

Events on the Highway

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Attached is a copy of a report considered by the County Council's Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 16 March 2011.

The report deals with the legislation and guidance on managing events on the highway, and advocates a simpler process is required to help communities and the County Council as Highway Authority deal with requests for such events.

Under the terms of the Norwich Highways Agency agreement Norwich City Council deals with the management of events on the highway in the city within the scope of discharging a delegated network management duty.

The County Council's report is tabled for Members of this committee to consider given the desire that network management matters are dealt with on a consistent basis across all of Norfolk.

Any views that Members may have on the County Council's report will be fed back to the County Council in order that they can be taken into account in formulating their approach.

Action required

- (i) To consider the County Council's report and express a view as to the options preferred for future service delivery. In particular giving guidance on:-
 1. How Road Closure Orders should be processed.
 2. The nature of what the Council should charge for.
 3. The extent to which certain events should be exempt any fees charged.
 4. Whether to relax the requirement in respect of public indemnity insurance and allow organisers of local neighbourhood events to decide for themselves whether or not to take out such insurance.
- (iii) To support the County Council's Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport in making representations to Government on changes to legislation, as set out in para 6.7 of the County Council's report, to further ease the burden on local authorities in the administering the highway approvals.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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Events on the Highway

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

The legislation and guidance on managing events on the highway is complex. A simpler process is required to help communities and the County Council in dealing with requests for such events. Norfolk Constabulary has recently changed their approach to their approval of such events, which has required the Council to rely on the use of formal road closure procedures. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has also recently advocated new guidance for certain events.

Such matters have during recent months attracted significant attention. The change of stance of the Police has resulted in increased complaints from event organisers over the fees charged and the amount of time it takes to process the request and secure the formal order.

This report considers the County Council's existing approach and sets out options for future service delivery. There is an opportunity to reduce the 'red tape' imposed upon those that wish to hold an event on the highway. There are legal issues and some risks to the Council in balancing its role as local Highway Authority with allowing the public to organise some activities themselves and taking responsibility to conduct such events in a safe and appropriate manner.

In order to assist event organisers and the County Council (in streamlining the processing requests for road closures) it is recommended that support be given for the County Council to lobby Government to change the current legislation, in order to enable a more proportionate and balanced approach to requests for road closures.

Action required

- (i) To consider this report and express a view as to the options preferred for future service delivery. In particular giving guidance on:-
 1. How Road Closure Orders should be processed.
 2. The nature of what the Council should charge for.
 3. The extent to which certain events should be exempt any fees charged.
 4. Whether to relax the requirement in respect of public indemnity insurance and allow organisers of local neighbourhood events to decide for themselves whether or not to take out such insurance.
- (ii) To support a change in the Council's Constitution to allow the Director of Environment, Transport and Development to also make orders under Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.
- (iii) To support the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport in making representations to Government on changes to legislation, as set out in para 6.7 of this report, to

further ease the burden on local authorities in the administering the highway approvals.

1. Background

- 1.1. For many years all events held on the highway have been approved jointly by the County Council as Local Highway Authority and Norfolk Constabulary using powers available under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (TPCA). Norfolk Constabulary, responding to Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) guidance, has recently withdrawn from using the 1847 Act for the purposes of managing traffic on the highway in order to enable an event to take place safely.
 - 1.2. In essence the change of stance by Norfolk Constabulary has resulted in their withdrawal of free assistance to event organisers in helping to informally close roads forcing event organisers to secure a formal temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) processed by the County Council using highway powers.
 - 1.3. Since the change of stance by the police the number of applications the Council receives for such formal orders has increased significantly and we have received many complaints from event organisers over the standard £450 fee charged and the amount of time it takes to process the request and secure the formal order. Many organising committees are very concerned or simply unable to fund the current fee and we are told that events that have been undertaken in previous years may well be cancelled in the future as a direct result of the costs that may be incurred.
 - 1.4. The Council's £450 fee is reviewed annually and is set to recover the average cost of placing the advert in the local newspaper and the associated legal costs in processing the order. The fee does not cover any of the time taken by officers within Environment Transport and Development (ETD) in checking each application, considering the request in relation to the wider network management implications, which may include visiting the site of either the location of the proposed road closure or any planned diversion route, preparation of draft legal orders and associated plans and updating our internal systems which are used to coordinate activities. On average it is estimated officers in ETD spend 3 hours 'administering' each proposal.
 - 1.5. In order to minimise costs for event organisers the Council promotes the use of multiple event orders. A recent example of this was the celebrations marking the switching on of Christmas lights in many of Norfolk's towns and villages last December. Processing a multiple order for the Christmas Lights events reduced the cost to the 19 event organisers of securing a formal TRO from £450 to £55. Given the cost savings that arise multiple orders are popular, however, the administration of such a process is very demanding of officer time with ETD and can create a problem for those not able to get their submission within the deadline for processing.
- A list of known events in Norfolk is provided in Appendix A. The information provided sets out those events which are currently exempt a fee and splits the rest into neighbourhood street parties and fetes and other larger public events.

2. **Legislative context**

Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (TPCA)

- 2.1. The County Council and Norfolk Constabulary have successfully used this legislation for many years without challenge. 'Road closures' resulting from events were processed by an exchange of letters between the County Council and Norfolk Constabulary. As the process required little resource, no fee was charged for this work. Following the issuing of ACPO guidance it is accepted that only District Councils have powers to use the TPCA and Norfolk Constabulary no longer support 'closures' processed using the TPCA.

Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (S16A order)

- 2.2. Taking into account the legal advice about TPCA, formally closing a road to enable an event to take place on the highway can only be secured by the County Council using a S16A order. In some instances a S16A order will also require approval from the Local Government Office North East.
- 2.3. The DfT published guidance notes in 1997 setting out that 'significant events' should be published in a local paper a minimum of 8 weeks ahead of the event and that notices be placed in the street giving these details 14 days ahead of the event. The Council currently advertise the event details in the local press but do not require organisers to post the notices on site.
- 2.4. The DfT guidance advocates a shortened procedure be used where the event (under the same name) generally takes place at the same time each year or where no more than 2 miles of road are affected (where all roads are subject to a 30mph speed limit or less and the closure duration does not exceed 12 hours). For these 'less disruptive' events the event details should still be published in the local press (4 weeks ahead of the event) and notices displayed in the affected streets 7 days ahead of the event. For these types of events the Council generally meets the 1 month advert requirement, we do not require organisers to post notices on site.
- 2.5. In addition to the DfT advice, any event that has a duration exceeding 3 days or any event that closes a road that has already been subject to a S16A order that year (1 Jan to 31 Dec) cannot be closed without the approval of the Government Office North East. This increases the time and cost required to process the request irrespective of whether they are 'significant disruptive' event types or not.

3. **Latest Government Guidance on Street Parties and Fetes**

- 3.1. In August 2010 the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced his success in reducing the bureaucracy in planning street parties and fetes that require roads to be closed. The letter sent to all local authority Chief Executives (Appendix B), the news release (Appendix C) and new application forms (Appendix D) are attached with this report.
- 3.2. In summary this advice suggests that :
- Local Authorities should seek S16A orders in relation to events where there is no restriction on who may attend (i.e. an event more significant than a local neighbourhood street party). In such cases it is still recommended to publicise the proposed road closure in local newspapers and secure proof of public liability indemnity insurance. The expectation is that events of this nature will be arranged by

professional or skilled organisers familiar with undertaking and acting upon the results of formal risk assessments.

A different approach is advocated for neighbourhood street parties or fetes. These are seen as being typically for residents only and would be most likely organised at a more informal local level. Publicity could be restricted to those most likely to be affected (i.e. the residents). The expectation is local authorities should adopt a less onerous process that does not impose regulations that require public liability insurance or formal traffic orders and extensive alternative route signing.

- 3.3. In addition the Secretary of State advocated the use of a single local authority application form covering the Highway Authority (County Council) road closure approvals, licensing requirements (District and Borough Council) and any Safety Advisory Group approval (groups organised by the District and Borough Councils which are supported by Highway and Police Authorities). The general thrust was that in this way Local Authorities could process applications more quickly and at no charge.
- 3.4. In November 2010 we received further advice (Appendix E) extending the coverage of the August guidance to street parties, festivals, picnics and other events.
- 3.5. On 7 February 2011 the Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, announced that the 1997 DfT guidance on S16A Orders has been withdrawn "*in order to make it easier for Councils to let street parties go ahead and allow local communities to celebrate without being bogged down by paperwork.*"

4. Options

- 4.1. It should be noted that when the Council receives a request from an event organiser to use the highway, approval is not given in all cases. While it is extremely rare that a request is refused there may well be cases where it is not considered appropriate to allow the event to take place using the highway.
- 4.2. The Council's existing procedures have been reviewed and options developed for future service delivery that minimise 'red tape'. Some options minimise the financial burden on the Council by seeking to recover all the costs incurred and others retain the current approach which shares the financial burden between the Council and the event organiser.
- 4.3. All events require a road closure order processed using S16A. Officers have explored the potential to exempt certain events, such as neighbourhood fetes and street parties, from the requirement to secure a formal road closure order, but there is no basis in law for doing this without exposing the Council to unnecessary risks.
- 4.4. **How should formal Road Closure Orders be processed?**

Notwithstanding that all events require an order to lawfully enable the highway to be closed (to vehicles) there is significant scope within the legislation, in particular now that the 1997 DfT guidance has been withdrawn, for how such orders are administered and secured. A significant element of the current fees charged relates to the cost of placing formal advertisements in local newspapers (principally the EDP). Section 16A of the Road Traffic Act 1984 does not place any requirement on the Council to advertise and now that the DfT guidance has been withdrawn there is a real opportunity to cut down the administrative burden and costs incurred. The options are:-

Variant A

As existing, whereby the Council would continue to advertise the propose closure in local newspapers. Normally single applications but multiple events orders promoted for regular seasonal events.

Variant B

Amend existing process to only advertise and process orders through multiple event orders. Given the number of events that take place in Norfolk annually, the Council may need to operate such a system on a monthly cycle.

It should be noted that where applications could have been included in a multiple event order but were received too late for inclusion, they would only be processed under Variant A with the event organiser bearing the single application fee.

Variant C (including C Large Single and C Large Multiple)

Amend existing process withdrawing the need for newspaper advertising of events of a local nature, which are proposed to take place for no longer than one calendar day on minor local roads (such as a residential cul-de-sac) which if closed are unlikely to have an adverse impact on the wider movement of traffic including bus services.

Organisers of local neighbourhood events would be expected to consult those locally affected and submit evidence of the local support, or any concerns expressed, when making their application. The Council would effectively 'fast track' applications considering the support or concerns expressed, coordinate with other works or events in the highway and conduct consultations with emergency services. It is expected that properly made applications could be turned round and a S16A Order secured within 28 days. Upon receipt of the Council's 'approval' event organisers would be required to place a notice on the highway informing other road users of event and the date the road would be closed. There would be no administrative or cost saving arising from multiple orders and all applications for local neighbourhood events would be treated as single applications.

Larger public events would still be required to advertise in local newspapers using either single orders (Variant C Large Single) or through multiple orders (Variant C Large Multiple).

Variant D

As per Variant C, but further extending the removal of the need to advertise in local newspapers to all events. Local neighbourhood events would be treated as set out in Variant C above, but in the case of larger public events it is still felt beneficial to carry out a formalised 'consultation'. The Council would advertise the proposed road closure on it's website and require event organisers to also place a notice advertising the proposed closure on street for one month providing an additional opportunity for road users to express their views or make an objection to the Council. There would be no administrative or cost saving arising from multiple orders. In this variant all applications would be treated as single applications.

5. Resource Implications

5.1. Finance : What should the Council charge for?

Having determined how the order should be processed the Council needs to decide

what should be included to calculate the fee charged. There are two basic options.

Fee Regime A

As existing, where the Council shares some of the financial burden with event organisers. Fees set annually at a level estimated to recover only the Council's legal and advertisement costs, but exclude recovery of officer time for staff within the ETD department (estimated to be typically be 3 hours per application).

Existing single application fee is £450. Recent fee charged for each of the 19 applicants for the multiple event order for switching on the 2010 Christmas lights was £55. Fee set for the forthcoming Royal Wedding is £29.04.

Variant A

Single Order applications £450.

Multiple orders in the range of £30 to £80 (dependant upon number of applications).

Variant B

£60 (based on 125 events annually).

Variant C

Local neighbourhood events £36

Larger public events single applications £450 (Variant C large Single)

Larger public events multiple applications £60 (Variant C Large Multiple - based on 125 events annually)

Note: The significant reduction in cost for local neighbourhood events is achieved by not having to pay for newspaper advertising and 're-engineering' the 'back office' processes to remove duplication of effort between staff in ETD and npLaw. To realise these savings the Council's Constitution would need to be amended to also allow the Director of Environment, Transport and Development to also make orders under Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Variant D

All applications £36. Cost reduced for the reasons set out for single applications above under Variant C.

Fee Regime B

Fees set annually at a level estimated to recover all of the County Council's costs. Many other local authorities have adopted this regime. It is likely that the costs set out above would typically increase by £72 per application (single or multiple order applications) for all local neighbourhood events or any larger public event that did not affect a bus route or by an additional £108 for larger public events which affected a bus route and required the Council to liaise with bus operators.

5.2. Exemptions

Assuming the Leader's decision that all Remembrance Day and military homecomings remain exempt from the fee Members views are sought on whether any other form of event should also be exempt the fee taking into account that any increase in exemptions creates an additional cost pressure for the County Council. Additional cost pressures could be reduced or negated if the fee set for chargeable

events allowed for the cost of delivering the exemptions within the overall service cost.

- 5.3. Appendix A sets out the number and type of applications the County Council typically receives annually (excludes those events handled by Norwich City Council under Highways Agency powers). The number of application may increase during the next few years with the likelihood that Norfolk communities may wish to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee or the Olympics.
- 5.4. **Staff** : The Council currently receives approximately 125 applications per year and applies in the order of 0.2 of a staff post to this activity spread across the teams that deal with these matters in the four Area Highways offices. There are no implications for staff arising from any of the above options, although in Variant C and D there would be a reduction in work load for staff in npLaw as the administration of the legal orders moves across to staff in ETD.
- 5.5. **Property** : None.
- 5.6. **IT** : The Secretary of State's suggestion that local authorities may wish to consider using a Single Application Form would require the development of a shared 'back office' system for use by the County Council, District and Borough Authorities and the emergency services. This has not been evaluated in any detail at this stage and is to be the subject of officer level discussions through the Safety Advisory Groups which the County Council supports.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1. **Legal Implications** : There are no legal issues arising from financial aspects set out above. The only substantive legal matter, which is explained in more detail in the risk assessment section below, relates to the extent and nature of the formal requirements the Council places on those wishing to hold an event on the highway. The Council's legal and risk and insurance advisors have helped developed and have approved the contents of this report
- 6.2. Various highway legislation set out the powers the County Council has as local Highway Authority for controlling how the local road network in Norfolk is used. While the scope of the various powers is relatively broad the County Council is under no obligation to use all of the powers available to it. In relation to the holding of events on the highway the County Council as local Highway Authority has the following specific duties to take into account in determining its approach to service delivery and in specific decisions on individual cases:-
 - Duty to maintain the highway (free from obstruction)
 - Duty to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on its road network and those networks of surrounding authorities
 - Duty to coordinate works
 - Duty to promote road safety
- 6.3. Allowing an event to use the highway and closing the road to general traffic does present some risks for the Council. If Members were to advocate the use of Variant C or D as set out above to reduce or cease the use of newspaper adverts there is no reason to assume, given previous experience of using the TCPA, that such relaxations would present an unacceptable risk to the Council.

- 6.4. Event organisers in applying under the previous TPCA procedures set out and signed up to a range of matters which sought to minimise risks to the Council. For instance indemnifying the County Council against any claim for damage or injury resulting (either directly or indirectly) from the street event and the erection of traffic barriers. A copy of a TPCA application form is attached as Appendix F. It is intended that the range of requirements set on the application form, items (a) to (f), would also be set out on any application form used pursuant to the option that Members chose.
- 6.5. In the case of local neighbourhood events the views of Members are sought on whether or not the Council should relax its current insistence that all event organisers have public indemnity insurance. The Council's application pack and the forms the event organiser signs will make it clear that the event organisers will be liable for any claims which are made if they are negligent in the way they deal with the road closure, but there is scope in relation to local neighbourhood events (as opposed to larger public events) to simply advise event organisers of the need to consider taking out public liability insurance.
- 6.6. **Lobbying Government:** Certain provisions of Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 are considered to place an unnecessarily high administrative burden on local authorities, which could be remedied if the Government were to amend legislation.
- 6.7. It is proposed that the Council should write to Government setting out the following amendments to the Road Traffic Act 1988:-
1. Include the description 'community event' within the list of event definitions set out in Section 16a of the Act. Extending the definition of events would help the Council deal with some charitable events, like farmers markets, which are currently excluded from the provisions of this part of the Act.
 2. Extend the scope of Section 16a to also include events that take place near to the highway. This would help deal with cases where it is advisable to close the road in the interests of public safety but the event is not actually proposed to take place on the highway.
 3. Remove the requirement for Secretary of State consent for proposals which:-
 - may be in force for more than three days (this currently burdens proposals like those promoted for the Lynn Mart)
 - which are proposed on a stretch on road that has already been the subject of a S16A order within any calendar year (this causes difficulties processing applications in many of our town and city centres where there is demand for a number of events throughout the year).
- 6.8. **Human Rights** : The way in which the highway is used and any limitations the Council imposes upon its use can impact upon a person's entitlement under Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, in so far as such use or limitation may deprive a person of their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions. The Council in exercising the provisions of S16A takes into account the impact closing a road to enable an event would have on those directly affected, and weigh that impact against the rights of those wishing to hold the event and any wider public benefits that may arise.
- 6.9. **Equality Impact Assessment** : A full programme of equality impact assessments has been carried out covering all Environment, Transport and Development

activities. However, this report is not directly relevant to equality in that it is not making proposals which may have a direct impact on equality of access or outcome.

- 6.10. **Health and Safety Implications** : Officers attend the Safety Advisory Groups set up by the District and Borough Councils as a means of providing a 'one stop shop' for advice on aspects such as the correct licensing and road closure orders to ensure the safety of those attending events. The Council also provides specific advice direct to event organisers on how to safely close roads and cater for the needs of traffic who may require an alternative diversion route. However notwithstanding the role the County Council has as a local Highway Authority an event organiser also has a responsibility for the safety of event that they provide.
- 6.11. **Communications** : There is a great deal of community and media interest in the events that take place in Norfolk. The manner in which the County Council helps support (or burdens) event organisers attracts specific attention and helps determine the way in which the Council is perceived by members of the public or specific charities or businesses.
- 6.12. **Any other implications** : Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1. The County Council requires those that undertake events on the highway to secure the Council's approval and a formal traffic order. Such approval provides the opportunity to coordinate events with planned public utility or highway works and make arrangements for the event to take place safely, which may involve formally closing roads and diverting traffic (including bus services).
- 7.2. There is an opportunity for the Council to reduce the administrative burden and further reduce costs imposed upon those that wish to hold an event on the highway. There are legal issues and some risks to the Council in balancing its role as local Highway Authority with allowing the public to organise some activities themselves and taking responsibility to conduct such events in a safe and appropriate manner. The views of Members are sought on future service delivery.

Action required

- (i) To consider this report and express a view as to the options preferred for future service delivery. In particular in determining:-
 1. How Road Closure Orders should be processed.
 2. The nature of what the Council should charge for.
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- (iii) To support the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport in making representations to Government on changes to legislation, as set out in para 6.7 of this report, to

further ease the burden on local authorities in the administering the highway approvals required to enable such events to take place.

Background Papers

Officer Contact

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Currently Exempt	Street parties or fetes	Larger Public Events
Cromer, British Legion Remembrance Parade Dereham, Homecoming (Light Dragoons) Downham Market, Remembrance Parade Downham Market, Royal Air Forces Association Parade Downham Market, St Georges Ceremony Holt.TPC But should possibly be 16A Hunstanton, Remembrance Parade King's Lynn, RAF Freedom Parade King's Lynn, Remembrance Parade Sheringham, Remembrance Parade Swaffham, Homecoming (RAF Marham II (AC) Squadron) Thetford, Homecoming (D-Squadron's joint Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Regiment) Wroxham and Hoveton, Remembrance Parade	Banham, Summer Fair Dickleburgh, Big Lunch Street Party Hockham, Village Fete Kenninghall, Go-kart races Langley, Fete/Fun Day Litcham, Community Fete New Buckenham, Fete Shouldham, Village Event Swannington, Village Picnic Thorpe St Andrew, Street party/BBQ Tibenham, Fete/soap- box derby Wortwell, Fete/Wacky Races	Attleborough, Christmas Carnival Aylsham Show. No order. Prob not needed signing sufficient. Aylsham, Carnival Procession Aylsham, Christmas Light Switch On Aylsham, God 4 U event Bawburgh, Royal Norfolk Show Bawburgh, Royal Norfolk Showground - Cancer UK Race for Broome, Black Dog Road Run &Fun Run Bungay, Black Dog Marathon Bunwell, Santa Fun Run Burnham Market, Christmas Light Switch On Burnham Market, Craft Fair Caister on Sea, Carnival Procession Cromer, Carnival Cromer, Christmas Lights Switch On Cromer, Crab and Lobster Festival Dereham, Christmas Lights Switch On Dereham, Festival (Music in the Market Place) Diss, Carnival Diss, Christmas Lights Switch On Downham Market, Carnival Procession Downham Market, Christmas Light Switch On Earsham, 'Memory Walk' (Alzheimers Society) Fakenham, Christmas Lights Switch On Gorleston on Sea, Christmas Lights Switch On Gt & Lt Plumstead, Fireworks Gt Yarmouth, ½ Marathon Gt Yarmouth, 10K Road Race Gt Yarmouth, Diversity Day Gt Yarmouth, Mardi Gras Festival Gt Yarmouth, North Drive Fireworks Gt Yarmouth, 'Outthere' Festival Harleston, Christmas Lights Switch On Heacham, Carnival Hempton, East Coast Riders (Cyclo- cross) Hemsby, Festival Hemsby, Fireworks

Currently Exempt	Street parties or fetes	Larger Public Events
		<p>Hethersett, 2012 Olympics Open Weekend Fun Run Holt, Christmas Lights Switch On Hopton on Sea, Carnival Houghton, Race For Life (5km run) Hunstanton, Carnival Hunstanton, Christmas Day Swim Hunstanton, Christmas Light Switch On Hunstanton, Fireworks (cliff top car park) Kettlestone, Street Fair King's Lynn, Festival Too (Music & Fireworks) King's Lynn, Festival Too (music) King's Lynn, GEAR Run King's Lynn, Christmas Light Switch On King's Lynn, Mart Opening Ceremony King's Lynn, Mayor's Charity Motorbike Ride King's Lynn, Walks Lions Fun day Langham, Fayre Lingwood, Fireworks Ludham, New Year's Eve Fireworks Martham, Street Parade Mundsley, Christmas Event Norfolk East Coast Truckers Norfolk Eastern Lights Motorcycle cavalcade Norfolk Tour of Britain North Walsham, Christmas Light Switch On Norwich, Half Marathon (from Showground/Easton etc.) Reedham, Beer and Music Festival Reedham, Duck Race Reepham Big Weekend. No order but should be 16A Reepham, Christmas Lights Switch On Sheringham, Carnival Sheringham, Christmas Lights Switch On Sheringham, Coast Day Sheringham, Crab and Lobster Festival Sheringham, Morris Festival Snettisham, Victorian Market South Walsham, Broadland ½ Marathon Stalham, Christmas Lights Switch On</p>

Currently Exempt	Street parties or fetes	Larger Public Events
		Stalham, Street Fayre Strumpshaw, Steam Festival Strumpshaw, Symmetry Music Festival Thetford, Continental Market Thetford, Dad's Army Parade Thetford, Saturday Market Thetford, Street Market Thorpe St Andrew, Christmas Lights Switch On Walsingham, Anglican Shrine - National Pilgrimage Walsingham, RC Shrine - processions Walsingham, RC Shrine Ecumenical Assumption Procession Walsingham, RC Shrine Union of Catholic Mothers Pilgrimage Walsingham, RC Shrine Tamil Pilgrimage Watton, Carnival Watton, Christmas Market Wells on Sea, Carnival Wells on Sea, Christmas Tide Wimbotsham, Fenman Motor Bike Rally Wolferton, Scarecrows Wymondham, Dickensian Christams Fayre Wymondham, Lions St George's Event



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Dear

Street Parties and Fetes

The seasonal fete and street party is a great British tradition. There is no better way for people to get to know their neighbours and meet members of their community, than by holding an event on their doorstep. Events such as The Big Lunch show there is a demand for street parties and fetes. This is only going to increase in the lead up to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics in 2012. This is the Big Society in action.

I do not want people to be put off holding this sort of event with their neighbours by unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy. I know that many local authorities are very supportive of residents who want to hold neighbourhood events. I want to get behind you by getting central government's house in order and removing any barriers we have created.

For starters, we have been working with Department for Transport to clarify the position on road closures for local events. For most small street parties that do not affect the wider road network, there is no requirement in law for local authorities to advertise proposed closures or carry out consultations. Neither are specific signs or other traffic management equipment required. Local authorities should act proportionately, wisely, and in the public interest and apply their discretion to suit local circumstances.

We have also worked with Streets Alive, the Big Lunch and local government partners to produce a short guide for local residents on how to organise a street party or fete. It includes a simple, easy to understand form for residents who are planning local events. The form can be downloaded from the CLG website [add link]. I very much hope you will be able to use of this in your area.

RT HON ERIC PICKLES MP



News Release

EMARGOED UNTIL 00:01 SATURDAY, 28 AUGUST 2010

28 August 2010

BUREAUCRACY FOR SUMMER FETES OVERRULED BY PICKLES

Eric Pickles has succeeded in his quest to ban the reams of forms, high costs and red tape getting in the way of communities organising street parties and summer fetes.

From now on, instead of organisers being met with endless, confusing guidelines on food licences, road closures and insurance – councils can ask street party organisers to complete one simple form

A cross government meeting set up by Mr Pickles, with the Department for Transport, Department of Culture Media and Sport as well as local government and community groups such as the Big Lunch and Streets Alive, has agreed this new approach.

Mr Pickles will make it clear in a new leaflet that there are no dusty, central laws restricting councils from taking a common sense approach to administering events.

He will expel the myth that councils are required by law to advertise and charge extortionate fees for small road closures, potentially saving organisers thousands of pounds.

Previously, some small community groups were asked to apply for up to five separate licences and found it tricky to get upfront advice on what to do. They also found out about hidden costs right at the last minute, causing delays or cancellations to community events.

Mr Pickles, said:

“Fetes, street parties and fairs should be fun, and everyone’s energy needs to go into the fun part – not trawling through endless reams of guidance and dusty rules.

“I want to banish the myths around laws preventing people from putting on events.

“So there is still time for you to get together with your neighbours this summer. Your council may be able to help you close a road for a proper street party. If not, you can hold something in a garden or even the park. It’s your community, so celebrate it.”

For most small organised street parties that don’t affect the wider road network, there is no requirement in law for local authorities to advertise proposed closures or carry out

consultations. Neither are specific signs or other traffic management equipment required. Local authorities should act proportionately, wisely, and in the public interest – and highways law do not present any barriers to that.

Some easy, good practice guidance has been agreed in a new leaflet which will be published in September and be made available online and from town halls.

Chris Gittins, Director of street party campaign group, Streets Alive:

“At last the red tape is being cut on road closures and the bunting can go up on building community spirit through street parties. After years of campaigning on this the Government is listening to us. Though there is more to do, it is a great step for common sense and a chance to open up the country to the simple pleasure of meeting your neighbours in your traffic-free street. We hope that councils will respond with a sigh of relief and make it easier for residents to join in what is a great British tradition.”

Edward Lister, Leader of Wandsworth Council:

"Traditional street parties are a terrific way for neighbours to have fun and get to know each other better. This year we made some big changes which made it much easier for our residents to get these up and running. We've been advising the new Government on ways in which they can cut through the red tape and come up with a streamlined, user-friendly application process with local authority interference kept to an absolute minimum. If we want street parties to take off then councils need to stop fussing over the paperwork and leave the organisers free to get on with it."

A Croydon Council spokesman said:

“Our overall aim is to help communities organise on-street activities wherever it is safe and practical to do so. We would expect that reducing red tape to simplify the process would be appreciated within communities who want to bring people together in a social environment. If it makes it easier to organise street parties, fetes and so on then this is something we would welcome as these kind of events are potentially powerful in developing a community ethos among people of all ages and backgrounds.”

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