

Organising a visit – step by step summary

This document is a quick summary of the full Campaign for National Parks’ Mosaic project Organising a Visit to a National Park manual. The first section is a check list of actions to work through when organising your own visit. The second section gives some golden rules of things to remember when you are organising a visit to a National Park. For the full manual please see www.cnp.org.uk/mosaic

ACTIONS	Tick
Allow at least one month in advance for a day trip or three months for a residential	
1. Have you enough interested people to justify the work involved & cost?	
2. Set a date that works for you, National Park staff you are involving & your group	
3. Produce initial publicity to gain interest commitment from your group	
4. Research & set a budget based on cost of travel, accommodation, food & activities	
5. Work out the cost per head and how much participants can be expected to contribute	
6. Submit funding bids to cover remaining costs, work with others in your group on this	
When funding is secured	
7. If staying overnight, book a suitable venue such as the YHA	
8. Book a minibus & driver, if required, agree a meeting point & time	
9. Contact National Park colleagues for ideas on activities, have a wet weather back up	
10. Contact other organisations to book their staff as necessary, eg Exmoor Pony Trust	
11. Share draft itinerary with National Park contact for comments and suggestions	
12. Make a site visit with a helper to check places, activity suppliers, location of toilets etc	
13. Send out booking form & itinerary to participants (use templates from the Manual)	
14. Create a spreadsheet, record all bookings and emergency contact details	
15. Obtain or create maps and directions for minibus driver & people driving themselves	
At least two weeks before the event	
16. Send confirmation letters, maps, itineraries, meeting point & time to group members	
17. If using public transport, book tickets in advance for better deals.	
18. Confirm numbers attending with accommodation, all staff & others working or helping	
19. Obtain mobile numbers of NP staff & anyone else providing a service during the visit.	
20. Highlight dietary & other needs such as prayer rooms to ensure they are catered for	
21. Ensure the heating is on at the accommodation, as appropriate	
The week before the event	
22. If self catering, secure potential Champions to cook and help with clearing up.	

23. If self catering, ask the cooks to create a shopping list. Agree who will buy this	
24. Allocate shared rooms as necessary (if not done by accommodation)	
On the day	
25. Drive to venue, welcome the group and do the fire & Health & Safety talk	
26. Settle the group into the accommodation	
27. Run the weekend according to the itinerary	
On the last day	
28. Ask all participants to fill in feedback forms and collect them. Thank everyone!	
During the next week to ten days	
29. Send emails to thank everyone for coming, helping, or providing a service.	
30. Pay all invoices, complete all feedback required by funders.	
31. Shred & recycle all paperwork with personal information.	
32. Plan the next event!	

Organising a visit: golden rules

1. Start small

If you haven't organised a visit or event before, start off with something small and manageable. Take a few friends for a summer picnic, visit a local attraction. This will give you a feel for what the responsibilities are in a safe environment and help build your confidence.

2. Appoint a deputy

Never do it alone. Work with others so you can bounce ideas off each other, sort out problems together and so that there is someone else to hold the reins if you get sick.

3. Write things down and share the information

Keep written records – plans, names and contact details of people coming, names and contact details of where you're going etc. Tell someone where this information is.

4. What might go wrong?

Imagine all the worst case scenarios and how you'll deal with them (without getting too depressed about it!) Eg what if the weather is bad? Does it matter? (Often it matters less than you think it will). What if people are late? What if one of the helpers has a last minute emergency? What if someone has an accident? If you're prepared for the worst, you'll deal with things calmly and know what you're doing. Discuss all of this with someone else. (Use Risk assessment forms in the manual as necessary)

5. Go on a site visit – information is king

Try to visit the place where you are going before the trip. Check toilet facilities, how long it will take to do the activities you've planned, whether drinking water is available etc. Talk to activity providers, cafe owners, bus drivers, so you have as much information as possible. Before the site visit, draw up a list of things to check so you don't forget anything!

Try to take at least one other person with you on the site visit. You can bounce ideas off each other.

Sometimes it's not possible to make a site visit. We don't recommend this, but if it is the case, gather as much information as you can by phoning accommodation providers, cafes, the local tourist information or ranger or other people working in the area.

6. Make a plan

When you first have the idea of organising a visit, think of what you want to do and all the things you need to do to achieve it. Try to give a time deadline for each activity. Write it down and share it. Use the plan above to get you started.

7. Remember that you are responsible

You are responsible for the group at all times. Have all the information you need with you. Carry emergency contact details and contact details of all places you're going on the visit. The group will look to you for guidance, to solve problems etc.

8. Have fun

Probably the most important of all. Enjoy yourself. If you've prepared everything, you should be able to deal with the unexpected. If you relax, the group will relax and you'll all have a good time.