

# Guidelines for the organisation of recreational events in Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. The role of Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
3. What types of events are covered by these guidelines
4. Initial research and consultation
  - Discuss the event early in your planning
  - Identify event centre and possible routes to be used
  - Number of competitors
  - Timing of event
  - Consider the impact on farmers and moorland owners
  - Decide who you need to consult with, and who you need permission from
5. Detailed planning for the event
  - Complete detailed route/checkpoint planning
  - Prepare risk assessments and event plan
6. Running the event
  - Way markers and road signs
  - Fully brief marshals
  - Fully brief entrants
  - Thank and acknowledge those involved and affected
7. Maximising the benefits of your event
  - Promoting active participation
  - Promoting the local economy
  - Promoting Nidderdale AONB
  - Voluntary contributions
  - Promoting the Countryside Code
  - Sustainable transport
8. Checklist for organisers

## 1. Introduction

Nidderdale AONB is a special place, providing the public with rare opportunities to experience peace and solitude within a landscape rich in scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. It also provides the individual with opportunities for challenge and adventure which depend on these qualities of remoteness and wilderness.

Recreational events in the AONB, such as charity walks and challenge events can have an adverse impact on the environment, and adverse or beneficial effects on the communities, local economy and other users and facilities. However, events can also provide many rich experiences for the people taking part and can make positive contributions to the economy of the area, and lead to new people discovering the AONB.

Appropriate recreational use of the AONB by large-scale events should be achieved by trying to promote appropriate use, of the right size and intensity, at the right time of year, or day of the week, and in the right place. This will ensure that any likely negative impacts will be minimal.

The Nidderdale AONB team seeks to promote good practice, and actively engage with organisers to mitigate any negative effects their events may have. To ensure that any potential problems are minimised, and that everyone (including organisers, participants, spectators, local residents, local businesses and land managers) gets the maximum benefit, events need to be very well planned and managed.

If your event does not depend on the special qualities of the AONB and it could be equally successful in a less sensitive location, you may find there are many benefits in basing your event in a different area. If you believe that your event relies on being in the AONB for its success, please read these guidelines and contact the Nidderdale AONB team in the early stages of planning and we will help you to ensure that minimum damage is caused to this special environment.

## 2. The role of Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### The Nidderdale AONB team does not:

- decide which events can go ahead and which cannot. This is up to the relevant land owner or tenant.
- advise on risk assessments
- provide or recruit volunteers to help with events
- do liaison with landowners or other organisations for you.

### The AONB team does have a role in:

- promoting best practice in organisation of events in the AONB
- ensuring events are contributing to the aim of the AONB
- minimising any potential impact on the AONB and its communities
- assisting event organisers contact the relevant land managers
- assisting with liaison with Natural England, if required.

## 3. What type of events are covered by these guidelines

These guidelines are applicable to events which:

- are formally organised and designed to attract large numbers of participants and/or spectators;
- use public rights of way, permissive trails, open country or moorland over which access is allowed or has been agreed;
- are competitive or just for fun, are profit or non-profit making or raising funds for charity;
- are held on foot, mountain bikes, horseback or horse-drawn carriage.

The AONB does not need to be consulted about events which are:

- held on the tarmac road network
- smaller events - however, you may want to discuss your event if it takes place in a particularly sensitive location.

	Number of people taking part		
	Small	Medium	Large
Foot-based events	25-50	50-200	200+
Mountain bike events	10-50	50-100	100+
Equestrian events	10-25	25-50	50+

## 4. Initial research and consultation

### Discuss the event early in your planning -

ideally the AONB team should be contacted as early as possible whilst there is still flexibility in your plans. We can give you advice on suitable routes and may be able to help with providing information on landowners and other organisations which may need to be contacted.

AONB contacts are as follows:

- Leanne Fox, AONB Information Officer:  
Leanne.fox@harrogate.gov.uk or 01423 551667
- Marian Wilby, Land Management Team Leader:  
Marian.wilby@harrogate.gov.uk or 01423 551673

### Identify event centre and possible routes to be used -

there are a limited number of venues of sufficient size in the AONB to handle large-scale events. You will need to consider:

- sufficient car parking for the number of competitors;
- sufficient toilets for the number of competitors - there will generally not be enough public facilities so these will need to be provided temporarily;
- provision of drinking water;
- collection of litter;
- shelter for event staff.

**Number of competitors** - many events become annual, and begin small, but increase in size over time. It is most important that events do not become too large for the environment of the AONB, and the local community, to cope with. Consider setting a maximum number for your event.

**Timing of event** - sensible timing of your event can go a long way to removing potential issues, and so it is worth taking care to get this right.

**Check for clashes with other events** - although we don't know of all the events taking place we do know about some of the bigger and regular annual events.

**Avoid busy periods** – it is worth trying to schedule your event so that it avoids the busiest periods for visitors. In particular, we would suggest the bank holidays should not be used. Events out of the peak holiday season are likely to be of more benefit to the local economy.

**Time of day** – try to avoid being close to residences during the night or unsociable hours of the day.

**Consider the impact on farmers** - if possible do not use a route which passes through farmyards, as this is likely to affect the operation of the farm. If it is unavoidable then discuss this with the farmer concerned.

Some times of year are more sensitive than others. The main lambing time runs from March to May and is both a busy period for farmers, and a time when disturbance could be more severe. Dogs will not be welcome during this period.

**Consider the impact on moorland owners** - the large areas of moorland in the AONB are generally managed grouse moors. These have two sensitive times of year: when the grouse are breeding (March to June) and when shooting takes place (August to December). At these times of year you are unlikely to be allowed to cross the moorland areas except on public rights of way. Again, dogs will not be welcome.

**Decide who you need to consult with, and who you need permission from:**

**Key landowners/managers/farmers** - all land is owned by someone. You need permission from the landowner or land manager to cross any land off the rights of way network. Even if your event is entirely on the rights of way

network it is helpful and courteous to consult with landowners who may be affected. Organised recreational events do not have a right to use open access land so landowner permission will be needed.

It may not be possible to contact all landowners along your route, but there will be certain key owners who should be contacted. We may be able to help you identify these people.

**Parish councils** - contacting the parish councils can be useful as it may help with getting knowledge of your event out to the local community. They can also be a good source of local knowledge and may be able to help in your planning.

**Borough councils** - if your event requires a licence – generally because music and/or alcohol are involved – you will need to contact the local council. You should do this at least six months before the event date.

You can also approach the local council to review your event management plan, including risk assessments, communications plan and consideration of highways issues. They can also facilitate liaison with the Police and Highways Department.

Councils covered by the AONB designation are:

- Harrogate Borough Council
- Richmondshire District Council

## 5. Detailed planning for the event

### Complete detailed route/checkpoint planning

**Potential damage to route surfaces** – consider whether the land is suitably robust for year round use. If the route would be unsuitable in wet weather you will need to change the route or have a wet weather contingency plan.

**Potential damage to environmental features** – check if any of the route is particularly sensitive. The AONB can help identify

sensitive sites – both archaeological and important habitats and species - that should be avoided.

Large parts of the AONB have national or international designations because of their nature conservation interest. Natural England should be consulted if the event uses land that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), particularly if you are going to use areas away from established paths and tracks.

**Prepare risk assessments and event plan** - the primary duty of care for the participants rests with the organiser of the event so it is essential that you prepare an event management plan and a full risk assessment.

There is good general guidance at [www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety](http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety)

**Insurance** - you will need to arrange a suitable level of public liability insurance. Having insufficient insurance would probably lead to the event not being supported by the public authorities and emergency services.

**Arrange medical emergency backup/ procedures and communications** – mobile phone coverage is patchy in the AONB so mobile phones should not be relied upon as your only communication method for an event.

Weather conditions in an upland area such as in Upper Nidderdale can deteriorate extremely rapidly, and participants need to be prepared for this. It is also important to have contingency and/or cancellation plans for problems such as high fire risk or severe weather conditions.

**Emergency procedures are required in the event of missing, late or injured persons**

- including liaison with mountain rescue teams if appropriate. You should notify the mountain rescue team of your event together with the route to be used. This will speed up the rescue process if you need to call on them. Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association ([www.uwfra.org.uk](http://www.uwfra.org.uk)) covers Nidderdale.

**Recruit helpers and marshals** - large-scale events will need a considerable numbers of helpers and marshals to help with tasks such as:

- safely parking vehicles
- registering competitors
- marshalling road junctions
- providing safety cover
- marshalling important gates for stock control
- putting out and collecting direction signs
- litter picking and tidying up after the event

## 6. Running the event

**Way markers and road signs** - these should be put out as close to the start of the event as possible to reduce their visual impact and make it less likely they will be tampered with. They should be collected back in immediately after the event.

**Fully brief marshals** - marshals provide contact between competitors and the general public, so an effective briefing of their role is crucial to the smooth running of the event. Consider the ratio of marshals to entrants, their positioning, and the desirability of having roving marshals.

**Fully brief entrants** - initial information in written form is important and should include safety issues, equipment, details about the event and how to get there. We are also keen to see competitors get more information about the AONB and how participants can put something back into the area, such as supporting our charity the 'Friends of Nidderdale AONB'.

Competitors should also be briefed at the start of the event and an equipment check may be necessary. Give messages such as:

- courtesy to residents and other recreational users
- not leaving gates open
- not leaving litter
- avoidance of erosion
- keeping to the signed route
- information about where they are legally entitled to go

**Thank and acknowledge those involved and affected** – letters of thanks to all those who have assisted, given permissions, or been inconvenienced by the event will produce benefits which far outweigh the effort of writing, and should never be forgotten.

## 7. Maximising the benefits of your event

**Promoting active participation** – often outdoor events in the AONB are aimed at challenging people with a good level of fitness and ability. We are keen to see events that are as inclusive as possible and encourage organisers to consider whether entry level events can be accommodated alongside their main event.

**Promoting the local economy** - it is good practice to maximise the benefits to the local economy through the use of local suppliers. For example:

- use local printers for vest numbers and brochures
- get food and drink from local sources
- use local companies for marquees, portaloos etc
- encourage participants, spectators and organisers to stay locally and use B&Bs, campsites and pubs for meals rather than simply travelling to the venue on the day.

**Promoting Nidderdale AONB** - events can play a key role in helping people to think positively about the special qualities of the AONB, and to act as ambassadors for the area after the event. If participants have had a good and enjoyable experience as part of the event, they are more likely to treat the area with respect and stay longer when they return. Please promote your event as being ‘... in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’, and consider marking the AONB on maps provided to participants.

We also have a logo available for event organisers to use – full details can be found at [www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/Pages/BusinessLocatorLogos.aspx](http://www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/Pages/BusinessLocatorLogos.aspx)

**Voluntary contributions** - successful events rely on the co-operation and goodwill of a

large number of people, many of whom see no direct benefit from the events that they have to live alongside. It is often a good idea for event organisers to ensure that something goes back into the local area to acknowledge this support. Such behaviour can help make it easier for you, or other organisers, to promote events again in the future. You may wish to consider contributing to local community initiatives and facilities, or to the maintenance of the rights of way network.

The AONB encourages organisers to contribute to the conservation of the area through our charity the ‘Friends of Nidderdale AONB’. For example a voluntary contribution of only £1 per participant could help fund conservation projects in the AONB.

**Promoting the Countryside Code** - the Countryside Code (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>) provides good common sense guidance for how people can respect, protect and enjoy the countryside, and you should ensure that participants, spectators and organisers follow the code.

**Sustainable transport** – the way people travel to your event is likely to be one of the biggest impacts that it has. Lots of cars cause congestion, noise and disruption to local communities trying to get on with their normal day-to-day activities. We appreciate that most competitors and spectators will travel by car, but urge organisers to consider how this can be minimised. Give details of how to use the train or bus to get to your event if this is possible. For example, events based in Lower Nidderdale can make use of the regular bus service from Harrogate. You could also look at ways of encouraging competitors to car share or arrive by public transport by giving a discounted entry, for example.

## 8. Checklist for organisers

### Initial research and consultation

- Identify suitable areas/locations/routes
  - Identify event centre
  - Check for clashes with other events
  - Arrange provision for toilets and car parking
- Discuss event with:
- Nidderdale AONB team
  - Key landowners/managers/farmers
  - Police, if appropriate
  - Borough and county councils, if appropriate
- Gain permissions from landowners and identify any out of bounds areas
  - Consult with Natural England if the event uses designated land.

### Detailed planning

- Complete detailed route/checkpoint planning
- Prepare risk assessments and event plan
- Arrange medical emergency backup/procedures
- Arrange insurance
- Locate usable mobile phone and/or radio communication sites
- Recruit helpers and marshals
- Inform any other landowners and residents affected
- Inform the relevant mountain rescue team
- Consider how to maximise the benefits to the local community such as through using local caterers
- Consider how to put something back into Nidderdale AONB, such as through the voluntary scheme to put £1 per competitor towards conservation projects.
- Recheck all route/checkpoint arrangements on the ground.
- Consult with the AONB team on the desirability of posting notices informing other users about the event at key access points.

### Running the event

- Put out checkpoints, way markers and road signs
- Fully brief entrants on out of bounds areas, behaviour, and so on
- Have someone briefed to deal with unanticipated land access or public relations problems
- Remove all litter and events signs
- Remove all checkpoints, markers or other debris
- Get feedback from participants and local community
- Thank and acknowledge those involved and affected.