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Hertfordshire
Playing Out



PLAYING OUT - HERTFORDSHIRE

- Do you want your children to benefit from playing outside, safely with others on their own street?
- Do you want to strengthen your street community through street play?
- Could it be you that kick starts this?
- It works, and there is lots of support.
- Contact me (details above) and visit www.playingout.net

➤ **Playing on the street –what has happened to it?**

Think back to when you were young. What were the best moments of childhood? Many people would say 'playing out' with friends, the independence that came from being able to go and knock for friends by yourself, cycle and scooter round the neighbourhood, chalk on pavements, explore in the woods, and all the adventures and friendships that come with that.

This kind of unstructured active play has been **severely eroded** over the last thirty years mostly due to perceived dangers from road traffic and an erosion of neighbourliness. At the same time we have had a sharp rise in rates of child obesity, unhappiness and many streets where people simply do not know many or any other people living on the same street. Coincidence?

➤ **We can change this**

'Playing Out' is a national movement that started in Bristol in 2009 to build a strong street community by giving children back the opportunity for at least some **unstructured active play** on their own streets and neighbourhoods.

This **major initial initiative** encourages and facilitates residents on suitable streets to apply for **regular temporary road closures** to allow playing out sessions to take place. The sessions are run and stewarded by volunteer residents. Carefully stewarded access for residents' cars is allowed during the sessions. The concept has spread right across the UK and has been highlighted by the BBC, Department Of Health, Sustrans and Streets Alive as a really exciting community led movement.

➤ **I want to do this on my street! What next?**

Great! Please get in touch with me! My street in Tring has lead the way locally, with regular monthly street play sessions. Things may take some time but there is plenty you can do straight away;

- Just start spending time outside your house to get to know your street a bit better. This is a surprisingly powerful step.
 - Supervise some pavement play and invite some neighbours and their kids to do some scootering and chalking
 - Talk to neighbours about organising a street party. If you haven't done this before you may need the excuse of an occasion e.g. national street party day in June (see www.thebiglunch.com). It is much easier to get and organise a road closure for a street party than for regular sessions
- 2) If you are a cul-de-sac or certain modern traffic calmed developments you may not need to do anything as formal as a road closure to kickstart street play. **I can give you plenty of suggestions and examples as well as some Playing Out bin stickers for use as temporary 'signage'.**
- 3) If you live on a busier street and want to close the road regularly you will need to apply for permission from the County Council. If you and your street are **ready to apply** for regular road closures **I can help you work with your local county councillor and county officers** to make this happen so you don't have to go through the learning curve from scratch
- 4) Usually there will be many other residents, old and young who feel exactly the same as you and will be really supportive and keen to get involved. There may of course be the occasional person who objects. Luckily it is usually possible to resolve these and **I can help by sharing how any objections have been resolved successfully**

Feeling inspired to make a change? Then get in touch! Even if you are just thinking about it. Thank you for reading 😊

