



Events Policy

The intelligent way to plan

Approved at Cabinet
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Colchester Borough Council

Events Policy

Context

Colchester Borough Council operates a variety of venues across the borough. All of these venues are able to host a wide range of events, from charitable through to full commercial events.

Aims of the Events Policy

To provide a clear framework for the consideration, programming and operation of a variety of commercial and community events across Council venues to enable a wide range of sporting, recreational, cultural, social and educational activities in line with the Council's strategic aims of being:

Vibrant - promoting our heritage and working hard to shape our future

Thriving - attracting business and selling Colchester as a destination

Prosperous –generating opportunities for growth and supporting infrastructure

Welcoming -a place where people can grow and be proud to live.

Objectives of the Events Policy

- Support and enable cultural, educational and leisure activities which widen access 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 its venues for suitable commercial purposes to generate revenue from events which are in line with the Council's strategic aims.
- 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 events 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 nature of the Council's venues.

To meet these aims and objectives, events will fall into five broad categories.

1. Commercial events of local, national or 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 and bring revenue to the Council.
2. Local commercial events that generate revenue for the Council, including weddings, parties, meetings, receptions and other suitable private bookings in line with the Council's commercial competitors.
3. Events organised by registered charities and/or voluntary groups for the purpose of raising money for local and national charities and/or community groups.
4. Events and activities that aim to enhance the environment of the parks, open space or borough venues that educate users, encourage participation and promote the leisure activities or opportunities available.
5. Civic events

Event Costs

All events, regardless of size, have a cost to the Council for staff time, hiring of equipment and services, organisation, set-up and clear-down. The Council is unable to subsidise these costs and will pass these on to all event organisers.

For selected charitable events these costs will be kept as low as possible and be run on a 'cost-neutral' basis.

Any appropriate costs must be paid before the event is permitted to take place.

For certain events, some or all of the advance payments may be waived (in instances such as profit share or payment in kind).

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 – and can refuse events based on income, payment and performance history.
- The Council will give priority to those events that have a record of being well-promoted and well-managed with a safe and high quality visitor experience.
- Castle Park, the Town Hall, Charter Hall and the Castle 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 'niche' 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 event venues.

Permitted Events

Examples of these would generally include:

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

Private Events

These will include weddings, parties, meetings and similar. These will all be available on a full commercial basis in competition with other local providers.

Council officers will use their experience to programme a full calendar of private events each year which will bring in revenue to the Council. All private events will meet all the necessary requirements for licences, insurance and health and safety, as with all Council events.

Programme exclusions

These would generally include:

- 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 (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 relevant Council Portfolio Holder will have the discretion and ultimate decision on determining whether a proposed event falls within the programme exclusions.
- Balloon releases and Chinese lantern launches are not permitted.

Charges

Hire fees and service charges are levied for the use of Council venues, and are reviewed and approved annually by the Council's Portfolio Holder. Charges are benchmarked with competitors for commercial events.

Discounts may be offered, at the discretion of the Operations Manager – Events, as seen fit by the commercial needs of the business. A flexible pricing approach will be used to remain competitive, such as during low demand periods, to secure the booking or multiple bookings, to secure high profile events or to achieve budgetary targets.

Some registered charities and non-profit making community groups may be offered their hire at a reduced charge. Charges will be made for the use of staff, materials and equipment supplied by the Council during the event.

The Council may be able to assist with the selling of tickets for events subject to a commission fee.

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 are encouraged to work with residents and relevant authorities to minimise the impact of events on the 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.
- For outdoor events, the protection of the 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-instatement and repairs following events.
- The Council does not allow the release of balloons or lanterns 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, at the event organiser's expense. Requirements may include the close supervision of vehicle movements to minimise damage. The cost of repair and reinstatement by the Council's approved contractors is charged to the event organiser. If severe weather makes it necessary to cancel an event, the Council will not be liable for any costs. The decision to cancel an event due to severe weather is taken by the Council's Head of Service, whose decision is final.
- In the case of severe winds creating dangerous conditions associated with trees on site or temporary structures – including but not limited to Inflatables and Marquees - 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 and continually monitor the risks. Such requirements will be at the event organiser's expense.

Event Promotion and Programming

The Council will:

- publicise public events through its various media and other channels.
- advise prospective event organisers of upcoming events. It will seek to avoid similar events clashing by having a minimum four weeks' separation between events of similar character and attraction at the same location.
- seek to offer a wide and varied programme of events to the public in meeting the objectives of this Events Policy. Applications for events will be dealt with on a 'first come first served' basis except where a recurring annual event is given priority if they are staged on regular dates.
- 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.
- schedule events in agreement with the Council's venues in relation to capacity and regularity.

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.

Operation

- Event organisers cannot hold an event in a Council venue 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 outdoor events are hosted between 1 April – 30 October. Some events outside of this time will also be permitted where the environment and features can be adequately protected.
- Operating hours for outdoor 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 such as New Year's Eve and Bonfire Night, on civic occasions, or where celebration of a significant local, regional or national event is required.
- Outdoor events where admission is charged for entry will be permitted. However, the Council will seek to minimise the impact that these events have on regular 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 New Year's Eve and Bonfire Night celebrations, civic events, military festivals, historical re-enactments, certain musical concerts and private functions (by prior agreement).

- The Council will inform local resident associations and outdoor user groups of the event programme for each outdoor venue, 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 (this can be carried out by the Council on their behalf at an additional charge) and to limit the impact that their event might have on local communities.
- All events at Council locations are subject to specific terms and conditions which need to be agreed and signed prior to the event. Council staff will go through these requirements with each organiser.

Licensing

- In accordance with the Licensing Act 2003, outdoor 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 are 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 are 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.
- If deemed necessary using predefined criteria, presentation of Event Safety Documentation may be required at a Safety Advisory Meeting.

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.

Monitoring of Standards and Customer Satisfaction

Organisers of annual or bi-annual events are 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 are required to carry out reviews of their events to learn from their experiences, 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 if appropriate.