



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

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Important dates to consider when planning your event

- **Lambing season:**
1 Feb – 30 April
- **Ground nesting bird season:**
1 March – 31 July
- **Shooting season:**
(no shooting on Sundays)
 - **Pheasant:** 1 Oct – 1 Feb
 - **Partridge:** 1 Sept – 1 Feb
 - **Red grouse:** 12 Aug – 10 Dec

1. Introduction

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (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 people with opportunities for challenge and adventure which depend on these qualities of remoteness and wilderness.

Recreational events, such as charity walks and challenge events, can 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 Nidderdale AONB. However, these types of events can also have an adverse impact on the environment, rural communities, local economy and other users and facilities.

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. There are some types and scales of events that will not be appropriate for the AONB.

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 has a role in:

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

The Nidderdale AONB team does not:

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

3. The types of events are covered by these guidelines

The general principles in these guidelines are applicable to a wide range of activities, e.g. fell-running, trail running, challenge walks, triathlons, mountain biking and orienteering, and should be valuable information for many people planning events.

However, they are mainly 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, rivers, reservoirs, 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, or watercraft

4. Planning an event

It may be useful to consider your event in three phases:

- Initial research and consultation
- Detailed planning
- Running and reviewing the event

4.1 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.

The AONB contact is:

- Iain Mann, Nidderdale AONB Manager
iain.mann@harrogate.gov.uk
01423 712950

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. Some times of year are more sensitive than others. The main lambing time runs from February to April, 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.

Consider the impact on designated sites-

much of the AONB is also covered by additional designation and protection for wildlife, geology and the historic environment. The legislation that provides these designations often includes legal protection and penalties for damaging them and this should be in the forefront of the concerns of event organisers.

Sensitive locations include:

- Designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – check where these are using Natural England's online [MAGIC Map application](#) and visit [GOV.UK](#) for guidance on SSSI's
- Archaeological features - use the [Historic England map-based search](#) and check [Heritage Gateway](#) or other non-designated archaeological sites
- Sensitive paths, for example poorly eroded and heavily used routes
- Moorland and farmland areas during bird nesting season (1 March to 31 July), even if using public rights of way.

In sensitive areas consents may be required, so you might want to consider looking into another location that is less vulnerable. It can take up to four months to receive the required consent from [Natural England](#).

When planning your event, you might need permission from one or more of the following:

- **Natural England or Historic England**- if your route is in a sensitive location (see above).
- **Key landowners, managers and/or 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 are also a good source of local knowledge and may be able to help in your planning.
- **Borough councils**- get in touch with local borough councils at least six months in advance to check if your event requires a licence, and to apply for a licence if required.

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](#)

4.2 Detailed planning for the event

Potential damage to environmental features-

Large parts of the AONB have national and/or international designations because of their nature conservation interest. The AONB can help identify sensitive sites that should be avoided, both archaeological and important habitats and species. 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. See section 4.1 above for more information.

Biosecurity- Biosecurity is the term used to describe the measures taken to protect the environment from the spread of Invasive Non-

Native Species (INNS), and animal and plant diseases. Human activity is a key factor.

By taking some simple routine measures we can reduce the spread of pests and diseases by minimising the amount of soil, water and plan material we carry between sites, and give control measures a better chance of success. Find out more about biosecurity on [our website](#).

Preparing for emergencies- weather conditions in an upland area such as in Upper Nidderdale can deteriorate extremely rapidly. Please prepare your participants for this, and consider having contingency plans in place.

Emergency procedures are required in the event of missing, late or injured persons - including liaison with mountain rescue teams if appropriate. Please notify the mountain rescue team of your event together with the route to be used. The team covering Nidderdale is [Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association](#).

4.2. Running the event

Please encourage attendees to respect the AONB's local communities and natural environment by sharing messages with them about:

- being courteous to residents and other recreational users
- leaving gates how they find them
- not leaving litter
- avoiding causing erosion
- keeping to the signed route
- information about where they are legally entitled to go
- the importance of undertaking biosecurity measures

Please put out and take down way markers and road signs as close to the start and finish of the event as possible to reduce their visual impact and make it less likely they will be tampered with.

After your event, please consider taking the time to thank and acknowledge those involved, including those who have assisted, given permissions, or been inconvenienced by the event.

5. Maximising the benefits of your event

Promoting active participation- we are keen to see events that are as inclusive as possible, and encourage organisers to consider including a range of event levels to accommodate as many people as possible.

Promoting the local economy- please consider maximising the benefits to the local economy through using 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.

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. To acknowledge this support, 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 provides 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. We appreciate that most competitors and spectators will travel by car, but urge organisers to consider how this can be minimised. Please give details of how to use the train or bus to get to your event if this is possible.

6. Useful information and contacts

Guidance

There is a wealth of useful guidance tailored to specific events. We advise you to look into the most appropriate guidance to inform your event planning.

- **Charity/fundraising events** – The Institute of Fundraising Code of Practice for Events provides a wealth of advice for organising events, particularly those run by charities.
- **Cycling events** - Cycling events taking place in the AONB on metalled roads should refer to British Cycling's event guidelines.

Cycling UK also have guidance on organising an event on their website.

- **Climbing and hill walking events** - The British Mountaineering Council has advice for organisers of climbing and hill walking events.

- **Fell running events** – visit the Fell Runners Association website for guidance on how their events are regulated.

Contacts

Other sporting bodies:

Horse riding

- The British Horse Society
- Endurance GB
- TREC GB

Motorcycle

- Auto Cycle Union
- Trail Riders Fellowship

Walking

- Ramblers
- British Walking Federation

Codes

- Countryside Code
- Moorland Code

Rights of Way / Access

- North Yorkshire County Council

Councils

- Harrogate Borough Council
- Richmondshire District Council
- List of Parish Councils, provided by NidderdalePlus

Destination Marketing

- Visit Harrogate

Mountain Rescue

- Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue

Agencies and groups

- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Historic England
- Nidderdale Moorland Group