

This position statement does not include reference to measures to combat Coronavirus and any events planned should conform to local and Government guidance in place at the time of the event.

Position Statement of the Coast & Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership (December 2020)

Introduction

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by Government to ensure that the natural beauty of nationally designated landscapes in England and Wales is conserved and enhanced.

Each year organised events follow AONB promoted long distance routes and other routes promoted by the AONBs as well as on public and private land. These events can provide an excellent opportunity for people to visit and enjoy the National Landscapes, such as AONBs. Many events use public rights of way and there is a legal right for users access them. However, no event can be given exclusive use to such facilities and organisers must anticipate for continuing public use as well as informing local landowners and communities. Successful events can enrich people's experience of these landscapes and boost the local economy. Careful event management ensures potential negative impacts are minimised.

Purpose

This purpose of this Position Statement, which has been endorsed by the Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership, provides clarity and direction for organisers of large-scale events. It outlines expected behaviours and collaboration to avoid reputational risk for themselves, among AONB Partners. It seeks to help organisers avoid any significant negative impact on the designated landscape, its special qualities and infrastructure or other users and resident populations.

Organisers of large-scale events should:

Plan the event to achieve zero negative impact on landscape, people and wildlife, by:

- Working with those with an interest in the area before the event.
- Ensure all statutory permissions are received in writing before the event.
- Seek to liaise with private landowners where the event is intended to cross their land on either Public Rights of Way or permissive paths or if other facilities such as toilets, car parks or hospitality facilities can reasonably be expected to be used by participants.
- Ensure the event leaves no trace afterwards, take all litter, signs, promotional materials and waste away.
- Never install event signage on private or public land without permission, nor on a Public Right of Way, where permission from the Highway Authority is required. Do not allow signage to impede access for other users. Ensure event signage is:
 - easily removable but fixed securely to not create litter.
 - does not obscure permanent signage.
 - will not damage trail signposts.
 - has relevant permissions.
 - put up and removed at appropriate times
- A robust travel plan should be developed as part of the event to detail where competitors and organisers are to park, to avoid disruption to others.

- Ensure participants travel to event in a sustainable way possible. If private vehicles have to be used ensure appropriate parking facilities are arranged that does not disadvantage other users and residents. Develop a vehicle sharing scheme.
- Ensure that participants do not stray off the route, use marshals as appropriate to prevent inappropriate behaviours/access.
- Ensure appropriate numbers of participants to guard against overcrowding and other detrimental impacts. Consider staggered starts and set a maximum number of participants.
- Ensure participants are informed of the significance of the nationally designated landscape and nationally and internationally designated wildlife and heritage sites where the event is taking place in promotional materials
- Consider making a contribution to conserve and enhance the local area through which they pass, such as to the AONB's Community and Conservation fund see: <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/managing/grants/ccf/>
- All commercial event and other licences are secured before the event from landowners and statutory agencies.
- That the timing of the avoids negative impact on populations of rare species, on protected sites and/or impact on other visitors' enjoyment. A choice of route should involve seasonal variations.

Further information and advice:

Advice regarding health & safety and risk assessments can be found on the Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside at: www.vscg.co.uk

The Countryside Code can be viewed at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code

Plan for the following items:

- Availability of drinking water taps
- Drop off and collection points and if required and parking locations
- Emergency vehicle access points
- Scheduled diversions, maintenance activities and other issues
- Other events taking place
- To report any unsuitable/unsafe structures and/or surfaces
- Ensure no damage of sensitive sites, eg areas designated for wildlife/archaeology. Use www.magic.gov.uk to see a map showing locations of Statutorily Designated Sites. Liaise with Natural England/Historic England if activities likely to impact to such sites
- Good public transport links
- That the event does not promote inappropriate use of rights of way
- A way to support local businesses/attractions
- Participants wishing to stay overnight
- A budget that allows for a donation to conserve and enhance the area
- Severe weather

Contact for AONB team:

For further information contact AONB team on 01394 445225 or email: schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk