

SUSTAINABLE EVENT GUIDE

Simple changes to help make your events more sustainable

We can all take action to reduce our impact on the environment!

Litter Free Dorset promotes the waste hierarchy, which prioritises reusing over recycling in order to reduce waste and prevent litter.

TIPS FOR FESTIVALS, MARKETS, FETES & FAIRS

1



Set clear expectations for vendors & stallholders

- No single-use plastic packaging, cutlery, straws, etc.
- Require vendors to offer a reusable option e.g. customers can bring their own shopping bag or cup.
- Encourage vendors to minimise their packaging.
- Be aware of food packaging – greasy cardboard and compostable packaging can't be recycled.

2



Offer refill and don't sell single-use drinks bottles

- Keep your event single-use plastic-free by not selling any drinks in plastic bottles or cartons.
- Have water refill points on site, with clear signage.
- Encourage visitors to bring their own bottle or cup.
- Make vendors and event staff aware of refill points so they can promote them to customers.

3



Offer a Cup Scheme

- Litter Free Dorset has 1000+ reusable cups available to borrow – head to our website for details.
- Check out www.refill.org for further guidance on reusable cup schemes.

4

Design your event with reuse in mind

- Reusable decorations such as bunting look great and can be used again and again – saving money and the planet!
- Banners can be reused by replacing dates, times, etc. with a new decal sticker each time.
- Reuse signage for bins, first aid tent and toilets at all your events.
- Promote your sustainability credentials – make it part of what people love about coming to your event!



5

Bins and recycling



- Make sure you have plenty of general waste and recycling bins across the site, clearly labelled with what can go in each bin.
- You can provide food compost bins if appropriate.
- Place bins close to exits and food vendors.
- Speak to vendors about their packaging so customers can be directed to the right bin.
- Compostable/biodegradable packaging should go into general waste as it can't be recycled.
- Remember - many coffee cups are not recyclable.

6



Don't inflate to celebrate

- Dorset and BCP Councils have a ban on the release of balloons and lanterns.
- Balloons contain plastic and chemicals which are harmful to wildlife and the environment.
- Sky lanterns are a fire hazard and will remain in the environment for years.
- Hire children's entertainers that **don't** use balloons.

7



Staff and volunteers

- Make sure staff are aware of the sustainable options at your event so they can promote them to visitors.
- Have staff available around litter hotspots so they can guide people to the right bins and keep an eye out for litter.

8

The Finale



- End your event with a team litter pick - you can borrow a kit from Litter Free Dorset!
- Make sure you have arranged collections for general waste, recycling, and food waste if needed.
- Make a plan for the changes you want to make at your next event - how can you do even better next time?

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TIPS FOR MEETINGS, CONFERENCES & NETWORKING

1

The venue

- Choose a venue that has kitchen facilities with plates, cutlery, mugs, etc, to avoid using disposable items.
- Use presenting facilities instead of printing paper copies.
- Ask your venue to recommend local suppliers to reduce mileage and support local businesses.
- Choose a location with easy access to public transport, or encourage attendees to car-share.



2

Catering

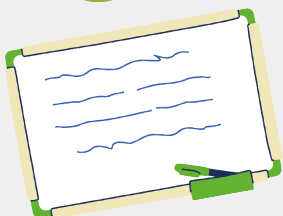
- Make your expectations clear prior to booking a caterer.
- Ensure that caterers can supply food in reusable containers that can be returned after your event.
- Select dishes that promote seasonal ingredients.
- Provide jugs of tap water instead of single-use bottles.
- Encourage attendees to take leftovers to avoid waste.
- Choose a caterer who uses local suppliers.



3

Resources

- Invest in reusable name tags that can be edited and used again at future events.
- Email feedback forms and documents or use presenting facilities to avoid additional printing.
- Provide whiteboards or chalkboards for feedback and activities, instead of post-it notes and flipcharts.



4

Refill

- Make sure tap water is always available and signposted.
- Remind attendees to bring their own reusable coffee cups and water bottles on the day.
- Ensure that reusable glassware and cups are available.



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TIPS FOR VENUES, PARTIES & WEDDINGS

1



Sign Up to the Sustainable Business Network

- Join a network of likeminded organisations.
- Reduce single use plastics in your business.
- Find resources to help improve your sustainability.
- Attend sustainable business network events.
- Discover simple changes you can make in your business.

2



Catering

- Ask your caterer about their ethos and sustainability credentials, and discuss what you want before booking.
- Consider the number of courses to avoid food waste, and talk to your caterer about using up leftovers.
- Food waste should be put into a compost bin.
- Select dishes that promote seasonal & local ingredients.

3



Decorations

- Use reusable decorations e.g. bunting, blankets, dried flowers
- Avoid single-use plastic decorations.
- Potted plants are a great alternative to floral arrangements - and you could give them away to guests afterwards!
- Create reusable signage with chalk boards and pallets.
- Save money! Hire/borrow decorations instead of buying new.

4



Don't inflate to celebrate

- Dorset and BCP Councils have a ban on the release of balloons and sky lanterns.
- Balloons are not biodegradable. They stay in the environment, gradually breaking down into microplastics.
- Balloons can be ingested by wildlife and contain chemicals which are harmful to our environment.
- Sky lanterns are a fire hazard and are dangerous for livestock.
- Try bunting or reusable backdrops instead of a balloon arch!

5



Refill

- Make sure your venue has tap water available and signposted – your guests will appreciate it!
- Provide glassware and jugs instead of bottled water.
- Glassware, crockery and cutlery can all be hired if your venue doesn't provide them.

6

Bar



- Plastic straws & stirrers are banned in the UK. Avoid single use by providing stainless steel straws as a gift for your guests!
- Paper napkins are extremely wasteful. Only provide them on request, or use fabric ones that can be washed & reused.
- Serve drinks from local providers to reduce mileage and support local businesses.
- If you're serving cocktails, avoid single-use decorations like umbrellas and sparklers.
- Fruit garnishes can be very wasteful. If you do use them, make sure the fruit goes into a food waste bin.

7

What Not to Flush



- Toilets are under pressure at big events!
- Flushing sanitary products, wipes, nappies, etc. down the loo leads to drain blockages which can cause flooding and end up polluting rivers and the sea.
- Download Litter Free Dorset's 'What Not to Flush' signage, which provides clear guidance for your guests.

8

Bins and recycling



- Reduce waste as much as you can, and recycle as much as possible after an event.
- Have separate bins and make it clear what goes where by displaying a list on each bin.
- Make it as easy as possible for guests to dispose of rubbish.
- Compostable/biodegradable packaging should go into general waste as it can't be recycled.
- Remember – many disposable coffee cups are not recyclable. Download our Ultimate Packaging Guide to find out more about different types of packaging.