

CONISTON 14- A Sustainable, Community-Organised Road Race.

The Coniston 14 Road Race was established in 1982 as a community organised race with support from the Burlington Slate Company. It is a 14 mile road race around Conistonwater and is claimed to be one of the most picturesque courses in Britain. It soon gained national recognition as a popular race for both club and fun runners and is now the largest event in Coniston's calendar raising some £20,000 each year for local clubs, charities and good causes. It is organised by a small, enthusiastic committee and supported by about 100 local volunteers on the day of the race. The committee are keen to encourage the economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of the race and believe it presents a case study of good practice:

- The race is planned for a Saturday in March, outside the main holiday season.
- The aim is not to maximise numbers but to run a successful community event. The committee has agreed that the race should not exceed 1800 runners, a comfortable carrying capacity for the village.
- The venue is John Ruskin School which has ample off-road parking and has a member of staff on the Coniston 14 Committee.
- The school, through their PTA, provide catering- sandwiches, cakes and drinks for the race and the takings from this and the parking go into school funds.
- Many runners and their families stay in B&Bs, self-catering cottages and hotels in the village for the weekend and buy goods and services in local shops.
- The race uses electronic timing and a website for information which reduces the amount of paper and postage.
- Each runner receives a slate coaster and there are slate prizes made by a Coniston business.
- There are several small, local sponsors for the event who provide extra funds and prizes.
- A local jazz band plays on site during the race.
- The committee have dramatically reduced the use of plastic over recent races. Tap water and recyclable paper cups are used at the start and finish and as an alternative to plastic bottled water at the water stations.

- Bins are available near each water station and runners encouraged to use them. Cups and bottles are collected immediately after the race and put into recycling bins provided by South Lakeland Council.
- A Presentation Evening takes place in the Coniston Sports and Social Centre each June when some 35 local organisations and charities are given donations. Major donations are given to the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team, First Responders, The Coniston Care Scheme, the local hospice and to maintain the community outdoor swimming pool. Some village organisations would not exist without financial support.
- The Committee has a review meeting after the race and receives feedback from runners via the Runners' World website.
- Information on car sharing for the 2013 Race will be put on our new website. Many club runners already share transport and other runners come by car with their families who have a day out or weekend in Coniston. Information on coach parking will also be given to clubs and runners.
- The Committee will also consider a donation to the "Fix the Fells" project in 2013.

Geoff Cooper

Race co-ordinator.