

TRAILS, ACCESS AND VOLUNTEERING

Summary: To report on key activity during the period

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee notes the report

Report by: Rebecca Jones, Access and Volunteers Lead

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

- CTAP meeting held on 4 October 2022, with the next virtual meeting due on 7 February 2023 and in person meeting on 25 April 2023.
- The Cotswold Wardens held an executive meeting on 21 November 2022 and the next is due on 20 February 2023

ACTIVITY IN THE PERIOD**1. Cotswold Way National Trail**

- Additional uplift funding of £12, 240 and a further £30,000 was made available by Natural England in November, in addition to the core grant of £63,929. The projects need to be completed by year-end and require 25% match funding (as is the case with the core grant). Agreed projects that have secured local authority match funding include further surface improvements at Leckhampton, Broadway Hill, Painswick and Lansdown.
- CTAP met on 4 October at Broadway Tower to look at a section of the Trail with the highest visitor footfall and to hear from the owner of Broadway Tower, Annette Gorton.
- Nicole has successfully piloted the Cotswold Way teacher resource at two schools and awaiting final sign off with the designer for the roll out across wider schools along the Trail.
- A meeting was held with a new contact for the Dyson Estate to discuss a proposed permissive route at Beacon Lane plantation, and a further meeting to look at ideas in more detail is being held on 19 January.
- The CNL team greatly appreciates the ongoing and increasing support from the Cotswold Way Association and is working with them and Natural England to agree a sub licence for the Cotswold Way Trail logo to support the sale of merchandise to raise funds for the Trail.

- The three people counters installed in December 2021 are continuing to record the latest total footfall figures, from December 2021 to December 2022:
 - Dyrham (6,240); Coaley (18,320); Broadway Hill (148,022)
 - The Cotswolds VIP pylon undergrounding project is progressing. The National Grid held a workshop on 15 October, hosted by CTAP, to update partners on the proposals and provide an opportunity for questions about the planned work at Cleeve Common and along the Cotswold Way from Postlip to Dowdeswell. Further meetings will be held as the proposals progress to ensure there is limited disruption to access in the area and as more details on community funding becomes available.
- 2. "Access for All" funding**
- An online meeting was held on 6 October, attended by a wide range of key partner organisations involved with access in the Cotswolds. Partners were informed of details for the scheme and invited to submit applications for funding by October
 - 20 project ideas were submitted to the value of £486,000. Due to the tight time scale, Andy and Becky reviewed the projects and offered funding to 16 projects totalling £220,997.
 - Following a presentation to the Wellbeing and Inclusion working group, members of the group volunteered to mentor projects in their area to support them and keep informed on progress for completion.
 - Two vehicles were purchased to support the East and Avon/South volunteer areas. The vehicles are suitable for transporting volunteers and tools and equipment to the often remote and difficult to access sites worked on by the Cotswold Wardens.
- 3. Bathscapes**
- Nicole Daw led a series of walks for the Bathscape Walking Festival (10-25 September) <https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/bathscape-walking-festival-4/>
 - The new Circuit of Bath Volunteer Rangers are now active in their new roles and being supported by Nicole and the Cotswold Wardens.
 - Nicole creating connections with a range of communities in Bath, including MIND.
 - Nicole is co-ordinating the mobility scooter route project at Lansdown.
- 4. Bourton-on-the-Water (creation of two short walks)**
- A low-key launch event to recognise the partnership working and voluntary effort was held on 15 September at Greystones Farm Nature Reserve.
 - The self-guided walk PDFs are now available on the CNL website at <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Bourton-Farm-Walk-1-v7.pdf> , <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Bourton-Walk-4-crossings-CNL-v8.pdf> and copies available at the local tourist office in Bourton.
- 5. Volunteering**
- The annual Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Conference for 2023 will be held on 9 June at the RAU, Cirencester with the theme of woodlands and trees in the Cotswolds.
 - The Cotswold Wardens Constitution, written in 2005, is looking to be finalised following the February Wardens Executive.
 - AGMS will be held in March to elect new committee and Head and Deputy Head Warden
 - A review will begin into risk assessments and safe working practices for volunteers with an initial discussion to be held in February.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- None

JANUARY 2023