

# **PARTIES**

## **HAVING A PARTY/EVENT WITHOUT PROBLEM**

### **The Law**

It is not illegal to have a private party however it is important to note that each year Environmental Services receives a large number of complaints relating to alleged noise nuisances in relation to private parties. Such complaints need never arise if party organisers and hosts give careful consideration to their neighbours. This leaflet explains the law and gives some suggestions to help prevent a nuisance being caused.

Environmental Services investigates complaints relating to noise from parties under **The Environmental Protection Act 1990**. The Council can take formal action if it is satisfied that the noise in question is causing a nuisance to another person. This means that the level of noise is intrusive and interfering unreasonably with another person's use and enjoyment of their home.

### **What can you do to prevent such complaints?**

Often party organisers are unaware that their actions may impact on others. Whilst we do not wish to prevent people from having a party, if you have neighbours you should consider the impact that your enjoyment may have on them and plan your event to take account of this.

### **Planning your Party/Event – Some things to consider.**

Please consider the following;

#### **Where will you hold your party?**

- If you choose to hold your party/event at a pub or hotel then you should ensure that the venue of your choice does have a current Premises License to hold such events.
- If you choose to hold your party at home, in the garden, in a field etc then give consideration for those around you. Last year alone South Norfolk Council dealt with a great many complaints about neighbours who had events in their gardens.

#### **Who should you inform that you are going to be hosting a party/event?**

- If your event is open to the public, then you should speak to South Norfolk Councils Licensing team as you may require a License to hold your event. If you are a resident within South Norfolk Council's District then we would recommend that you speak to your neighbours as soon as possible, give people plenty of notice and be prepared to discuss the type of party/event you intend to host, together with details of what it will involve i.e. music, BBQ, additional traffic etc. Experience has shown that IF neighbours know there is a party planned and what time it will finish they are less likely to complain, or better still, "Invite your Neighbours along!"

### **What type of party/event is it?**

- A Christening is usually less noisy than say, for example, a 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Party or a motorbike club meeting annually. However, on all occasions hosts should consider the likelihood that their noise is affecting others.

### **What is the average age of the attendees?**

- If your party/event is for young children then often they are held in the day and don't as a rule result in complaints. However, other parties, which are usually held in the evening, can result in noise complaints so careful attention should be paid to levels of music and sound emitted from attendees.

### **How many guests will you invite?**

- Be realistic! If you live in a small house, don't invite too many people as this will probably result in people being uncomfortable, air will be limited and the need to open windows and doors will become more necessary, which will stop the containment of any noise. Your guests may also begin to start congregating outside which again could create noise that disturbs close neighbours.

### **How will your guests get to your party/event?**

- Again, please be realistic! If the majority of people are going to use cars, motorbikes etc to get to your party/event, remember that whilst they are inside, these vehicles will need to be parked somewhere without causing an obstruction to neighbours and emergency services.
- Please try to say your "thank yous" and "goodbyes" to your guests whilst inside your home as often engines running whilst goodbyes are said, or conversations in the street can be disturbing to your neighbours.
- Please ask guests leaving your home quite late at night or very early in the morning to avoid the revving of engines and beeping of horns, boisterous behaviour or shouting which may result in odour or noise complaints.

### **Will your party involve food and drink?**

- If your party /event involves a BBQ please ensure that the odour and smoke emitted does not affect your neighbours' usage of their own gardens.
- Ensure that you position your BBQ away from any fences, sheds or flammable substances.
- Ensure that all food is stored and cooked correctly.
- Consider the disposal of waste food; ensure it is not left around as this can provide a good food source for vermin.
- Consider the recycling of any bottles or aluminium cans etc. Details of recycling points are readily available from this Department.

### **Will your party/event have music or a band playing?**

- If your party/event is being held outside and you have chosen to play background music then please keep it to a reasonable level: ie can only be clearly heard in your garden, also consider the type of music as heavy based music can be disturbing whatever the level.
- Wherever appropriate, ie if you have young children or elderly people living in close proximity, then take your music indoors from around 7.00pm to avoid noise complaints.

- When music is being played indoors keep windows and doors shut except for access purposes, keep the level reasonable and be prepared to turn it down considerably lower or indeed off altogether around midnight.

**Will your party/event involve fireworks?**

- Please plan the area carefully where you intend to ignite and display fireworks. Ensure there is a fenced off “safe” area for people to stand and watch, well away from the ground where spent shells may fall.
- Please let fireworks off over a short space of time as soon after dusk as is possible.
- Inform neighbours that you intend to have fireworks at your party/event to allow them to keep family pets safely indoors. Also please be reasonable if an elderly neighbour or a neighbour with young children expresses concerns; be prepared to compromise.

**Will you need to make alternative provisions for family pets?**

- In some cases when a party/event takes place alternative provision is made for family pets. Owners holding a BBQ need to ensure their pet, like you would a child, are kept well away.
- Owners holding events inside may opt to temporarily put their pet outside. Please ensure that your dog is not outside barking or whining and causing a noise problem for your neighbours.

**Please note that all South Norfolk Council fact sheets are available in large print, cassette form or alternative languages**

**upon request**

