



Events Policy for Parks and Open Spaces

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Colchester Borough Council

Events Policy for Parks and Open Spaces

Context

Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan.

Priorities for action are:

- Addressing young people's needs
- Addressing older people's needs
- Healthy Living
- Community Safety
- Community Development
- Reduce, Re-use and Recycle
- Congestion Busting
- Enable Job Creation
- Affordable Housing

Aims of the Events Policy

To provide a clear framework for the consideration, programming and operation of a variety of events in parks and open space to enable a wide range of sporting, recreational, cultural, social and educational opportunities, which enhance the quality of life and address the priorities for action set out in the Council's Strategic Plan.

Objectives of the Events Policy

- Support and enable cultural, educational and leisure activities which widen access to Colchester's parks and open spaces and increase participation from all sectors of the community
- Encourage activities that enhance the quality of life for visitors, encourage healthy living and promote diversity
- Enable the council to offer parks and open space as venues for events within its financial resources
- Use local products, services and people where possible to encourage active citizenship and promote a positive image of Colchester regionally, nationally and, where appropriate, internationally
- Attract visitors and event organisers to Colchester to bring investment, jobs and prosperity to the local economy
- Promote Colchester as a destination with a strong heritage complemented by a vibrant contemporary culture

- Manage events so as to protect, preserve and enhance the historic and natural environment of our parks

To meet these aims and objectives, events staged at parks and open spaces in the Borough of Colchester will fall into 5 broad categories:

- Events organised by registered charities for the purpose of raising money for local and national charities
- Events organised by voluntary groups or organisations for the purpose of benefiting the local community and/or raising money for local and national charities
- Commercial events of local, national and international importance or significance that support the aims and objectives of the Events Policy and promote the Borough to a wider audience and encourage visitors to the town.
- Events and activities that aim to enhance the environment of the park or open space, educate users, encourage participation and promote the leisure activities or opportunities available.
- Civic events

Event Programme

- Regular annual or biannual events will normally be given priority but the Council will not guarantee the provision of a site to any particular event or organising body based on previous use alone.
- The Council will give priority to those events that have a record of being well promoted and managed offering a safe and high quality visitor experience.
- Castle Park will be promoted for events of Civic importance and events which promote Colchester regionally, nationally or internationally, or are of wide ranging interest. Organisers of smaller events and activities with minority or local interest will be encouraged to utilise some of Colchester's other parks that are closer to their community
- The Council will aim to achieve a well -balanced programme of events across the Borough's parks and open spaces and minimise disruption to regular users.
- The Council will, where resources permit, support a programme of ranger and volunteer led activities at Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and at other venues which engage local communities and encourage participation, provide environmental education and support tourism and local business.

Permitted Events

Generally to include:

- Civic events
- Sporting and recreational events
- Arts and cultural Events
- Children's activities
- Musical concerts
- Entertainment events
- Firework displays
- Shows, Exhibitions and Craft fairs
- Bona fide Animal Breed Exhibitions or Shows
- Fairs
- Circuses (see Programme Exclusions)
- Drama
- Guided and Sponsored Walking Tours
- Historic re-enactment
- Military Festivals
- Environmental and horticultural demonstrations
- Religious Events
- Political Activities
- Private Hire*
- Other events not included here as approved by the Council

* An event to which admission is by ticket only, where such tickets are not on general sale to the public or the subject of general publicity

Programme exclusions

- Any event likely to provoke public disorder
- Any event that includes the use of performing animals, except those which are normally regarded as domesticated in the United Kingdom (i.e. horses, dogs, cats, birds used in falconry demonstrations, caged birds and rabbits) which may be used as an ancillary part of a performance
- Any event that would cast doubt on the integrity of the Council or that the Council believes may be of questionable public morality
- The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Parks and Open Spaces will have the discretion and ultimate decision on determining whether a proposed event falls within the programme exclusions.
- Balloon releases are not permitted

Charges

- Hire fees and service charges will be levied for the use of parks and open spaces and these fees will be reviewed and approved annually by the Portfolio Holder. Fees for the hire of parks and open spaces and charges for the use of materials and equipment supplied by the Council during the event will be published.
- Registered charities may be offered the hire of parks and open spaces for raising money for local and national charities at no charge. Charges will be made for the use of materials and equipment supplied by the Council during the event.
- Non-profit making and local community groups which are not registered charities that wish to hire parks and open spaces for events to raise money for local and national charities will be required to pay the approved hiring fee. Charges will be made for the use of materials and equipment supplied by the Council during the event.
- Income derived from event hire fees will form part of the Parks and Recreation Service budget.
- Organisers of events in Castle Park will be encouraged to sell tickets through the Visitor Information Centre and Charter Hall Booking Office at Colchester Leisure World. Commission on ticket sales is negotiable and these charges may form part of any agreement with the Council to stage an event in Castle Park

Environmental Protection

- The Council shall ensure that event organisers comply with all relevant legislation relating to the control of noise and the protection of the immediate and local environment.
- Organisers will be encouraged to work with local residents and the relevant authorities to minimise the impact of events on the local community. Where considered appropriate by the Council, organisers will be required to inform local residents in advance of major events that may cause local disruption
- The protection of the park environment, wildlife and features will take precedence and will be considered when planning events. Where necessary the Council will secure a bond from the organiser in advance for re-instatements and repairs following events.
- The council does not allow the release of balloons on any sites due to the environmental impact caused by such an activity.

- In the case of severe weather creating very wet ground conditions, the Council reserves the right to cancel the event or require the event organiser to introduce ground protection measures to avoid excessive damage to the fabric of the park or open space. Such requirements will be at the Event organiser's expense. Such requirements may include the close supervision of vehicle movements to minimise damage. The cost of repair and reinstatement by the Council's approved contractors will be charged to the event organiser. In the circumstances that it is necessary to cancel an event due to severe weather the Council will not be liable for any costs. The decision to cancel an event due to severe weather will be taken by the Council's Head of Service whose decision will be final.
- In the case of severe winds creating dangerous conditions associated with trees on site, the Council reserves the right to cancel the event or require the event organiser to cordon off areas where the public may be at risk. Such requirements will be at the Event organiser's expense.

Event Promotion and Programming

- The Council will publicise park events through the Colchester Visitor Information Centre and its website www.colchester.gov.uk where possible. The Council will also publicise events on park notice boards and at information points where space permits.
- Promoters and organisers remain responsible for the marketing and promotion of their event and shall be required to make adequate provision for it and comply with the relevant licensing and planning legislation.
- The Council seeks to offer a wide and varied programme of events to the public in meeting the objectives of this Policy. Applications for events in parks and open spaces will be dealt with on a first come first served basis excepting that recurring annual events will be given priority if they are staged on regular dates.
- The Council will advise prospective event organisers of the forthcoming year's events. The Council will seek to avoid a clash of similar events by creating a minimum 4 weeks separation between events of similar character and attraction at the same location.
- The Council will consider events on the basis of those permitted events and programme exclusions as referred to above. References may be required and taken up where the content of an event needs further confirmation. The Council accepts no responsibility for the impact of refusing an event.

Operation

- Event organisers cannot hold an event in the Council's parks and open spaces without the Council's written permission. This permission will be granted at the discretion of the Council and only following satisfactory

completion of the Event Application documents. Evidence of adequate insurance and risk assessment will also be required.

- The majority of events are hosted during the period 1st April – 30th October. Some events outside of this time will also be permitted where the park environment and features can be adequately protected.
- Operating hours for events will be between 9am to 11pm (excluding set-up and set-down). In exceptional circumstances an extension of these hours may be sought from the licensing authority for celebrations on festival days (New Years Eve, Guy Fawkes Night etc.), on civic occasions, or where celebration of a significant local, regional or national event is required.
- Events where admission is charged for entry into a park or part of a park will be permitted. However, the Council will seek to minimise the impact that these events have on regular park users. The Council will encourage organisers and promoters to offer free entry to their events wherever possible.
- Firework displays and other pyrotechnics will only be permitted where they are an integral part of an event such as Guy Fawkes Night, New Years Eve celebrations, Civic Events, Military Festivals, historical re-enactments and certain musical concerts
- The Council will inform local resident associations and park user groups of the event programme for each park and will consider their views during the planning stages for each event. Organisers of larger events will be encouraged to liaise directly with these groups to minimise any disruption or disturbance and limit the impact that their event might have on local communities

Monitoring of Standards and Customer Satisfaction

- Organisers of annual or bi-annual events will be required to monitor customer satisfaction and take any appropriate action at future events. The details of all public consultation are to be supplied to the Council
- Organisers of annual or bi-annual events will be required to carry out post mortems of their events to learn from their experiences and seek to improve on the product being provided and the impact on local residents. The Council may require a clear Action Plan setting out the lessons learnt and the improvements to be incorporated in future years before approving subsequent events.
- No event organiser shall make an assumption that there is any form of guarantee or contract with the Council for continuation of annual events.

- The Council will monitor standards, customer satisfaction and feedback and will liaise with organisers to instigate improvements where appropriate

Licensing

- In accordance with the Licensing Act 2003, Event organisers will be required to obtain Temporary Events Notices and all appropriate licences and permissions from the relevant authorities, where these are not already provided for under the terms of a Premises Licence.
- The Event organisers will be responsible for ensuring that their event complies with the relevant Temporary Events Notice or Premises Licence. Compliance will be strictly monitored by the Council's Authorised Officer, Designated Premises Supervisor or appointed deputy.
- Organisers, during all licensable activities, shall be required to promote the four licensing objectives:
 1. The Prevention of Crime and Disorder
 2. Public Safety
 3. The Prevention of Public Nuisance
 4. The Protection of Children from Harm
- Organisers shall be required to read, understand and put into practice the Council's Policies relating to Noise Control, the Sale of Alcohol, Proof of Age, Safeguarding Children and Adults, Registered Security and Drugs.

Insurance

- Organisers will be required to obtain and provide evidence to the Council of Public and Employers Liability Insurance to a minimum value of £5 million.
- This minimum figure is subject to review and may be updated at any time on the advice of the Council's insurers. For some events, the Council may request a higher minimum value
- Promoters and organisers will be responsible for ensuring that all participants and contractors are adequately insured

Health and Safety

Event organisers will be required to provide evidence where required by the Council that they are complying with:

- All relevant Health and Safety Legislation and
- The Council's own Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

Safeguarding Children and Adults

- Event organisers, their employees and contractors will be required to comply with the Council's Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy
- The content of each event shall be considered by the Council and an age limit agreed with the Organiser. These limits will be monitored by the Council and failure to comply with them may result in the closure of the event.
- All organisers and promoters will be required to provide evidence of procedures for dealing with lost children