

Your guide to organising a street party

What sort of events does this apply to?

This is about the sort of street parties that groups of residents get together to arrange for their neighbours. The main differences between a small street party and other public events are listed below:

STREET PARTIES	OTHER PUBLIC EVENTS
For residents/neighbours only	Anyone can attend
Publicity only to residents	External publicity (such as in newspapers)
In a quiet residential road or street	In buildings, parks etc.
Self-organised	Professional/skilled organisers
Normally no insurance	Insurance needed
No formal risk assessment needed	Risk assessment common
No licences normally necessary unless the sale of alcohol is involved	Licence usually needed

It's that simple

Organising a street party just for residents and neighbours is very simple and does not need a licence. The number one tip for holding a party is to plan early, share jobs out amongst residents and get in touch with your council at least 4-6 weeks in advance. A good first point of contact will be your council's highways, events or communities team. If you encounter any difficulties speak to your local councillor who will be happy to help.

More helpful tips, advice and support for organising a successful event can be found on the Streets Alive website www.streetparty.org.uk and The Big Lunch website www.thebiglunch.com. Do check them out, they're great.

Street Parties - the myths and the facts

Myth 1: It's too difficult and confusing

Streets Alive and The Big Lunch have great websites to help you plan (www.streetparty.org.uk and www.thebiglunch.com). You can also use Gov.UK to access local information and contact details for more advice (enter your postcode at: [Apply to hold a street party](#)).

You should not need a risk assessment – as long as consideration is given to the needs of all those attending, common sense precautions should be enough.

Myth 2: You need a licence

The Licensing Act 2003 does not require a music licence at a street party unless amplified music is one of the main purposes of the event.

However, if you plan to sell alcohol you will need to check whether you need a

Temporary Events Notice. This is a temporary permission for licensable activities which currently costs £21 and covers events of less than 500 people. For more information or to make an application, please contact your local licensing authority by entering your postcode at [GOV.UK - Temporary Events Notice](#).

Myth 3: The law requires complex forms for a road closure and councils need to sign off every detail

For most small parties in quiet streets, all your council needs to know is where and when the closure will take place so they can plan around it (for example, so emergency services know). They will need a few weeks' advance notice as they will need to put in place a traffic regulation order. If councils really need more information they will contact organisers, but they are expected to take a 'light touch' approach. If your council asks for excessive information, you should challenge them.

Or you can organise a gathering or 'Street Meet' on private land, such as a driveway or front garden, without any requirement to fill in council forms. Residents should speak to their council about plans - Streets Alive has some excellent guidance on how to go about it (<http://www.streetparty.org.uk/residents/street-meet.aspx>)

Myth 4: The law requires a fee to be charged for a road closure

The Department for Transport has scrapped guidance that led some councils to over-complicate the process and to charge people wanting to close their road. If your council is making a charge, you have every right to question what those charges are for.

Myth 5: It's too late to ask for a road closure

Some councils have set deadlines to help them manage their work. But there are no deadlines in law, so if they look unreasonable ask your council to be flexible. If you can't or don't want to close your road, you could plan a simpler Street Meet (see Myth 3 above).

Myth 6: You need to buy expensive road signs

Some local councils will lend you signs and cones, or you can hire or buy signs, or even print your own from downloadable templates if they are for use in daylight.

Streets Alive gives advice about this (<http://www.streetparty.org.uk/road-closed-signs.aspx>).

Myth 7: You need expensive insurance

There is no requirement from central government to have public liability insurance. Many councils do not insist on it so you should challenge those who do.

But if you think insurance would be a good idea, have a look at the advice on the Streets Alive and Big Lunch websites and shop around. Quotes for insurance start from as little as £50, which can be split between people attending, or you could hold a raffle or ask for donations to cover the costs.

Myth 8: You need a food licence

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has confirmed that one-off events such as street parties aren't usually considered food businesses, so there are no forms to fill in.

However you must ensure that any food provided is safe to eat.

The FSA provides more detail about street parties on its web site at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/parties>

Further advice for community groups on providing safe food can be found here:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/food-hygiene/charity-community-groups>

The NHS Choices website has practical tips on how to prepare and cook food safely at

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Pages/Foodhygiene.aspx>