

Richmond upon Thames

SUSTAINABILITY

Guide for events

making your event more sustainable



LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES



Introduction

Putting on events can have a negative impact on the environment and contribute to climate change if steps aren't taken to identify the impact and take some action to reduce it. Negative impacts on the environment can happen through the ways people travel to the event, items consumed, waste produced, and pollution generated.



Events should seek to minimise their environmental and climate impact, as well as disruption to the local community and biodiversity by considering noise, waste, traffic, and visitors, as well as promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. For events on council land, the council may set conditions where required - e.g. to ensure that steps are taken to leave the site in as good a condition as it was before the event.

This guidance document provides support for event organisers to help them make events more sustainable and ensure environmental and climate impacts are accounted for and reduced. It's intended for events that are being run on council land, but is a useful guide for any event being run in the borough.

Event greening: making your event more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

Conscious organisation: sustainability principles are embedded into the organisation of an event from the offset to ensure an event is sustainable (or 'green').

How to make your event more sustainable

■ Our waste

Events require a waste management plan. The steps outlined below provide more sustainable waste management options that will help to reduce the environmental impact of an event.

As a general guiding principle, the best option is to **reduce** waste. Where that is not possible, **reuse** products. Where reducing or reusing are not possible, **recycle** waste produced by the event (including ensuring that the waste produced is recyclable).



● Reduce

- Ban single use plastics (e.g. use reusable, compostable, or recyclable alternatives where needed).
- Go paperless (e.g. no printed tickets or flyers).
- If providing food, ensure that any leftover food can be donated rather than thrown away.
- Provide water bottle refilling stations to reduce the use of plastic water bottles.
- Proactively encourage attendees to bring reusable coffee cups.
- Look to borrow a marquee or tent where possible from friends/neighbours/ community groups to avoid purchasing an item with limited use.

● Reuse

- Reuse products where possible (e.g. glasses for drinks or reusable plastic cups, an organisation's banner, etc.).

● Recycle

- Ensure recycling facilities are readily available and signposted across the event.
- Ensure that waste produced at the event is recyclable.
- Ensure food waste recycling facilities are available on site to compost food waste.

How to make your event more sustainable

■ Sustainable transport

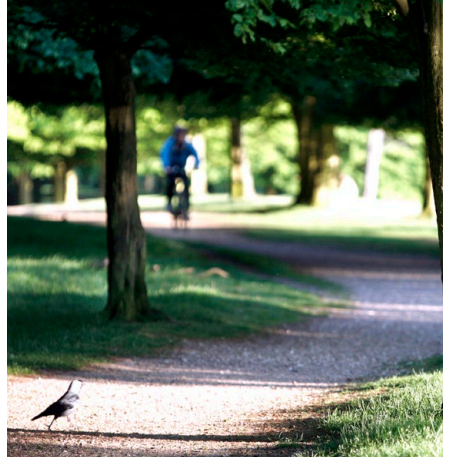
Discourage private cars as means of transportation to the event.

Only provide parking for those that require cars (e.g. for those with disabilities).

Encourage the use of and provide information on **public transport**.

Ensure safe **cycling** facilities (e.g. bike racks) are available for attendees.

If public transport and /or cycling are not possible for all, provide a shuttle service for attendees.



■ Contractors and procurement

Use contractors / suppliers who have **sustainability policies / ambitions** (e.g. use contractors who only use electric vehicles rather than petrol or diesel).



How to make your event more sustainable

■ Our nature

Leave the site in the same (or better) condition as before the event, by identifying vulnerable and important natural features and putting in place measures to prevent pollution/harm.

For example:

- Identify **water bodies** on site and ensure these are not damaged or polluted (e.g., keep the event distanced from water bodies and ensure there is no run-off into water bodies, ensure sufficient toilet provision, etc.).
- Identify **species** on site and their vulnerability to the nature of the event being run (e.g. check bonfires for animals before lighting them).
- Identify species' sensitivity to **noise and light pollution** (e.g. have a noise limiter and keep bright lighting to essential use only (i.e. for safety considerations)).
- Run a **litter picking** session after the event.
- Avoid using items which are harmful to the environment (e.g. paper lanterns).

Use venues with strong **sustainability credentials**. Most venues will provide this information readily on their website, as it is a positive attribute they would like to promote. If they do not, you can ask for this information.

Consider having an information stall promoting environmental best practice (e.g. ideas for attendees on how they can reduce their environmental/carbon footprint).



How to make your event more sustainable

■ Sustainable purchasing

ENERGY

Use **renewable energy**. For mains power, ensure that the site uses a renewable energy supplier. For off-grid energy sources, use renewable generators; e.g., rather than a diesel generator, use a solar powered generator.

Provide renewable-powered plug-in points for vendors (this will mean they do not need to have their engine running to provide food / drinks).



Photo: Thurtell

FOOD

More sustainable food sources are:

- Locally sourced
- Organic
- Meat-free
- Seasonal

The above can be achieved by selecting food vendors that already use local, organic, and meat-free food, rather than asking vendors to do this (you can simply ask vendors these three questions to determine if they are suitable for your event).



Photo: Aamulya

How to make your event more sustainable

■ Carbon offsetting

It is not always possible to reduce the carbon emissions of an event entirely. In such cases, you can **offset** your event's carbon.

Carbon offsetting is complicated, and the effectiveness can vary, so it should be used as a last resort after all reasonable steps have been taken to reduce carbon emissions as much as you can.

The first step is to calculate the carbon footprint of an event (e.g. you can use this tool: [Calculate the CO2 footprint of the event – with the CO2 calculator from myclimate | myclimate.](#))

Once you have calculated the carbon footprint of your event, you can offset your carbon (e.g. you can use the [United Nations Carbon Offset Platform](#)).

To help fund the cost of carbon offsetting, you could consider the following options:

- Include in the cost of the ticket of the event.
- Include as an optional extra that attendees can donate to when buying their ticket.
- Run a raffle as part of the event which would fund the carbon offsetting.



Additional information

[How To Run Sustainable Events | University of London Venues](#)

[Environmental Impacts - International Association of Event Hosts](#)

[How to Reduce the Environmental Impact of Events - Eventbrite](#)

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

- Glastonbury festival [green policies](#)
- [Large-scale](#) event sustainability
- Running events [sustainability considerations](#)
- Environmental sustainability at [Twickenham stadium](#)



Photo: tupungato

CASE STUDY: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Kew Gardens is committed to reducing the environmental impact of their events. It launched its net zero carbon events guide in February 2022. They also have a food waste free event guide and a sustainability monitoring checklist, to support sustainable events at Kew Gardens. Some of the key actions that are imbedded into events at Kew Gardens are:

- Letting people know you are hosting a sustainable event.
- Asking key questions during the planning stage (e.g., using a checklist).
- Providing information on public transport.
- Using local caterers.
- Giving all attendees a rubbish bag on entry and returned on exit.
- Having no idling vehicles on site.
- Training staff on sustainability principles.
- Going paperless: ticketless events, briefings for staff and stewards available via QR code rather than being printed, and safety forms and checklists done on phones.
- Using generic banners that can be used for multiple events.

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SUSTAINABILITY

thank you

