

GUIDANCE &
INFORMATION FOR
**HOSTING AN
EVENT IN
OXFORD**

Events Team
Policy, Culture & Communications
Email: events@oxford.gov.uk



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Event Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

We want to make the application process as easy as we can although it should be noted that we are committed to ensuring the safety of the public at all times.

This guidance can be used for all events regardless of size; however some parts may not be relevant for smaller events.

All appendices are available as downloads separately.

The guide gives general advice for procedures and planning for any type of event therefore some attention to detail is necessary. However, events can be extremely diverse, ranging from a one day promotional stall, to a large outdoor carnival and therefore this guidance aims to cover most if not all events. However there will be times when additional requirements may be needed.

2. Step by step guide to putting on an event on Oxford City Council land

Step 1 – Read all Information

Read this Event Guidance and the [Terms & Conditions for Use of Parks & Open Spaces](#) carefully and [Fees & Charges](#) for the hire of our land.

Step 2 – Complete Event Application Form and Sign Terms and Conditions

Please download the application form, fill it in within a word processor, and return it as an editable document. PLEASE NOTE WE WILL NOT PROCESS APPLICATIONS UNTIL WE HAVE RECEIVED A SIGNED COPY OF OUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.

Step 3 - Submit your Application

- Submit your signed Event Application within the required timescales and attach any supporting information as per the [Supporting Information Required and Submissions Timeline](#) document e.g. signed copy of Terms & Conditions for use of Parks & Open Spaces and evidence of a valid Public Liability Insurance certificate (if you have it at this stage).
- Don't advertise your event just yet! Permission to use city land has not been granted until we send you a Confirmation Letter.
- Submit a copy of your Event Application in AN EDITABLE DOCUMENT by email to events@oxford.gov.uk and separately with a signature within the required timescales and attach any supporting information as per the Supporting Information Required and Submissions Timeline document:
- Once we receive your application, we will email you to let you know that we are processing it. Your application will then be sent to the relevant locations stakeholders who will include the emergency services and other internal Council departments for their approval. This initial consultation takes a minimum period of 2 weeks.
- We will then respond with a decision on your event and you will also be notified of the hire fee and deposit/bond fee and our payment terms & conditions.

Step 4 – Submit your supporting information

Further supporting information may be requested from relevant stakeholders or as outlined in [Supporting Information Required and Submissions Timeline document](#). Any further supporting information MUST be submitted to the Events Office a minimum of 4 weeks before your event

date. Failure to submit your required further supporting information may result in your event confirmation not being granted for which the Council accepts no responsibility or liability for.

Documents may be submitted by post (Applications will not be accepted by post):
Events Office
Policy, Culture & Communications
Oxford City Council
Town Hall, Oxford, OX1 1BX

Step 5 – Make payment

The Events Office will then email you the Invoice for the Hire Fee and for the Deposit/Bond as per our **Fees & Charges**. Other City Council Departments may request additional payments and they will contact you separately regarding these. Please refer to the **Additional Costs section on our Fees & Charges** (i.e. road closures, distribution of free printed matter – leaflets, street trading consent). Payment must be made at least 28 days before your event start date.

Step 6 – Event confirmation granted

Final event confirmation (a letter of authority) from the Events Officer will only be granted once all the required supporting information has been submitted and the payment for the hire fee and deposit/bond has been made. You may now advertise/promote your event.

3. Event Planning Considerations for ALL events

Before you begin to plan your event, please consider the following points:

What is your event?

Clearly identify the purpose of your event (e.g. commercial, community, demonstration, outdoor concert etc). Decide on the type of activities to be held. Will there be any specific hazards such as animals or water sports? If possible also try to establish the size of the proposed event and whether or not an entrance fee will be charged.

Where will you hold your event?

When selecting your location, please ensure that it is adequate for the proposed event and safe and suitable for the participants who will be attending. Do not forget to consider the impact on the local community, how easy it will be for people to get to the location and any car parking requirements. Consider the suitability of the location and any existing hazards, which may be on the site such as water hazards, ground conditions, traffic, pedestrian and emergency routes, position of local residents' buildings, overhead power lines etc. Consider whether or not emergency routes will be adequate. It is important to visit the venue or site to carry out a preliminary assessment to determine suitability.

Please refer to our list of locations for hire including city centre spaces, parks and other open spaces.

Check you have enough time

We need a certain amount of notice to be able to support your event effectively. We will do our utmost to help you put on your event, but please be aware that the earlier we know about what you want to do, the more likely it is that we can approve your event and support you. Please refer to the **Supporting Information Required and Submissions Timelines** for further clarity.

Your Audience

Identify the aims of the event. Are particular groups or types of people to be targeted, such as young children, teenagers, the elderly or disabled? If so, specific facilities may be required to accommodate them or additional stewards to ensure adequate safety standards are maintained. You will also need to consider your target audience and what will be appropriate

for them in terms of licensing, branding and sponsors. You also must consider the effect of your event on the public and if it is suitable for ages

Numbers Attending

The maximum number of people the event can safely hold must be established. This may be reduced dependant upon the activities being planned. The numbers of people attending the event may have to be counted to prevent overcrowding. Remember that one particular attraction may draw large numbers of visitors. There is also a benefit in knowing the maximum capacity when determining the level of provision needed for first aid, stewards, toilets, catering facilities, etc.

When will you hold your event?

Consider the time of year, including the consequences of extreme weather conditions at an outside event. The day of the week and time will also need consideration regarding the nature of the event, noise and ease of travel etc. You will probably need to arrange lighting for an evening function. The event should not clash with any other major events in the area. It is your responsibility to research key event dates in both the area in question and the city.

Your staffing needs

Do you or your organisation have the capacity to plan and manage your event? If you are unsure, it may be worth considering employing a professional event planner, event production company, Health & Safety co-ordinator, traffic management company or other specialists.

Insurance

All events will require public liability insurance. All contractors and performers will also need their own public liability cover with a £5 million Limit of Indemnity. Depending upon the nature of your organisation and the proposed event other insurances may also be required. Quotations should be obtained from your insurance provider. Events on the public highway will require public liability cover with a minimum cover of £10 million Limit of Indemnity.

Timescale

Set out the proposed timescale and give yourself as much time as possible to organise the event. You may need as much as 9 to 12 months planning. Some specialist advice may be required, and special permission could take time. Do not forget the summer can be a busy time with hundreds of events taking place within your area.

Budget

You may incur unexpected expenses (for example making good damage to property which occurred during your event). Please check that your budget will cover all expenses and charges, whether from us or those from other agencies. It is also a good idea to have a contingency included within your budget to cover you against any unexpected surprises!

Site Plan

Draw out a site plan identifying the position of all the intended attractions and facilities. Plan out and designate the entrance and exit points, circulation routes, vehicle access and emergency evacuation paths.

First-Aid Provision

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that medical, ambulance and first-aid assistance, as appropriate, are available to all those involved in an event. The event organiser needs to minimise the effects of an event on the healthcare provision for the local population and, wherever possible, reduce its impact on the local NHS facilities and ambulance service. Previous experience suggests that approximately 1-2% of an audience will seek medical assistance during an event day. Of these, around 10% will need further treatment on site.

Approximately 1% of the number requiring initial medical assistance will require subsequent referral to hospital. It should be recognised that other factors such as ineffective welfare facilities, poor weather conditions, absence of free drinking water or the presence of other 'on site' hazards may increase this number. Appoint a competent organisation to provide medical management if necessary. No event should have less than two first-aiders.

Stewards

It is important that stewards can be easily identified by the public and that they can effectively communicate with each other, their supervisor, the person responsible for health and safety, and the event manager. All stewards should be properly trained and competent, as they will need to be constantly on the lookout for hazards, which could develop during the event. They may also be required to guide vehicles, clear emergency exits, and sort out any behavioural problems. Specific training should be provided for basic first aid assistance and fire fighting. Stewards may require personal protective clothing such as hats, boots, gloves or coats. For evening events, they may need to be issued with torches. At all day events, duty rotas will be required.

Temporary Structures

Many events will require temporary structures such as staging, tents, marquees, stalls etc. Decide where this equipment is to be obtained, who will erect it and what safety checks will be required. The location of any such structures should be identified on the site plan. Consider whether barriers will be required to protect the public against specific hazards such as moving machinery, barbecues, vehicles and any other dangerous displays etc. In some cases, barriers will need to have specified safety loadings dependant upon the number of people likely to attend. Temporary structures should only be obtained from experienced suppliers.

Catering

Ensure any caterers have been licensed by their local authority and that they will be sensibly positioned such as away from children's activity areas and near to water supplies etc. Adequate space should be left between catering facilities to prevent any risk of fire spread. Ask to see caterers' food hygiene certification. You may wish to use only caterers who are members of the Mobile Outside Caterers Association. You should obtain a list of their menu and charges to ensure their prices are reasonable. Ensure that the delivery, storage, preparation and sale of food complies with the relevant food safety legislation and where appropriate consideration is given to the advice contained in the relevant industry guides and codes of practice. This will include mobile catering units, catering stalls and marquees, crew catering outlets, hospitality catering, bars and ice cream vendors, etc

Bar / Alcohol Providers

Anyone wishing to sell alcohol will need to apply for a Temporary Event Notice. However glass bottles can not be sold on Oxford City Council land. If necessary, local public houses and food outlets should be contacted to request that during the event food and drink is not sold in glass containers.

Performers

All performers should have their own insurances and risk assessments and the same considerations will apply as for contractors. Where amateur performers are being used, discuss your detailed requirements with them and ensure they will comply with your health and safety rules and event plan.

Contractors

All contractors should be vetted to ensure they are competent to undertake the tasks required of them. Wherever possible personal references should be obtained and followed up. Ask contractors for a copy of their safety policy and risk assessments, and satisfy yourself that they will perform the task safely. Always ask to see their public liability insurance certificate, which should provide a limit of indemnity of at least £5 million.

Facilities and Utilities

Where electricity, gas or water is to be used, detailed arrangements must be made to ensure the facilities are safe. All portable electrical appliances including extension leads etc. should be tested for electrical safety and a record kept. Any hired equipment should come with a certificate of electrical safety. Where events are taking place outside, residual current circuit breakers should be used and if possible the power supply stepped down to 110volts. All cables will have to be safely channelled to eliminate any electrical and tripping hazards. Potential hazards due to extreme weather should not be overlooked at outside events. Portable gas supplies for cooking should be kept to a minimum in designated areas away from the general public. The same should apply to any fuel supplies items such as portable generators etc. Generators should be suitably fenced or barriered to prevent public access from public areas. All these arrangements should be clearly shown on the site plan.

Fire Safety including Fire Extinguishers

All events within locations should be provided with appropriate portable or hand-held fire-fighting equipment (fire extinguishers) and this provision should be determined at the planning stage. The provision of fire-fighting equipment for outdoor venues will vary according to the local conditions and what is brought onto the site. There will need to be equipment for tackling fires in vegetation, vehicles and marquees. The best arrangement is to provide well indicated fire points. However the ability to extinguish a small fire at the early stages can prevent large scale disruption to an event and a large percentage of fires do not require the attendance of the Fire Service because they are dealt with quickly using portable extinguishers. For further guidance, please refer to [Appendix I - Guidance on Fire Risk Assessments and Fire Precautions](#).

Clearing Up / Waste Management

Arrangements may be required for waste disposal and rubbish clearance both during and after the event. Individuals should be designated specific responsibilities for emptying rubbish bins and clearing the site. At some events there could be discarded hypodermic needles, which need to be disposed of safely. This will require specialist training and equipment. Waste needs to be managed carefully to minimise the risks associated with its accumulation, collection and final disposal

Provision for the Disabled

Specific arrangements should be made to ensure disabled visitors have adequate facilities, parking and specific viewing areas and can safely enjoy the event.

Is your proposed location in a sensitive location?

Oxford City has several areas which are more sensitive than a general area and will require additional consideration when planning.

- City centre locations such as Bonn Square & Broad Street (both have protocols in place)
- Countryside Sites (some are SSSI sites for example Shotover Country Park and are therefore not appropriate for many types of events and activities. Also Port Meadow is Freeland and is not appropriate for many activities nor for any vehicles on there either. Please check the list of Locations.
- Cutteslowe Park (you will require a thorough Traffic Management Plan for any event planned for here with over 500 people in attendance)

Does your event need a Licence?

If you are planning on having any licensable activities within your event, you will need a licence.

Licensable activities are:

- the sale or supply of alcohol
- late night refreshment (any hot food or drink between 23:00 and 05:00)

- regulated entertainment (including music, dance, films, plays, indoor sport and similar entertainment)

Licensed Areas:

Oxford City Council holds Premises Licences for the following areas:

- Bonn Square (city centre)
- Broad Street (city centre)
- Gloucester Green (city centre)
- Aristotle Lane Recreation Ground
- Rose Hill Park
- Blackbird Leys Park
- Sandy Lane Recreation Ground
- Hinksey Park
- South Park
- Oxpens Recreation Ground
- Manzil Way Play Area (Manzil Gardens)
- Headington Hill Park
- Florence Park
- Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground
- Court Place Farm
- Bury Knowle Park
- Barton Bradley Recreation Ground
- Barton Village Recreation Ground
- Botley Road Recreation Ground

Where your event requires the use of the City Council Premises Licence then you will be advised by our **Licensing Department** as part of the consultation period and we recommend that you request a copy of such premises licence from our **Licensing Department** so that you can ensure that you comply with the conditions of such license. It is the responsibility of the Event Organiser to ensure that any conditions of any Premises Licence are adhered to.

If you need a new Premises Licence application for a location that does not currently hold a premises licence, you will need to apply to the Council. Please speak to our **Licensing Department** for further information.

If your event is for 499 people or less, you can apply for a **Temporary Event Notice**. If your event is for more than 499 people, you will need to use an existing Premises Licence (as above) or apply for a new one.

If you are unsure, please contact the **Licensing Department** and ask them.

Vehicular Movement & Parking

City centre events

You as the event organiser are responsible for arranging your own car parking arrangements for staff, suppliers, volunteers, or others. A list of available public car parks can be found here on our website.

Once you have received event confirmation, Event Organisers holding an event in the city centre can request a discounted parking rate at the Westgate Car Park. Please contact our Parking Team for further information, costs and details.

Events in our Parks

There is a no vehicular movement bye-law in the City of Oxford that applies to all of our parks which you will need to take into consideration when planning your parking arrangements and

access.

On-site traffic

Contractors and/or performers vehicles and other traffic should be carefully managed to ensure segregation from pedestrians. It may be necessary to only permit vehicular access at specific times and not during the event itself. Separate entrances should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians with specific arrangements for emergency vehicle access. Car parking facilities will be required at most events and these will have to be stewarded. Consider where such facilities should be situated.

Off-site traffic

Unplanned and uncontrolled access and egress to a site can result in a serious accident. Traffic control both inside and outside the site should be discussed with the police. Adequate signs and directions should be provided in prominent positions on the approaches to the entrances. If road closures, signs on the highway, traffic diversions and/or the placement of cones are required then an application must be made for a traffic regulation order and/or approval from the highway authority.

Street Trading

Street Trading is defined as the selling or exposing for sale of any article (including a living thing) in a street or any road, footway, beach or other area to which the public have access without payment. **Please contact the Street Trading Department for further information.**

Advertisement Consent

Please contact our Planning Enforcement Officer; ptownsend@oxford.gov.uk for further information on advertisement consent (i.e. publicly displaying posters and banners), timescales involved and costs.

Risk Assessments

Taking all the above into consideration, you should establish which specific hazards require individual risk assessment. A timescale should be specified where necessary. Please see **Appendix C, Risk Assessment Form Template & Guidance** for further guidance on completing Risk Assessments.

4. Event Planning Considerations for large-sized events (over 500)

Event Plan

The Event Plan is a live document which records the development of your event and records any agreements, changes or issues that may come up. You can download an Event Plan template from Oxfordshire County Council website. This should include all your health and safety arrangements. Once you have resolved all the issues referred to above, keep records of the proposals as a formal plan for the event. This will help you when carrying out your risk assessments. [Please see Appendix H, Event Plan Template.](#)

Consultation

As part of your event plan you will need to consult with local businesses and residents and residents associations so that they are aware of your event and can discuss any concerns with you.

Event liaison

Contact the local police, fire brigade, ambulance and first aid providers – please see [Useful Contacts](#). Tell them about the event and ask them for advice. Decide what additional information is required regarding specific activities and make contact with the council and/or the relevant organisations. We recommend establishing key roles and responsibilities for individuals involved in the planning of the event for specific areas.

Safety Advisory Group

Oxford City has a [Safety Advisory Group](#), which meets monthly; the event organiser is expected to attend a SAG meeting if requested to discuss their plans. The role of the Safety Advisory Group is:

- To promote high levels of safety and welfare at events by giving advice;
- To promote good practice in safety and welfare planning for event;
- To ensure events cause minimal adverse impact;
- To ensure that any licensable activities have been granted the necessary permissions;
- To provide advice to Event Organisers with regard to event controls and risk assessments.

Emergency action plan

A formal plan should be established to deal with any emergency situations, which may arise during the event. The complexity of this will depend upon the size and nature of the event itself. A simple easy to follow plan will be acceptable for a small event. You may have to liaise with the emergency services, local hospitals and the council's emergency planning officer and create a planning team to consider all potential major incidents and how you would deal with them.

Stewards

Stewards at larger events must be fully briefed on all aspects of the event including crowd control and emergency arrangements. Written instructions, site plans and checklists should be provided to them. It is important that stewards can be easily identified by the public and that they can effectively communicate with each other, their supervisor, the person responsible for health and safety, and the event manager. All stewards should be properly trained and competent, as they will need to be constantly on the lookout for hazards, which could develop during the event. They may also be required to guide vehicles, clear emergency exits, and sort out any behavioural problems. Specific training should be provided for basic first aid assistance and fire fighting. Stewards may require personal protective clothing such as hats, boots, gloves or coats. For evening events, they may need to be issued with torches. At all day events, duty rotas will be required.

Crowd control

The type of event and the numbers attending will determine the measures needed. Consideration will need to be given to the number and positioning of barriers, and the provision of a public address system. If you are expecting a large number of participants or spectators you may need to employ security officers or stewards to manage your event area safely.

Security

Depending upon the nature of the event, specific security arrangements may be necessary, including arrangements for securing property overnight. Cash collection should be planned to ensure this is kept to a minimum at collection points and that regular collections are made to a secure area. Following your risk assessment, stewards or helpers collecting cash may require money belts or other carrying facilities. Counting and banking arrangements should be given careful consideration.

Transportation

The local rail and bus companies should be advised of larger events to establish if existing services will be adequate. You will also need to liaise with them if road closures or diversions are intended.

Contractors

All contractors should be vetted to ensure they are competent to undertake the tasks required of them. Wherever possible personal references should be obtained and followed up. Ask contractors for a copy of their safety policy and risk assessments, and satisfy yourself that they will perform the task safely. Always ask to see their public liability insurance certificate, which should provide a limit of indemnity of at least £5 million. Provide contractors with a copy of the event plan and arrange liaison meetings to ensure they will work within your specified parameters.

Contingency plans

Consider the implications on the event of extreme weather conditions. Will the event be cancelled? Could specialist matting be hired in at short notice? Or could the event be moved to an alternative area? This will involve a lot of planning and may be too complex for anything other than the smallest of events. There could also be other scenarios, which should be planned for, such as dealing with a disappointed crowd if the main attraction has not turned up.

Specialist equipment

Will the activities require the use of any specialist equipment such as bungee jumps etc.? If so, does this equipment pose any specific hazards? Will a particular activity need barriers etc? Some equipment may require certificates of erection by a competent person.

Welfare arrangements

Providing information and welfare services at an event not only contributes to the safety and well-being of the audience but they also act as an early-warning system to detect any potential breakdown of services or facilities on site. The range and level of information and welfare services needed at any event will be determined by the event risk assessment. Locate information and welfare services in suitable accommodation, easily accessible, well signed, properly lit and make sure that they are open for the whole time the audience are on site

Toilets

The organiser must estimate the number of attendees to the event and consider its duration. Toilet and first aid requirements should be based on these estimations. Advice is given in the Code of Practice for Outdoor Events referred to above. Permanent toilets should be checked for adequacy and maintained during the event. Ensure that adequate sanitary provision is made for the number of people expected to attend the event, and that consideration is given to

location, access, construction, type of temporary facilities, lighting and signage. Construct and locate toilets so that people are protected from bad weather and trip hazards. The floors, ramps and steps of the units should be stable and of a non-slip surface construction. Protect connecting pipe work to avoid damage.

Drinking Water

The provision of drinking water will be necessary. Depending upon the scale of the event, refreshments and other facilities may be required.

Children

Consider provision for children even if the event itself is not necessarily aimed at children, as they may accompany adults. Make sure that your publicity material indicates whether or not the event is suitable for children and if they are required to be accompanied by an adult, or if children under a certain age are not allowed entry. Anyone directly dealing with children must be CRB checked and cleared.

Lost Children's Point

Prepare a 'lost child' policy that identifies arrangements for the safe care of lost children until they are reunited with parent/guardian. It is likely that there will be a number of children present on site and facilities will have to be provided, including potentially accommodating children overnight. Communications and availability of information on lost children, lost friends, etc, must be established. There should be a clearly advertised collection point for lost children, supervised at all times with fully briefed workers. Such a point should be separate from the First Aid point. Ensure that lost children are not left in the sole care of a single worker. If there is a children's area on site, this will be the best place for the care of lost children. In some circumstances it may be necessary to make an announcement over the PA system. Take care to ensure that announcements do not refer to children specifically or give personal details, descriptions or names. If a child is reluctant to go with a parent or collecting adult seek a second opinion from the police. The parent's or guardian's signature and proof of identity should also be obtained. Once a child has been reunited with their parent or guardian, inform stewards and police immediately if they have been involved.

Other

Provision also needs to be made for missing persons, baby changing and lost property.

Production Schedule

If your event needs equipment or installations such as stages, lighting or barriers to be moved on to and off site, then you will need to include a production schedule

5. Other Useful Information / Guidance

- HSE: The Event Safety Guide. A guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events ("The Purple Guide") ISBN 0 7176 24536
- Managing Crowds Safely (HSE 2000) ISBN 0 7176 1834 X
- 5 Steps to Risk Assessment: Case Studies (HSE 1998) ISBN 07176 15804
- The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (The Stationery Office, 1997) ("The Green Guide")
- ISBN 0 11 300095 2
- Safety Guidance for Street Arts, Carnival, Processions and Large Scale Performances
- (Independent Street Arts Network):
www.streetartsnetwork.org.uk/pages/publications.htm.
- Guide to industry best practice for organizing outdoor events, PAS 51: 2004 (BSI):
www.bsiglobal.com
- Open Air Events and Venues
www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk
- HSE: Guidance on Safe Practice for Fairgrounds & Amusement Parks (web-friendly version of HSG175)