



Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader
Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 6 December 2021

Mass Participation Events

Members have raised concerns regarding the potential impacts of mass participation events on Gower AONB. This paper outlines the current context to stimulate discussion on the matter at the AONB Partnership.

These events are focussed either on sporting activity (such as marathons and triathlons) or challenge events marketed at a broader audience that focus on raising money for charities (e.g. Macmillan Mighty Hike). The events tend to be promoted, organised and delivered by professional companies and/or charitable organisations.

There are in the region of 30,000 of these events being promoted at any one time throughout the UK; whilst many of these will be in towns and cities, many fundraising organisations raise funds from events based outdoors whereby individuals or teams are challenged to complete a course that is sufficiently compelling to attract sponsorship. Such events are often held in areas of attractive landscape including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

These events are opportunities to showcase the landscape, its wildlife and culture. As well as generating funds for charities, there are typically revenue opportunities for local landowners, businesses and other suppliers. There are also health and well-being benefits from training and participating in such events.

However, events have the potential for negative impacts on an area. The Chartered Institute of Fundraising has published guidance on how to run outdoor challenge events in the UK. The guidance highlights that fundraisers and charities should be aware of the impact on local communities, infrastructure, and to the environment in putting on these events and take all reasonable steps to minimise these. The impact on local residents, roads, other users, facilities, footpaths, wildlife and the wider landscape can be damaging, and can damage an organisation's reputation if the event does not take steps to minimise their effect. Failure to ensure this could also risk other organisation's being able to put on similar challenge events in the future. See:-

[Chartered Institute of Fundraising - Outdoor UK challenge events \(ciof.org.uk\)](https://www.ciof.org.uk)

Further guidance for specific areas has been developed by landscape authorities. For example, Brecon Beacons National Park guidance is directed at both:

- Organisers - To help ensure that their participants enjoy the special qualities of the National Park and leave it in good condition for others to do the same; and
- Landowners - advice for landowners considering hosting events on their land

See:

[GUIDANCE FOR OUTDOOR ACCESS EVENTS IN THE NATIONAL PARK
\(beacons-npa.gov.uk\)](https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/guidance-for-outdoor-access-events-in-the-national-park)

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