

How to organise a street party

Greener Sawston have done it, and YASMIN EMERSON explains how you can too!

This year sees an extra bank holiday, to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee: Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd June will be bank holidays, giving a four-day weekend. How about a street party to celebrate? It turns out that the admin you need to do is exactly the same as for the Playing Out sessions that Greener Sawston have organised, so I've put together a guide to applying to close the road for a street party.

The formal application must be placed at least eight weeks before your event. Eight weeks before 2nd June is 7th April, so now is a very good time to start planning.

If it would work to have a party on a local park or green space, then there's no need to apply formally. The county council say you need permission from the landowner, and obviously you'd need to consult neighbours and work out a plan.

But maybe your street would work well for an actual street party? To close the road, there's a legal requirement to apply formally, even if you and all your neighbours are in agreement – but it's free! There is something really exciting about closing the road and turning it into a dedicated fun space, even if it's only for a few hours – it's a liberating and memorable experience for all involved. It frees up a huge space for neighbours to get together, right on your doorstep!

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

1. Is your street suitable?

It must be a residential road where non-residents would be unaffected. So the bus route is a bad idea – a little road where there is a parallel road that non-residents could use instead would be a better choice. Maybe just a bit of your street would be easier to manage than the whole street?



2. Get neighbours on board.

For Playing Out, we've found it really helpful to have two organisers per street on board at the beginning. Once you've found a buddy, get the rest of your neighbours on board!

Write a consultation letter explaining your ideas so far, and invite them to an informal meeting. The meeting could be just in a front garden, or on Zoom if the weather is rubbish. You'll need to do this in February or March, in order to have time to put your application

in. The letter should contain some of your ideas, meeting details, your contact details, and possible dates for the street party, and it must include the Cambridgeshire County Council contact email address: highway.events@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Neighbours will have questions: you should be able to help in the first instance. If neighbours have objections, forward them on to the Highway Events team and they will guide you on how to respond to overcome any potential issues.

3. Plan the day.

Hopefully the meeting went well, everyone is happy, you've got a few more people interested in organising, and you can start to agree the shape of the day.

A basic plan might be something like removing cars by

11am, lunch at 1pm (bring your own? Bring and share?), afternoon tea at 4pm, finish by 6pm so that everyone can wind down before bedtime. Obviously covid is likely to be an ongoing concern, so flexibility will be helpful.

It's probably going to be impossible to avoid clashing with other village events. David Ellis has a summary on page 5 – Thursday and Friday daytime look free at the moment. Keep an eye here: www.sawstonqueensplatinumjubilee.co.uk



There doesn't have to be any entertainment, but might someone want to take on organising some games for the children? What about a quiz or a display of historic photos of the street? Is it anyone's birthday? Do any neighbours have skills to share? Could you celebrate the oldest and youngest person on the street? Might someone make special jubilee cakes? Having all ages involved makes it more of a community event. We've found that big chalk, bubbles, long skipping ropes and freeze pops help the afternoon go down well with all ages!

4. Apply for a road closure.

One person should take on applying to close the street. This is called a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, or TTRO. Before completing the online form, you'll need to create a traffic management plan and a risk assessment. These sound daunting, but you'll find them helpful for thinking through the event in advance. There are examples of both on the county council website, but do get in touch with Greener Sawston (greener@sawston.org) if you'd like to see ours – they were approved by the Highways Events team and will help you to understand what's required. You'll need to include these, plus your consultation letter, with your application.

The TTRO is a legal road closure, with neighbours acting as marshals at each road closure point. Obviously you'd maintain access for emergency vehicles. Residents and their visitors may drive in and out if need be – they'd be escorted by the marshal at walking speed, and drivers who flout this may find they have to explain their actions to the police.

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Members of the public can still walk or push their cycles through. Delivery drivers could have access, but in our experience they are supportive and would rather park up and walk over to the house. People wanting to drive through your road would be directed by marshals to use an alternative road.

The county council say you must use official ROAD CLOSED signs, traffic cones and high-vis jackets at each road closure point: the signs and cones are used to block vehicular access to the road. Greener Sawston have some available from our Playing Out sessions – you're welcome to borrow them.

Once you've run the traffic management plan and risk assessment past your buddy or organising team, it's time to fill in the form on the county council website. Make

USEFUL LINKS:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-events/platinum-jubilee-events

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-events/organising-a-street-party-event

If selling alcohol is involved – say you'd like to raise a bit of money for a PTA – you'd need to apply to South Cambridgeshire District Council for a Temporary Event Notice (or TEN). They cost £21: www.scambs.gov.uk/licensing/alcohol-and-premises/temporary-event-notice/

eight weeks before the event. So the deadline for applying for the Queen's jubilee weekend is Thursday 7th April.

The Highways Events team will review your application and create the TTRO – if all goes to plan, you should receive a copy fourteen to twenty-eight days before the event (I have had variable experience on this front – note the dates in your diary and be prepared to do some chasing).

5. Consider whether you need insurance.

There is no requirement to have any at all, although the county council recommend organising public liability insurance. According to the (now defunct) organisation Streets Alive, for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, about two million people took part in street parties. Not all had insurance cover – but of those who did, there were zero claims made across the entire country.

A quick internet search reveals that the premium is likely to be £59 for up to 100 attendees, £89 for 150 attendees, £130 for 250, and £146 for 500.

6. Let everyone know!

Hopefully your entertainments team are good at keeping people engaged and getting the excitement going! You should definitely aim to do a letter drop two to four weeks before the actual event – reminding residents of the date and times, and including the Highways Events email address.

7. Today's the day!

It'll be tiring, but you'll feel a great satisfaction at having got your community together. Well done you! Don't forget to take photos – and, with the relevant permissions, send them over to Sawston Scene... 📸