

Section 4: Events

Holding an event is important to your project for a number of reasons: it will raise awareness amongst local people about what you are doing and why; it will help you to network and make links with key decision makers like local MPs or government figures; it will boost morale amongst your group and local community; it will showcase your project and possibly lead to further funding opportunities.

Your event can be as simple or as dynamic as you like – the key is to get people there and tell them about what you have achieved.

Types of events

Holding a launch event is a requirement of the Community Spaces grant. It will mark the opening of your new and improved project site to celebrate everyone's hard work and encourage people to use the site.

You should let us know the official opening date of your project at least 6 weeks in advance, as we may want to help publicise your event and prepare for any media enquiries.

Below are ideas for other types of events that you can hold to publicise your Community Spaces project, and encourage local people to get involved and use the site:

- **One-off event.** For example, a bulb planting day that local schools could be involved in, or an awareness training day that could be run in partnership with your local authority or stakeholders.
- **Regular events**, such as a weekly nature trail or guided tour of your project.
- **Annual events.** This may be a summer fête, a music festival or something that marks an anniversary of a local achievement.

Organising an event

Below are some suggestions of things to think about when organising your event. The most important things to consider when organising an event are your budget, resources and health and safety. These will give you the basis to planning your event.

Setting a date

Choose a date that is timely for your event. Make sure you leave yourself plenty of time to plan and organise your event and that the right people will be available. With your project being an outdoor space you may also want to consider the time of year and possible weather conditions.

Budget

The first thing you should do when planning your event is to check how much money you have available. Some of the things to consider for your event include:

- Refreshments / catering
- Hire of equipment
- Advertising the event
- Entertainment
- Special guests
- Staff / volunteers
- Information materials

Agree the things you will need for your event and allocate some of your budget to each requirement.

Venue

When preparing for your event, try to think about the following with regards to your project site or venue:

- Does the venue have easy access and facilities for the disabled?
- How big is the space?
- Is there somewhere to hang banners?
- What facilities are there for preparing drinks?
- Are there enough power points for the equipment you are using?
- If you need them, where are the power points located?
- If the venue is outdoors and the weather is bad, can you provide cover for your guests?

Road closures

If your event is for over 500 people you will need to consider applying for a temporary road closure. This will allow your guests, visitors and participants to get to and from your event quickly and safely. In some cases, it will be necessary to give your local authority at least 3 months notice. Rules and procedures for temporary road closures vary from one local area to another, so it is best to check with your local authority first.

Health and safety

There are some laws and regulations around public health and safety that you will need to be aware of when organising your event. It is important that you have public liability insurance so that you (or the owner of the site) are protected in case of an accident.

As an event organiser you will need to consider the following:

- How many people can your venue/project site safely hold?
- Are there any obvious hazards that you need to tend to, such as exposed wiring or uneven surfaces?
- If you are serving food, is there somewhere to safely store it and to serve it from?
- Do you have a First Aider available on the day of your event?

For information on health and safety visit the Health and Safety Executive website:

www.hse.gov.uk

Entertainment

If you are providing entertainment in the form of live or recorded music, check with your local authority to find out if you need a license. Refer to the Licensing Act (2003) – specifically, relating to ‘licensable activities’.

For the definition and breakdown of what the Licensing Act (2003) means go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Licensing_Act_2003

An official version of the Licensing Act (2003) can be found at: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030017_en_1

For more information about the Licensing Act (2003) visit: www.culture.gov.uk

Resources

Stalls – if you have enough space and enough people to run stalls, use the event as an opportunity to provide information to people. This could be in the form of literature about local issues. Consider asking your local authority, neighbourhood group, residents association, or local environmental charity if they would like a stall too.

Refreshments – if you are serving food and drink, think about what facilities there are available at the venue. Health and safety should be considered especially if you intend to serve hot food or drinks.

Volunteers

As your event will be free to the public, it is best to get as many volunteers as you can to help you.

Take into account the skills that people in your group have, and who would be best placed to be in charge of certain tasks. If someone is good at the more creative side of things, they might want to do some artwork such as producing posters to advertise the event. If you know that someone has excellent communication skills they might be the best person to speak to the media. Similarly, if someone is particularly good at organising, they could help you co-ordinate the event and make sure that everything runs smoothly.

Invitations

Consider **how many** people to invite and **who** to invite. For example:

- your local MP
- the press
- a photographer
- local councillors
- the mayor
- neighbours and local residents
- partners – Groundwork UK, Big Lottery Fund and others that may have supported your project.

Special guests

More people are likely to attend an event if they know a special guest will be there. Your special guest could be in the form of a celebrity or other well known figure e.g. the Mayor or an MP.

If you can arrange for a special guest to open the event your project may get more attention in terms of media, but it is not essential for the success of your event.

Find someone who is suitable for your event. Choose someone that will empathise with your cause, and benefit by being associated with your event. For example, inviting a local MP who is aware of local issues will make more sense than inviting an actor from a soap opera who has no connection to your neighbourhood.

If you have invited a special guest to your event, it is important to show your appreciation to them for attending, but without too much fuss. Special guests generally have busy schedules and will be used to being treated with a certain level of care.

Here are a few hints and tips on how to look after a special guest:

- A special guest is likely to have a personal assistant or agent who manages their diary. Be polite at all times and be clear about what you are asking them for.
- Prepare your special guest (or indeed, their personal assistant) by briefing them about the event. Let them know what the agenda will be, what time the event is, how long the event will run for, and what role you would like them to play – if any. It may be that they simply attend.
- Ask your special guest what they would like to do at the event. They may have a novel idea that you have not thought of.
- Ask your special guest how long they can attend for. If they have far to travel they may only be able to stay for a short period of time.
- Offer to pay for basic expenses such as their travel costs to and from the event.
- Be there in person (or ask a member of your group) to greet your special guest on arrival, and introduce them to other guests at the event.
- Make your special guest feel important by keeping a close eye on them at your event and making sure that they are well looked after.
- If your special guest has a particular role to play at your event, such as making a short speech or cutting a ribbon, let them know what time this will be.
- If there is a photographer at your event, plan the photo opportunities to fit in with when your special guest is available (and anybody else who needs to be pictured).
- Thank your special guest by sending them a card or letter, following their attendance at the event.

Advertising your event

There are several ways to let people know about your event. Here are some examples of how to advertise:

- word of mouth
- posters
- phone calls
- announcement on your social networking site
- internet blog
- e-mail or letter
- advert in your local paper
- newsletter.

Please refer to [Section 1: Promoting your project](#).

Equipment

Think about what equipment you might need for your event. Here are some examples of things that you should consider:

- Will you need tables and chairs? If so, how many?
- Do you need a microphone?
- Do you need a sound system?
- Are you using any video equipment?
- If you are making a presentation, will you need a projector and laptop?
- Where can you safely and practically position the equipment?

Always test your equipment in advance. You must ensure that it is safe to use and that it works well enough to produce good quality results. For example, check the sound for quality, pitch and volume. If you are using lighting, check that you have a spare bulb and that you can adjust the brightness if appropriate.

Photograph permissions

Community Spaces has a [photograph permissions policy](#). Please refer to this before taking photographs of people for the purposes of your Community Spaces project – particularly if you intend to publish the photos.

It is important that any member of the public who is photographed has given their consent for their photo to be taken and that they realise for what purpose the photo may be used. It is very important to get permission from parents if the individuals being photographed are under 16. Please use the [photograph consent form](#) as a template.

Photography

Taking photographs at your event will be a great way to remember your project and look back on what you have achieved.

If you know of a budding photographer or a local college that runs a photography course, they might be glad of the opportunity to take pictures at your event. It does not have to be someone professional, particularly as most digital cameras are now able to produce high quality shots.

Click [here](#) for Kodak's 10 Top Tips for Great Pictures.

Community Spaces has a dedicated group online, specifically for Community Spaces projects to share photos. We'd like all successful projects to join the 'Community Spaces Fund' group on the photo sharing website Flickr. Please visit us at <http://www.flickr.com/groups/communityspaces/> for more information. You will need a yahoo! email account to join Flickr. Simply join the group and upload your photos so that we can all see the differences being made with Community Spaces funding.