



Greyhound Rescue West of England

FAQ: EVENT ORGANISERS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers have been organising successful fundraising events for GRWE for many years. This Guidance is not prescriptive, but seeks to draw on that experience, and set out suggestions as to what may be good practice to follow. It refers frequently to the “**Organiser**”, but it is appreciated that often a number of committed volunteers will assist in arranging an event. It may, nevertheless, be sensible to have one person recognised as the principal point of reference.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Authorisation

GRWE cannot sanction every fundraising event that is proposed. It may have to consider the cost as against the likely benefit (although it is recognised that the benefit derived from an event cannot only be measured in financial terms). There may be wider considerations as to whether GRWE wants to be seen as associated with a particular form of fundraising, or a particular fundraising partner. There may also be considerations as to whether the Charity's insurance covers the event.

Prior authorisation should, therefore, always be sought via the relevant Link Trustee.

Scheduling

Particularly with bigger events it may be as well to check the website (and with the Link Trustee) to avoid a clash of dates with any event already organised. Even with smaller events, a clash with another GRWE event nearby would be unfortunate, as a number of those who would wish to attend both events may have to choose to attend only one.

For obvious reasons, a clash with a national sporting or social event should also be avoided.

Venue

Amongst the matters the event organiser will obviously need to consider are the following-

- (a) is the proposed venue of adequate size for the event, with suitable car-parking facilities?
- (b) if dogs are expected to attend, are there adequate exercising and toileting facilities?
- (c) does the venue provide suitable access for those with disabilities?
- (d) does the venue comply with necessary health and safety requirements? In the case of an enclosed venue, proper fire safety equipment and usable, clearly marked fire exits may be particularly relevant. Even at an open venue, equipment such as first aid provision may be appropriate.

There should be a written and signed contract with the owner of the venue. The level of formality will obviously vary depending on the nature of the venue. Where a local farmer is providing no more than the use of a field, a simple exchange of letters may be adequate.

On the other hand, where a local authority are hiring out a hall together with refreshment facilities, a comprehensive written agreement may be appropriate.

The Organiser may wish to bear in mind that signing an agreement may make them personally liable to the other party to the agreement for any charges arising under it. If the Organiser is to be indemnified by GRWE, they must have obtained the prior authorisation for the event referred to above. If there are doubts as to whether an agreement should be signed, the Organiser may wish to refer to the Trustee with responsibility for legal matters.

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Any agreement should make clear

- the date of the event and cost of the venue
- the services included in the cost
- the land, building or part of a building to which access is being allowed for the event
- the hours between which access is being allowed
- who is responsible for relevant insurance
- what the provisions are for cancellation and cancellation fees.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment ("RA") involves anticipating the possible risks involved in the proposed event, and then seeking to prevent them arising by planning in the necessary precautions.

Hazards

The Organiser should initially identify any potential hazards at the venue. Common sense and experience should be applied, and the venue viewed in a critical light, but remembering that there is no expectation that every conceivable hazard should be considered and eliminated, only those which may cause significant harm. The following may be particularly relevant:

- slipping, tripping or falling hazards
- fire risks arising from activities such as cooking and barbequeing
- other hazards arising from use of cooking and refreshment equipment
- hazards arising from the use of electrical equipment and cabling
- potential injuries from setting up and dismantling stands and displays and moving stock
- risks arising from the presence of a number of dogs with unknown temperaments
- risks arising from the presence of a number of children
- risk arising from vehicles arriving and departing from a site.

Assessment

Those Organisers who are familiar with RA will know that there are many methods of quantifying risk, some involving quite complex calculations. There is no need for an unduly sophisticated approach, but after carrying out the RA, the Organiser should be able to categorise the potential risk in the following way-

low risk no action needs to be taken, but it may be desirable to implement controls where this can easily be done- e.g. there may be a theoretical risk of a minor scald if a volunteer who is not familiar with its operation is put in charge of a tea urn; the risk may easily be avoided/minimised by restricting use to adult volunteers who have been warned as to the temperature, and had its use demonstrated

medium risk the risk needs to be reduced and controls implemented- e.g. a greyhound is unlikely ever to attack a child, but it is a risk if the temperament of the dog is unknown, it is unsettled by being at an event, and the child is provoking it; the risk of harm may be reduced/removed by requiring the dog to wear a muzzle

high risk the risk needs to be removed/reduced, and if it cannot be, consider not conducting that activity at all- e.g. the provision of an announcement system involves a cable being laid across a path that will be used by a number of people,

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including children and the elderly; the risk of a trip and fall is obvious, and if the cable cannot be re-routed, consideration should be given to using a megaphone instead.

For those Organisers who are more mathematically inclined, or who prefer a more structured approach, the RA can be carried out by using a scale of 1 to 9, and arriving at a score in the following way:-

(A) Consider first the potential **harm** that could result from the activity and grade it 1 to 3

i.e.

- 1 trivial injury
- 2 minor injury requiring first aid
- 3 major injury requiring hospital treatment

(B) Consider then the **likelihood** of the event occurring and grade it 1 to 3

i.e.

- 1 unlikely
- 2 possible
- 3 likely

(C) Calculate the **risk factor** multiplying the harm score by the likelihood score, and assess those scoring

1 to 3 as **low risk**

4 to 6 as **medium risk**

7 to 9 as **high risk**

Examples

1) Andy is organising a fundraising event. A volunteer has a large trampoline, and proposes to attend with it, raising money for GRWE by charging people a pound for ten minutes bouncing. Andy carries out a RA, and concludes that a major injury could result from someone bouncing off and breaking a bone, so he assesses the **harm** score at **3**. Andy then concludes that the **likelihood** is possible, so he scores that factor at **2**. Multiplying 3 by 2 gives a **risk factor** of **6**. This is at the high end of a **medium risk**, so Andy will need to reduce the risk and introduce controls. He may, perhaps, decide that only adults and children aged 12 or over may take part, that he should obtain a written disclaimer from each participant, that he should also ensure that only one person may be on the trampoline at any one time, and that no-one may bounce above a certain height.

Alternatively, he may (perhaps wisely) decide that this is all rather too much trouble, decline the volunteer's offer of the trampoline, and suggest he mans the tombola stall instead.

(2) Betty is organising a fundraising event for GRWE. She has acquired a set of stocks, and has arranged for the local link trustee to be put in the stocks. She has also obtained a supply of over-ripe tomatoes from a local fruit supplier. Volunteers will be offered the opportunity of throwing 5 rotten tomatoes at the trustee for £2. She anticipates it will be a popular sideshow (the local RHO has already put down for £10 worth). Betty carries out a RA and concludes that a trivial injury could result, so measuring the **harm** score at **1**, but that this is no more than possible at most, so awarding **2** for the **likelihood** score. Multiplying 1 by 2 gives a **risk factor** of 2, so as it is a **low risk** activity, Betty is content to proceed having merely made sure that the link trustee wears her swimming goggles.

(3) Claudine is organising a sponsored dog walk. The route she has chosen is demanding, involving a steep rise up a hill at one point. It is a recognised footpath, but walkers are known to have slipped at this point before. She assesses the **harm** that could result at **3**, and the **likelihood** of it happening at **2**, producing an overall **risk factor** of **6**. Although this is

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again at the high end of a **medium risk**, she is content that the walk can proceed, provided that controls are introduced, such as warning all participants in writing of the severity of the walk, the need for proper footwear and a reasonable level of fitness for both volunteer and dog.

Of course, the above examples also illustrate that RA is fact-specific, and that whether the Organiser takes a formulaic approach or not, much of it is subjective. If Betty was a cautious person, she might have assessed the risk of **harm** to the link trustee at 2, perhaps worrying that a ripe tomato might have a stalk that could scratch the trustee's face. Remember though that if taken too far, no-one would ever get out of bed in the morning once they had carried out a RA on getting through the day unscathed.

There is a lot to be said for the sound application of common-sense, linked in some situations (perhaps example (3) above) to obtaining from participants a written acceptance that they do so at their own risk.

Issues Arising from the RA

As with the examples and illustrations above, the RA itself may point to the further precautions that need to be taken. Consider also though in the context of the venue-

- should the police and emergency services be notified that the event is being held?
- is the event such that some volunteers should be appointed as stewards (and adequately briefed as to what is expected of them)?
- is there adequate first aid equipment readily available on site, together with someone who is trained in first aid?

Written Record

GRWE appreciates that it is tedious having to complete forms. However, the Charity would wish to do all that it can to support those who take the time and trouble to organise events on its behalf.

In some circumstances, it would be wise of the Organiser to complete and retain a form of the type set out on the next page, particularly in the context of seeking an indemnity from the relevant insurers. There is no need to use this particular form, but it illustrates the type of information that might be recorded.

So for each individual potential hazard worthy of recording, a note could be made of the nature of the hazard, the risk could be quantified, and a note made of the action taken to eradicate or reduce the risk.

By way of example, the Organiser may be planning an event at which a number of dogs will be present. She assesses that harm could be caused by a dog running loose at the event, and so enters as **Item A** "Dogs running loose". She does not feel the need to carry out a mathematical approach to quantifying the risk, being satisfied from her own experience that this could possibly give rise to a medium risk of injury to volunteers and other dogs. She decides that this risk can easily be managed by asking all persons who attend with dogs to keep their dogs on a lead at all times. She, therefore, enters in the **Action Taken** column "Highly visible signs to be placed at the entrance saying "All dogs to be kept on a lead", and stewards to monitor during the event".

It must be stressed that the Organiser would not be responsible for doing any more than what was reasonable to manage the risk; she would not be expected to police the compliance of everyone who attended.

However, if something unfortunate did happen because someone failed to keep their dog on a lead, and sought to blame GRWE as holders of the event, the Charity would be assisted in refuting any allegation of fault by showing that the

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Organiser had considered the risk, and sought to manage it in a reasonable way. A completed form of the type shown would support that.

Of course, it should be said that risk management is not a product of the “compensation culture”, nor should it be seen as being a means of avoiding liability. It is about protecting members of the public, including children, who might otherwise suffer an avoidable injury. Apart from the obvious bad publicity that would result, no charity would wish to be responsible, directly or indirectly, for harming someone who supporting it by attending one of its events.

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RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

HAZARD

RISK
(Low/Medium/High)

ACTION TAKEN

ITEM A

ITEM B

ITEM C

ITEM D

ITEM E

ITEM F

..... **(Signed)**

.....**(Dated)**

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Licences and Insurance Cover

The Organiser must ensure that a proper and effective insurance policy is in place to cover potential claims by any member of the public, including GRWE volunteers assisting with or attending the event.

It is not sufficient to rely on assurances from the owner of the venue, or those providing displays and stalls. The Organiser should demand to see the relevant policy, and if they have any reservations as to its effectiveness for the event planned, they should refer the matter to the Trustee responsible for legal matters.

In any event, a specific enquiry should always be made of the GRWE treasurer, who will be able to advise of the type and level of cover provided by GRWE's generic public liability policy, and whether additional cover should be taken out.

Some events may require a specific licence over and above the permission of the land-owner, or owner of the venue. For example, street collections may require a licence from the local authority. It is the responsibility of the Organiser to obtain any necessary licence, but GRWE will pay any necessary licence fee, provided that clearance is obtained from the treasurer before committing the Charity to the cost.

If the Organiser is uncertain as to what licences or permissions may be required, they should liaise with the Link Trustee who may be able to clarify the requirements or provide lines of enquiry.

Contracts with suppliers

It may be that a feature of the event will depend on suppliers other than the owner of the venue. For example, perhaps a marquee is to be hired, or a public address system.

There should be a written contract with each such supplier, making it clear what they are to provide, and at what cost. It does not necessarily need to be a sophisticated document, and may be covered by an exchange of letters in many cases. Nevertheless, this will help to avoid disputes as to what the contractual obligations are, and will assist if a claim for compensation arises where a supplier fails to provide the contracted service, as well as ensuring that the event runs smoothly.

Promotional and Other Materials

The Organiser will wish to take all proper steps to publicise the event locally, and should liaise with GRWE for assistance in advertising the event via the Charity's website and publications. The Fundraising Committee of the Trustees will be able to help with advice and support, and may be able to provide banners, signs, displays and similar equipment.

If the event is to include the sale of stock, adequate notice must be given to allow for the stock to be provided, and the Organiser will have to agree with the Fundraising Committee what stock is to be provided, who is to be responsible for the stock, where it is to be stored before the event, and what is to happen to unsold stock after the event. Whether a facility is to be provided for credit/debit card payments at the event must also be agreed in advance.

As well as raising funds, an event provides a good opportunity to publicise the many ways that members of the public can get involved with, and support, GRWE, either directly as volunteers, or less directly (but equally importantly) perhaps through such as the "Sponsor a Dog" scheme and the "Friends" scheme, or perhaps by way of a legacy. It is essential that the Organiser ensures that there are adequate supplies of the leaflets and brochures explaining these ways of supporting

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GRWE for handing out to interested members of the public. Similarly, even if stock will not be sold at the event, consideration should be given to having an adequate number of mail order/web shop catalogues available for distribution.

Contingency Plans

There is always a risk that an event may have to be cancelled at a late stage. For example, bad weather, illness to a critical participant, or an outbreak of a contagious animal disease could all derail the best of plans.

Planning for the event should also include having in place procedures to-

- cancel the venue
- notify participants of the cancellation
- publicise the cancellation to avoid inconvenience to volunteers/members of the public.

The appropriate advance contingency plans must depend on the nature of the event. With something relatively straightforward, such as a sponsored dog walk, providing a list of telephone numbers that participants could call on the morning, to check that the walk was going ahead, could suffice.

It may also be necessary to have a contingency plan for matters arising on the day. With an enclosed venue, the most serious contingency that could arise is the need to vacate swiftly during the event. If the numbers expected to attend are such that orderly evacuation could be problematic, consideration should be given to appointing in advance some able-bodied and level-headed volunteers as stewards, and briefing them on their role if the premises need to be evacuated. Bear in mind that the presence of a number of potentially distressed dogs could make the incident more difficult to manage than might otherwise be the case.

AT THE EVENT

Venue

The Risk Assessment should be re-visited to ensure that those matters that were identified as requiring action have been attended to. In addition, the following matters may be relevant, depending on the nature of the venue-

- fire exits and fire safety equipment checked and operative
- public areas clean and clear
- stalls and displays set up in a safe manner with stock and materials sensibly set out
- toilets signed and available for use
- refreshment facilities functional and stocked
- cleaning equipment readily available in case of spillages/accidents
- supply of suitable equipment and plastic bags available for clearing dog deposits
- first aid equipment available, together with someone trained to use it
- public address system tested and operative
- key volunteers/stewards briefed as to their roles
- emergency telephone numbers readily available.

Cash Handling

The event may involve a number of volunteers handling cash on the day. There may, for example, be donations and sponsorship money received, stock and refreshments sold, raffle money handed over, etc. It is obviously a matter for the

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Organiser to ensure that those entrusted with handling money on the day are comfortable in doing so, and fully understand their responsibilities.

Some transactions may require particular formalities to be followed; a credit/debit card sale will give rise to both the customer's and GRWE's record of the transaction by way of a paper slip. It may, perhaps, be felt that carrying out of credit/debit card sales is best confined to those confident with the use of the machinery. The Treasurer will be able to give further advice as to the formalities to be followed if needed.

Sensible precautions should be taken with regard to the storage of cash on the day. At a large event it may be that a cash register can be provided, but more commonly cash will need to be stored in a less sophisticated way; less sophisticated should not necessarily mean less secure.

The Organiser will wish to remind stall holders and donation collectors of the need for vigilance and common-sense. It may be advisable for sums to be transferred at regular intervals to a more secure environment. At large exhibitions and shows there may be banking facilities on site. At more typical events this sort of facility is unlikely to be available. Nevertheless, there may be a bank nearby where payments in could be made. As a minimum, it might be advisable to discreetly transfer sums during the day to a more secure environment such as the boot of a car parked in a visible safe area.

Stock Handling

Those selling stock at the event will need to keep proper records of the stock sold, to enable GRWE to know what items are selling well, and what items need to be re-stocked from suppliers. Proper records will also be needed by the Treasurer to comply with VAT records requirements, and again if there is any doubt as to what is required, he will be able to advise.

Common sense on the day should help to minimise stock losses from theft. Whilst it is important to provide a full display of the range of items available, precautions such as not overloading the display so as to cause stock to fall out of view, displaying only a selection of sizes and colours and volunteering verbally to interested potential customers the availability of others, and storing spare stock out of sight under display tables or securely in the back of a car until needed, can all assist in minimising losses.

Those in charge of stock on the day must have a clear understanding as to what their responsibilities are with regard to unsold stock at the end of the event, and in particular who is store it or return it to GRWE's central stockholding.

AFTER THE EVENT

Leaving the Venue

GRWE seeks to operate as responsible charity, paying due regard to the impact of its activities on the environment. The Organiser should aim to give effect to this by leaving the venue, whether open-air or enclosed, in at least as good a condition as it was before the event.

This may include-

- overseeing the dismantling of stalls, displays and equipment
- ensuring their safe removal from the venue
- ensuring there are adequate arrangements for the return to kennels of any GRWE dogs
- taking unused stock back in to the control of GRWE
- taking control of any GRWE monies
- checking that any catering facilities have been properly closed down and left safe and tidy

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- ensuring that the venue is left clean, with any litter and dog deposits properly disposed of
- securing the venue and returning any keys to the keyholder.

Banking Procedures

Procedures for counting, recording and banking monies afterwards may vary depending on the nature of the event. Guidance should be sought from the Treasurer before the event as to the procedure to be adopted.

In all cases, however, at least two responsible people should be present when GRWE monies are being counted. This does not imply any lack of trust on the part of the Charity, but is for the protection and security of the volunteer who has to carry out this task.

Acknowledgements

Even where the venue has been provided on a commercial basis, the Organise may consider it appropriate to write recording the Charity's thanks for its use. Those who have assisted with sponsorship, loans of equipment, significant donations and similar matters should also be thanked formally, as should those who have given up their time to, for example, judge classes.

It will not usually be practical to thank formally all the GRWE volunteers who have assisted on the day, and there is a danger that in seeking to do so, anyone inadvertently over-looked may be offended. A particularly helpful contribution might merit a private acknowledgement.

Reviewing the Event

It may be advisable for the Organiser and key volunteers who assisted on the day to have a formal review in the following weeks. A candid discussion will assist in determining the success of the event, and what amendments or alterations should be made to ensure similar or greater success with the next event.