



Organising a Community Event

It takes a great deal of planning, organisation and preparation to hold a successful community event. This factsheet gives an overview of any laws or licences you need to be aware of when planning your event.

Before you start planning, you need to make sure your governing document (constitution, rules etc.) allows you to hold the event you want to deliver. If your governing document does have any restriction on what activities you can undertake you must abide by these restrictions.

Things to consider

Licensing

You need to ensure the premises you are using for your event are licensed if you want to do any of the following:

- Sell alcohol
- Provide late night refreshment (hot food or drink served after 11.00pm)
- Cinema
- Theatre
- Music & Dancing

If the premises do not have the appropriate license you may be able to get a Temporary Event Notice from Northumberland County Council:

www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=557

Film screenings

If you want to screen a film in a community building or outdoors you will need a license to ensure you are not infringing copyright law. It is an offence to show a film in public without the permission of the copyright holder.

There are a number of different licenses you can get depending on the nature of your event. These take into consideration whether you intend to charge, how many people attend and whether it is a one off event or something ongoing. A different license is needed for public events and membership-based film clubs. 'Filmbank' is generally a good place to start since they have a wide variety of new releases as well as older films. Find out more at www.filmbank.co.uk.

Music

In most instances of recorded music being played in public, a music licence is required from Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) and Performing Rights Society (PRS). PPL collects and distributes licence fees for the use of recorded music on behalf of record companies and performers, while PRS for Music collects and distributes the use of musical compositions and lyrics on behalf of songwriters, composers and publishers. You will also need a license from the local authority.

The cost of the licenses varies depending on a number of factors, full information can be found on the PPL & PRS websites: www.ppluk.com and www.prsformusic.com.

Festivals, Street Parties & Events

Northumberland County Council and partners (Northumbria Police Force, North East Ambulance Service) operate Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's) across Northumberland, the purpose of which, where appropriate, is to comment on matters associated with events in relation to their impact on the Council and its partners. Representatives of the group will use their professional judgement to consider proposals and they may help assess the risks to the general public.

Typical examples of events would include:

- Fetes, fairs etc.
- Open air concerts and music festivals
- Trade shows
- Sporting events
- Horse shows, agricultural shows, dog shows, car and caravan shows and similar.
- Open air entertainment including theatre, opera and historic re-enactments
- Firework displays
- Large scale company parties
- Processions, marches and carnivals
- Street parties
- Religious events

More information and an event notification form can be found on NCC's website: www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=11105.

Raising money at a community event

Incidental non-commercial lotteries – These are held at non-commercial events, such as school fetes etc. At such events where any money raised is not for private gain, you can run an incidental non-commercial lottery without a licence. All tickets must be sold at the location and the draw must take place during the event, which may last more than a single day. The promoters of the lottery may not deduct more than £100 from the proceeds in respect of the expenses incurred in organising the lottery, such as the cost of printing tickets, hire of equipment and so on. No more than £500 can be spent on prizes (but other prizes may be donated to the lottery) and the lottery cannot involve a rollover of prizes from one lottery to another.

Small Society Lottery – The society in question must be set up for non-commercial purposes eg sports, cultural or charitable. Proceeds must not exceed £20,000 for a single draw and aggregate proceeds from lotteries must not exceed £250,000 in any one year. If you belong to a society or club that wants to run regular lottery draws or raffles, you can register with Northumberland County Council to run a small society lottery. A fee will apply.

Street Collections – If you are holding a collection in the street, you will need to obtain a licence from Northumberland County Council. To find out more, visit: www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=537.

Private collections – If your collection is being held on private property such as within a shopping centre or rail station, you must obtain permission from the landowner or manager.

Food

If you are organising an event where food is consumed you need to be aware of the risks involved and to ensure that these risks are controlled. If professional or outside caterers are used, they are required by law to have food hygiene training and to have adequate safety controls. Caterers should be able to provide evidence of food safety management systems.

With events organised by volunteers, it is important that those involved have a clear idea of the requirements of good hygienic practice and to ensure these are carried out. If events take place regularly, it is good practice to ensure that someone has had formal food hygiene training.

Health and safety

If you are organising an event your organisation has a duty of care to ensure the safety of everyone attending your event.

Have you considered a 'Risk Assessment' for each of your activities?

Make sure any equipment used is appropriate, in good working order and safe to use.

You need to plan what to do if there is an incident or emergency. For example: Will someone trained in first aid be in attendance? Do you know what to do in the event of a fire?

You should also consider the security of money and any equipment.

For more information contact the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk.

Insurance

If you are holding your event in a building or on land owned by somebody else, for example a community building or pub, you should find out if their insurance is adequate for your event.

If you are holding a small private street party you may not require insurance.

If you are holding an event where public liability insurance is needed, an insurance broker will be able to source a competitive quote. Public liability insurance covers you for any claims of injury which happens to the public at your event.

It is possible to get event insurance which includes public liability and event cancellation insurance.

You should fully research any financial product before taking it out to ensure it meets your needs.

Getting further support

Northumberland Community Voluntary Action (Northumberland CVA) has access to a wide range of resources to help you organise community events more effectively. For more information, advice and support email enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk or call 01670 858688.