

# Guide to

## Planning and running an event on Norfolk Trails



 **Norfolk** County Council

NATIONAL TRAIL 

 **NORFOLK  
TRAILS**

The Norfolk Trails network is managed and maintained by the Norfolk Trails Team at Norfolk County Council.

The Norfolk Trails network provides the public with an opportunity to experience the natural beauty, tranquillity, cultural heritage and wildlife of the county. With over 1,200 miles of trail, and over 200 circular walks, allowing access for a range of activities including walking, running, horse riding and cycling the trails are an ideal way to explore the great outdoors in Norfolk.



Norfolk Trails network overview map

Crossing the length and breadth of Norfolk, the trails pass through stunning countryside, including a number of protected landscapes, such as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Broads National Park, the Brecks and a range of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The network also includes Norfolk's two National Trails, the Norfolk Coast Path and the Peddars Way.

**This guide will help you to plan a successful event on the Norfolk Trails network whilst minimising your impact on this unique county. An interactive map is available on the Norfolk Trails website to help identify each trail.**

Events are an important way for people to discover and enjoy the Norfolk countryside.

Norfolk County Council can provide guidance to assist with event planning by:

- Promoting best practice;
- Ensuring events make a positive contribution to the local economy, communities and environment;
- Ensuring events contribute to the purposes and duty of Norfolk County Council;
- Helping to minimise any potential impact on the protected landscapes, sensitive wildlife and historical sites of Norfolk and its communities; and
- Assisting with provision of local knowledge and landowner liaison where possible.

Norfolk County Council cannot advise specifically on risk assessments, insurance or provide volunteers for events.

If your event is taking part in Norfolk please consult the relevant Norfolk Safety Advisory Group for the appropriate District Council, via the links below:

- North Norfolk  
[www.northnorfolk.org/community/19093.asp](http://www.northnorfolk.org/community/19093.asp)
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk  
[www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=25235](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=25235)
- South Norfolk  
[www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/environment/7082.asp](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/environment/7082.asp)
- Great Yarmouth  
<http://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=971&p=0>
- Breckland District Council  
[www.breckland.gov.uk/article/2175/Safety-Advisory-Group](http://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/2175/Safety-Advisory-Group)
- Broadland District Council  
[www.broadland.gov.uk/business/4986.asp](http://www.broadland.gov.uk/business/4986.asp)
- Norwich City Council  
[www.norwich.gov.uk/Events/Pages/HireOfOpenSpaces.aspx](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Events/Pages/HireOfOpenSpaces.aspx)

## Types of events covered by these guidelines

These guidelines are applicable to events with more than 25 participants held on foot, bicycle and horseback using the Norfolk Trails network and surrounding rights of way.

## Getting Permission

The majority of the Norfolk Trails network uses public highways maintained at public expense, which are open to all legitimate users at all times, free of charge. Some stretches of the trails network follow permissive paths over land owned by local authorities, such as Marriott's Way, which are also open to use free of charge.

No formal permission is required for most events as long as the event is legal and not in conflict with the restrictions highlighted in this guidance document.

Any event infrastructure on private land will need permission from the relevant landowner. In this instance it would be best practice that all landowners affected by your event be notified well in advance of the event date.

## Setting a date

As some trails are more popular for holding events on than others, it is important that the events are not in conflict with each other.

Therefore when planning your event, please check our calendar to ensure that yours will not be affected by another that is already scheduled.

View event calendar: <https://tockify.com/norfolk.trails>



Deep History Coast guided walk (Walking Festival 2015)  
© Norfolk Trails.

## Public access

The Norfolk Trails network uses public rights of way and other public highways, as well as some permissive access. This means that anybody can travel along the trail subject to the restrictions below and therefore no one event can be given exclusive use.

You should ensure that your event will not cause problems for other legitimate users.

Please also remember that these public rights of way usually cross private land, where farm businesses are run and other private rights may exist.

Some trails are open for use on foot only, such as Wherryman's Way and Angles Way, whereas others are multi-use (cyclists, horse riding and pedestrians) such as the Marriott's Way and Peddars Way. In some places, separate routes associated with the long distance trail are available for cyclists and riders.

People on foot can use all public routes; Horse-riders and cyclists can use all public routes except public footpaths.

Please ensure that all participants are aware of the following:

- Be aware of and be courteous and considerate to other users;
- Event participants, even if racing on foot, do not have priority;
- On bridleways, cyclists must give way to walkers and horse-riders by law (Section 30 Countryside Act 1968);
- Racing of bikes on a public highway (e.g. bridleway) including 'against the clock' or riding recklessly or without due care and attention is a criminal offence. (Road traffic Act 1988, sections 66-69).

## Event infrastructure

Support and marshals' vehicles are not allowed to access the Norfolk Trails network or any other public right of way unless it is a

vehicular highway or they have the express permission of all the relevant landowners.

Please also remember that any marshal or check points, refreshments and toilets etc. erected next to the route will need the permission of the relevant landowners. It must be ensured that any such infrastructure does not restrict the route of the trail or any other private access.

## Event Waymarking

Temporary event waymarking is discouraged. However if you do put up event waymarking, please do so as close to the time of the event as possible. All event waymarking must include the event name and if possible the event date.

Any waymarks without an event name may be removed. Please ensure that all signs and waymarks do not obscure official signage and are removed (including any staples or pins) within 24 hours of the end of the event. Remember also that some horses are spooked by flapping signage.

There are also strict regulations about signage on or adjacent to public carriageways and permission may be required from the local Highway Authority (in this instance Norfolk County Council, or Norwich City Council if within the city boundary.)

**Guidance on erecting event signs in the highway:** <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/highways-licences-and-permits>

## Avoiding conflict with landowners and other users

The Norfolk Trails run through landscape that includes towns and villages, farming and coastal areas as well as some protected landscapes. As a result all event participants should abide by the Countryside Code : [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/338299/countryside-code.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338299/countryside-code.pdf) and be respectful of the fact that people live and work within the landscape.

Farm machinery may be using the trails and other rights of way, and working in fields along the route.

Please ensure all participants understand that:

- They must give way to farm machinery and moving livestock;
- If riding or running they must slow down when approaching livestock or other horses being ridden or held to avoid them taking fright and causing injury;
- They do not have exclusive use of the trails;
- They must slow down when cycling around blind bends or past driveways and junctions and be prepared for other users on the trails.

Most problems occur when large groups of participants pass without a gap. To minimise this please consider staggered starts or enforced rest stops.

### Minimising wildlife disturbance

The Norfolk countryside also includes rare and important habitat for many species of wildlife and so care does need to be taken if any event takes place on, or passes through, a protected landscape, or sensitive wildlife or historical sites. It is important that:

- Wildlife is respected;
- Events on protected sites avoid; or have minimum impact; on the breeding season (March to July approx.) This applies to any site where ground nesting birds are a feature, such as on certain beaches, grassland, heathland, woodland;
- Dogs are always kept under effective control, and in certain areas, kept on a short lead, particularly during the breeding season;
- Participants keep to well-marked paths, which will have been set out with the aim of avoiding wildlife disturbance;
- Wild flowers or plants are not damaged or picked.

- Undue noise or behaviour that might disturb wildlife is avoided/minimised.

Further guidance on ground nesting birds can be found at <http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/partnership/help-our-coastal-birds/726>

More information about dogs in the countryside can be found in the Countryside Code at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/338299/countryside\\_code.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338299/countryside_code.pdf).

### Waste management

Plan your event in a way that minimises rubbish and recycles as much material as possible, including any additional waymarking you have erected. Ensure that litter is not left behind. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that litter is not left on site.

### Travel to and from the event

Participants and support crews travelling to and from your event can cause considerable disruption to the local area. Please be aware that some car parks have charges and have limited capacity and may have height restrictions. Please plan which car parks you expect to use and contact the managing body to advise to avoid any capacity issues.

Event participants and support crews should be encouraged to car share to decrease congestion and pressure on car parking, as well as protecting the tranquillity and environment of the Norfolk countryside.

Where larger parking facilities are required, it is advisable to negotiate with adjacent landowners rather than trying to use the small public car parks.

### When and where to hold your event

The Norfolk Trails network runs through protected sites and landscapes which include National Parks, AONB and sensitive wildlife and heritage sites. Therefore, relevant habitat regulations assessments may

need to be undertaken in order to mitigate any impacts. This may include timing of events so they do not clash with ground bird nesting season for example. In addition, event organisers need to be aware of popular areas which attract significant footfall at key times of the year and events need to be planned that take account of this.

### Information on protected sites

When proposing dates or locations some key issues that need to be thought about are:

- Does the area become busy with visitors on bank holidays?
- Does the area have a heavy seasonal influx of tourists?
- Does the event take part in a protected area?
- Is there a suitable event centre with car parking and toilets?
- Are local residents likely to be inconvenienced by the event?
- Are there other events in the area on the proposed date?
- Will the path surface be damaged by use outside of the summer season when the ground can be softer?
- Are any sections of trail likely to be damaged by unusually heavy use?
- Is there a potential fire hazard in the summer?
- Will the event coincide with the lambing season, harvesting, bird nesting or other seasonal activity?
- Will the event affect the breeding or management of deer, grouse and other game birds?
- Will the event disturb users of trails which are already waymarked, or promoted for self guided walks and rides?

Minimising impacts of any events on protected sites or landscapes, or small towns and villages is key to the overall success of the event.

### RISK ASSESSMENTS AND INSURANCE

All event organisers must undertake an event risk assessment and have adequate insurance, marshals and first aid cover for their event. This will help ensure that you have thought about the potential risks and taken steps to mitigate or minimise them, which is important for both event organisers and participants. There is some good advice regarding health & safety and risk assessments from the following resources.

- Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside, published by the Visitor Safety In The Countryside Group [www.vscg.co.uk](http://www.vscg.co.uk)
- Health & Safety Executive website [www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/index.htm)

**It is the responsibility of the event organiser to arrange both their own risk assessment and event insurance.**

We would advise all event organisers to either walk or ride their proposed course in order to carry out a full risk assessment. Once this has been done a full consultation with local parish councils, landowners, highway authorities and the Norfolk Trails team should be undertaken in order to minimise any issues.

If your event is taking part in coastal areas organisers are encouraged to refer to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 for further advice. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

### Promoting your event

It is important that your event is well publicised not only so that you get a good take up but also to avoid conflicts with land managers, and other users. For example, farmers may delay carrying out some works or move animals if they know a large event will be coming through their farm or using their land.

To help publicise your event to landowners and other users please add it to our calendar which can be found at:

<https://tockify.com/norfolk.trails/agenda>

There are instructions on how to add an event to the calendar here:

[norfolktrails.wordpress.com/add-an-event/](http://norfolktrails.wordpress.com/add-an-event/)

Norfolk Trails can also help by promoting relevant events on our social media channels (Twitter / Facebook / Community Blog).

Unfortunately it is not possible to erect advertising banners or event fliers along the trails except in a few locations when agreed with the land manager.

### **Promoting the Norfolk Trails network and Norfolk countryside**

Organised external events are a great way to promote the Norfolk Trails and to help participants understand and think positively about the special qualities of the Norfolk countryside.

Norfolk Trails is happy to supply free general information about the trails network to provide to event participants. It may be possible for the Norfolk Trails team to provide an information stand at either the start of or finish of your event. Please talk to us about this well in advance.

### **After your event**

#### **Remove litter, event markers and signs.**

Remember, if you do not remove all items after the event it will not only damage the reputation of your organisation, but may deter landowners from welcoming future events.

On fixed route events, 'sweepers' should follow the last entrant looking for any damage and dealing with any problems. They will also be able to help entrants who find themselves in difficulties.

Landowners and path managers may prefer waymarking and control flags to be mounted on canes provided by the organisers, and these should be removed immediately after the event.

Removing checkpoints and waymarkers is a good opportunity to take photographs and notes recording the effect of the event on any vulnerable or fragile areas.

Always write to thank everyone who has helped, given their permission, or been inconvenienced by the event.

We recommend you phone the key landowners and authorities a few days after the event. This will allow you to both thank the land owners and also deal with any issues that may have occurred.



Marathon runners in fancy dress on the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail (Walking Festival 2015) © Norfolk Trails.

**Help us maintain the Norfolk Trails network - please donate a £**

The Norfolk Trails Network is maintained largely at public expense and by volunteers for the public's use and enjoyment. This constant maintenance and improvement costs thousands of pounds each year and much of this work relies on good will and partnerships.

The Norfolk Trails network is maintained to a higher standard than the general rights of way network in recognition of both its local and national status and high usage.

Events (especially large ones) can put extra strain on these already popular routes. It is important that the special qualities of the trails network and the protected and landscapes that the routes run through are not damaged or eroded by extra pressure that events can cause.

Ensuring the highest possible levels of maintenance, signage, vegetation control and wider landscape works can protect these special qualities but this inevitably costs money.

The Norfolk Trails Team are following a number of other pilot schemes to help contribute to the management of the Norfolk Trails network and the associated corridor.

Every pound raised can bring in additional funding, so please consider donating to the Norfolk Trails network.

Please consider making a donation of 2% of entrance fee income (if the event is charged for) or £1 per participant if your event is using one of our main trails, or uses any linking path network or associated circular walk:

The main Norfolk Trails linear routes include:

- Angles way;
- Boudicca Way;
- Marriott's Way;
- Nar Valley Way;
- Norfolk Coast Path;
- Paston Way;
- Peddars Way;
- Weavers' Way;
- Wensum Way;
- Wherryman's Way;

Donations can be made via the 'Donate Now' button on the National Trail website [www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk) (if using the Norfolk Coast Path or Peddars Way) or can be paid by cheque payable to "Norfolk County Council", for any other Norfolk Trail, via a purchase order or by direct bank transfer using the following details.

**Account Name: NORFOLK CC – CNTY FD**  
**Sort Code: 20-62-53**  
**Account number: 00675261**  
**Our reference: PC3000 Trails donation**

Please ensure you let us know you've made a donation and include the reference route and event name as a reference, so we can ensure it gets banked correctly.

All donations will be acknowledged on a donations page on the Norfolk Trails website, and via the National Trail website (if using the Norfolk Coast Path or Peddars way) and social media.

Thank you for your help in ensuring the management and maintenance of our countryside.



Norfolk Ramblers Weybourne to Trimmingham walk (Walking Festival 2015) © Norfolk Trails.

## Contact us

By post:

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**Community and Environmental Services**  
**Norfolk County Council**  
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Phone - 0344 800 8020



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*Deep History Coast' event on the Norfolk Coast National Trail (Walking Festival 2015).© Norfolk Trails*