****

**1.0 Introduction**

This event application process has been established to allow the mountain bike trail centres in [**Castlewellan**](http://www.mountainbikeni.com/castlewellan/) and [**Rostrevor**](http://www.mountainbikeni.com/rostrevor/) to be managed in a responsible and effective way. The objectives of this event application process are to:

* Ensure events taking place on the trail centres are delivered to a high standard in terms of both customer experience and safety
* Allow the local area to benefit from the economic impact provided by events
* Raise the profile of the trail centre(s)
* Reduce the potential conflict caused to other trail / forest park users
* Reduce the potential displacement of regular mountain bike trail users
* Manage the physical impact of events on trails and their ongoing maintenance
* Avoid date clashes between major events across both trail centres
* Allow the Mourne Mountain Bike Ranger to balance facilitation of events alongside their other roles and responsibilities
* Provide an open transparent application process where responsibilities, permit and licence conditions and charges are clearly defined

**1.1 Permissions**

Castlewellan and Rostrevor Mountain Bike Trails are managed by Down District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council respectively and as such they are responsible for providing permission to host mountain biking events within each trail centre and the associated forest. The event application process will be facilitated by the Mourne Mountain Bike Ranger employed by [**Mourne Heritage Trust**](http://www.mournelive.com/).

This application process **only applies to mountain biking events** taking place within Castlewellan Forest Park and Rostrevor Forest. Applications for events involving other activities within these forests should contact:

Forest Service Northern Ireland
East District Forest Office
The Grange
Castlewellan Forest Park
Castlewellan
BT31 9BU
Tel: 028 4377 2240

**2.0 Guidelines**

The guidelines below are designed to outline the application process, timescales and charges relevant to the size and nature of your event.

**2.1 Leading of Mountain Biking Activities**

Those individuals or organisations wishing to lead mountain biking i.e. coaching or guiding either on a commercial or non commercial basis within Castlewellan Forest Park or Rostrevor Forest must apply for an [**'Annual Mountain Biking Permit.'**](http://www.mountainbikeni.com/useful-info/mountain-bike-permits/)

**2.2 Events with less than 20 participants**

Events with less than 20 participants which will have a low impact on the trail centre (not involving closure of trail(s)) and other users will not require formal permission. There may however be ongoing forest operations, trail maintenance/diversions or other events taking place which could restrict access to certain areas for safety reasons. It is therefore strongly advised that you contact the **Mourne Mountain Bike Ranger** in advance to check. mtbranger@mourne.co.uk or 07718 098 029.

It should be remembered that the event organiser is responsible for the activity, the participants and the potential impact it could have on other people around. These events must comply with the [**'MountainBikeNI.com Code of Conduct'**](http://www.mountainbikeni.com/useful-info/mtb-code-of-conduct/) for the trails.

**2.2 Events with more than 20 participants**

Events with more than 20 participants will require formal permission to take place, must go through the event application process and be subject to charges identified below.

Those events given permission will be provided a licence by the relevant council for each event. Please consult the [**Sample Licence**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/kbvp0nt2mtbdia2/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Event%20Licence%20Agreement_Sample.docx)which is provided to give guidance to event organisers as to their responsibilities. Please note this is just a sample and may be adjusted according to each event.

**2.3 Event Fees & Bonds**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event Type** | **Definition** | **Application Process** | **Charge Per Event / Per Trail Centre** | **Minimum Event Bond Required ^** |
| **Commercial** | This is an event where participants are charged a fee | Applications made for **'Annual Calendar'** | Rostrevor £1000 + Participant Fee\*Castlewellan £500  | £1000 for DH Trails£500 for X-Country Trails  |
| **Club** | This is an event organised by a Cycling Ireland Club and not operated on a commercial basis | Applications made for **'Annual Calendar'** | Rostrevor £300 Castlewellan £300 | £300 |
| **Charity / Voluntary / Community Event - 51+ participants**  | This is an event organised to raise money for a registered charity, or voluntary / community organisation provided that all monies raised (after costs) are donated to that charity  | Applications made for **'Annual Calendar'** | Rostrevor £300 Castlewellan £300 | £300 |
|  **Charity / Voluntary / Community Event - 20- 50 participants** | This is an event organised to raise money for a registered charity, or voluntary / community organisation provided that all monies raised (after costs) are donated to that charity | Applications made at least **'6 weeks in advance'** | Rostrevor & Castlewellan £100 | £100 |
| **Exceptional** | Given the diversity of mountain biking, it is recognised that there may be events which do not fall into the above event definitions and will therefore be considered on an event by event basis.  | Applications made at least **'6 weeks in advance'** | Castlewellan & Rostrevor Min £100 - Max £1000 - Negotiable depending on nature of the event.  | £100-£1000Negotiable depending on nature of the event. |

All charges and fees are subject to an annual review

\* If the event exceeds 200 participants, a £2 fee per each participant in excess of 200 participants will be charged

^The ‘Event Bond’ is payable to the trail managing council. This will be returned following the event subject to the council being satisfied that all conditions within the Event Licence have been adhered to. The trail managing council reserves the right to increase amount of the ‘Event Bond’ depending on the event requirements.

**2.4 Application Process**

**2.4.1 Annual Calendar Applications**
Each trail centre wishes to balance the number of events throughout the year and to avoid clashes between major events. Therefore 'Commercial' and 'Club' and ‘Charity / Voluntary / Community events exceeding 50 participants’ wishing to be held in 2014 **must submit an '**[**Expression of Interest'**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/fm7kdc9qk9q5kt6/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Expression%20of%20Interest.docx) **form by 4pm Friday 20th December 2013**

Expression of Interests will be assessed by a panel and ratified by local council. Those which are accepted to the annual calendar will be required to submit an [**'Event Management Plan'**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6jlhull9kpdys2o/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Event%20Management%20Plan_Sample.docx). See application process flow chart in Appendix 1.

Event organisers **must not** promote the event until permission has been granted by the relevant council.

**2.4.2 6 Weeks in Advance Applications**

'Charity Events with between 20-50 participants' and 'Exceptional' events wishing to be held during 2014 must complete the [**'Expression of Interest'**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/fm7kdc9qk9q5kt6/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Expression%20of%20Interest.docx) form and submit to the relevant council **at least 6 weeks in advance** of the intended event date.

However please submit applications as far in advance as possible to increase the potential of receiving permission on the date you require. An ['**Event Management Plan'**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6jlhull9kpdys2o/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Event%20Management%20Plan_Sample.docx) will also be required. See application process flow chart in Appendix 1.

Event organisers **must not** promote the event until permission has been granted by the relevant council.

**2.5 Charges**

Both councils have made significant investment in the development, management and maintenance of the mountain bike trails therefore as with any other leisure facility they must ensure a level of income to offset these costs. Charging a fee has been identified as a means of generating income to reinvest in trail management, upkeep and development.

**2.6 Services you get in return:**

**In return for the charge for the event, the Mournes Mountain Bike Ranger will:**

* Facilitate a site visit for event planning purposes
* Liaise with Forest Service NI regarding the event and seek any additional approvals required to host the event (this may be involve the facilitation of a meeting with relevant Forest Service NI staff)
* Provide introduction to other third parties which you may need to liaise with
* Discuss any issues and help seek solutions where necessary
* Raise awareness with trail users of your event and any trail diversions or closures in advance via main trail info panel and MountainBikeNI.com
* Ensure licence is issued by relevant council to run the event on agreed date
* Provide post event feedback template which must be provided to competitors
* Carry out a post event inspection

**3.0 Factors to Consider**

**Timing of Events -** Whilst events can be a key driver of visitors to a trail centre, it is also recognised that they can also detract from the experience of regular trail users. Therefore it is important to find the balance. As mountain biking is a year round activity the local councils would ask event organisers to avoid peak holiday periods such as Easter, Bank Holidays, July Fortnight etc. It is anticipated that the trail centres will already be busy at these times of years whereas a quality event could attract visitors in off peak times.

**Use of Informal Trails** - The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Sport NI, Down District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council invested in excess of £1.8 million to develop the purpose built trail centres in Castlewellan Forest Park and Rostrevor Forest.

Given this investment, events should use the official trails within the centres and in the direction they are designed to be ridden.

Whilst it is accepted there are circumstances where informal trails may be used, only in exceptional circumstances, will permission be given for events to use informal trails. In such circumstances the event organiser must:

* Submit detailed plans of any required informal trails on a base map
* Submit detailed specification of required informal trails – See details in [**'Event Management Plan Appendix'**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6jlhull9kpdys2o/MTB%20Mournes%20-%20Event%20Management%20Plan_Sample.docx)
* Provide a detailed construction and remediation plan including:
	+ Evidence of public liability insurance to the sum of £5M covering duration of construction, event and remediation period. **PLEASE NOTE:** The event organiser must indemnify the trail managing council for any claim arising from informal trail during construction, event and remediation period.
	+ Evidence of informal trail designers and contractors competence
	+ Project Schedule - detailing construction and remediation schedule

Informal trails should be constructed to according to the [**‘Principles and Standard for Trail Development in Northern Ireland’**](http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/news/principles-and-standards-for-trail-development-in-northern-ireland/)

**4.0 Enquiries**

For any enquiries on the application process please contact:

Keith Mackey
Mourne Mountain Bike Ranger
Mourne Heritage Trust
mtbranger@mourne.co.uk
07718 098 029
028 4176 5489

**Appendix 1 - Event Application Process Flow Chart**

 **Annual Calendar Event Applications 6 Week Applications**

 **'Commercial' and 'Club' and 'Charity events between 21-50 ‘Charity / Voluntary / Community participants and 'Exceptional' events exceeding 50 participants’ events**