



Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Rd
London SW1P 4DR

2 February 2022

Our Jubilee Ask for Community Street Closures

Playing Out, The Big Lunch and The Street Party Site are playing a key role in supporting residents to hold neighbours' events for the Platinum Jubilee, throughout the summer and beyond. With our support, Michael Gove, Secretary of State DLUHC, has already written to councils asking them to support street parties by 'for example relaxing road closure rules to enable them to take place as easily as possible' for residents.

Street parties, as well as being a great British tradition, are a chance for neighbours of all ages to come together and build community. They are also a chance for children to play out together safely on their doorstep. This valuable experience in some parts of the country continues in regular play street sessions using Temporary Play Street Orders supported currently by over 90 local authority highways teams.

We would like to see communities in every part of the country able to take the opportunity to come together with their neighbours for a street party, Big Jubilee Lunch or ongoing regular play streets.

The impact of the pandemic has been enormous for communities and especially for children. Street parties and play streets - small, informal outdoor gatherings for neighbours on their own street/estate - are an ideal way for communities to safely come together outside and begin to heal. The Jubilee weekend is the perfect opportunity for as many people as possible to benefit from these very low-cost, community-led models and to celebrate the occasion.

However, we know that there are still significant barriers in many council areas for residents to be able to close their street to through traffic, either for a one-off event or a regular play street. These barriers prevent positive resident-led activity from being able to happen, especially in less affluent and confident communities.

To make it easy and accessible for people to safely close their road for these events both during and after the Jubilee weekend, we ask that the DfT puts out clear procedural guidance to councils, adding to the [existing legislative guidance](#), encouraging them to implement clear, simple and cost-free application processes for community-led road closures. Councils could do this on a pilot basis in the first instance, to get it done quickly in time for the Jubilee weekend.

We feel that a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport to all Highways Authorities, linking to these guidelines, would have maximum impact. If it is within your gift to do so, dropping the current requirement for councils to gain Secretary of State approval for regular play street orders (which often last more than 3 days, to allow regular closures through the year) would enable councils to process applications more quickly, simply and using less resource.

Offering guidance to councils (in line with [existing street party guidance](#) for residents on gov.uk website) could encourage them to reduce red tape and make it as easy as possible for people to close their street for a one-off neighbour gathering or regular play street and reassure them that:

1. Many councils already successfully have these processes in place and policies can quickly be implemented as a pilot.
Good examples include: Leeds City Council: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/licences-and-permits/play-streets> Manchester City Council: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/384980/play_street_scheme/category/355/highways_and_pavements
2. The benefits of resident-led street gatherings for community cohesion, public health, environment and active travel far outweigh the administrative costs to councils of processing road closures
3. There is no legal requirement for street communities to have public liability insurance. Many councils recommend it but do not insist on it and most use an indemnity clause instead
4. Formal traffic management training is not necessary or proportionate for residents wanting to close a residential street for a low-key community gathering. Instead, signpost to appropriate guidance and resources e.g. this [instructional video](#) from Sustrans and Playing Out
5. Councils can be reasonably flexible about the style of signage and barriers used to close the road safely. 2012 Government guidance on Jubilee road closures said “Neither are specific signs or other traffic management equipment required. Local authorities should act proportionately, wisely, and in the public interest – and highways law does not present any barriers to that.”
6. There is no minimum statutory consultation period or requirement for low-key residential road closures. It is recommended and proportionate to require residents to conduct a simple letter consultation rather than demonstrate percentage support.
7. There are no specific advertising requirements for these traffic regulation orders using the [DfT recommended legislation](#) (section 16a)
8. There are several specialist organisations who provide free support, resources and advice on community-led road closures, for councils and community groups.
Play streets: <https://playingout.net/play-streets/>
The Big Lunch: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch/councils>
Street parties: www.streetparty.org.uk

We very much hope you can support our request and help millions of people celebrate the Jubilee weekend with neighbours in their streets.

Yours sincerely,

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Tracey Robbins, Head of UK Delivery The Big Lunch/Eden Communities

Xavier Brice, CEO Sustrans

Chris Gittins, The Street Party Site

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO Neighbourhood Watch

Why it makes sense for councils to enable resident-led street closures

Eden's disconnected communities release: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-cost-of-disconnected-communities>

Closing the distance between us: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/closing-the-distance-between-us>

Costs v benefits of play streets: <https://playingout.net/play-streets/info-for-councils/faqs-local-authorities/#two>

Community, public health and active travel impact of play streets: <https://playingout.net/play-streets/impact-overview/>

The Big Lunch /The Big Jubilee Lunch & Month of Community

Since 2009, **The Big Lunch** has been bringing millions of people together to share food and fun in a **nationwide act of community friendship** on the first weekend of June every year. An idea from the Eden Project, made possible by The National Lottery, The Big Lunch saw **9 million people participate** at over 200k community led events in June 2021, with **over £7.4 million raised for good causes**.

We're delighted to share that **The Big Lunch will be part of the official celebrations for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022**. Buckingham Palace has announced an exciting programme of events for the extra-long celebration weekend and together **we're inviting people and communities across the UK to come together for The Big Jubilee Lunch 2-5 June 2022**.

We want the event to be as open and inclusive to individuals and organisations as possible and your help will be key.

Play streets

Also since 2009, **Playing Out** has been supporting the resident-led temporary play street model first developed in Bristol. Over 1,300 street communities across the UK have now organised regular play street sessions, enabling tens of thousands of children to play freely and safely together on their doorstep.

Helped by updated DfT guidance in 2019 clarifying the legal basis, 91 local authorities now have a play street policy or pilot in place enabling communities to close their street to through-traffic on a regular basis. However, many other councils are still either reluctant to put policies in place at all or put cost or other barriers in place to residents using the policies. Where these policies are simple, cost-free and well promoted, local authorities have seen large numbers of play streets across all demographics, with huge positive impact for children's health, community cohesion and safer streets.

Councils have said that clearer procedural guidance from DfT (as requested above) would make a big difference to their confidence in implementing these policies.

The Street Party Site

This website is a popular site providing important simple advice for residents and councils to hold street parties, especially regarding road closures and questions about insurance. The site is linked from and relied on by the MLHC street party page:

<https://www.gov.uk/organise-street-party/closing-a-road>

<https://www.streetparty.org.uk/>