

University Parks – Venue Hire Guidance

Thank you for considering the University Parks for your event.

Aiming to be available for the enjoyment of members of the University, local residents, and visitors to Oxford the park is open to the public almost every day of the year until dusk (the only exception being Christmas Eve) and boasts a choice of walks, a large collection of trees and plants and space for informal games and picnics.

To begin planning your event with us, please read through the following guidance. If you have any questions, please do contact us at university.parks@admin.ox.ac.uk.

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1. What is a University Park 'event'?

An 'event' is any organised activity for **more than 30 people** or an **occasion involving any of the following**:

- Charging or fundraising events
- Erecting structures (marquees, gazebos, tents, etc.)
- Requiring Parks assistance
- Professional catering services*
- Vehicle access on site

**Note: [Barbecues](#) are not permitted unless supplied by a professional catering service.*

If you wish to have an event for more than 30 people or your event involves any of the above, you will need to complete an [Event Request Form](#) available on our website.

1.1. Informal Social Gatherings

Private or informal social gatherings for maximum 30 people, such as picnics, do not require permission from University Parks, as long as they do not involve any structures (gazebos, etc.), barbecues or any of the other aspects listed above.

We ask that individuals are considerate to other park users and to abide by the [Venue Restrictions](#).

If you wish to erect a gazebo or require vehicle access in the park, this would be considered an event and you will need to complete an [Event Request Form](#).

1.2. Research Requests

If you wish to carry out research within the park, an [Event Request Form](#) must be completed ensuring that you have provided as much detail as possible as to the required activities and the associated methods.

2. Event Application Process

- 1) Read this Venue Guidance document fully.
- 2) Visit the Parks and identify the best location for your event. See guidance on [3.1. Choosing Your Event Space](#).
- 3) Complete the [Event Request Form](#) and return this to university.parks@admin.ox.ac.uk. For recommended timescales, please see [5. Timescales for planning events](#).
- 4) If your event is likely to involve more than 200 attendees, your event request will be subject to a further approval process.
- 5) On approval of your application and throughout your planning process the University Parks Events Officer will communicate with you ensuring that your event remains in line with the requirements of the University Parks venue. You will be sent a quotation & booking contract from our team.
- 6) Depending on the details of your event, you may be required to complete an Event Management Plan and we may ask to arrange a site visit with you.
- 7) Copies of your risk assessments, licenses, public liability insurance should be sent to University Parks. Please refer to [4. Documentation Required](#) for all the documentation you may be required to submit.
- 8) Once we have all the necessary details from you, we will confirm your event and the University's Security Services team will be fully informed.

3. Event Spaces in University Parks

3.1. Choosing Your Event Space

There are five key areas that we recommend for most events. Please see [3.9. Map](#). These are:

- Area near Keble Gate
- Area marked Old Parks
- Area near High Bridge
- Picked Mead area
- Area near Genetic Garden

For information about each area, please see below for details. However, we recommend that you visit the space in person to confirm its suitability. We are also happy to discuss any other areas that would be of interest for your event.

3.2. Keble Gate Public Play Area

Key details:

- Largest open space
- Busiest public area in the Parks
- Easy access from Keble Gate

Due to the limited vehicle access of this area (low-hanging tree branches at the end of South Walk), we only recommend this area for the larger, multi-day events that could not fit elsewhere or smaller events with minimal set-up. This area is not recommended for private parties, such as department parties.

3.3. Old Parks Public Play Area

Key details:

- A large open space
- Proximity to the public toilets
- Opposite the Genetic Garden area

This area has greater vehicle accessibility than Keble Gate area, though trees along South Walk on route should be considered when organising suppliers. This open area is great for outdoor games, especially if combined with the area near Genetic Garden.

3.4. High Bridge Public Play Area

Key Details:

- Quieter public area
- Proximity to the river
- Hard surface nearby for vehicles (at weekends)

This area is on the quieter side of the Parks. This area is not recommended for use between Mon-Thurs (08:00-16:00) or Fri (08:00-12:30) due to the noise created by the Parks operational vehicles.

3.5 Picked Mead Area

Key details:

- Quieter public area
- Proximity to the river

This area is on the quieter side of the Park and is located near the pond. There are a few trees in this area so it is not a completely open space. This space has been used for outdoor performances or small social events and is popular for its fantastic views of the river. Generally, there are no problems with vehicle access along the route from South Lodge, though this is dependent upon the size of vehicle.

3.6. Area near Genetic Garden

Key details:

- More enclosed space to allow for some privacy
- Close to Keble Gate entrance

This area is on the busier side of the Park, but is quite enclosed which allows for more privacy. This area has a lot of trees so is not suitable for large structures. However, towards the Park boundary fence, there is open area which is suitable for smaller temporary structures. This area has previously been used for staff parties that involve 1 or 2 catering vans or outdoor games.

3.7. Whole Park

Some events may encompass the whole park, such as orienteering. If this is the case, we will still require a site plan identifying your route and exactly where you plan for any equipment or structures to be used or situated.

3.8. Sports Pitches

University Sports Pitches are highlighted in green on the map and are not permitted to be used for events, unless approval has first been obtained by the Parks department in agreement with Oxford University Sports.

3.9. Map

Please contact University Parks if you would like a pdf of this map to annotate.



4. Documentation Required

As part of the event booking process, the Event Organiser will need to provide the following documents to University Parks:

4.1. Event Management Plan

Depending on the size and complexity of your event, we may ask you to complete and update our Event Management Plan. This will include the key details about your event. This should be kept up to date as you organise all the different elements of your event. Any parts of an event that do not correspond with the information on the Plan will not be permitted on the day. This may also affect any future event applications you make to the University Parks. Therefore, it is important to update and send us the latest Event Management Plan.

4.2. Site Plan

This plan should include where any of your temporary structures, equipment and vehicles will be situated. Your site plan will be subject to approval from the University Parks.

4.3. Site-specific Risk Assessment

Your risk assessment must be specific to the University Parks. For example, if your event is happening near the river or pond, this should be identified within your risk assessment. We will supply you with the University Parks Events Risk Assessment for your information.

University members can find a risk assessment template and guidance here:

<https://communications.web.ox.ac.uk/event-management-toolkit>

4.4. Copy of Public Liability Insurance

As part of your terms of hire, evidence must be provided to show that you have obtained Public Liability Insurance that covers a value of at least £10 million.

4.5. Relevant Licenses (if applicable)

For example, Temporary Event Notice, Premise License, PPL PRS licenses. Please see [6.12. Licenses](#) for further details.

4.6. Vehicle Movement Plan (if applicable)

This should show the route your vehicles will take through the University Parks for your event. For further details, please see [6.10. Vehicle Access and Movement](#) & [6.11. Ground Protection](#).

5. Planning your event

Our Event Management Plan provides you with a good template to help you consider and plan the different aspects of your event.

If you are part of the University, you can also find guidance and templates to help you plan your event here: <https://communications.web.ox.ac.uk/event-management#/>.

Timescales for planning events

We aim to consider all event requests, however we highly recommend submitting an Event Request Form early to avoid disappointment. We would request the following timescales based on how many people will be attending your event:

- 0-30 people - at least 10 working days' notice before the planned event date
- 30-100 people - at least four weeks' notice
- 100-200 people - at least eight weeks' notice
- 200+ people, or events that are open to the public - at least six months' notice

The number of vehicles requiring access and number of structures will also have an impact on how quickly we can process your request. To save planning time, please read the below venue guidelines.

6. Venue Guidelines

6.1. Accidents and Incidents

Any accidents or incidents should be recorded by the Event Organiser and reported to University Parks.

6.2. Alcohol

Alcohol may be consumed but must not be sold in the boundaries of the University Parks.

The University Parks come under the [Public Spaces Protection Order](#). It is not an offence to drink alcohol in a public place in Oxford however, the Order creates an offence in the restricted area for any person to refuse to stop drinking alcohol or hand over any containers (sealed or unsealed) which are believed to contain alcohol, when required to do so by a police officer or authorised officer in order to prevent public nuisance or disorder, unless they have a reasonable excuse.

The University Parks is an unlicensed venue so if you wish to sell alcohol at your event, you will first need to discuss this with us. If we agree to the selling of alcohol as part of your event, you will be required to obtain either a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) or a Premises license for your event. Once you have obtained the relevant license, you must send us a copy of confirmation, otherwise you or your suppliers will not be permitted to sell alcohol on the premises.

6.3. Barbecues

Barbecues are not permitted in the University Parks, unless this is part of an event and is supplied and operated by a professional catering service.

The professional catering service will need to provide a risk assessment on their operations within the Parks. This should include details on precautions the caterers will make when cooking on site, especially when the ground may be dry from hot weather. The caterers must also consider how hot charcoal / equipment will be safely removed from the site at the end of the event.

6.4. Catering

Events can be self-catered in the University Parks. For professional catered events, vehicle movements on the premises would need to be considered. Please see guidance under [6.11. Vehicle Access and Movement](#).

Catering vans, such as ice cream vans, will need to park on the grass of the event space and must not block pathways. Please see further guidance to assist with this requirement under [6.12 Ground Protection](#).

6.5. Emergency Evacuation Plan

In the case of an emergency evacuation of the Parks, you should decide on an Assembly Point for your event. Please ensure this is communicated to any event participants and attendees. All event attendees should be accounted for.

6.6. Emergency Parks Closure

In the event of adverse weather the University Parks may be required to close. Reasons the Parks may have to close:

- Flooding
- Wind speed reaching over 40 mph
- Heavy snow & Ice

We will try notify you as soon possible via email if the Park is going to be closed so it is crucial that you provide University Parks with up-to-date contact details. However, these closures are difficult to predict so we recommend you have a contingency plan should an emergency closure occur.

It is the Event Organiser's responsibility to make sure all of their event attendees are notified not to attend the event. We highly recommend you have all attendees contact details and that good communication methods are in place.

6.7. Entertainment

If your event features any regulated entertainment under the Licensing Act 2003, you may need to obtain a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) or Premises license.

Licensable activities may include:

- Performance of a play
- Exhibition of a film
- Performance of a dance
- Performance of live music
- Playing of recorded music

However, there are some exceptions to the above, which may mean you do not require a license.

A few examples include:

- Live **acoustic** music between 8am and 11pm
- Films that are solely to advertise, provide information, education or instruction
- Incidental music – background music where the purpose is not for the music, but for another non-licensable activity. E.g. music for a keep-fit class (people are there to exercise).

For further information on exceptions and regulated entertainment licensing, please visit the Oxford City Council website:

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20143/alcohol_entertainment_and_late_night_refreshment/37/regulate_d_entertainment

If you are **providing regulated entertainment**, such as live music, dancing or a performance, you will need to apply for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). This is restricted for events up to 500 people and the event must last no more than 7 days.

If you are playing **live or pre-recorded music**, you may also need to obtain a **PPL license**. Please see [6.12. Licenses](#) for details.

6.8. First Aid Provisions

The Event Organiser is responsible for ensuring they provide sufficient first aid cover for the number of people attending the event. Please find details here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>

A defibrillator is located by the cricket pavilion. Please see [3.9. Map](#).

6.9. Generators

If you or any of your suppliers plan on using a generator, we will require a risk assessment on how fuels, oils and chemicals will be stored and handled while on the premises. Generators must be fenced off and securely restricted from the public.

6.10. Vehicle Access and Movement

The only vehicle access on site is **via South Lodge Gate** (located on South Parks Road, OX1 3RF). Please be aware University Parks and Oxford University Sports also use South Lodge to conduct their duties and should not be denied access on the premises (for details see [6.17. Parks Access](#)).

If you require vehicle access, we will provide you with a Temporary Access Card to give you access via the electric bollard. Please ensure that you agree with University Parks when these cards are to be collected and returned to the Tentorium office. Each card will cost £25 if lost or damaged.

As part of your Event Management Plan, you must include all vehicles that will be coming on site. We will need to know the **dimensions of vehicles** at least 2 weeks before the event date and the exact vehicle route you plan to take. We may advise that the driver or event organiser comes to site and checks that access at South Lodge gate and the route is possible. Most routes are lined with trees so these should also be taken into consideration. No articulated lorries are permitted in the University Parks.

As the University Parks is a public venue, **all vehicles should be marshalled** to ensure no risk comes to other park users. Vehicles should also adhere to the speed limits as displayed in the Parks and hazard warning lights or warning beacons must be used. It is the responsibility of the Event

Organiser to manage their event traffic and the behaviour of any drivers to prevent damage and follow the agreed vehicle movement plan. We recommend careful planning, briefings and use of stewards to help with this.

6.11. Ground Protection

We recommend you keep vehicles to hard surfaces where possible. If vehicles need to drive on the grass, more consideration will need to be given if the ground is wet.

6.12. Licenses

There are a few licenses that you may need to obtain depending on the nature and purpose of your event. Please see below:

Temporary Event Notice

If your event involves any regulated entertainment or you wish to sell alcohol, you may need to obtain a TEN. Please read [6.2. Alcohol](#) and [6.7. Entertainment](#) sections for specific information on each topic. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/temporary-events-notice> for details.

Premises License

Similar to the TEN, this allows for regulated entertainment and selling of alcohol for events for over 500 people.

PPL and PRS

If you are using music, recorded or live, you will need the relevant PPL and PRS licenses to cover. The University has PRS cover, however University Parks can help you obtain the necessary PPL license for your event.

6.13. Marquees / Gazebos

Marquees and gazebos are permitted as part of an organised event. You will need to include details of any structures in your Event Request Form. These **must be weighed down** appropriately, opposed to using spikes, as nothing must be dug into the ground within the University Park venue.

6.14. Opening Times

We are only able to accommodate events during opening hours, which are daylight hours. University Parks and Mesopotamia Walk open daily from 07:45 and close approximately 30 minutes before dusk each day. For exact timings, please see the [Opening Times](#) on our website.

6.15. PA Systems and Sound Amplification

Amplified music and PA systems are not permitted without prior approval. If approval is given and depending on your set-up, you may need to notify neighbouring parties of University Parks prior to

your event. The continuous sound level should not exceed 107 dB (A) in any part of the audience area.

Please also see the [6.7. Entertainment](#), as you may need to obtain the relevant licenses to play music.

6.16. Parking

We can offer 1 or 2 temporary parking permits for South Lodge car park or overflow car park. However, please note that we cannot guarantee a parking space as this is dependent upon day-to-day activities and sporting fixtures.

6.17. Parks Access

University Parks and Oxford University Sports staff access the Parks at all hours, including weekends, to help maintain the premises. Staff have the right to access the Parks as they require and should not be denied access onto the premises by any event staff. Staff can be identified by their Oxford University Card, and may not necessarily arrive in a Parks vehicle.

Please be aware that South Lodge may be particularly busy with Parks vehicles entering and exiting on **Monday-Thursday between 07:30-09:00 and 15:00-16:00**; and **Fridays between 07:30-08:30 and 11:30-12:30**. We recommend where possible that any of your vehicles or deliveries avoid these times.

6.18. Signage

Please refrain from attaching any signage to trees, bins and benches without prior approval. Any signage must be freestanding and cannot be dug into the ground.

6.19. Structures

Structures may only be erected as part of an event. This may include, but not limited to, gazebos, marquees, stages, tents, etc. If your event involves any of these items, please complete an Event Request Form.

All structures will be required to be weighed down appropriately, rather than using pegs/stakes being dug into the ground.

Placement of structures or vehicles should be clearly illustrated on your site plan. Structures should not be erected under the canopy of any trees to prevent root compression. If you have any particularly heavy structures or structures up for more than 24 hours, we may arrange a site visit to discuss the precise locations.

6.20. Suppliers

Any suppliers who are coming on the premises are the responsibility of the Event Organiser. Supplier risk assessments should be submitted to University Parks for review.

Please ensure all suppliers are clearly briefed on the venue's restrictions. If they are bringing vehicles on site, they must follow the vehicle guidance.

6.21. Booking Contract and Invoices

This will be sent to the event organiser. We will require a billing address and an email address to send the invoice to. Invoices will be sent 30 days after your event.

University events will be charged internally via journal. Please provide us with your full costing string.

6.22. Toilets

There are public toilets located at the Cricket Pavilion, including an accessible toilet.

6.23. VIPs

If your event involves any VIPs, please inform the University Parks. You are responsible for ensuring suitable security arrangements are made and agreed with the University Parks prior to the event, as we may need to make our own arrangements with Security Services or the Proctor's office.

6.24. Waste

The Event Organiser is responsible for ensuring all waste created by their event is taken away at the end of the event. For larger events, the Event Organiser may need to hire their own bins.

If you are unable to provide your own waste removal, the University Parks have a limited amount of additional litter bins available to hire which would include collection & disposal costs. Please contact us for a quote.

6.25. Weather

The University Parks is an outside venue so it is important to consider how the weather may affect your event and identify this in your risk assessment. For example, wetter days may need consideration as pathways and the grass may be slippery.

7. Venue Restrictions

- **No fires or self-catered barbeques**
- **Venue hire is non-exclusive** - the University Parks is open to the public so hire is not exclusive. Areas of the park cannot be cordoned off for events without prior agreement.
- **No bouncy castles and play inflatables**
- **No fairground rides or attractions**
- **No cycling or cycles in the University Parks**
- **No swimming, jumping or diving into the river or pond.**
- **No climbing trees**
- **No disturbance or interacting with trees, plants, parks infrastructure and signage**
- **Nothing should be dug into the ground.** Please see Venue Guidelines for details on signage and structures.
- **Events must be within Parks opening hours** – Everyone must have departed the parks by gate closing time. This varies depending on the time of year. Please see <https://www.parks.ox.ac.uk/opening-times> for details.

8. FAQ

Is there a venue hire charge?

This will depend on the size of your event and what your event involves. The Parks team can provide an initial quote based on the details in your Event Request Form, this is subject to change dependant on your final event plan.

What happens if it rains on my requested date?

We may be able to find you an alternative date if plans do not go ahead on the original date. This is dependent upon availability.

When are the University Parks available for hire?

The Parks are available to hire during opening hours. The opening hours vary throughout the year based on the times of dusk and dawn. Please visit to find details: <https://www.parks.ox.ac.uk/opening-times>.

Can we get takeaway/food deliveries to the University Parks?

Yes, you may collect any food deliveries from the entrance by South Lodge (OX1 3RF) where there is a small turning circle. Please ensure vehicles do not drive past the electronic bollard into the Parks. As with any event, all litter associated with your event must be disposed of in bin bags and taken off site or disposed of in the bins at South Lodge.

Are there toilet facilities available?

There are public toilets located to the side of the Cricket Pavilion.

Can I hire a sports pitch?

Sports pitches are maintained and managed by Oxford University Sports. For more details, please contact Jon Buddington on 01865 557106 (office) or 07834 849435 (mobile) or jon.buddington@sport.ox.ac.uk.

Is alcohol allowed in the University Parks?

Alcohol may be consumed within the University Parks. The Parks are protected by the Public Spaces Protection Order so any anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

However, alcohol must not be sold as part of an event. The University Parks do not have a license for this. If you wish to sell alcohol, this must be agreed with University Parks prior to the event. If approved, you will then need to apply for a TEN license.

Do the Parks have a gazebo/marquee available to hire for events?

No. The gazebo/marquee and the appropriate weighting will need to be sourced by the Event Organiser.

9. Contact Details

If you have any questions, please do get in touch.

University.parks@admin.ox.ac.uk

01865 282040

The Tentorium, South Lodge, University Parks, OX1 3RF