

TRAILS, ACCESS AND VOLUNTEERING

Summary: To review the progress of trails, access and volunteering activity

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee notes the report

Report by: Rebecca Jones, Access and Volunteers Lead

ACTIVITY IN THE PERIOD

1. **Bathscapes** - Nicole Daw is leading a series of guided walks along the Circuit of Bath route at weekends across the summer. Four linear walks of between 4.25 and 8 miles along the Circuit of Bath route are now available on the website at [Circuit of Bath Walks - CNL](#) and the Bathscape website at [Circuit of Bath Walks - Bathscapes](#)

Nicole has identified the additional 18 walks in and around Bath that target a variety of audiences and is working to create mapping and an online resource for these routes to be added to the website. Further practical improvement works are due to be completed by contractors over the summer 2022.
2. **Guided Walks** - The Cotswold Wardens have led a recent walk on 9 May around Cirencester with the Friendship Café in Gloucester and a further four walks are planned for summer / autumn 2022, together with a session with the group on map reading to support the maps and walking poles that they received as part of the successful Caring for the Cotswolds bid.
3. **Additional funding for Cotswold Way** – The additional funded projects have now been completed and the £75,000 will be claimed through the end of year Cotswold Way claim to Natural England.
4. **Cotswold Way** – The end of year report and grant claim will be submitted to Natural England by 31 May and the National Trail has received a grant offer at a flatline budget figure of £63,929 (budget includes staff costs, hosting costs as well as project funds). Becky attended the National Trails Forum 10-12 May, hosted by the Pennine Way Bridleway and it proved an excellent opportunity to share ideas and project updates. The Cotswold Way may be hosting the event in 2023. Work on the Cotswold Way primary school education resource is underway. It is a teacher resource for use on school whiteboards with animation to engage the younger audience.
5. **The Cotswold Way Association** - continues to support work along the Trail and has approved grant funding for the purchase of waymark posts (£6,750), contribution towards the educational resource (£2,000) and improvements to drainage and surfacing at Old Sodbury Church (£293).

The CWA has launched its *“Cotswold Way Companion: an insider guide”*, there are both eBook and paperback editions and its proceeds - the eBook will retail at £12.90 and the paperback at £15.90 - will be going towards the Trail’s upkeep and improvement. To maximise these proceeds, the CWA website will be the main point of sale. To buy copies, just go to www.cotswoldwayassociation.org.uk and click on ‘Shop’ followed by ‘The Cotswold Way Companion’.

6. **People counters** - The three people counters installed in December are continuing to record the latest total footfall figures from December 2021 to 16 May for Dyrham (3,400), Coaley (7,900) and Broadway Hill (58,952).
7. **New routes in Bourton on the Water** – The PDFs have been created with maps and descriptions to support new walkers. The waymark discs are due to be installed this month. Initial Historic England consent for the installation of easy access gates along the Greystones route has finally been given but we need to wait for the formal paperwork before dates for the Wardens to install the gates in the presence of an archaeologist can be agreed. A launch date will be set as soon as the gates are installed.
8. **The new Charitable Incorporated Organisation for National Trails** - National Trails UK has now recruited nine Trustees, leaving a few places vacant to try and attract Trustees from a more diverse background

The vision of the charity is *“to ensure the National Trails flourish as world-class long-distance routes connecting people with our finest landscapes”* and its charitable purposes are:

- To promote and protect the health and well-being of the public by securing the protection, improvement and conservation of the various National Trails in the UK, in particular, but not exclusively by promoting public access to the National Trails and encouraging people to walk, ride and take exercise using the National Trails and to access and enjoy the landscapes through which they pass;
- Advance the education of the public in relation to the National Trails, their history and heritage, the communities linked with them and the physical and natural environment in which they are situated, in particular but not exclusively by the provision of arts and heritage engagement activities; and
- Promote for the benefit of the public, and to advance the education of the public in, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment where this relates to the network of National Trails and the landscapes through which they run.

9. **Volunteer Policy**

A volunteer policy and associated volunteer’s handbook are currently being drafted. The CNL Board does not currently have a policy for volunteering and it is important that we show support for the many volunteers that work on behalf of the CNL and formalise this relationship.

DECISIONS REQUIRED - none

NEXT STEPS

- Agreeing 2022/ 23 draft budget (total annual grant £63,929)
- Completion of the Completion of Bourton walks project
- Volunteering Policy to be completed for adoption by the Board in June 2022.

SUPPORTING PAPERS - none

MEMBERS OF THE COTSWOLD TRAILS AND ACCESS PARTNERSHIP (CTAP)

- Becky Jones, CNL Access and Volunteers Lead
- Ed Macalister-Smith, Board Member and Chair
- Tess Jackson, Natural England
- Margaret Reid, Head Warden
- Mike Cripps, Deputy Head Warden
- John Bartram, Chair Cotswold Way Association
- Michele Holden, Gloucestershire Ramblers
- Alan Bentley, Gloucestershire Rights of Way
- Cheryl Hannan, BANES Rights of Way
- Fiona Argyll, Worcestershire Rights of Way
- Lindsay Purdie and Karen Hayes, South Gloucestershire Rights of Way
- Sally Graff, Cotswold Tourism

MEMBERS OF THE WARDEN'S EXECUTIVE

- Head and Deputy Warden
- Chairs of all five districts
- Access and Volunteers Lead

MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- One CTAP meeting took place on 14 March and the next meeting is due on 26 May.
- The Cotswold Wardens held an Executive meeting on 28 February and the next meeting takes place on 23 May.

MAY 2022