

A COTSWOLDS VISION: A NATIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR EVERYONE

A time of opportunity

The Cotswolds lifts our hearts and spirits; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us.

As we begin to slowly recover from the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, there has never been a time when we are so aware of the condition of our natural world, and its relationship to us and our own wellbeing. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, recovery, wellbeing, and inclusion.

The picture is not perfect...

Yet, all is not right: we are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Events in 2020 also highlighted ongoing social and economic inequalities. Here in the Cotswolds, these concerns are just as real for us too, and we face significant challenges: climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – and in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourages a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds.

What can we do, and how should we do it?

To address these issues and begin to make improvements, we need to challenge ourselves – of that, there is no doubt. We mustn't fall into the trap of complacency, or afford ourselves the luxury of adhering rigidly to past beliefs – this will only hold us back, and limit how much positive change we can introduce.

Instead, we need to embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance the landscape, and serve the people who are here. We will work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact. We will need to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We will need to be energetic and proactive. We will need to be bold, brave, and confident. Above all, we will need to acknowledge that we can't do it all alone – we want to work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all of us, and nature.

The future should be bright

The treasured landscapes which make the Cotswolds nationally and internationally important are diverse in character, as are the people who live, work, and visit here. There is no one size fits all, nor a crystal ball, for the future – but we have a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds, and to work with each other to harness our dedication and expertise to forge the future of the Cotswolds.

This place, the Cotswolds National Landscape, is for everyone, from all walks of life. In sharing it and looking after it, we will continue to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature. We will work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure. Our communities should be connected and diverse, but self-sustaining. Visitors should feel welcome to enjoy being here, confident about access, and motivated to give something back to help look after this landscape. This should be a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other. The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.