

Accessible Events Guide

January 2026

Introduction

At CPRE we believe in a ‘Countryside for All’ because everyone should have the chance to enjoy and be involved in countryside issues and our activities. But not everyone is able to access and benefit from the countryside equally.

People’s backgrounds and situations can result in a variety of possible barriers. These could be practical like a lack of public transport, money to travel to the countryside and/or disabilities and medical conditions.

Social and cultural factors can also play a part, such as lack of prior experience or unfamiliarity with what the countryside can offer or how to explore it. Sometimes this can lead to a feeling that ‘the countryside is not for me’.

We have an opportunity to overcome some of these challenges through how CPRE events, meetings, and activities are planned. The more thought given in advance, and the more insights captured from different perspectives, the more inclusive and accessible CPRE and its events will become.

This document provides some practical guidance and suggestions for everyone in the CPRE Network and beyond to help embed accessibility into the events offered. It covers in-person events, whether indoors or in the countryside, and online events. A short checklist of the practical actions referred to in this document is on the final page.

This guide has been put together by members of the CPRE Network EDI Group, and we recognise it will not be exhaustive. We are keen to hear your feedback and to keep improving this guidance.

How to use this guide

Event planning has many elements, but we recommend that you start with Event Goals and Identifying a Key Audience. After you have clarity on event goals it will be easier to work through the rest of the steps to plan an accessible event.

Within this guide there are lots of hints and tips about choosing a venue, deciding on the programme for the day, promotion and collaboration and we’ve used examples to illustrate scenarios. At the end is a checklist to help you plan your own event. We have drawn on experience from other organisations and links to their resources are throughout the guide.

1. Event goals and identifying the key audience

To achieve the best outcome on the day, it's critical to identify who you want to take part in the event and why. Think about the following questions:

- What do you want to achieve through the event?
- Who specifically do you want to engage with? Be as specific as you can about ethnicity, gender, disability, geography and/or socio-economic situations.
- Why do you think they will be interested in an event with you?
- What do you see as being of benefit to them?
- What are the benefits to you and your branch of engaging with this group(s)?

Examples

Audience 1: *young families living on an estate backing on to a new cycle way.*

These residents could use the cycle path, as a safer route to cycle with children than on the road, and CPRE would like to know what would encourage them to use it more often.

Audience 2: *students on campus who are passionate about environmental issues.*

Students who've moved to the area to study may be passionate about environmental issues, and CPRE wants to encourage them to join in with its campaigns and to better understand the issues that matter to younger people.

Audience 3: *members of a Muslim hiking group.*

This group may be interested in a guided walk on a new trail (or could lead the walk) and CPRE will better understand what people who practice Islam experience when going into the countryside together.

As you work your way through this guide, it may be helpful to think about these three examples for all the different elements of planning an event.

There are many reasons why a particular group of people may have difficulty joining in with a CPRE event or activity. The good news is that some of these challenges can be overcome if the event is designed with a particular group(s) in mind.

2. Involving people from the start

Involving people from the target audience in designing and even delivering the event is a powerful way to help achieve event goals, for example deepening relationships between CPRE staff and volunteers and a community group. The adage ‘nothing about me, without me’ is helpful.

If you already know people from the target audience, you can involve them in event planning by:

- Asking for their input into the venue choice and programme
- Ask them to help introduce you to community leaders or speakers
- Ask them to share ways to best meet the group’s needs

This is called diversity checking and it's a way of exploring an idea with people who have lived experience, so it meets their needs as much as possible.

If the event organiser doesn’t have relevant lived experience, it can be hard to put themselves in other people’s shoes and know what will work best. It’s helpful to think about the following questions:

- How and when can you learn more if there are knowledge gaps in your group?
- What connections do you already have with these groups?
- How could you start a new connection?
- How could someone from the group help improve the idea further?

Often the best way of reaching out to get to know a new group of people is through a local community group. This can seem daunting, so it can be helpful to start by exploring who in the branch already has connections or is part of the community you want to appeal to.

If there aren’t any existing connections, information about local community groups can be found from a Community Directory which is hosted either by the local council or a voluntary sector infrastructure body like the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). These have an extensive list of all the community groups, sports clubs, and more in the county. Search ‘Community Directory [name of county]’ online to find the one near you. Parish and town councils will also have useful local knowledge, and their contact details are on their website.

There are two guides to engagement with community groups here from [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) (NCCPE) and a [local authority](#).

The three Cs of community engagement are a useful aide memoire:

- **Communication** – we all know this is key to a successful relationship, so keep it frequent, relevant and be flexible about what works best for your contact and the group. For example, a preference for talking on the phone rather than emailing. Remember to clarify roles and responsibilities so that everyone is clear about what they will be doing to prepare for the event.
- **Collaboration** – when reaching out to a new audience through a third party, it’s worth bearing in mind they will have ideas about the event too. Think about this as a collaboration and by working together and being flexible you are more likely to have a successful partnership.

- **Commitment** – this is about building trust and being in it for the long term. Whilst the focus may be on the immediate priority of a looming event deadline, it's valuable to think about what could happen after and how to deepen the relationship. Perhaps there is some reciprocal opportunity where CPRE staff and volunteers attend an event organised by the group in future.

There are some brilliant guides available from other organisations:

- All The Elements CIC have curated a plethora of access guides and are well worth a look: [All the Elements guides](#).
- Scope, the disability charity, have a toolkit about [Accessible Events](#)
- Wildlife Trusts' [A Space for Everyone](#) is a guide to making natural spaces welcoming to all.

3. Venue and location choice

Venue and location choice are really important. Which venue or location for the event might be most suitable depends on a lot of factors. It's worth asking people from your target audience about:

- If the group shares a particular religion, will they feel comfortable if a meeting place of another religious group is chosen?
- If the group includes people from the global majority, will they be comfortable in a venue highlighting past links to colonialism?
- Is parking accessible for blue badge holders and is access to the building suitable for wheelchair users?
- Will any walks or other outside activities be accessible to everyone? Are there any adaptations you could consider making to a physical activity such as a walk so it is more accessible? For example, you could have a wheelchair-friendly route option and a shorter distance option for families with younger children.
- To help promote the event, it can be useful to provide a map and transport options to the venue with the booking information.

Dates and times

Depending on the audience for the event there will be differences in days of the week and times of day that will make it easier for them to join in. For example, avoiding school pick-up times, religious holidays, working hours etc. If you aren't sure, it's best to try and find out more:

- How can you find out what works best for the group of people?
- Is there a contact with a group you can ask?
- Who in your group has lived experience you could talk to?
- If you want to appeal to families, you will need to consider days of the week and school holidays.
- Are particular days of the week suitable depending on religious or cultural observances?
- Is it possible to run the event more than once so that different groups can be accommodated?

Travel and expenses

How people will get to and from the venue/location is very important.

Sometimes a particular venue or location is chosen because it has qualities the event will highlight to attendees. However, it's critical to think about transport and how any barriers can be overcome before a venue is confirmed. If transport issues can't be resolved, it's worthwhile to consider alternative locations and venues.

- Will the target audience be able to get to and from the venue?
- Will they need to use public transport, or can they car-share?
- Will the cost of hiring a minibus or paying for public transport be a barrier? How can this be overcome?
- Will public transport drop them close enough to the venue to access it easily?
- Will transport be accessible to anyone with mobility issues?

There may be some occasions where providing financial support towards travel costs for event attendees is appropriate, given the purpose of the event, if attendees are unable to self-fund.

Covering travel costs may come from your branch resources, via a partner as part of a partnership agreement (e.g. where they cover transport and CPRE covers food and activity costs for example) or by small grant application to a local funder or council.

There are some specialist community transport providers and funders, for example:

- [Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport](#) operates in Derbyshire and similar community transport charities exist across the country.
- South Downs National Park Authority offers a [Health and Wellbeing Travel Grant](#) for eligible participants and similar may be available in other National Parks.
- The [National Lottery Good Causes](#) funding may also be able to help with event costs, including travel.

4. Event programme

To plan an accessible event programme it's helpful to think through how everyone attending will be made to feel welcome. There are lots of small tweaks you can make that taken together can make an event more comfortable for a diverse audience.

- Diverse representation in speakers, hosts, images and video content, including in promotional materials helps people feel the event is for them.
- Clear, concise language and avoiding jargon, or explaining it, ensures everyone attending understands the content.
- Topics and discussions should be relevant for the whole audience.
- Using breakout groups enables people to choose a topic of most interest.
- Scheduling regular breaks in the programme is important for those who may need regular rest, refreshment or comfort breaks. They also encourage informal conversations.

- When hosts and speakers share their pronouns (she/her, he/him, they/them) it can help others to feel more comfortable to share their pronouns.
- Welcome everyone and thank them for the differences that they bring to the event.
- Consider a broad welcome as this can be powerful:

“I’d like to welcome people of all genders, backgrounds and descents today, with different life experiences, education, disabilities, whether visible or invisible, all genders and sexualities, those with faith and those who have no religion, young or older, here for the first time or the 100th time, everyone is welcome. All your voices matter and we hope you all benefit from today’s event.”

- Encourage participation of as many people as possible during any talks or presentations by providing different ways for people to ask questions. Some may be comfortable to speak; others may prefer to write a question, add a comment or share experiences in another way.
- Consider how informal networking will work best, for example in a different space, over coffee, with an activity to do, to encourage everyone to connect with others if they are comfortable to.
- Ensure different rooms/areas are marked well with signage that’s easy to understand and follow.
- Be mindful of lighting, noise levels, and potential triggers for individuals with sensory sensitivities. Some issues may be unavoidable, but you can warn people in advance and share what you have tried to do to reduce any impact on people.
- Depending on people’s needs, it can be helpful to offer a quiet space in case people need a break, for religious observances or other reasons.
- Enabling people to arrive early, for example, if they’d feel more comfortable having time to get used to their surroundings, or would like to sit in a specific place, can also be welcome.

When collecting information from guests at the point they register to attend is an ideal opportunity to ask for any support needs they have, such as a hearing loop or baby changing facilities, so they can enjoy the event. More information about what to include in a registration form is included in Section 6.

Online events

For online events, in addition to the above it’s helpful to:

- Invite participants to introduce themselves in the chat. This helps everyone to feel welcomed, and their presence acknowledged.
- Encourage people to add and share their pronouns when introducing themselves and by renaming themselves on screen.

- Allow participants to contribute ideas or questions in different ways, such as raising a virtual hand or contributing through the chat or Q&A function.
- Facilitate participation through the chat and have a person dedicated to managing it.
- Enable close captions and make a transcription available after the event.
- Let people know it's ok to keep their camera off if they wish.

If slides are being used to share information or bring talks to life, these should be checked through in advance for all speakers to ensure they will be widely accessible. There's more information about accessible presentations on the [Business Disability Forum](#) website, but here are a few tips:

- Keep text to a minimum on slides and increase the font size.
- Make sure any essential information is said verbally, don't rely on the slides.
- Use colour/brand elements consistently.
- Use an easy-to-read font like calibri or arial. Decorative fonts are hard to read.
- Provide some printed copies of slides.
- Check attendee registration information for any requests for other adjustments.

Food and beverage

The time of day the event takes place has a bearing on what refreshments guests will appreciate. For example, when people have travelled an hour or more to get there and it's lunchtime, the chances are they will be hungry. They will enjoy the event much more if food and drinks are available, or there is a clear moment in the schedule for a picnic/packed lunch.

If you intend to arrange your own food, it's essential to consider food hygiene, allergens and intolerances, like nuts and lactose, as well as how to cater for special diets. The Food Standards Agency has some guidance here for [charity events](#). Whilst it isn't a requirement to provide allergen information if you aren't a registered food business, it is good practice to do so. Keeping packaging from any ready-made food is essential and if people home-bake, they should provide a list of ingredients. Some simple exclusions like no nuts or vegetarian-only can be a useful way to simplify menu planning and reduce risks.

If the venue chosen provides catering, please talk to them about:

- How will the event cater for any food preferences and allergies? Asking for a list of options is a helpful way to understand what range of options will be available.
- How far in advance will they need to know numbers, preferences, and allergies?
- What information or advice do you need to give to the group about food options?

Collecting allergen and preference information from people attending the event is essential to help plan any food and beverage offer. This information can be collected when people register to attend the event.

Bathroom facilities

Events at venues that are open to the public or have a regular staff team on site will of course have bathroom facilities. If an event aims to attract people who have disabilities or those with very young children, the venue you chose should provide wheelchair accessible and baby changing facilities.

If the event involves a walk, or meeting somewhere that does not require a venue, it's helpful to identify a place to meet that is close to public toilets and/or will be passed during the event.

5. Promotion to reach your audience

All of us have preferences for how we like to receive information and communicate with people. In promoting the event, it's important to make sure the event invitation reaches the groups and individuals the event is for in a way they are comfortable with. For example, adjustments that will help people with visual impairments to access event information. This can involve trying something new, depending on what works best to reach and engage the target audience, and this could affect the channels and format of promotional material and booking processes.

Writing a communications plan can be helpful to map out what will be communicated, when and by what means. You should use a variety of channels like email, website, social media, posters, chat groups, and local press. Local community group contacts are a useful source of information about the best way to reach their members and contacts. They may have some in-house options like a newsletter or WhatsApp group that could help hugely.

Here are some tips about promoting events to reach the intended audience:

- Frame and communicate the event in an open and accessible way so that people do not think 'this event is not for me'.
- Make the event information clear and written in language which is easy to understand.
- Use photos which represent a diversity of people. Royalty free photos are available from [Unsplash](#).
- Provide a contact number/email for any questions or requesting specific requirements.
- If booking is online, offer an alternative, such as telephone booking, for those unable to access or use a computer.
- Include a link to an EDI statement or commitment with information about the event on the promotion materials and booking form. For an example see [CPRE's website](#).
- Explain what accessibility options you'll be able to offer and ask for preferences or needs in advance e.g. blue badge parking.
- If your event has an entry charge, could you offer a free option for carers and cheaper tickets for those with less means, such as the young, unwaged, students, retired people?
- Advertise your event in a variety of places both online and off and target locations (i.e. close to the venue) or publications (e.g. local newspapers) to widen the reach.

- Ask contacts within the groups and communities you want to appeal to help you reach their members. They may be able to send some information to people on your behalf.

Keeping a record of where the event has been promoted and how effective it was at reaching the target audience will help you to evaluate the promotional activity.

6. Event registration and pre-arrival information

Registration

A simple event registration process captures information about who wants to attend your event. This will help you find out about their support needs, making it will be easier to plan the event.

The most effective way to do this is by online registration. There are a few options available to help, for example:

- [EventBrite](#) is free to use for free events, however if there's a fee to attend, then EventBrite will charge a small commission. Only basic contact data will be collected, and no consent to recontact in future beyond this specific event is included.
- [TryBooking](#) is an alternative to EventBrite for community events and has lower charges for ticketed events. Only basic contact data will be collected and no consent to recontact in future beyond this specific event.

If you opt for one of these free registration tools and they do not collect consent to contact after the event, you can add a contact details question to a feedback survey shared on the day.

A simple registration form might include the following fields:

- Full name
- Phone number and email address
- Access requirements (open box)
- Dietary requirements (if refreshments provided)
- Please share any additional needs that will help you to enjoy and feel comfortable at the event
- Consent to contact event only and/or ongoing (see below)

Some people may need to bring a carer, support worker, translator or other assistant. To ensure they also feel welcome, it is better to ask them to register for the event too. Extra tickets for carers/support workers should be allocated free of charge.

Some people may have a guide or assistance dog. Even if a venue does not normally allow dogs, it is a reasonable adjustment to allow a disabled person to bring their trained assistance dog with them. More information about welcoming people with assistance dogs is available from [Assistance Dogs UK](#).

Examples of consent questions

At the very least you need consent to contact people who register before and immediately after the event to share details with them and thank them for attending. You can include this statement in the registration form:

- **Consent 1 Event only**- “By registering to attend this event you consent to us holding your contact details for the purpose of contacting you about this event before and within 1 month of the event.
- **Consent 2 Full consent**- “CPRE would like to send you the latest news and information on our work, campaigns, fundraising, events and other ways you can support our vision for a thriving countryside. We hold and manage your details in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. We won’t share, sell or swap your information with other organisations for their own marketing purposes. You can [read our privacy policy](#) for more information.”

Pre-arrival information

At least two touch points with attendees are needed. The first is usually sent at the point when people register to attend, and the second within a week of the event. A reminder 24-48 hours before is always helpful too.

If the event programme is still subject to alterations when bookings open, it’s a good idea to send this to any attendees who registered early and update your booking platform if possible.

A timed agenda/outline for the event helps your attendees know what to expect and prepare anything they need to bring with them to do during the day. As well as the timetable for the day, this outline can provide information about:

- Travel to the venue, including public transport and if help with travel costs is available.
- A map of the site highlighting key information like where to meet and park.
- Blue badge parking and wheelchair accessible routes and facilities.
- Accessibility information that has been planned.
- Information about food and drinks.
- Contact information so people can reach you before the event if needed

There is more advice about what information to provide in [Scope’s Accessible Event Planning Toolkit](#).

All the speakers, activity leaders and helpers on the day will also need to know about these arrangements and any specific tasks or duties you will need their help with, in order that the event runs to plan. A pre-event briefing note and meeting with all those who will help on the day can be well worth the time and effort.

7. After the event

Some post-event tasks include:

- Thanking people for attending and share with them any details, links or contact details from any speakers during the day.
- Asking for feedback in a couple of different formats with the option to give it anonymously – an online form and a simple paper version with the same questions covers both bases.
- Asking volunteers, staff and any visiting leaders/speakers for their feedback too.

- Ensuring feedback is taken note of, potentially sharing a summary with the attendees.
- Have a debrief with those who helped organise and deliver the events to reflect on how the event went and what might be improved on next time.

Taking time to review the feedback and consider what changes you would make for the next event is really helpful. Making notes for next time and storing all your files and equipment securely will also make the next event easier to plan and deliver.

8. Useful external links

[All the Elements CiC](#) – guides for diversity in the UK outdoors

[Assistance Dogs UK](#) - guide and assistance dogs at venues

[Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport](#) – group transport

[Business Disability Forum](#) - accessible presentations

[EventBrite](#) - booking site

[Food Standards Agency](#) - catering at charity events

[National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) – guide to EDI

[National Lottery Good Causes](#) – travel funding

[Penny Rabiger/All the Elements](#) – organising an event

[Scope](#) - accessible events planning toolkit

[Scottish Borders Council](#) – community engagement toolkit

[South Downs NPA](#) - travel grant

[TryBooking](#) - booking site

[Unsplash](#) – royalty free photos

[Wildlife Trusts](#) – a space for everyone

9. Self-evaluation checklist

Acknowledgement: the following self-evaluation checklist is reproduced from the [Organising and event: a toolkit](#), written by Penny Rabiger, provided by All the Elements CiC.

	Description	Y/N	Next steps
1	Diverse speakers/content planned in from the outset		
2	There is a diverse programme with varied viewpoints and perspectives		

3	An external view by a critical partner has been given on the speaker lineup and content of event		
4	There is a balanced representation of speakers from across class, age, gender, race, heritage and so on		
5	There is a balanced representation of attendees from across different class, age, gender, race, heritage and so on		
6	The people planning the event come from a wide range of backgrounds with different views from each other they are comfortable to express		
7	Where there aren't diverse organisers, support has been offered from others with expertise to challenge the programme content/speaker line up		
8	There is physical space at the event for people with different needs e.g. prayer room, baby change facilities, access for people with mobility needs, choice of food and so on		
9	Panel members and speakers are clear on the purpose of the event and what is expected of them		
10	The event is advertised in a wide range of places, on and offline, to ensure people from all backgrounds have more chance to see it		
11	The cost of the event is set with thought about affordability for different groups		
12	There are subsidies, bursaries and free tickets available for groups that may struggle to attend		