

## **Guidance for organisers of large festivals and events within or close to the boundary of the South Downs National Park**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The South Downs National Park is a beautiful and inspiring place to hold organised events. The area offers fantastic opportunities for people to enjoy the special places of the National Park. At the same time however, it is important to make sure that any events do not harm the special qualities for which the Park was designated.
- 1.2 This guidance may be useful for anyone wishing to hold an organised event in the National Park but it is may be especially helpful for those planning large scale events which are likely to require planning permission.

### **2. Protecting the National Park**

- 2.1 It is important that any events are consistent with the purposes of the National Park:

The two purposes of National Park designation are:

- **Purpose 1:** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- **Purpose 2:** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

It is important to remember that if there is a conflict, purpose 1 takes precedence over purpose 2.

### **3. Government advice**

- 3.1 The Government's recommended approach with regard to major events within or close to the National Park is set out in Paragraphs 26-27 of the [UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 for National Parks and the Broads](#).
- 3.2 This recognises the benefits that large scale community, charitable or other events and festivals such as organised charity walks, cycling events, cultural and musical events and fairs can have to National Parks. However, it states that events with the potential to harm the special qualities of a National Park, such as caravan and vehicle rallies and large music festivals will need to be controlled.



#### **4. Do I need planning permission?**

- 4.1 You may require planning permission to hold an event or festival in the National Park depending on the type of the event, its duration and any specific planning restrictions on the land. We recommend that you contact the SDNPA as soon as possible in order to determine whether planning permission is required. If planning permission is required, this can be a lengthy process and therefore early engagement with the SDNPA is strongly encouraged.
- 4.2 Some events can be carried out without planning permission as a temporary use of land. The permitted development rights for the temporary use of land are set out in Part 4, Class B of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015. If the whole event, including set-up and take-down lasts for more than 28 days (14 days for holding a market or for motor car or motorcycle racing including trials of speed, and practising for these activities) planning permission will be required. Planning permission would be required if the land is within the curtilage of a building and there are also restrictions within Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Development requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will always require planning permission. In some cases permitted development rights may have been removed from the land (you will need to check with the SDNPA).
- 4.3 Consideration must be given to the 'planning unit' when dealing with events on large Estates. Connectivity between parcels of land, physical division and different functional uses of the land should all be considered.
- 4.4 Permanent works (such as the laying of water pipes, hardstanding, roads and new access onto a highway) are likely to need planning permission. Signs, posters, etc may also require Advertisement Consent. Hedgerows and trees may also be protected from removal, including under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.
- 4.5 Please contact the SDNPA for further advice, and always seek advice if you are unsure.



#### **5. Relationship between licensing and planning permission**

- 5.1 Event licensing and planning permission are two separate regimes. The SDNPA is not the licensing authority for the area but will be consulted by the relevant licensing authority and will provide comment on applications for the larger events. It is therefore important that you engage with both the SDNPA and the relevant licensing authority when planning your event to ensure that the special qualities of the National Park are not harmed.



## 6. Planning an event

- 6.1 If you are planning on running an event within the National Park (or close to the boundary), please read through the advice below, and then get in touch so we can work with you to have a successful event which also looks after the National Park.

Things to consider when planning your event	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check to see if planning permission is required. This can be via submission of a request for pre-application advice or a “Do I Need Planning Permission?” query to the SDNPA- <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/making-an-application/pre-application/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/making-an-application/pre-application/</a></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check to see if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. EIA development will always require planning permission and does not benefit from any permitted development rights.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What impacts will there be upon rights of way/access land? What methods would be used to notify users of proposed closures?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What impacts will there be on protected wildlife (individual species and designated sites), landscape and cultural heritage? What can be done to reduce and mitigate for these impacts?  Certain times of year (e.g. bird breeding season) may be more than sensitive others. Can you time your event to avoid these sensitive periods?  Steer events away from the most sensitive areas (e.g. near SSSI's/SAC's/SPA's).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will noise and light pollution be controlled?  Light pollution should be minimised to avoid harm to the International Dark Night Skies Reserve - <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/</a> Further technical guidance on appropriate lighting in the National Park is also available on our website- <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf</a></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What signage will be used to advertise the event (remember Advertisement Consent may be required for these). Will signage be removed immediately after the event has finished?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What impacts will there be upon local communities? How can these be reduced? What public engagement mechanisms will be put in place?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What will be done to reduce traffic impacts, such as encouraging use of public transport and shared vehicles? Avoid selecting remote locations or sites with poor access and consider actively incentivising sustainable modes of transport e.g. ticketing discount.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What impacts may there be on forestry, farming, and other land uses? How can these be reduced?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will water and power be supplied and waste removed from the site?</li> </ul>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid inappropriate dates, eg near other major events in order to reduce cumulative impacts.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some cases, and in line with the Government Circular quoted on Page I, it may be necessary to justify why the event must be held within the National Park, rather than outside. Organisers need to think about what contribution the event is giving towards the National Park purposes. Where an event is proposed on a large Estate or other landholding within the National Park, it would be preferable if it could be identified as part of a Whole Estate Plan showing how it contributes to the management of the Estate in a way that achieves the purposes of the National Park designation.</li> </ul> <p>Further details of Whole Estate Plans can be found here- <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/supporting-communities-business/whole-estate-plans/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/supporting-communities-business/whole-estate-plans/</a></p>	

### Event Management Plan

Whether or not this is required by licence/planning permission, organisers are encouraged to prepare an Event Management Plan at a suitably early stage, and that the SDNPA has the opportunity for input.

## **7. How to give something back**

7.1 As well as the above considerations, we encourage event organisers to consider other ways in which your event can help contribute to the ongoing protection and enhancement of the National Park for future generations. Some suggestions are below, but please contact the SDNPA to discuss any other ideas you may have.

- Encourage people to stay in the Park and buy goods locally. There is lots of information on our food and drink portal- <http://www.southdownsfood.org/#home>
- Let your participants know this is a National Park and about its special qualities
- Donate to the South Downs National Park Trust or include a donation in the ticket for your event - <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/donate/>
- Tell your participants about the Trust's online shop where they could buy a souvenir of their visit to the the National Park- <https://southdowns.teemill.co.uk/>



### **Contact details**

South Downs National Park Authority  
South Downs Centre  
North Street  
Midhurst  
West Sussex GU29 9DH

Email: [planning@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southdowns.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01730 814810  
Website [www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk)

Please contact your local council for details of the relevant licensing team in your area

