

The Essential Guide to...

Community Events

Community events are a great way of getting local people together, whether its to learn, to fundraise, or simply to meet similar people. However, the list of requirements can seem like a daunting challenge. The following list gives an introduction to some of the main things you will need to consider and how you can get support along the way.

1. Types of group

If you're a group of friends looking to put together an event, there are two ways you can go about this. You may want to look into what local organizations already exist and see whether an existing organization has similar aims to you, it can be a great way of organizing your event with the support of a well-established organization. 3VA produces directories of all our members, which include what work they undertake.

Alternatively, you may want to set yourselves up as an organization for instance if you are looking to do entirely separate work, or want to provide events or other services over the long term. Please contact us for help on getting started.

If you are a registered voluntary organization, you will need to check whether you have the right governance and finances in place so that you can hold insurance, funds, book premises etc. Again, we can support you to undertake a healthcheck of these critical areas.

2. Make a plan!

Think about what kind of event you'd like to put on, when you'd like to hold it and where, make sure you've got a clear aim and that there is a need. Event planning normally takes that little bit longer than you expect – it's best to give yourself at least 6 months planning for a large event, which will be 6 meetings if your group meets monthly.

It's also important to check that your date/place/theme doesn't clash with any other event locally.

Once your group is established, sit down and look at the details of what you want to do and develop a plan with timescales, costs and who has responsibility for which areas so that everyone is clear about what happens next.

3. Venue

- We have halls for hire lists on our website for Lewes District, Eastbourne and Wealden which list any facilities our members have that are available for hire.
- Make connections with local organisations who have space such as leisure centres, schools, colleges, churches, theatres etc – they may be willing to help.

3. Funding

It's likely that any event you put on will incur costs, whether it's the venue, catering, publications or insurance. Once you've got a clear idea of what you'd like to put on and how much it will cost, the next question is where you can get it from.

If you are looking to make an application for funding, you will need to provide a clear rationale for your event, such as what will it achieve? How will you know it will be effective? Who will it target? What will happen once this funding ends?

As well as showing that you have top quality governance, policies and finances.

Depending on what kind of event you are thinking of there are a variety of grants-giving organizations and trusts that you could apply to, as well as thinking about sponsorship, and in-kind funding such as a local printer providing your leaflets or a local organization providing a venue free of charge, which you would need to approach on an individual basis.

4. License

You may need to obtain a permit or license to hold your event – these mainly relate to if you are having entertainment, alcohol, film/theatre, music or gambling. The best way to check this is to contact the relevant team at your local authority:

[Eastbourne Borough Council](#): Events Team

[Lewes District Council](#): Licensing Team

[Wealden District Council](#): Licensing Team

5. Insurance

If you are a local branch of a national organization, you will need to check that your event is covered by their insurance.

If you are an independent group, it is likely that you will need to organize your own insurance, to protect you against any liabilities. The type of insurance you may need will vary depending on your event, however the most likely is public liability. For more information and a list of specialist insurance providers for the voluntary and community sector, go to the [Voluntary Resource website](#).

6. Parking and road closures

If you need to close a road for an event like as for a street party, you'll need to apply 4 - 8 weeks in advance your district/borough's relevant team:

[Eastbourne Borough Council](#): Highways Group

[Lewes District Council](#): Planning

[Wealden District Council](#): Environment & Transport

They need a certain amount of time to consult the relevant organizations such as contacting Sussex Police and East Sussex County Council.

7. First Aid

Depending on the size of your event, it may be appropriate to organize first aid assistance. [St Johns Ambulance](#) provides cover at a number of events and can be contacted to discuss your needs.

8. Catering/Refreshments

If you are looking to provide homemade food/drinks, there is not a straightforward answer about whether you will need to comply with food safety and hygiene legislation. If you are a formal group, it is more likely that you will need to comply, rather than for a one-off event.

To be sure, the best idea is to contact your district/borough's relevant team:

[Eastbourne Borough Council](#): Food Safety

[Lewes District Council](#): Food Safety

[Wealden District Council](#): Food Safety

9. Volunteers

Whether you would like to recruit volunteers to help with the event, or would like to know more about how to involve volunteers and best practice around specialised areas such as DBS checks, contact [Volunteer Centre East Sussex](#).

10. Risk Assessment

This is a process that requires you to identify all the hazards associated with your event, evaluate the risks involved and put in place adequate measures to ensure the safety of everybody involved. This can include everything from the venue you're using, to the equipment and catering and age/health of people attending – it needs to be as comprehensive as possible to show that you've thought through all possible hazards and made reasonable adjustments to mitigate risks. The [Health and Safety Executive](#) provides a number of excellent templates which can be adapted for your use.

11. Marketing

Think about what sort of event you are putting on and who you want to target. There are a number of ways to promote your event e.g. flyers, posters, website, radio interview, newspaper advert, local information board, library notice board and word of mouth.

12. Summary

So the quick checklist for you and your group to consider when planning an event is:

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type of group | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking & road closure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a plan | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Venue | <input type="checkbox"/> Catering/Refreshments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> License | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |

Lastly, best of luck with your planning and for success on the day!