

## **Guide to organising a small community event**

This guide is to help those organising smaller community and local events attended by fewer than 500, including those working on the site. This guidance will help you understand how to comply with legislation and good practice in order to create a safe environment for everyone involved, from volunteers to attendees.

Choosing the right venue, good planning and organisation are keys to putting on a successful event that is both safe and enjoyable for everyone.

To achieve this, it is important to consider all aspects of the event from start to finish.

As an outline the following are broadly things organisers need to consider:

### **Can it work?**

Can you achieve your goals safely and successfully with the funds available to you? Start the budget early and be cautious about over estimating income.

Choose a date that does not clash with other events taking place or which might impact yours, including events further afield which could affect the availability of suppliers or have an impact on local transport. Check that the key suppliers, equipment, contractors and staff you need will be available on the date you need them.

### **Venue & Infrastructure**

In choosing the right venue for your event you need to consider key factors, including the availability of on-site services, such as water and electricity, as these can be expensive to bring into a site. Consider the venue's suitability in terms of factors such as the impact on the local community/residents, how easy it is for people to travel to the venue using public transport and arrangements for car parking etc. If the event is on public or council owned land you will also need to apply for permission several weeks in advance.

### **Timescales**

Give yourself as much time as possible to organise the event. It takes time to consider all the aspects of planning and to organise people; artists and the better suppliers tend to be booked up well in advance, while applying for licenses and permissions may also require months of advance notice.

### **Weather**

Consider how the weather at that time of year could affect attendances as well as from a practical point-of-view, all those working on the site, including traders, performers etc. Bad weather may affect movements in the car park (e.g. mud) as well as getting equipment on and off the site. In hot weather, the provision of drinking water and shade/shelter may be essential.

### **Who will attend?**

Consider the audience attending and any specific needs they may have in terms of facilities or support services, such as lost children, baby changing, welfare support and lost property.

## Planning Schedule

Creating a planning schedule identifying dates when jobs should be done and by whom helps to ensure that nothing is overlooked.

A written Event Management Plan is a valuable planning tool as it provides you, and all those working with you, with a guide to responsibilities and action deadlines. It also provides documentary evidence of the planning that has gone into the event should anything go wrong. It is also a valuable tool if you need to apply for a licence as Authorities will generally want to see evidence of planning.

- [Event Management Plan Example](#) (Word Document .docx).

Typically, the Event Management Plan should include:

- A description of the event, including dates/times, numbers expected to attend, type of audiences (e.g. families) and the activities that will be taking place (e.g. live music, fireworks, sales of alcohol etc.)
- Who is the lead responsible person responsible for the overall event (the event manager)?
- Who is responsible for other responsible roles?
- What staff are needed (don't underestimate what you need) and who is responsible for each element of the event. A management structure plan should be drawn up stating who is responsible – and their roles - for each part of the event (e.g. parking, staging, health & safety etc.)
- The budget/finance – this should be updated regularly and should include details of income sources and anticipated expenditure.
- Timescales for each action
- The layout and design of the event within the venue, including access considerations
- Detailed infrastructure requirements
- Details of all suppliers and contractors
- Provision of safety services (e.g. first aid, fire, security, police etc.)
- An emergency response plan should an incident occur
- Local authority and emergency services liaison
- Insurances required (3<sup>rd</sup> party/public liability at least)
- Marketing and press plans, including implementation dates
- A communications plan (e.g. radios, phones, internet, emergency etc.)
- A production schedule, including build-up and break-down plans
- An operational plan for when the event takes place, including who is responsible for what, briefings for volunteers and a clear understanding of the communication channels being used.
- A detailed Take Down plan – closing the site is as important as building it – this should include the safe removal of equipment and structures as well as cleaning the site to leave it as you found it, as well as a detailed debrief with all the key people involved.

## Accessibility

It is important that events are as inclusive as possible and that organisers consider the needs of those who may need support such as wheelchair access or accessible toilets. Attitude is Everything offers a framework of holistic inclusive practice for live events via its [Live Access Charter](#).

## Animals & Welfare

If animals are involved in the event, it is important to consider their welfare such as providing water and, if necessary, suitable shelter on site. The keeping and use of some animals requires a licence (e.g. pony rides) and the welfare of animals is covered under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. If people are allowed to feed or touch the animals there must be suitable hand washing facilities available including running water, soap and paper towels or other means for hygienically drying them.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [23. Animal Welfare](#)

### **Attendee Management**

Even with small community events consideration needs to be given to making it as safe and easy as possible for people attending. This may simply involve providing clear signage to direct people to the event, exits, parking etc. and avoiding any pinch points in the layout of the site. In some areas barriers (such as rope lines) and stewards may be helpful in directing people, particularly in car parks. It is important that those doing these jobs are well briefed and advised what to do if conflicts occur.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [13. Crowd Management](#) and [12. Barriers & Fencing](#)

### **Children and At-Risk Adults**

Consideration should be given to how to deal with children becoming separated from parents at events. It is good practice to appoint two people, ideally with appropriate training, to look after lost children and at-risk adults in this situation. It is also important that all those involved in running the event know who is responsible and what to do in such situations, including when to inform the police. Details of lost children should never be broadcast in a way that could increase the risk.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [22. Safeguarding Children & Young People](#)

### **Communications**

The ability for all those working on the event to communicate effectively is critical, particularly in emergencies. If reliance is to be placed on mobile phones, make sure that there is a sufficient signal available at the venue and that those using them keep them open for receiving calls. It is also important to ensure that everyone has the appropriate contact details of those working on the site. If a handheld radio system is to be used, it is important to properly brief those using them on their use. Where code words are to be used, always keep them simple and ensure that they are understood by all those working on the event. Consideration also needs to be given to communicating with the public attending the event.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [6. Communication](#)

### **Crime & Police**

It is good practice to advise the local police in advance of your event taking place as they may be able to advise of any specific crime risks you should be aware of. They should also be informed immediately if a crime or incident takes place at the event.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [26. Dealing with Crime & Disorder](#) and [28. Working with the Police](#)

### **Crowd Management**

Crowd management and planning relate to all aspects of ensuring that those attending an event, including those working there, are kept safe. This process starts with how people will access the event and move around the site to how they depart, particularly in an emergency. Keeping people properly informed and directed are key elements in creating a safe event environment. The principles of crowd management planning apply even for small, free to enter and open access events taking place in streets or in public open spaces.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [13. Crowd Management](#).

### **Electricity**

Is there an existing electricity supply to the site or sufficiently close to it that can be used? What permissions do you need to access it. In some cases, it may be less expensive to use generators or sustainable alternative power than to establish a link to the local supply.

Remember no matter the size of event, there are legal requirements in relation to electrical installations and equipment (Electricity at Work Regulations 1989) and only competent persons should carry out electrical installation work.

While it may be tempting for those organising small events to rig up their own electrical supply, it can be dangerous.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [11. Electrical & Lighting](#)

### **Emergency Procedures**

Consider what actions need to be taken in case of an emergency (e.g. fire on site, crowd injuries, stormy conditions etc.) and prepare action plans so that those involved know what to do if they need to act. This should include how to handle an evacuation of the event should it be needed.

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Events should be open to all. Accessibility goes beyond physical considerations and encompasses social, cultural, and economic barriers and organisers should take care not to unintentionally exclude marginalised groups.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [45. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Outdoor Events](#)

### **Fire**

It is important to consider the risks of a fire breaking out and, if one does, how it might be controlled quickly and safely without putting anyone at risk. There are many potential sources of fire involved at events, from catering equipment and electrical faults to cigarette ends. Organisers should assess the risks and ensure that there is adequate firefighting equipment available. However, no-one should attempt to a fight fire unless they have been trained to do so and in the use of any firefighting equipment on site.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [10. Fire Safety](#)

### **Food & Drink**

Be mindful of the need to ensure that food and drink are suitably made and handled to be safe. If caterers are being used, they should provide you with a risk assessment and their official food hygiene rating. If volunteers are involved, they should be made aware of the regulations covering food safety, allergens etc. There are guidelines available on the Food Standards Agency website [here](#) It is essential to make sure that drinking water (aka potable water) is available on site, particularly in hot weather or if the site is isolated from a supply of potable mains water.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [21. Catering at Events](#)

### **Fun Fairs/Rides/Amusements**

All fun fair equipment should be covered by the ADIPS (Amusement Device Inspection Scheme), and operators should provide you with a copy of the Service Annual Inspection papers plus written confirmation that they operate under the HSG175 Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks – Guidance on Safe Practice.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [15. Amusements](#)

### **Gas**

Bottled gas (LPG), rather than mains gas, is generally used at events. Both require specialist handling.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [44. Safe Use of Mobile LPG](#)

## **High Risk Activities**

Any activities planned that involve specific risks (e.g. events on water, vehicle displays etc.) require a risk assessment to be carried out by someone with sufficient experience of the activity and the risks involved.

## **Inflatables**

Inflatables, such as bouncy castles, are often found at smaller events but it is important that they meet the correct safety standards. All equipment should have a current PIPA test certificate and should be clearly marked with limitations of use (e.g. maximum wind speeds). The user should have a wind speed checking device (anemometer).

## **Insurance**

All organisers of events should have public liability insurance with a limit of indemnity of at least £10 million. All suppliers, including first aid providers, and performers must have their own public liability insurance. Depending on the activity, other insurances may be needed. It is recommended that organisers contact a specialist event insurer for advice and quotes.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [31. Insurance](#)

## **Licensing**

Most small community events will not require licenses unless they involve licensable activities, such as the sale of alcohol or the playing of live/ recorded music, showing films etc. Serving hot food or drink after 11pm also requires a licence. If fewer than 500 people are involved (including the audience and all those working at the event) a TEN (Temporary Event Notice) can be issued. At least 10 days will generally be required for the Police and Local Authority to consider an application.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [36. The Licensing of Events](#)

## **Lighting**

Lighting can play an important part in event safety, particularly if activity is taking place after dusk or in the early hours of the morning, especially in areas where there are potential trip hazards etc.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [11. Electrical & Lighting](#)

## **Medical Provision**

The level of medical cover needed will depend on both the scale of the event and the activities taking place. At a minimum there should be a qualified first aider present as accidents can happen even at the smallest of events. Organisers need to assess the risks and put in place a level of cover that is appropriate to the event.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [5. Medical](#)

## **Neighbours/Noise**

Make sure that local residents and businesses are forewarned about the event well in advance so that they have adequate time to plan for it. Music, fun fairs, public address systems, revving engines etc. can all cause noise which can be a nuisance to those living and working locally. Consider locating activities that generate high levels of noise where they will have the least impact on the local community and talk to those likely to be affected so that you can deal with their concerns before they become escalated.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [17. Noise](#)

## **Promotion**

As part of building a promotional campaign for the event, consider ways that you can communicate with your audiences, volunteers etc. both to keep them informed and warn them if you need to. For example, if

you need to cancel the event due to the weather. The use of social media is a good way to do this and enables you to build a database of potential visitors for future events.

### **Safety Manager**

A key consideration at any event is the safety of those both working there and attending. It is good practice to appoint someone to oversee this aspect of the event from checking that suppliers have the necessary insurances, risk assessments and approvals to checking that there are no obvious hazards, such as exposed cables that could be trip hazards or LPG cylinders located near potential ignition sources.

### **Security**

Wherever numbers of people gather there is generally a need for stewards to help with crowd control. These need to be suitably trained for their role and the numbers needed will depend on factors such as the audience profile, venue logistics etc. If there is a need for professional security, those employed must be SIA (Security Industry Authority) licensed. Note: Security staff are trained to deal with criminal activity, enforce security protocols whilst stewards are there to direct attendees and are generally not trained to deal with security issues.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [13. Crowd Management](#)

### **Staffing & Volunteers**

It is easy to underestimate how many staff will be required to plan and successfully run your event. Consider how many stewards, car park attendants etc. you will need to manage things safely. Make sure that volunteers are capable of doing the tasks you want them to do and provide them with clear, comprehensive information about the event, roles, safety procedures, and emergency protocols.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [41. Recruitment and Management of Volunteers for Outdoor Events](#)

### **Sustainability & Environment**

Consideration should be given to the impact the event might have on the environment both locally and generally. Damage locally can include factors such as drainage or damage to nature. More broadly consider ways of minimising energy use, using recyclable materials and encouraging people to use public transport.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [38. Environmental Sustainability](#)

### **Tented/Temporary Structures (Marquees, Stalls, Gazebos etc.)**

All structures must be appropriately secured to the ground taking particular account of their wind ratings and the weather during the event. Wind conditions should be monitored using an anemometer (wind speed device) and action taken if there is any risk of them being blown over. Care should be taken during the erection and dismantling of tented structures, paying particular attention to the 'Working at Height' [guidelines](#). In the case of larger structures, these should be erected by the supplier using appropriately trained staff and they should provide a signed handover inspection report saying that the structure is safe and ready to use.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [9. Temporary Demountable Structures](#)

### **Toilets**

Unless public toilets are available on the site, it will be necessary to provide facilities for the comfort of both those attending and working on the site. Generally portable toilets can be rented and suppliers can advise on the appropriate number for a specific event. Provision should also be made for cleaning and emptying toilets if the event runs over a prolonged period. As a rule, more female toilets are needed than male toilets – for a typical local event the guide is one female toilet per 100 attendees and one male toilet

per 500 attendees plus one urinal per 150. At least one dedicated accessible toilet should also be provided. Hand wash or gel should also be provided.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [18. Sanitation](#)

### **Traffic**

Vehicles movements, both around event sites and in car parking areas, are one of the areas where accidents frequently occur. Unlike the public highway, people tend not to be so alert to traffic on an event site. Where possible, pedestrians should be separated from vehicle movements. Make sure traffic and pedestrian routes are well signposted; discourage the use hazard-warning lights on site as this prevents the use of indicators; clearly define parking spaces; and consider the ground conditions, particularly in muddy fields. Also, consider whether special provision is needed for vehicles used by people with disabilities, especially wheelchair users. If the event will be taking place on, or will have an impact on, a public road it is important to notify the local council and police of this.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [7. Transport Management](#)

### **Viewing Areas**

Areas where spectators are expected to gather – including grandstands etc. – need to be planned and managed. Any structures, such as grandstands, must conform to safety standards and the supplier must sign them off as safe and ready to use. Wind ratings should also be considered – see Temporary Structures (above). Where people are standing or sitting on the ground to view an event, ensure there are appropriate clearways for stewards to be able to access the area and for people to come and go safely.

### **Waste**

Where people gather there will always be waste, and it is important that suitable and sufficient bins are provided around the event site. Separate bins should be provided for general waste and recyclables. Provision should also be made to ensure bins do not become over full. Good management of waste will help to minimise the litter clearing after the event. Consideration should also be given to removing the waste off site to a waste/recycling centre at the end of the event. Arrangements also need to be made to pick up dropped litter from around the site at the end of the event.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [16. Waste Management](#)

### **Water**

There are regulations covering the quality of water supplied for domestic purposes, which includes for water (potable) used for drinking, washing, cooking and sanitary purposes. Connecting a main or service pipe (including hosepipes) to a water company's network, by someone other than a water company, is prohibited under the Water Industry Act 1991. If a running water supply is needed, it is important to contact the local mains water supplier for advice.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [40. Water Provision](#)

### **Weather**

Consider how the weather might impact the event and how to respond to different scenarios (e.g. flooding, high winds, thunderstorms, snow etc.). Monitor weather forecasts both in advance and during the event. Be prepared for dealing with the risks (e.g. waterlogged ground, getting vehicles out of parking areas etc.) and consider how to inform people attending the event if it must be cancelled.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [30. Coping with the Weather](#)

**Working at Height**

A major cause of accidents at events is people falling from heights and it is important that organisers minimise the risk of this. It's tempting for people to scale ladders to do things, but they can be very seriously injured if they have a fall. Ensure that all those working on site understand the risks of working at height and understand the need to [follow the HSE Guidelines](#). If necessary, bring in people with appropriate skills to do work at height.

For more detailed advice see the Purple Guide Chapter [8. Working at Height](#)

