

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

Open Spaces Policy

Purpose of the Commons.

The Commons are maintained and preserved by the Conservators according to the provisions of the County of Kent Act 1981 for the enjoyment of townspeople and visitors. Commercial companies are not, in principle to be excluded, so long as they are not trading on the Commons or behaving in a way that the public might find unacceptable. Organised events on the Commons are not in principle to be excluded but will require permission from the Conservators in advance.

Suitability

Each event must be judged individually on its merits, but as a guide the types of event that would be deemed **suitable** for further consideration would be:

- Traditional events including the fair.
- Charitable events.
- Sporting events.
- Community events with an emphasis on children.
- Free and inclusive, open to all.
- Filming and still photography *.

Events would normally be considered **unsuitable** if they:

- Have the potential to cause considerable damage to the Commons.
- Are commercial events to generate profit.
- Need to enclose part of the Common.
- Require excessive Officer time.
- Are excessively disruptive for the local community.
- Create unreasonable noise and disturbance for residents.
- Need excessive sound amplification.
- Require crowd control.
- Are expected to continue beyond 22.00hrs.
- Have been refused permission by the Trustees of the Manor of Rusthall.

Applications

Requests for permission to hold events or to use the Commons for a specific activity should be emailed to info@twcommons.org.

Requests will need to adhere to the following:

1. They must be made in a timely manner. If you are considering a large event, please be aware that the Conservators only meet four times per year and large events will require discussion in person, please allow enough time for this process. The office has permission to decide on small scale activities such as photography and filming, in this case please provide at least two weeks for your request to be processed.
2. Evidence of Public Liability Insurance must be included.

3. A risk assessment for the event or activity will need to have been completed.
4. Inclusion of full details of the plans including purpose, dates, times, types of equipment involved, numbers of people etc.
5. Please ensure that no vehicles are taken on to the Common unless explicit permission has been given.
6. Measures to manage litter and to avoid damage to the Commons must be detailed.

Charges

In some instances, it may be necessary for the Commons Conservators to charge the organisers a nominal fee to cover costs. As appropriate this will be included in the terms of the permission.

Licensing.

Events which need an entertainment or alcohol licence are not, in principle, unacceptable if they meet the terms of the licence as well as the criteria of the Conservators. The Conservators can begin negotiations and, if appropriate, give agreement in principle, but they reserve the right to require a licence to be obtained before permission is granted. Their final decision would take into account any representations made to the Licensing Committee.

Local authority Open Spaces Policy.

The Conservators are not bound by the Open Spaces Policy of other bodies, notably Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, although they can take such policies into consideration.

Explanation of decisions.

Conservators should give reasons for their decisions if they are judged to be contentious or of interest to the public. These will be recorded in the Conservator's meeting minutes and published on the website. If considered appropriate, the local press should be explicitly informed.

Donations

All donations for the use of the Commons would be gratefully received by the Commons Conservators for their ongoing management.

* Commercial filming and still photography is acceptable on the Commons if it meets the following criteria

- Maximum of 1 day of shooting.
- Maximum of 20 people involved (including crew and models).
- No structures such as gazebos
- No vehicles on the Commons. Parking is restricted to a limited number of spaces in Fir Tree car park, with a height barrier of 6ft 6, or parking in surrounding roads and car parks subject to usual parking restrictions.
- Areas of the Commons can't be cordoned off.
- Provision of copies of insurance and relevant risk assessments.

There is a charge for use of the Commons for filming and photography.

Date of last review: October 2024
Date of next review: October 2027