

# Greener Events Guide Checklist - Outdoor/Community Events

(Produced for the Government Office for the South West by Sustainability South West - Version May 2008)

## Introduction

Outdoor events (small festivals and community events) often take place on sites that have little or no facilities like parks or village greens and they are often organised by teams of volunteers on a small or no budget. All these factors can seem to make a 'greener' and more sustainable event difficult to achieve.

But a few simple things can make a big difference; and it's also worth remembering that the public's expectation is that these types of events become greener, so not doing certain things (like recycling) can have a negative impact not only on the environment, but on the reputation of the event. As fuel and other costs rise, a greener event will also be a more efficient and economically viable event!

## Key Factors

### CO2 emissions (power and transport)

Cutting down on transport can be difficult for events, particularly as in most cases the event infrastructure (toilets etc) has to be brought to site. In many cases the majority of visitors/guests will still come by car. But the increasing costs of fuel and awareness of our carbon footprints will mean that local sourcing and car free options will be vital to a successful event. Even the smaller, local events can benefit from reducing their carbon.

### Waste and pollution (rubbish and noise)

Waste is a huge issue for outdoor and community events. The amount of waste that is produced by traders and the public may be surprising! Most events have recycling bins available, so the public are used to putting their rubbish in different bins. In fact, many people will notice more if you *don't* provide recycling facilities and may take away a negative view of the event. Make sure any traders on site recycle as well (especially cardboard). Increasing recycling will also help to decrease removal costs for waste to landfill.

Ensuring all rubbish is cleared and the site left in good condition is vital, and a strong rubbish removal/recycling plan will help.

How you serve food/drink is important as well, reduce as much waste as possible like using napkins instead of paper plates and refilling cups. When you do provide plates, cutlery etc try to use recycled materials and paper that can be recycled, instead of plastic that needs to go in the bin.

### Sourcing (food, drink and other products)

Whether you are providing all the food and drink (and products) yourselves, or inviting in specialised traders, your choices can have a huge impact. Sourcing as locally as possible, from milk to tom-bola prizes, is a good way to reduce transport miles and support the local economy and communities – and to celebrate local distinctiveness. Choosing seasonal and organic food is also a plus. If prizes and items for sale are not homemade locally, ensure that the people who produced them were given a fair deal and good working conditions. And ensuring quality products will make for happy punters!

## Further information

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) provides information for events and entertainment on their website and there are an increasing number of websites that can be found via a search engine offering guidance on recycling and other aspects of greening your event/festival. The web page for the 'Greener Events' guide (on [www.oursouthwest.com](http://www.oursouthwest.com)) also provides tips and ideas.



## Before the event

- local councils provide health and safety information and any guidelines regarding environmental health, traffic etc

## Traffic and transport

- research all public transport options and advertise those *first* on publicity material/website
- if possible, run (mini)buses from major train/bus stops and have posters on stops explaining where to go
- don't forget to shout about the car-free options – people want to know!
- provide adequate, safe and secure cycle parking

## Sponsorship

- link to similar thinking organisations
- support and work with local companies

## Communications and Media

### Printed materials

- print on recycled paper using vegetable inks
- print only the number needed
- use websites as much as possible to reduce printing of promotional materials
- make event programmes worth keeping or usable on the day (vouchers etc)
- provide recycling on site if people don't want to take programmes/information home

### Information for the public/guests and visitors

- list public transport first on website (before other travel options)
- provide additional links to other information they may need (train timetables etc)
- local radio is a great 'paper-free' way of advertising – find a station to be 'media partner'

## On-site

### Choosing a site

- choose a site with good public transport links
- choose a site that can be accessed easily on foot and by bicycle and for the disabled
- ensure the site does not require special protection (SSSI or similar). If it does, work with local groups (Wildlife Trust/EA etc) to ensure the site is used correctly during and after the event

### Choosing contractors (toilets, marquees etc)

- choose local businesses to minimise road miles
- choose those that have environmental accreditation (ISO14001 etc) where possible

### Stalls and traders (food and drink, gifts etc)

- encourage local and organic food (milk, meat)
- request Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar

- request recycled, recyclable, compostable or biodegradable cutlery and plates (at least paper)
- if using homemade food, use local ingredients/products as much as possible
- smaller events can use china plates and steel cutlery to minimise paper/plastic waste
- where possible, use napkins instead of plates
- serve in milk, sugar etc in jugs/bowls rather than in individual packets
- recycle any cooking oil
- discourage 'leafletting' (companies that hand out promotional leaflets/put on car windscreens)

### Electricity and power

- if you need an onsite generator, use bio-diesel (where available)
- choose one large silent generator rather than lots of small generators
- use a reputable provider and ask about their 'green/renewable' options
- ask stallholders to hook up to the main generator rather than bringing their own
- minimise vehicle movement on the site
- offset CO2 use as well as the transport of those coming by car

### Rubbish and Waste

- providing separate bins (glass, plastic, paper etc), is now an accepted standard at events
- have recycling bins visible and in high traffic areas (including on the way in and out) with easy to read information
- make sure bins are emptied regularly
- employ a specialist company to litter pick on site/remove waste and provide recycling
- provide cardboard recycling facilities (is the main waste from stallholders)
- provide information to traders before the event and separate bags/bins for them to sort rubbish

### Noise and Pollution

- reduce where possible, using music and PA systems only in the areas needed
- let local residents know the plan for sound/lights

### Information for the public/guests

- highlight recycling info, bus stops etc on maps
- use robust signage that you can use again

## After the event...

- clean up – ensure the site is left in good condition
- request feedback from stallholders and other organisers