

## 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
- Margaret Reid, Chair and Board Member
- Tess Jackson, Natural England
- Mike Cripps, Head Voluntary Warden
- John Bartram, Chair Cotswold Way Association
- Michele Holden, Gloucestershire Ramblers
- Nicola Chidley, Gloucestershire Rights of Way
- Fiona Argyll, Worcestershire Rights of Way
- Karen Hayes, South Gloucestershire Rights of Way
- Richard Holmes, Gloucestershire Access Forum
- Sally Graff, Cotswold Tourism

### MEMBERS OF THE WARDEN'S EXECUTIVE

- Head and Deputy Warden – Mike Cripps and Sarah West
- Chairs of all five districts
- Access and Volunteers Lead, CEO, Trails and Access Officer

### MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- CTAP meeting held 8 May 2024 at Cold Ashton Village Hall with a walk in the afternoon. The next CTAP is due to be held on 16 October 2024.
- Wardens Executive Meeting held on 19 February 2024. The next meeting is due to be held at Greystones on 21 May 2024.

### ACTIVITY IN THE PERIOD

#### 1. Cotswold Way National Trail

- Additional funding for the purchase of oak signposts, stream crossing at Cold Ashton and surface improvements in Sudeley totalling £26,022 was provided and work/ purchased completed by year-end.
- National Trails UK provided additional funding in February through the National Landscapes Partnership totalling £19685.66 with work completed/ purchased by year-end. Projects and equipment included the purchase of tools and mowers for maintaining the Trail, a 360degree camera for recording accessible routes for the website, surfacing at Kings Stanley, Radar gates at Dovers Hill, bridge at Stanton.
- Projects completed with the core grant included taking the Trail off the road and onto the verge at Kingcombe Lane, Chipping Campden; surfacing at Stanton and further surfacing work along the Lansdown mobility route. The National Trust completed surface improvements at Standish Woods, Cheltenham Borough completed the series of off-road mobility scooter routes at Lansdown and BANES completed some surface improvements at Weston, Bath.
- The CNL team greatly appreciates the ongoing and increasing support from the Cotswold Way Association who funded work at Stanton and Kingcombe Lane.

- Ramblers Worldwide Outdoor Trust have funded £689 for the purchase of Cotswold Way waymarkers.
- We are working with National Trails UK (the new umbrella charity supporting the Trails) to arrange a Cotswolds based conference, to celebrate 75 years of National Trails and showcase Trails and raise awareness amongst funders and wider networks. The conference will be held at the Leonardo Hotel in Cheltenham on 16 May 2024.
- The Cotswold Way will also be hosting the annual Trail Officers event on 17 May 2024 at Cleve Hill.

**2. Removing Barriers (Access for All) funding**

- Additional removing Barriers funding of £53,908.45 was made available for 2023/24 and was allocated to Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust for access improvement at Greystones Farm including pedestrian gates and surfacing, a bug hotel and pond close to the roundhouse created for school children with limited mobility; a vehicle for wardens in the north area to transport equipment to site and transport volunteers to site who would otherwise not have transport available; and completion of accessibility work on the CNL website.
- Projects submissions have now been received, reviewed and offers are ready to go out as soon as the agreement is signed with DEFRA for the 2024/25 allocation of £254,381. Project funding has been allocated to a variety of partners including the Woodland Trust, National Trust, Radway Parish Council, Stroud Valleys Project, Beckford's Tower, Strubditch Farm and Wiltshire County Council.

**3. Bathscape**

- The final claim for the Bathscapes access project was submitted for £13,061, with a match funding for our Cotswold Way off road mobility scooter route at Lansdown for £6,930.
- We continue to work well with the project, with support for the walking festival and the delivery of a contract for map skills training this year.

**4. Volunteering**

- The Cotswold Wardens achieved an outstanding 51,351 hours during 2023/24. These figures include leading 319 free guided walks for 4,173 participants; planting 1433 trees; giving 55 talks about the wardens and the CNL; installing or repairing 146 gates and clearing 77,133 m of paths and bridleways. Wardens work in partnership with a wide range of organisations and landowners including Butterfly Conservation, all the local County Councils, parish councils, Wychwood Forest Trust and Wessex Water.
- The 2024 annual Volunteers Conference will be held on Friday 14 June at the RAU, with the theme of Rivers and Waterways. These conferences act as an informal training day with afternoon site visits and more importantly, as a thank you in recognition of their amazing achievements.

**DECISIONS REQUIRED**

- None

MAY 2024