

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MANAGING RECREATIONAL AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN THE MENDIP HILLS AONB

The Mendip Hills AONB is a special place designated for its great natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and provides opportunities for quiet enjoyment.

In recent years an increasing number of large-scale events have been taking place the AONB. These events can have an impact on the environment and on other people's enjoyment of the area. The AONB Partnership has produced the following guidelines with the aim of ensuring that events within the AONB are appropriate, well planned, well located and well organised. Such planning and care is vital to conserve the natural and cultural environment, and to prevent conflict with the interests of farmers and local communities and other visitors.

Plan your event well in advance.

Allow time to obtain permissions and for proper consultation with other interested parties.

Initial contact with the AONB Unit well before the event takes place should give adequate time to talk to other parties and ensure that important wildlife sites and vulnerable routes are avoided.

Submit details of your proposed event as fully as possible to the AONB Unit providing the following information:

- Map of the proposed route.
- Dates and times of the proposed event.
- Projected numbers of participants.
- Any proposed check pints or refreshment points.

This will allow the AONB unit to advise you.

Obtain full permission from the relevant Rights of Way Authorities, landowners and, if on common land, consult local Commoners' Associations.

The AONB Unit will be able to help you with relevant contact numbers and addresses for conservation organisations and agencies that own land within the AONB, local Commoners Associations and the relevant Rights of Way authorities.

Ensure that your event is compatible with the conservation of the environment.

Damage to the landscape or to archaeological sites, and disturbance of wildlife, within the AONB is unacceptable and noisy events will be

discouraged. Consider whether alternative locations outside the AONB might be more suitable.

The Mendip Hills AONB has 27 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and organised recreation events on these areas may require approval from Natural England.

Any damage caused to the ecological interest of these areas may result in prosecution under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The AONB is also rich in historical and archaeological sites. Many of these are designated as Scheduled Monuments (SMs) and organised recreation events affecting these sites may require approval from English Heritage.

Remember wet weather causes increased environmental damage.

Any consent, relating to SSSIs and SMs, given to an event may be withdrawn if weather conditions mean excessive damage may be caused.

All publicity should make it known that the event may be cancelled or postponed due to adverse conditions.

Plan your event to avoid school holidays and all bank holidays.

Events during these times would risk problems of congestion, conflict with other visitors and shortage of parking.

Put the environment first when considering transport arrangements.

Please do all you can to limit congestion and demand for parking.

If participants are likely to require transport to and from the event please encourage car sharing and/or look into minibus hire. Avoid large coaches, as many roads in the AONB are narrow.

Place a specific limit on entry numbers to ensure that car parking and other arrangements are adequate.

A pre-entry booking system is recommended. Guidelines cannot be given on suitable numbers because this will depend upon many factors including the type of event and time of year.

Plan your event to minimise the impact on other visitors.

Organise the event to avoid congestion and stagger start times.

Ensure traffic control, and emergency and rescue arrangements are finalised with the police, search and rescue organisations and the AONB Unit.

DURING THE EVENT

- Ensure that all participants are thoroughly briefed on routes; environmental issues and the need to keep to paths and show respect for other hill users and local residents.
- Strongly discourage racing between participants.
- Provide high quality marshals with local experience.
- Remember that vehicular access to off-road checkpoints is prohibited unless authorised by the landowner.

AFTER THE EVENT

- Before leaving, check that you have removed any trace of your visit, especially litter.
- Report any damage to the AONB Unit and local landowners.

MAIN CONTACTS

Mendip Hills AONB Unit – 01761 462 338 mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk

Natural England – 0845 600 3078

English Heritage - 0870 333 1181

Rights of Way Authorities:

North Somerset Council 01934 888802

Bath & North East Somerset Council 01225 394041

Somerset County Council - 0845 3459155

The National Trust - 01985 843624

Avon Wildlife Trust - 0117 917 7270

Somerset Wildlife Trust - 01823 652 400

Avon and Somerset Search and Rescue – enquiries@ascrt.com