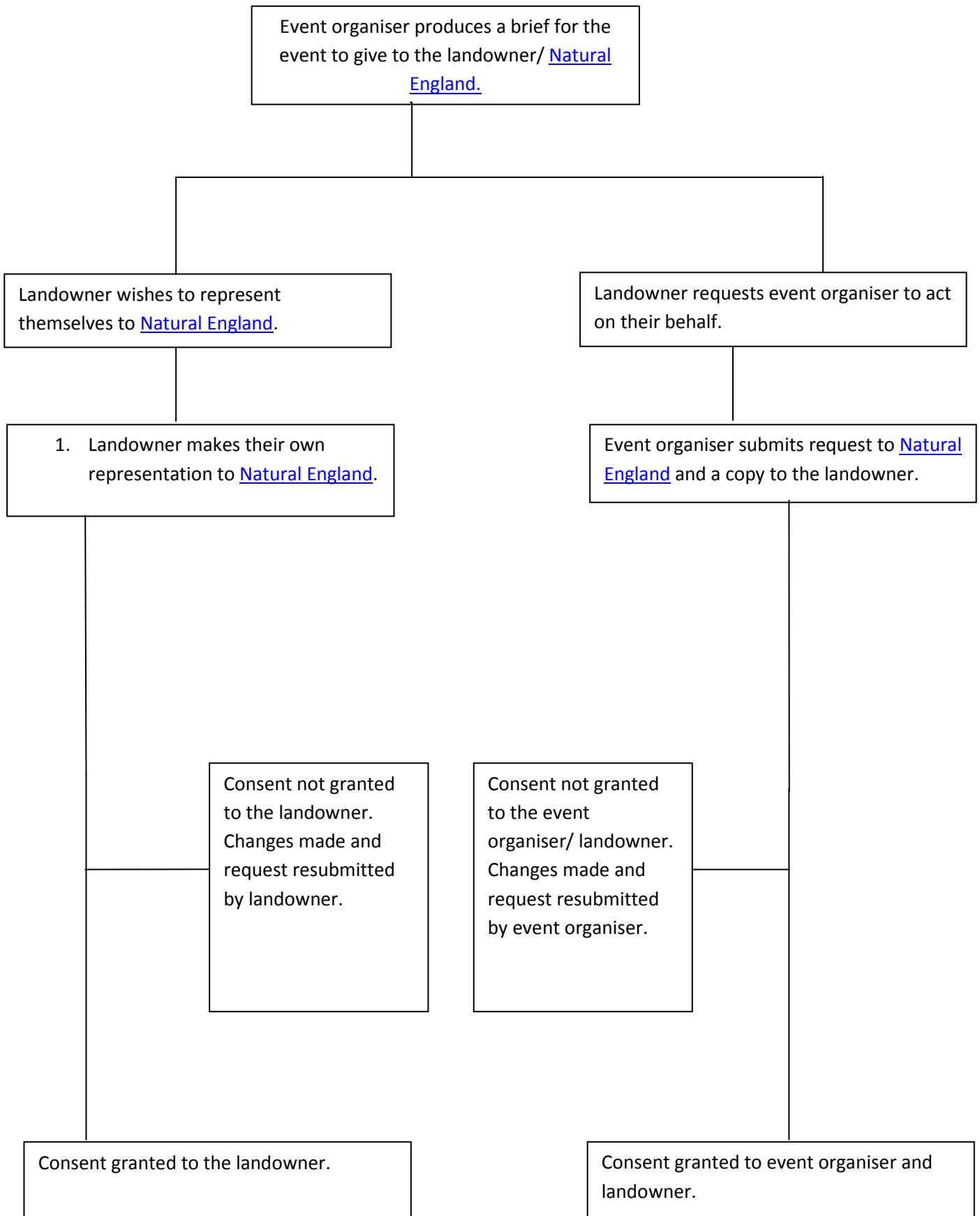


Process in Order to Apply for Consent for Group Event/Use on SSSI's (Site of Special Scientific Interest)



How to apply for consent for group activities on SSSI access land

It is important that before holding a group event on SSSI access land, that the owner of the land is notified. If this does not happen it can implicate large fines. If you need help in identifying the land owners contact The Forest of Bowland AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) office on 01200 448000.

It is a legal requirement for the landowner to be granted Natural England permission for an event to take place on their land. This is because some events/activities can be classed as a 'recreational or other activity likely to damage flora or fauna', which is an operation listed on what was the 'Operations likely to damage' (OLD) list (now ORNEC – 'Operations requiring Natural England Consent').

If the event goes ahead without consent and damage occurs there are two possible offences – the owner/occupier not gaining Natural England consent or third party reckless damage (where the owner/occupier did not give permission).

An objective of most groups wanting to use these rural landscapes for recreational activities would be to go and enjoy the surroundings there and leave not a trace of their passing.

These are not rules but suggestions of ways in which activities/events can be planned and organised to minimise the effects of the event on the environment. Much of the following is common sense and carried out already.

- **Get the Owner's Permission** - Establish who owns the land and contact the owners in good time to obtain their permission. Also consult tenants who manage the land on a day to day basis.
- **Consider Special Land Status** – Check whether your route or any part of it lies in a designated area such as a National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Park and if so contact relevant organisations to find out any restrictions or considerations.
- **Path Protection** – Slopes of more than 30% are the most vulnerable. Most erosion is caused by big groups descending.
- **If in doubt, consult** – If there is any doubt as to the vulnerability or condition of the proposed route, consult the relevant organisations.
- **Use Existing Paths** – If there is a path in existence, use it! Try to follow them as closely as possible, adhering to any erosion control instructions. Avoid creating new paths.
- **Pay Attention to Steep Slopes** – Avoid steep, bare, very wet slopes and scree runs, particularly if alternative routes exist and especially on descent runs.
- **Consider Ground Conditions** – In sensitive areas consider alternative areas when thawing snow, heavy frost or excessive rain have softened the ground.
- **Boundary Protection** – Limit wall and fence crossings to specific locations.
- **Numbers** – Decide whether it is necessary to limit the numbers at the event in order to reduce/ limit the damage caused.
- **Dates** – Avoid coinciding with other events on the same ground on the same day and take into consideration ground nesting season for birds and also the shooting season.
- **Wildlife Habitats** – Consult locally about areas of sensitivity as certain type of habitat may be particularly vulnerable to damage.
- **Farm Livestock** – Get in touch in advance with the landowners and tenant farmers regarding sensitive stock, stock movements and if necessary, plan temporary stock protection from the route.
- **Dogs** – The CroW Act does not permit dogs in the new access areas except on a lead on an existing right of way.
- **Finally** – On the day of the event, participants may forget to follow these instructions so organisers must take steps to ensure that plans are laid to protect the environment are effective on the day.