YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Guidelines for the organisation of recreational events in the Yorkshire Dales National Park

March 2012
(updated March 2025)

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Yorkshire Dales National Park 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.

1.2 Recreational events in the National Park, 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. The National Park Authority seeks to promote good practice, and actively engage with organisers to mitigate any negative effects their events may have.

1.3 The National Park Authority has a duty to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park, and any recreational activities undertaken should be those that rely on these qualities and do nothing to damage them.

1.4 The National Park is a great place to hold organised events and has hosted, over many years, a wide and varied range of successful outdoor events. This includes fell races, mountain bike events, sponsored walks, orienteering and adventure races. Appropriate recreational use of the National Park 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.

1.5 The area offers great opportunities for participants in events to enjoy the spectacular landscapes and recreational resources. Events 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 National Park. To ensure that any potential problems are minimised, and that everyone (including organisers, participants, spectators, local residents, local businesses and land managers) derives the maximum benefit – events need to be very well planned and managed. Such planning is vital to ensure the protection of the natural and cultural environment and to prevent conflict with the interests of farmers, local communities and other people using the National Park.

1.6 Pressure from recreation is particularly high in National Parks. If your event does not depend on the special qualities of the National Park and it could be equally successful in a less sensitive location, you may find there are many benefits in basing your event in areas that are less pressured. If you believe that your event relies on being in the National Park for it's success, contact the National Park Authority, using the form at the end of this document, in the early

stages of planning and we will work with you to ensure that minimum damage is caused to this special environment.

2. The role of the National Park Authority

2.1 The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority does not decide which events can go ahead and which cannot – instead this issue is generally left to the relevant land managers (generally the owners or tenants), in consultation with others. For some events the relevant Unitary Authority or District Council may call a Safety Advisory Group which will look at the event plans, and ensure that you have put in place the necessary measures to minimise risk to participants.

2.2 It is not the role of the National Park Authority to advise on risk assessments, provide volunteers to help with events or to do liaison for you. However, the NPA does have a role in:

- Promoting best practice in organisation of events in the National Park;
- Ensuring events are contributing to the aims of the National Park;
- Minimising any potential impact on the National Park and its communities;
- Assisting event organisers contact the relevant land managers;

3. What type of events are covered by these guidelines

3.1 The 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.

3.2 The National Park Authority does not normally need to be consulted about events such as cyclosportives which are held on the tarmac road network. However, it is always useful to inform us that such events are happening to avoid clashes with other events. You should also contact us if the planned start/finish area is in the National Park. If you wish to use one of our car parks as a feed station, then please contact us prior to the event.

3.3 We also do not need to be consulted about smaller sized events, as any potential negative impacts are reduced because the numbers taking part are smaller. However, you may want to discuss your event if it is unusual such as an adventure race with special stages, or 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. Planning events

4.1 Running an event can be considered to be in three phases:

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

4.2 The bigger the event, the earlier you need to start planning, as increasing competitor numbers will lead to greater potential impact. The following suggested timetable prior to the event provides a guide around which events may be organised.

Timescales for undertaking activities in each of the three planning stages

	Initial research and consultation	**Detailed planning**	**Running the event and review**
	Amount of time before the event		
Large events	12 – 24 months	1 – 12 months	Review within 2 months
Medium events	4 – 8 months	1 – 4 months	Review within 2 months
Small events	2 – 4 months	1 – 2 months	Review within 2 months

4.3 The following sections identify some of the key actions you will need to take as part of these phases of preparation.

5. Initial research and consultation

Discuss the event early in your planning

5.1 It is important that the National Park Authority is contacted as early as possible whilst there is still flexibility in your plans. The Authority will give you advice on timing, suitable routes, and important contacts. In particular, we can help with providing information on landowners and other organisations which may need to be contacted.

5.2 Important contacts are as follows:

- Head of Access and Engagement if you are in the early planning stages, or if the planned event covers a wide area of the National Park; Rebecca.greenfield@yorkshiredales.org.uk direct line 01756 751626.

- The relevant Area Manager if your event is just in one area or has been established for a number of years:
    - South area (Craven) including the **Three Peaks**, Kate Hilditch. Kate.hilditch@yorkshiredales.org.uk , direct line 01756 751631
    - Northern area (Richmondshire), Matt Neale. Matt.neale@yorkshiredales.org.uk , 01969 652387
    - Western area (Cumbria), Steve Hastie. Steve.hastie@yorkshiredales.org.uk , 01539756611

5.3 Some of the pressure that may be caused by your event could be alleviated by choosing dates, times and locations carefully and the NPA can advise you further on this.

Identify event centre and possible routes to be used

5.4 Select start and end venue carefully. There are a limited number of venues of sufficient size in the National Park to handle large-scale events. You will need to consider:

- Sufficient car parking for the number of competitors. National Park Authority car parks are not suitable because of the impact this has on other people wanting to use the facilities;
- Public transport links
- Sufficient toilets for the number of competitors;
- Provision of drinking water. The National Park Authority strongly encourages the use of reuseable bottles with drinking water made available where

needed. Please do not use single use bottled water as they are a major source of litter ;
- Collection of litter;
- Shelter for event staff.

5.5 There will generally not be sufficient public facilities so these will need to be provided temporarily.

5.6 At the initial stage of route planning you will need to identify the areas to be used, think about the kind of terrain that is appropriate for the likely participants, and consider the likely sensitivities of your plans.

Number of competitors

5.7 Many events become annual, and begin small, but extend to well over the number that were originally envisaged. Although it is difficult to turn people away, it is most important that events do not become too large for the environment of the National Park, and the local community, to cope with.

5.8 It is important that organisers take account of National Park Authority advice on this, and consider setting a maximum number for their event. Generally, we request that there are no events with more than 1000 participants which start and finish in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Timing of the event

5.9 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

5.10 We can help with this. Although not all event organisers let us know that their event is happening, we do know about most of the regular annual events.

Avoid busy periods

5.11 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

5.12 Try to avoid being close to residences during the night or unsociable hours of the day.

Consider the impact on farmers

5.13 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.

5.14 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 are unlikely to be welcome.

Consider the impact on moorland owners:

5.15 The large tracts of moorland in the National Park 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 are unlikely to be welcome.

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

Key landowners/managers/farmers

5.16 All land is owned by someone — individuals, businesses, organisations or public bodies. To cross any land off the rights of way network requires permission from the landowner or land-managing body, even when this land has been designated as 'access land'. Even if your event is entirely on the rights of way network it is helpful to consult with landowners who may be affected. Organised recreational events do not have a right to use open access land – again landowner permission will be needed.

Further information about access land and any restrictions applied to this land:

https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam

http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk/wps/portal/oasys/maps/MapSearch

5.17 It may not be possible to contact all landowners along your route, but there will be certain key owners who should be contacted. We can assist in identifying these people.

Parish Councils

5.18 We can supply contact details for any parish councils along your route. Contacting the parish councils can be useful as it will 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 assist in your planning.

Parish Council details can be found here:
https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?bcr=1

District Councils

5.20 If your event requires a licence – generally because music and/or alcohol are involved – then you will need to contact the relevant District Council. You should do this at least 6 months before the event date, and considerably longer if it is a new event.

5.21 You can also approach the Unitary Authority or District 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. This is through the use of a Safety Advisory Group.

5.22 North Yorkshire Council have online notification form for events, details can be found here:

https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/leisure-tourism-and-culture/events/planning-event

5.23 Westmorland and Furness council's guide on organising and applying for events can be found here:

https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/parks-culture-and-leisure/visiting-culture-and-events/organising-event#:~:text=If%20you%20want%20to%20organise,an%20event%20on%20our%20land

They can be contacted at: event.notification@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

5.24 Lancaster City Council Events guidance can be found here:

https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/information/event-safety

6. Detailed planning for the event

Complete detailed route/checkpoint planning

Potential damage to route surfaces

6.1 Consider whether the land is suitably robust for year round use - or should it only be used in dry conditions? If the route would be unsuitable in wet weather, then you will need to change the route or have a wet weather contingency plan.

Potential damage to environmental features

6.2 Discuss whether any of the route or area to be used is particularly environmentally sensitive. The National Park Authority will help identify sensitive sites – both archaeological and important habitats and species - that should be avoided. These issues can normally be easily resolved by re-routing, the use of out-of-bounds areas, or ensuring that only small numbers of participants visit a particular sensitive site.

6.3 Large parts of the National Park have national or international designations because of their nature conservation interest. You should consult with Natural England 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. Again, the National Park Authority can help identify who to contact. You can see where SSSIs are on www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk.

Prepare risk assessments and event plan

6.4 Remember that the primary duty of care for the participants rests with the organiser of the event, and so it is essential that you prepare an event management plan and a full risk assessment. The National Park Authority does not provide assistance with these.

6.6 The District and County Councils provide useful advice and guidance:
Westmorland and Furness Council

https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/parks-culture-and-leisure/visiting-culture-and-events/organising-event

North Yorkshire Council

https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/leisure-tourism-and-culture/events/planning-event#:~:text=You%20should%20complete%20our%20online,notification%20of%20event%20form%20online.

Lancaster City Council
https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/information/event-safety

6.7 The Institute of Fundraising also publish good guidance for organisers of outdoors fundraising events, much of which is applicable to any type of large-scale recreational event.

6.8 As part of your planning you will need to arrange a suitable level of public liability insurance. The absence of such insurance would probably lead to the event not being supported by the public authorities and emergency services.

Arrange medical emergency backup/procedures and communications

6.9 Please be aware that mobile phone coverage is patchy in the Yorkshire Dales, and the use of phones cannot generally be relied upon as your communication method for an event.

6.10 Remember that weather conditions in an upland area such as the Yorkshire Dales 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 (mist, storms, snow).

6.11 Emergency procedures are also required in the event of missing, late or injured persons, or for those still out after nightfall - 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.

The Cave Rescue Organisation covers the Three Peaks area and Malhamdale.
Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association covers Wharfedale, Nidderdale and Littondale
Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team covers Swaledale and Wensleydale.
Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team covers the Westmorland Dales area.

Recruit helpers and marshals

6.12 Large-scale events will all need 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

6.13 The National Park's Dales Volunteers do not provide support for these types of activities, and you will need to organise and recruit these people yourself.

7. Running the event

Waymarkers and road signs

7.1 Any waymarkers or road signs should be put out as close to the start of the event as possible. This reduces their visual impact and makes it less likely they will be tampered with. It is then important that they are collected back in immediately after the event. Failure to remove all items immediately will not only damage the reputation of your organisation and or sport, but may also deter landowners from welcoming future events. Leaving signs up can also lead to confusion as other events maybe using a similar route.

The **Three Peaks** route is well signed and it should not be necessary to place additional signs.

Fully brief marshals

7.2 The marshals provide contact between competitors and the general public, so an effective briefing of their role backed up with a written statement of their duties is crucial to the smooth running of the event. You will need to consider the ratio of marshals to entrants, their positioning, and the desirability of having roving marshals.

Fully brief entrants

7.3 Initial information in written form is important. Safety issues and equipment are obviously important for this initial information, along with details about the event and how to get there. We are also keen to see competitors get more information about the National Park and how participants can put something back into the area.

7.4 Event briefing immediately prior to the start of the event is vital. All competitors should be briefed, not just the ‘leader’. Messages such as courtesy to residents and other recreational users, not leaving gates open, not leaving litter, and avoidance of erosion are essential. Keeping to the signed route and information about where they are legally entitled to go must also be provided. An equipment check may also be necessary. Remember your sport will be judged on how your competitors behave.

Leave no Trace

7.5 Enjoy and respect the environment and ensure your participants are aware to so the same. Leave no trace of your event, ensure all rubbish is collected and responsibly disposed of, remove all signage after the event and keep noise down to allow everyone to enjoy the tranquillity of this special place. This summary of the Countryside Code might be helpful to share with participants:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/646f7507243157000c6f42cd/Countryside_Code_A5.pdf

Thank and acknowledge those involved and affected

7.5 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 omitted.

8. Maximising the benefits of your event

Promoting active participation

8.1 Frequently outdoor events in the National Park 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

8.2 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, food and drink from local sources, and 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 the Yorkshire Dales National Park

8.3 Events can play a key role in helping people to think positively about the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, 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 Yorkshire Dales National Park', and consider marking the National Park on maps provided to participants.

Voluntary contributions

8.4 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 National Park Authority encourages organisers to contribute to rights of way maintenance through the Three Peaks Project with a voluntary contribution of a minimum of £2.00 per participant which is used directly to maintain the paths in the most heavily used part of the National Park.

Promoting the countryside code

8.5 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 appropriate measures in the code.

Sustainable transport

8.6 How people travel to your event is likely to be one of the biggest impacts that it has. Large numbers 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. In the information you provide give details of how to use the train or bus to get to your event if this is possible. For example, events based at Horton-in-Ribblesdale can make use of the excellent train service. You could also look at ways of encouraging competitors to car share or arrive by public transport by giving a discounted entry for example.

Checklist for organisers of large-scale events

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:
    - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
    - Key landowners/managers/farmers
    - Police if appropriate
    - Consult with District 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 the National Park, such as through the voluntary scheme to put £1.00 per competitor towards rights of way upkeep
- Recheck all route/checkpoint arrangements on the ground.
- Consult with YDNPA on the desirability of posting notices informing other users about the event at key access points.

Running the event

- Put out checkpoints, waymarkers, road signs.
- Fully brief entrants on out of bounds areas, behaviour etc.
- 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

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

EVENTS ENQUIRY FORM

Name of organisation/charity:

Contact name, address and phone number:

E mail:

Proposed venue:

Proposed dates:

Scale of event, approximate number of participants:

Type of event, please indicate:

Challenge	☐	Walkers	☐
Competitive	☐	Cyclists	☐
Fun	☐	Horse riders	☐
Sponsored	☐	Runners	☐
Other (specify)	☐	Other (specify)	☐

Approximate duration of the event:

Other details including history of the event, travel and parking arrangements:

Proposed route, please provide a map if possible.

Please return to: Head of Access and Engagement, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Colvend, Grassington, North Yorkshire BD23 5LB
Rebecca.greenfield@yorkshiredales.org.uk