

Events Strategy 2022-25

Activating the city's parks



An introduction to the Events Strategy

Urban Green Newcastle's first Events Strategy outlines the vision and aims for the events programme over the next three years and the approach that we will take in supporting and managing events in the city's parks and allotments. It also provides a framework to ensure that the events that we curate, host and support meet Urban Green Newcastle's wider charitable aims.

Urban Green Newcastle is the charity that manages the city's 33 parks and over 60 allotment sites. They are all major assets for the city and its residents. The variety of events held in the city's parks will provide opportunities for residents and visitors alike to take part in activities and enjoy the city's green spaces, as well as providing a crucial source of income to support the long-term maintenance and improvement of Newcastle's parks and allotments.

This strategy seeks to ensure a balance between community and commercial events, to protect the environment, and to provide a framework for good management.



Our vision

Our vision is to host and support a varied and inclusive programme of events and activities throughout Newcastle's green spaces, that will attract local, national and international visitors, bring local communities together and generate income to re-invest into the city's parks and allotments.

What does the strategy cover?

This strategy covers everything from a guided walk from one of the Urban Green rangers, to an organised or community event, through to a music festival.

Although most events in the parks will take place outdoors, some of the smaller activities will be hosted in buildings such as Springbank Pavilion in Leazes Park, which has recently been restored and brought back into use.

Why host events?

By creating opportunities to participate in a wide range of events, we are enabling communities to come together, have fun, get fit, and get to know one another. Events also create essential income to invest in maintaining parks and allotments, as well as contributing to the local economy and supporting local businesses.



How we categorise events by size



Our strategy will

1. Create a lively and varied programme of events activating the parks for a wide range of audiences to enjoy
2. Generate income that will be invested in the parks and allotments
3. Help to support communities to develop and deliver events in their local parks
4. Deliver an annual flagship event that celebrates, local communities (*subject to funding*)
5. Create a funded programme of cultural events
6. Ensure a transparent and clear process for event organisers
7. Encourage access to health, education, sports, and wellbeing events
8. Promote accessibility, sustainability, and greener practices for events
9. Engage with the residents, park users and stakeholders of the parks
10. Monitor, evaluate and report on the impact of events and activities



1. Create a lively and varied programme of events activating the parks for a wide range of audiences to enjoy

Working with a number of different organisations and event organisers will allow us to curate a varied programme of events throughout the city's parks.

Commitment

We will:

- develop relationships with the North-East cultural network
- support community groups to deliver their events
- explore opportunities to bring innovative ideas and events to the city's parks

Outcomes

A wide-ranging programme of events, with something for everyone, that will allow us to engage with a wider audience and share with them the positive social impact that these events bring to the community.



2. Generate an essential income stream through events

It is important that we can generate income to look after the city's parks and allotments. To do this we will attract a wide variety of commercial events to the city's parks.

Commitment

We will:

- curate a varied and inclusive programme of events through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for all large and medium-sized events in Leazes Park and Exhibition Park. (These have been identified and licenced to hold events of this size)
- assess all proposed events for their environmental impact, to ensure that we are protecting the parks
- operate a robust process to ensure that events are safe and well managed.
- review our hire charges regularly to make sure that we are getting best value for money whilst remaining competitive
- balance the interests of residents, park users, stakeholders, and businesses to ensure a sustainable number of events are permitted
- demonstrate best practice in all aspects of event management, including the event application process

Outcomes

An active and varied events programme that provides a vital income stream to invest in looking after the city's parks and allotments.



3. Help to support communities to develop and deliver events in their local parks

We want to continue to encourage and support communities in delivering a wide range of events throughout the parks in a safe and sustainable manner. Over the past three years we have helped support 6,000 events and activities in the city's parks.

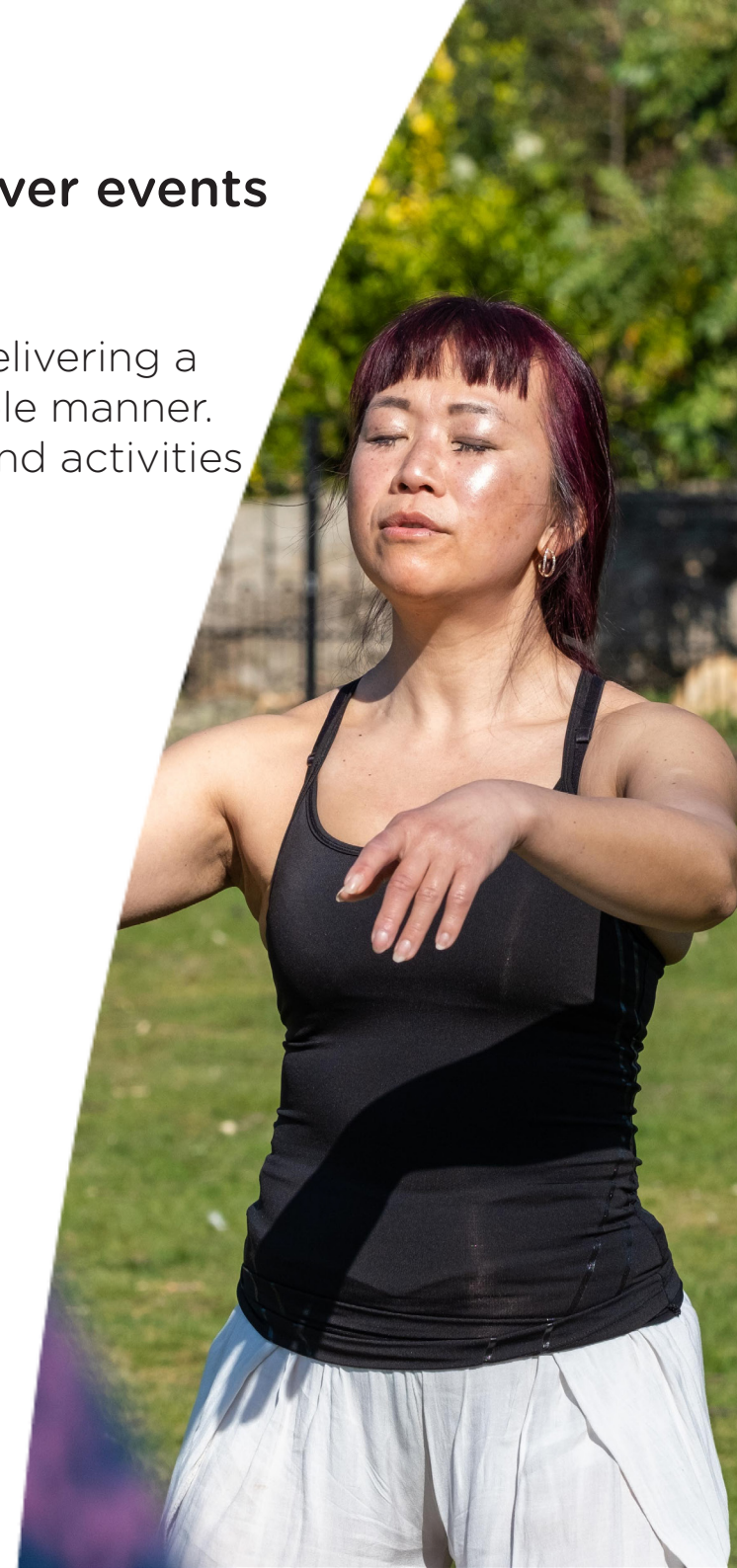
Commitment

We will:

- provide professional advice, support and guidance through our Events Team, online resources and In kind promotion and marketing
- encourage events that have strong community benefit and engagement
- support community event organisers and park user groups through the development of a streamlined event application process

Outcomes

An increase in the number and variety of events in the city's parks and allotments and delivery of a programme of diverse community events, which will benefit residents, park users, and a wider audience.



4. Deliver an annual flagship event that celebrates local communities *(subject to funding)*

A flagship event focussed on the allotments will encourage a city-wide celebration of green spaces and growing, showcasing the work of allotment holders, growing for food, and growing for the environment.

Commitment

We will

- seek funding to grow the annual Allotment and Garden Show into a broader, city-wide community event
- work with the UGN Allotments Advisory Panel to celebrate the work of allotment holders

Outcomes

To bring communities in the city together to experience, celebrate and enjoy the benefits of green spaces and growing.



5. Create a funded programme of cultural events

We want to develop and deliver a self-funded cultural programme that will grow reputation, generate income, and increase opportunities for public engagement.

We will work with partners to curate a cultural programme that will focus on health and wellbeing, teaching new skills and working with artists to present quality events and activities.

Commitment

We will offer a quality programme based on:

- co-creation - organising events, activities, and strategies to help communities develop and deliver creative projects in their local green spaces
- health and well-being - building on the Springbank Pavilion pilot, responding to the ACE 'Creative Health' agenda, and strengthening our strategic partnership with the NHS
- diversity - piloting a mobile bandstand programme with hard-to-reach and diverse communities to develop their own events

Outcomes

The cultural programme will increase the number and diversity of visitors to the city's parks. It will enable people to engage with cultural activity and green spaces more widely.



6. Ensure a transparent and clear process for event organisers

In order to attract events we need to make sure that the application process is clear and transparent from start to finish.

Commitment

We will:

- ensure that the events application process is clear with well thought out timelines to allow both Urban Green and the event organiser enough time to carry out the relevant planning and processes
- ensure that the events that we host, support, and deliver have clear links to the vision and aims of this events strategy and our charitable objectives
- ensure that event organisers meet their statutory obligations in the delivery of safe and successful events
- make sure that all opportunities are publicised online and via our social media channels
- make sure that all deadlines are met from both the applicants and Urban Green
- work with organisers to advise them of the requirements for hosting their event

Outcomes

The clear and transparent process will help Urban Green build a positive reputation with event organisers and continue a positive relationship with relevant parties such as the Safety Advisory Group, Multi-agency Group, stakeholders and residents.



7. Encourage access to health, education, sports, and well-being events

We want to enable and encourage people to get outdoors and be active, take pride in their local parks and improve their mental health and well-being.

Regular access to outdoor environments is shown to have a wide range of health, education, and well-being benefits.

Commitment

We will:

- partner with health, sport and social care organisations to identify joint health and well-being initiatives
- look to increase physical activity in all parks and open spaces
- develop a programme of educational events in the city's parks

Outcomes

A deeper connection between people and green spaces which has a positive impact on levels of physical activity, health, and well-being.



8. Promote accessibility, sustainability, and greener practices for events

Newcastle's parks and allotments are important green lungs for the city. They contain a wide variety of plants and habitats as well as sensitive historic designed landscapes and structures. As an environmental charity, Urban Green is committed to improving the green space in its care and to improving environmental sustainability across all its activities.

Commitment

We will:

- assess every request for an event or activity for its environmental impact
- not host events which would cause lasting and irreversible environmental damage
- require organisers of large and medium events to provide information showing how they will mitigate risks of environmental damage
- use environmental sustainability criteria as part of the selection process for events

Outcomes

A varied and accessible programme of events which works in harmony with the environmental sensitivities of the city's parks and allotments. Over time our ambition is to pilot and develop innovative ways to reduce the environmental footprint of events.



9. Engage with the residents, park users and stakeholders of the parks

We recognise that each of the city's parks and allotments is embedded in its local community and that events and activities can affect the lives of local residents and users. We are keen to spread events and activities across the city, and a balance needs to be struck to ensure that the needs of different communities and audiences are taken on board.

Commitment

We will:

- improve communication and engagement with residents and stakeholders
- hold stakeholder meetings twice a year in the two city parks where we are hosting large events
- email stakeholders to give an overview of large events
- update our online calendar with all events and activities that are open to the public
- make sure event organisers send out residents' letters to houses neighbouring the parks

Outcomes

The programme will be informed and management of events will continue to improve due to the input from local communities and audiences who take part in events.



10. Monitor, evaluate and report on the impact of events and activities

We will monitor and evaluate the impact and benefits of events and activities in the city's parks to learn and improve for the future. Events have a crucial role to play in supporting the maintenance and care of green spaces across the city. They also provide the capacity for community events which do so much to animate these spaces.

Commitment

We will:

- request information from delivery partners through our 'Supported by' programme which will help us to understand the benefits of events to our communities
- carry out evaluation of our own events and activities
- feature statistics in our annual reports

Outcomes

Improved future event/activity planning informed by monitoring data and evaluation, ensuring broader audiences are reached and engaged.



Guiding Principles

When working to achieve the aims of this strategy we will use a framework of guiding principles to ensure that events are:

- in line with Urban Green Newcastle's aims and charitable objectives
- commercially viable and contribute to the long-term maintenance of parks and allotments
- planned, managed, and delivered by experienced and reputable organisers ensuring that they are safe and run well
- providing opportunities for accessible public participation
- not clashing with other events that would impact on the amenities of the parks
- planned considering the cumulative impact of all events and activities in each park as well as the city as a whole

