



# WATFORD'S OUTDOOR EVENTS POLICY

## A PLACE WHERE GREATER THINGS HAPPEN

A vibrant and exciting programme of outdoor events play an important part in Watford's cultural and creative offer, connecting the community and attracting visitors to the town to enjoy all that Watford has to offer.

Our outdoor events are at the heart of what makes Watford a distinctive, dynamic place. They bring to life Watford's outstanding spaces, from our lively town centre to our award-winning parks, whilst contributing to the town's vibrancy and reputation as a place 'where greater things happen'. Outdoor events are a great platform to showcase local talent, celebrate cultural heritage and diversity, unlock potential and build pride in Watford. They are at the heart of what makes Watford such a distinctive dynamic town and are enjoyed by a great many of the town's residents and visitors.

## SUPPORTING OUR AMBITIONS FOR WATFORD

Our Council Plan 2022-26 sets out our ambition for Watford to be **an inspiring, thriving and creative town** and a commitment to **celebrate and promote our town's rich and diverse culture and creativity**. This is also woven through our Cultural Strategy 2018-25, which seeks to build on Watford's successful festivals and event programmes and support fledgling events animate spaces across the town and drive footfall across the year.

## WATFORD'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Outdoor events form an important part of Watford's overall cultural offer, linking open and green space with creative venues and facilities, including Watford Palace Theatre, Watford Colosseum and the Pump House. Animating our spaces through a varied and entertaining range of outdoor performances enhances the town's reputation as a vibrant, lively, and well-connected cultural hub

## OUTDOOR EVENTS DELIVERING CULTURAL AMBITIONS

This policy supports our cultural ambitions by:

- supporting a vibrant performance and creative scene across the town
- raising the profile of Watford at local, regional and national levels as a centre for culture, entertainment and arts
- contributing to the positive reputation of Watford as the place to be for culture, arts and performances

- fostering community pride and spirit through a varied range and scale of events, which brings local people together whether as participants or spectators
- encouraging events that reflect and celebrate the diversity, heritage and interests of the Watford community, increasing engagement and participation
- providing opportunities for Watford talent to perform and inspire others, showcasing local performers in our open spaces
- offering experiences for local people to connect, promoting health and well-being and community connections

## **SUSTAINBLE EVENTS – EVENT GREENING**

Watford Borough Council has set an ambition for the town to be net carbon zero by 2030. This means we look at everything we do to see how we can counteract or minimise our environmental impact. Green and sustainable events are events that aim to do this – which is often known as “event greening.”

Event greening means planning in a way that reduces the amount of energy, waste and carbon emissions that an event would normally produce. How this is done will depend a lot on the type of event you’re running. However, a general list of green event ideas include:

- Being carbon neutral or carbon aware
- Having a zero or low waste policy
- Providing fair trade or organic food
- Using sustainable energy to run the event where possible
- Providing local produce/food
- Going plastic free

The council can provide advice on how you can organise a sustainable event by making small, manageable changes – email [sustainability@watford.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@watford.gov.uk)

## **MAKING OUTDOOR EVENTS SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL IN WATFORD**

This Policy is designed to achieve the outcomes we, and our community, want for Watford by ensuring planning and running a fun, safe and quality event is as straight forward as possible - without compromising on the key elements that are essential for success.

This Policy sets out:

- clear and transparent processes to support event organisers run safe, successful and enjoyable events, including how to book, manage risks and meet safety requirements
- expectations on minimising, where possible, any disruption to residents and businesses

This Outdoor Events Policy will evolve and develop to meet the needs of the town and those organising events. The Policy will need to be flexible and responsive and, in order to retain a ‘can do approach’, will be reviewed regularly.

## **WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL’S EVENTS TEAM**

The council has a small Events team that can provide advice to event organisers. Engaging with the team at the earliest possible opportunity will give organisers the best possible start to their event.

Email: [events@watford.gov.uk](mailto:events@watford.gov.uk)

The Events Team is responsible for monitoring this policy, including:

- number of events, small, medium and large held across the town
- safety and environmental impact of events, advising on relevant applications and referrals to the Safety Advisory Group if needed
- identifying and encouraging local talent involved in the town's events
- numbers attending council run and sponsored events
- the economic impact of events
- the satisfaction of those attending events; and
- the satisfaction of event organisers

## **WATFORD EVENTS CALENDAR**

We want to encourage a good mix and balance of events across the town and throughout the year, with events supporting and enhancing each other rather than competing. We have an annual events calendar that shows what is going on in the town and will allow organisers to work with us, and together, to plan a successful programme for the town.

## **HOW TO HIRE OUR EVENT SPACES**

### **1. SPACES AVAILABLE TO HIRE**

Watford has a diverse range of outdoor events space, available for event organisers to hire.

The cost of hiring an outdoor space will depend on a number of things, including the type of event and space required (see below).

### **Events in Watford's parks**

Watford's parks make wonderful settings for events.

#### **Cassiobury Park**

As Watford's largest park, Cassiobury Park is very popular for outdoor events.

Cassiobury hosts up to 12 large events each year, Of these, we allow a maximum of six events per with a significant amplified musical element, which requires a noise management plan to be submitted and agreed prior to the event.

**To enquire about hiring a park contact Veolia, who manage the town's parks on behalf of the council: [enquiries.watford.vesuk@veolia.com](mailto:enquiries.watford.vesuk@veolia.com)**

### **Events in the town centre and other open spaces**

The town centre has a dedicated events space (800m<sup>2</sup>) but there are other spaces within the town centre and across the town suitable for holding events or performances.

In the town centre, the maximum number of large events is 20 per year with musical events or

events which may have a significant amplified musical element limited to 6. We will work with event organisers to agree which space is right for them and their event.

**To enquire about hiring space in the town centre or other open spaces not in a park:**

[events@watford.gov.uk](mailto:events@watford.gov.uk)

## **2. EVENT APPROVAL**

Before you can hold an event in one of the council's event spaces, you will need approval for it to go ahead (either from Veolia (parks) or Watford BC (town centre and other spaces)).

Our aim will always be to help event organisers to stage outdoor events so, we will work with event organisers to ensure all necessary criteria are met. This will depend on a number of factors such as the size of the event and chosen location.

### **Criteria for approving an event in Watford's parks and open spaces**

Both Veolia and Watford BC will consider an application against the following:

#### **Event impact**

- Impact of the event on regular users of parks and open spaces, local residents and stakeholders
- Impact upon the environment and any required mitigation
- Economic benefit of the event to the town as a whole
- Impact on transport and traffic infrastructure to support the event e.g., parking

#### **Event details**

- Previous history of the event and /or confidence in the organisers' previous management of events
- Type, scale, nature of event. Types of event include:
  - **Community and Charity**  
Any event organised by not for profit, community or voluntary groups that directly benefit the residents and visitors
  - **Commercial**  
These events provide a commercial benefit to a profit-making business or operation including product launches, corporate events and other marketing and promotional activities for profit making organisations
- Numbers attending or numbers estimated to attend
- Timing of the event
- Assessment of the content / quality of the event
- Consideration whether the event is complimentary to Watford's event programme and not in conflict with other events

#### **Event organisation**

- Evidence the event organiser to manage the financial requirements of the event
- The ability of the organisers to effectively plan, manage and control the event – assessed by the application form
- Compliance with public safety and security issues
- Compliance with conditions specific to the event location set out in licence conditions or in by-laws

- Compliance with statutory requirements as required by the council as the Highways or Environmental Health and Licensing Authority e.g. noise disturbance and food hygiene
- Compliance with the council's policy on not allowing live animals at circus or fairs

### 3. APPLYING TO HOLD AN EVENT

Please email the Events team for guidance on the appropriate application for your event - [events@watford.gov.uk](mailto:events@watford.gov.uk)

For any event, you will be required to complete an **Event Application Form**. Not everything on the form will be applicable to your event but just indicate this on the form.

Event Organisers will be responsible for undertaking appropriate **risk assessments** and **event management plans** that comply with relevant legislative guidance to ensure the safety of the audience, participants, general public and staff.

The council reserves the right to determine the types of events deemed suitable for council owned and managed land and the right to refuse an event if it does not meet the criteria set out previously and has the potential to damage the council's reputation or that of the town.

### 4. LICENSING, PERMISSIONS & INSURANCE

As the event organiser, you must provide evidence that you hold adequate insurance appropriate to the scale and nature of the event.

If appropriate to your event, event organisers must ensure that all required permissions and licenses are acquired in an appropriate and timely manner including but not necessarily limited to:

- Performing Rights Society Licence (PRS)
- Phonographic Performance Limited Licence (PPL)
- A Temporary Events Notice (TEN) or time limited premises licenses under the Licensing Act 2003 may be required

Licensable activities covered by a TEN include:

- selling alcohol
- providing entertainment, such as music, dancing or indoor sporting events
- serving hot food or drink between 11pm and 5am

For information on applying for a TEN see: [www.watford.gov.uk/licensing-3/temporary-events-notice/1](http://www.watford.gov.uk/licensing-3/temporary-events-notice/1)

- Permission to use the highway from the Highways Authority (Hertfordshire County Council)
- Permission from the council to use the town centre premises license where relevant

The Licensing Team can advise whether you need a license depending on the size and nature of your event and guide you through the appropriate process.

### 5. CONSULTATION

Consultation helps event organisers identify any potential problems in advance and put measures in place. In some cases, it may show why a particular event would not be suitable for the proposed location. Not every event will require consultation each time it takes place.

### **Do I need to consult on my event?**

This will be part of the advice from the Events Team.

The consultation process may include some of the following:

- Initial consultation by the organiser with the Events Team to ensure it fits with this Outdoor Events Policy
- Safety Advisory Group (see below)
- Watford BID (for town centre events)
- Emergency services
- Watford Borough Council relevant Portfolio Holder and local ward councillors
- External partners specific to an event location
- Communities of interest specific to the event

### **The Watford and Three Rivers Safety Advisory Group**

The Watford and Three Rivers Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is made up of a cross-section of agencies, particularly Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, East of England Ambulance Service and Hertfordshire Highways.

SAG offers guidance to help organisers (primarily of large events) meet their responsibilities, to promote and encourage high standards of public safety and wellbeing at events.

The group will consider plans presented by organisers on the safety elements of an event. It is not the role of the group to help plan the event or write the plan and members of the group will not accept or adopt any of your responsibilities as the organiser.

You may be invited to attend a safety advisory group meeting to present your plan and to hear the joint views of the various interested statutory agencies and stakeholders or you may wish to attend a SAG meeting to obtain advice about your event too.

Although all comments and observations made by the safety advisory group are always advisory, they are made by professionals in the interest of public safety.

Failure to follow advice from the safety advisory group may affect your public liability insurance, licence permissions and leave you exposed to possible litigation.

Organisers of medium and especially large events should also refer to **The Purple Guide** to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events ( [www.thepurpleguide.co.uk](http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk) )

## **6. FEES AND CHARGES**

**All fees are subject to change and will be reviewed annually.**

**For advice on fees and charges contact Veolia (parks) or the Events Team (other outdoor spaces).**

### **Reinstatement Deposit**

A refundable deposit may be required to be lodged with the council or the council's contracted partner where there is a potential risk of damage to the physical environment from the event. The deposit will be required at the time the hire fee is due and will be used to fund any repairs or

damage caused by the event.

### **Licensing Fees**

Applies to town centre premises licence if varied.

### **Waste Management**

Event organisers are required to have arrangements in place to minimise waste, promote recycling and where unavoidable, dispose of waste.

Normal service levels are provided by the council's partner, Veolia for the cleansing of public areas or management and disposal of waste.

If the event organisers' arrangements are not considered sufficient then separate arrangements can be made via Veolia.

### **Highways – Road Closure fees apply**

Where road closures are required to comply with Highway Regulation and Enforcement, a fee will be made to the event organiser for these formal road closures.

### **Parking**

The Events Team will monitor the large events to ensure compliance with the policy and the location hire agreement. The costs of these visits are not recharged. However, where the council is required to provide staffing, equipment or other resources to the event, the costs for such resources may be charged to the event organiser.

In the town centre special parking permits and arrangements can be made via the Events Team depending on the nature and duration of the event.

## **7. NOISE**

Events do generate noise – that what makes them fun and lively but we want to make sure the noise levels are considered and mitigated as far as possible.

Where necessary it is expected that the event organiser will have suitably qualified and accredited noise consultants to measure, monitor and control and report noise and these will be identified and approved as part of the event management plan. Should it be necessary for the council to carry out noise monitoring an hourly fee will be applied. Noise level, controls and management plan will be agreed with the Events Team and the event organiser will be instructed to provide advance notification to residents, Portfolio Holder, ward councillors and businesses as appropriate. A copy of the report demonstrating the levels measured during the event should be provided to the council within 5 working days of the event finishing.

## **8. CANCELLATIONS**

If you need to cancel a booking less than 28 days before the date of hire, there will be no refund. If payment has not been received when stated on the approval letter prior to the event taking place the council can cancel the event.

The council reserves the right to cancel events by refusing the use of land should the terms and conditions of hire, legal requirements or financial obligations not be met and inclement weather or other circumstances seen or unforeseen circumstances.

## **9. EXCLUDED EVENTS**

Whilst we welcome a diverse range of events in Watford, there are times when we would have to decline a hire.

These would generally include an event that:

- Provokes or likely to provoke public disorder
- Offends or likely to offend the community or parts of the community
- Uses performing animals – where an event is considering using animals which are seen as domesticated in the United Kingdom (e.g. horses, dogs, cats, birds used in falconry demonstrations, caged birds and rabbits), we would want to discuss this with the event organiser.
- Includes animals as prizes, including goldfish at a funfair
- Impacts the reputation of the council
- Includes balloon releases and Chinese lantern

The relevant Council Portfolio Holder will have the discretion and ultimate decision on determining whether a proposed event falls within the programme exclusions.

## **10. STREET PERFORMANCES AND BUSKING**

Watford Borough Council welcomes quality street performances and busking. Booking an event space might be the right route. We have guidance available to make sure you know everything you need to perform in Watford - [www.watford.gov.uk/environment/street-performances-busking](http://www.watford.gov.uk/environment/street-performances-busking)