

There is no limit to what else you and your council can develop to support community activity in your area. The Jubilee has seen a huge variety of different approaches, some temporary and others longer term.

Nor is there a fixed definition of good practice. What works in one area will not be suitable in another, and the examples and advice in this guide should be considered as part of a menu of options that you are able to supplement and amend as you think appropriate.

Funding, of course, can make a significant difference to events. Many councils have retained their small grants programmes because of the value they can bring. Small amounts can often make a huge difference.

Even if you can't commit to a fund through the year, it can make a real difference during a special celebration. Wakefield Council has a £21,000 Queens Diamond Jubilee Fund which will be allocated across the district, £1000 per ward, and community groups are invited to apply for up to £500 to help celebrate the event.

Grants of £250 have been awarded by Christchurch Council for events run by twenty groups ranging from an indoor Jubilee 'street party' for older people attending Christchurch Day Care Centre to an 2012 Games Carnival Celebration by Twynham Rangers.

As well as other street parties, picnics, lunches and afternoon teas, events also include a water sports 'mini-olympics' by the Community Partnership and a 'Sporting Glory' exhibition at the Red House Museum. The grant fund was announced as a way of the council celebrating the two great events happening in this country this year.

Cambridgeshire County Council has set up the special fund to help local groups and communities create activities and events to celebrate the London 2012 Games throughout the whole of the summer. Grants of up to £500 will be available, with applicants expected to agree to contribute additional funding or support and ensure that the event is linked to the 2012 Games.

In-kind support is another valuable contribution that councils can make. Basildon Council has excelled in this – offering 100 'double party in a box' packs for both St George's Day and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Each box includes 25 bowler hats, 25 hand held flags, 25 balloons, a pack of bunting and one large flag – one St George's themed and one Union Jack themed – along with a template poster for each event for residents to use for promotion.



It may not be possible to go to those levels, but councils have considerable in-house expertise that could make a helpful contribution to running a community event. Why not include supporting events as part of your employee volunteering policy? Graphic designers, environmental health officers or community development workers will all have specialist skills that will be very welcome, but any enthusiastic volunteer is an asset. As well as supporting community activity, it can present the council in accessible and supportive light.

The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics have been billed as the greenest games ever. You may well wish, therefore, to use your influence as a councillor to encourage local event organisers to consider the sustainability of their events. Support and information on this issue would require another handbook in its own right, but fortunately there are plenty of guides available. LOCOG, Olympic sponsors and environmental charities have all worked together to highlight the top ten ways that events can be 'greened'. Their sustainability guidelines can be found on the London Games webpage<sup>18</sup>.



<sup>18</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/sustainableevents>

# Further advice and support

As a councillor there are numerous organisations which it may be useful for you to know about as a resource to assist councils and local communities when organising and running events.

## Knowledge Hub

The LGA's Knowledge Hub is an online platform which enables users to create connections to peers and experts in their fields of interest, share learning, experiences and ideas, and drive local government self-regulation and improvement.

The LGA has created a dedicated Community Events Group<sup>19</sup> on the Knowledge Hub. It is an open forum to discuss ways of making it easier for communities and voluntary groups to run events, share existing effective practice and discuss regulatory barriers facing communities and local authorities.

If you become a member of the group you can ask questions of other group members, share resources like useful publications, promote events you are running and find out about others, and work collaboratively with others using the 'wiki' feature.

You can use the 'global search' to find a range of material on running community events from all over the Knowledge Hub. However, the Knowledge Hub's clever search function will not only allow you to find things more easily, but also enables the information to find you, based on your profile and activity – just look out for related content and suggestions panels.

## LAEOG

The Local Authority Events Organiser's Group (LAEOG) is made up of local authority officers that have a remit to deal with events. It is very much an organisation that is "by local authorities for local authorities". Council officers have an important role to play in organising, facilitating or authorising community events. These may vary from a small teddy bear's picnic to a large commercial outdoor concert.

Yet there is a huge variation in the level of knowledge, skills and experience of officers that are dealing with events within local authorities. LAEOG want to drive standards up to a consistently high level right across the UK and be an organisation that its members can come to and find out the information they need and learn from others.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/communityevents>

LAEOG's aims are to help its members build upon their skills and knowledge in event management as well as improving consistency and quality in event management from one authority to another. The main way it does this is through sharing good practice and information, and providing training. It is also engaging with the industry to support changes to guidance and legislation.

The strength of the group is its members and the wealth of knowledge they possess and can share with others. Any officer that is employed by a local authority and has a remit of events within their role is eligible to join. You might wish to encourage relevant officers in your local authority to join this group to improve event management expertise and skills in your council.

To find out more about the organisation visit [www.laeog.org](http://www.laeog.org) or contact Andy Grove, Chair of LAEOG: email [chair@laeog.org](mailto:chair@laeog.org) or telephone 01256 845455.

## Streets Alive

Streets Alive runs the popular <http://www.streetparty.org.uk/> site where you can find useful information on running street parties. It also offers training and resources for building community spirit at the street level. It works with councils to help them understand some of the inadvertent barriers that can exist, preventing street parties from taking place.

## The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch, run by the Eden Project is an annual get-together on the first weekend of June for neighbours. In 2012 it is being held on Sunday 3rd June and is called The Big Jubilee Lunch as part of the Diamond Jubilee Programme. Communities are invited to take part by holding an event in the street, back garden, park or local community venue.

The Big Lunch provide all the information, support and resources needed to help residents get started. You can signpost your residents to [www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com) or they can call 0845 850 8181 to get a free pack with posters, invites, stickers, seeds, recipe ideas and much more. The website also has lots of ideas, practical advice, downloadable resources and lesson plans and the team are available to answer any questions communities may have.

## Community Matters

Community Matters provides information, advice and support for **community** and voluntary groups throughout the UK. It offers easy to use advice on all aspects of setting up and managing a community organisation from health and safety to writing press releases.

For example, it can advise on whether community groups need insurance for their event, and what type of insurance they may need, as well as legal issues such as licensing for raffles, bingo, serving food and playing music.

Its full range of support and guidance is available at:

[www.communitymatters.org.uk/onlineguidance](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/onlineguidance)



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