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# Hiring a Park or Open Space for Events

**Process, Guidance and Additional Information**

**Introduction**

If you are interested in holding a public event in a park, open space or countryside site owned by Guildford Borough Council then this guide will take you through the permission process, the terms & conditions and provide you with useful information.

It is important to plan ahead and agree the programme of activities well in advance of the event date. You will need a team of people to help with organising the various aspects of the event such as event administration, finance and health & safety. Good planning and organisation are essential to putting on an event that is both safe and enjoyable.

Further information about running an event safely can be found on the [Health and safety Executive website](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/17581/Alcohol-entertainment-and-late-night-refreshment-licences). See here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/running.htm>

If you are organising a voluntary or community event, then [the ‘Can do’ guide on the gov.uk website](mailto:SAG@guildford.gov.uk) will help you to plan and run a successful event. See here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events>

**Choose your Site**

Guildford has more than 50 parks and countryside sites that can be hired as a venue for your commercial, community or fundraising event. Public open space is not available for private hire such as wedding receptions or private parties. Our most popular event sites include:

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| * Allen House Grounds (Green Flag) * Bannisters Open Space * Castle Grounds (Green Flag) * Chantry Woods * Chilworth Gunpowder Mills (Green Flag) * Kingston Meadows | * Lakeside, Ash * Onslow Recreational Ground * Riverside (Green Flag) * Shalford Park * Stoke Park (Green Flag) * Sutherland Memorial Park (Green Flag) |

Events on the highway that require the road to be closed off to general traffic such as parades and processions will require a temporary road closure licence. Please contact Surrey County Council for further details. See here:

[Public events on the road - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/public-events)

If you wish to stage an event in Guildford Town Centre, you should contact the Town Centre Management Team on 01483 444133 or email Diana.parker@guildford.gov.uk

**Decide on the type of Event, Theme and Activities**

Once you have decided on the location for your event, you need to decide what type of event would you like to have? Ideas could include Music concerts, funfairs, community fetes, cultural events, dog shows, walks or runs, outdoor cinema, carnival, theatre show, food festival, educational event or a circus.

Other considerations to think about (but not limited to) include:

1. Will your event be commercial or a community event? For fundraising or for profit?
2. How many people would you like to attend?
3. Will you have an entry charge?
4. Do you need to hire toilets or fencing or staging or marquees?
5. Who will work at the event?
6. What activities will you have? Activities could include dancing, theatre, music, filming, films, sports, fairground rides, fireworks, inflatables, donkey rides, camping, market stalls, food, face painting, cooking, balloon launch, obstacle course, re-enactment etc.
7. Where will people park?

**Event Application Process**

Application – All events held on Council owned Parks & Countryside sites will need permission form the Council to be able to go ahead. To begin the process, you will need to complete the appropriate application form from the list below:

* Outdoor Event Application Form
* Filming
* Regular School Physical Education and Fitness Sessions
* Balloon Launches
* Outdoor Theatre
* Bandstand Concerts

Event Acknowledgement – Once your completed application has been received, we will check it for date availability, event suitability and licence requirements. We will write to you and acknowledge your application and we will confirm the park hire fees & charges. We will also let you know about any other additional requirements that are necessary before your event can be confirmed.

Event Confirmation – For events under 1000 people, you will need to provide a Risk Assessment, COVID-19 Risk Assessment, a copy of your Public Liability Insurance and a Site Plan. This documentation is required at least four weeks in advance of your proposed event.

Larger events with over 1000 people expected to attend, will require a comprehensive Event Management Plan to include risk assessments, parking & traffic management plans. This documentation is required at least three months in advance of your proposed event. Details of your event may also be passed to the Safety Advisory Group for their consideration.

Once all the necessary documents have been received, we will write to you and confirm that the event can go ahead. We will also invoice you for the hire of the park. Events will not be able to go ahead without a written Event Confirmation from us.

It is recommended that you apply at least six months in advance. Large scale events require much longer. You need to allow enough time to properly plan your event, consider Health & Safety implications, obtain licenses (if necessary), secure any necessary infrastructure, hire staff/volunteers and promote your event.

**Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

Safety is your responsibility and as an event organiser you have a duty of care for the people who will work at and attend your event. If you are holding an event on Council owned land, a site-specific Risk Assessment and a COVID-19 Secure Risk Assessment must be conducted.

Completing a site-specific risk assessment is an essential part of organising a successful event. It will ensure the safety of everyone involved with your event. Risk assessments are a legal requirement for employers under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Sometimes specific safety requirements will have to be applied and failure to apply them could result in the cancellation of your event or, in the most extreme cases, prosecution.

It is important for you to think about the aspects of your event which may involve a level of risk e.g. manual handling, inflatables, machinery, vehicle movements, structures, animal welfare, working at height, fireworks, first aid, electricity, lost children, fire safety, fuel, slips/trips/falls, money handling, staff welfare etc. Consider what accidents could happen and what you will do to prevent them?

For more information see:

* Event Safety: [Event safety - Running an event safely (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/running.htm)
* The [Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare](mailto:customer.services@guildford.gov.uk) provides comprehensive guidance on all aspects of event planning and management: [The Purple Guide](https://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/index.php)
* Bouncy Castles and Inflatables: Serious incidents have occurred where inflatables have collapsed or blown away. These simple precautions can help you avoid serious incidents, whether you supply or buy bouncy castles and inflatables, are hiring one for an event, or operate them.

[Bouncy castles: safety advice - Health and safety in the entertainment industry (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/bouncy-castles-safety-advice.htm)

* Temporary Demountable Structures: [Event safety - Temporary demountable structures (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/temporary-demountable-structures.htm)
* Animal Welfare: [Apply for animal activity licence](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/animallicensing). For general information see [GuidelinesForWelfare.pdf (rspca.org.uk)](https://www.rspca.org.uk/webContent/staticImages/Performing/GuidelinesForWelfare.pdf)The Council does not allow events that offer ‘Pets as Prizes’.
* Fireworks: Displays on public land are restricted to professional operators and recognised bonfire and firework societies. [HSE Explosives - Organising firework displays](https://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm)
* Fun Fairs & Circus Events: The event organiser must notify the Council at least two months before the event. Specific documentation must be completed and returned. The additional documentation for a Fun Fair includes 1) Agreement 2) Third Party Public Liability Insurance Cover of a minimum value of £10 million per Ride 3) ADIPS forms for all rides 4) Risk Assessment.
* Circuses: are required to be a Member of the [Association of Circus Proprietors of Great Britain.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm)

[The Association of Circus Proprietors of Great Britain (circusgb.com)](https://circusgb.com/)

* Fire safety guidance, [Event safety - Fire safety (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/fire-safety.htm)

**Do not compromise on safety. You can always rearrange your plans and programme but you cannot correct the effects of an accident.**

**COVID-19 Risk Assessment**

You will need to provide a COVID-19 risk assessment. The risk assessment should ensure that you are working safely during coronavirus and that you do all you can to stay alert, control the virus and save lives. For up to date Government advice see [Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Safety Advisory Group**

[http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/safety-advisory-groups.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/safety-advisory-groups.htm)

Larger events, events of an unusual nature or events that are new to Guildford will benefit from meeting with the [Safety Advisory Group](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport) (SAG). SAGs provide a multi-agency forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event. They aim to help event organisers with the planning, and management of an event and to encourage cooperation and coordination between all relevant agencies. The SAG may contact you to discuss your event proposals further.

**Licenses**

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/licencesandpermits>

Some events will require a licence. You will need to allow 10 weeks for a premises licence and 4 weeks for a temporary event notice (TEN). For advice on [licensing, see the links below or contact](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events) Environmental Health & Licensing Services at [licensing@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@guildford.gov.uk)

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| --- | --- |
| * Premises Licence * Personal Alcohol Licence * [Temporary Event Notice (TEN)](mailto:Diana.parker@guildford.gov.uk) | [Find out about alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment licences - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/17581/Find-out-about-alcohol-entertainment-and-late-night-refreshment-licences) |
| * Charity Collection Licence | [Find out about charitable collection licences - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/24642/Charity-street-collections) |
| * Street Trading Licence | [Apply for a street trading licence - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/24629/What-is-full-street-trading-consent) |
| * Animal Licensing | [Animal licensing - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/animallicensing) |

* Food Hygiene Rating – See [Food hygiene rating scheme - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/25029/What-is-the-food-hygiene-rating-scheme). Make sure that anyone selling food at your event has been awarded a Food Hygiene Rating of 5. A good food hygiene rating can help you keep your customers safe.
* Alcohol – Events of less than 500 people: You will need to obtain a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). Applications need to be made at least 10 days before the event. Events of more than 500 people: You will need to obtain a Temporary Premises Licence. Applications need to be made at least two months before the event.
* Street Trading Licence and Selling of Goods – If your event is free to attend and you will be trading (selling any item including food, drink) or collecting, you will need to apply for a Street Trading Licence. The Council prohibits the sale of illegal goods, animals, birds and fish, replica or real guns, knives and other weapons on its land. A Street Trading License should be applied for at least two months before your event.
* Raffle – If you are planning to sell raffle tickets and complete the draw on the same day then permission is not normally needed. If you are planning to sell tickets in advance of the draw then you may need a Lotteries Registration License. If you are planning to sell £20,000 or more in raffle or lottery tickets then you will need to register with the [Gambling Commission](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/). Individuals cannot raise money for private gain.
* Charitable Collections – The permission of the landowner is required and/or a street collection permit is required before collections can take place. The Council is able to issue a street collection permit so that you can collect money from the general public on behalf of charities. Applications for a permit must be made at least one month in advance.

**Insurance**

Hirers of public open space are required to hold a current insurance policy for Public Liability. The policy cover must be for a minimum indemnity sum of £5 million per incident and the Council reserves the right to require a higher limit if deemed necessary. Please ensure your insurers are fully aware of all the activities taking place and that all your exhibitors, sub-contractors and caterers etc all have their own insurance. Evidence of this may be requested before, at or after the event.

**Live Events Reinsurance Scheme**

The government has partnered with insurers to offer a cost indemnification insurance scheme which will make cover available against the cancellation, postponement, relocation or abandonment of events due to new UK Civil Authority restrictions in response to COVID-19. For more information see: [Live Events Reinsurance Scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/live-events-reinsurance-scheme)

**Site Plan**

You will need to produce a detailed site plan showing the layout of your event, positions of stalls, marquees, exhibition units, car parking, stages, structures, seating, toilets, emergency access points, marshal points, first aid etc. For races, a detailed route plan will need to include the location of route marshals, refreshment points, first aid etc.

**Event Parking**

The park is not to be used for event parking without prior arrangement. Parking around many of Guildford’s parks is limited. A detailed parking plan may be required and will need to be agreed with the Council. Information about event parking must be clearly communicated to all ticket holders.

**Event Management Plans**

Large scale events will require a detailed Event Management Plan covering all aspects of the event.

**Traffic Management Plans**

Large scale events will require detailed Traffic & Parking Management Plans.

**Fees and Charges (including Security Deposits, Reinstatement and Cancellation Charges)**

A scale of fees & charges is set yearly. There is a minimum booking charge for the hire of our Parks and Countryside Sites. The fees are dependent on the type of event, the numbers of people attending and the duration of the event. Using an event charge calculator, we work out other charges that are payable according to the type of event being planned. The fee is determined once we have received your event application. A security deposit to cover against damage to the park or reinstatement fees if your event has caused damage to the park may also be payable. Should the Hirer cancel after written confirmation of a firm booking has been given, the Hirer will be liable for 20% of the total hire charge or the minimum event fee, whichever is the greater. Cancellations must be in writing or the full hire charge will be payable. For more information about fees and charges, please see the separate ‘Fees & Charges’ sheet.

**Q:** Why do we charge schools, charities, community groups and other non-commercial groups to use our land?

**A:** As landowners, Guildford Borough Council has a duty of care to ensure events & activities are planned, well run, safe to attend and that health & safety risks are fully considered and adequate control measures are in place. We need to know who is using our land, when they are using it, for what purpose and how it will affect others. We also need to consider environmental protection and the protection of the Borough’s assets with minimal disruption to the environment and wildlife. Having this information will also help to ensure that events & activities don’t clash with one another and with our regular maintenance. Anyone wanting to use our parks, countryside sites or maintained pitches for events or organised activities must go through the application process. The same considerations and approach is used for all event and activity applications and substantial financial discounts can be applied if the event or activity is for the benefit of the local community such as charity events and school sports sessions. Our principle aim is to cover our administration costs.  When we receive specific information that facilities are being used without permission or payment, we will act on that information and this may result in your event being stopped.

**Event Cancellation due to COVID-19**

If your event is cancelled due to COVID-19 and any associated local or UK lockdown, a cancellation fee will not be payable. If your event is cancelled for other reasons, a charge may be payable. See the separate Fees & Charges document.

**Emergency Services**

You are requested to notify the police and other appropriate emergency services of your proposed event particularly if more than 1000 people are expected to attend or if your event activities are of an unusual nature, for example, balloon launches. You will need to supply details of your first aid provider. You will be held responsible for ensuring adequate fire precautions are in place, that exits are kept clear for emergency vehicles and for seeing that none of the footpaths are blocked. For smaller events the Police Liaison Officer will distribute details and information about your event to the relevant PC’s or PCSO’s.

* [Surrey Police](https://www.surrey.police.uk/)
* [Ambulance Services](https://www.secamb.nhs.uk/)
* [St Johns Ambulance](https://www.sja.org.uk/)/Red Cross
* [Surrey Fire & Rescue](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/fire-and-rescue)

**Public Conveniences**

Some of our Parks and Countryside sites do not have public toilet facilities or existing facilities may not be available or may not be adequate for the number of people coming to your event. Depending upon the size of your event, you may need to provide temporary toilet facilities.

**Noise**

[Report a noise complaint - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/24846/What-you-need-to-know)

The control of [noise](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outdoor-advertisements-and-signs-a-guide-for-advertisers) including music from public address systems is covered by Environmental Protection legislation. When planning your event, always consider residents living close by. Nominate a noise monitor who regularly checks the noise levels at the perimeter of your event and adjusts them as necessary. Advise residents of your planned activities, giving start and finish times. This is not compulsory but highly recommended and good practice. Any event on Council land using amplification for music or speech must comply with the maximum noise levels set by the Council and end by 10:30pm, unless a licence has been granted.

**Site Access and Keys**

Some of our parks are locked up at night. Please consider this and confirm arrangements with the Council before your event. We may issue you with an access key to the park and/or toilet facilities. No copies of this key should be made. On occasions, we may have to close a site or offer you an alternative site. For example, if the ground conditions are poor or if a large event has booked the entire park.

**Park and Building Protection**

Event organisers will be responsible for any damage to the land and/or buildings close by. You will need to consider this when setting up your event. Repairs to any damage will be carried out by the Council and their contractors and the recharge will be for your account. Larger events may be required to pay a security deposit before the event. To protect Guildford’s parks; events, activities and training must not take place on or within 3 meters of marked out sports pitches or areas that may be temporarily fenced off in preparation for an event. Park infrastructure must not be used such as fencing, goal posts, benches etc. Music is not to be played without permission.

**Promote your event - for FREE!**

We work closely with Visit Surrey our county’s tourist board and have a dedicated area for Guildford on the website [Guildford: Plan your Visit to Guildford (visitsurrey.com)](https://www.visitsurrey.com/guildford) . You can enter your event details here for free [Submit your Surrey event for free - Visit Surrey](https://www.visitsurrey.com/whats-on/submit-event)  and your event will appear in all searches for ‘Guildford events’.

Our partner and town centre business improvement district (BID) Experience Guildford have a website for shoppers and visitors to our town centre and you can add your event for free to appear their listings here [Upcoming Events – Experience Guildford](https://www.experienceguildford.com/events/) by contacting them here [Contact - Experience Guildford](https://www.experienceguildford.com/contact/)

Tag us on social media and we will reshare your event @VisitGuildford (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram)

Council notice boards can be hired for advertising your event. To book a space email [marketing@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:marketing@guildford.gov.uk) with the location and desired date. First come, first come first served and there is a small charge for this.

**Advertisements and Signs**

If you intend to use banners, posters or flyers around the Borough then you will need to get written approval from The Council. [Consent to display an advertisement(s) - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/22697/Consent-to-display-an-advertisement-s)

If you intend to use banners, posters or flyers at the event site then please add details of this to your event application form. You must not advertise your event until the relevant permissions have been granted for your event to go ahead. Posters & banners must be hung with string (not cable ties) and removed immediately after your event.

Guildford Borough Council cannot give permission for advertising outside of its property. “Fly posting” is an offence under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. The council reserves the right to remove and cancel any unauthorised advertising and to recover the cost incurred from the event organisers. For more information see: [Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outdoor-advertisements-and-signs-a-guide-for-advertisers)

**Waste Management and Litter**

To ensure that the Council's obligations under the *Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse* are met, the event organiser is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that the event site is regularly litter-picked during the event
2. Ensuring that the event site is cleared of all refuse & recycling and disposed of legally following the event

If the event organiser fails to do this, then the Council reserves the right to carry out the works and charge the event organiser for any costs incurred. The Council are able to offer an Event Waste Service. There is a fee for this service. For more information see [Event waste management - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/24496/Event-waste-management)

It may be possible to hire litter picking equipment. For more information see: [Arrange a community litter pick - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/litterpick)

**Electric & Water**

Some sites can offer electric and water hook ups. Electric hooks will need to be checked by a certified electrician. Water will need to be flushed through before use. If the water is being used for drinking and/or cooking then a water test will need to be carried out 6 weeks before the event. There may be a charge for electric and water hook ups.

**Neighbours**

When planning your event, please consider residents living close by. Advise them of your planned activities, giving start & finish times and provide them with a contact email and/or telephone number should there be any issues during your event.

**Privacy Statement**

[Privacy statements - Guildford Borough Council](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/privacy)

**General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

Applications for events, balloon launches, fitness/PE sessions, theatre, bandstand concerts and filming events will be processed by Guildford Borough Council Strategy & Communications Team.

Personal data and company information will be kept on file for a period of up to three years. We may share information you provide with other agencies involved in your event application including but not limited to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG), other GBC Services such as licensing, Surrey County Council, other emergency services, Visit Guildford and Experience Guildford. Your information will not be shared with anyone else or any other organisation not associated with your event. Risk assessments and public liability insurance information will remain on file.

Guildford Borough Council will use your information to administer events in Guildford’s parks and will contact you for the following reasons:

1. To discuss, request further information, acknowledge and confirm your event.
2. We may need to inform others of your events/activities if they are likely to impact on others. This does not include your personal information.
3. Guildford Borough Council and Visit Guildford will promote Castle Grounds events including bandstand concerts and outdoor theatre performances. Marketing methods include flyers, posters, social media and website. The public enquiry contact information that you have provided will be included.

**Keep Your Information Updated**

If any of your application details change once your application has been submitted, please inform us. No additional items/activities may be included without the Council’s consent.

**More information**

For further advice on organising a safe and successful event, see the Health & Safety Executive website ‘[Guidance on running events safely](mailto:tic@guildford.gov.uk)’ at [https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/](https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/running.htm)

If you are organising a voluntary event then the [‘Can do’ Guide](http://www.surreyambulance.co.uk/ameed/) will help you to plan and run a successful event [Organising a voluntary event: a 'can do' guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events)

**Terms and Conditions**

See our separate Terms & Conditions for the hire of Parks, Countryside and Open Spaces. When completing your Event Application Form, you will be asked to sign to say that you have read and accept the terms.