

## **The work of the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens**

There are c.400 members of the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, men & women, spread across five Districts of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They are the volunteer arm of the Cotswolds Conservation Board and since 1968 their brief has been to enhance and encourage enjoyment of the Cotswolds.

Cotswold Wardens can assist landowners and councils in the following ways:

Wardens patrol footpaths and bridleways to advise the Public Rights of Way officers of problem areas. They may also identify local features in need of restoration. Cotswold wardens work closely with all PROW teams.

They mobilise trained, equipped, & insured work parties to clear blocked paths, stiles and stone walls, in co-operation with landowners. Where required, wardens install signage, kissing gates, stiles, steps and footbridges. Work parties also undertake other appropriate community projects, such as hedge-laying, tree planting, dry stone walling, and the conservation of unimproved limestone grassland, meadows, and broadleaved woodlands.

Cotswold Wardens organise and lead a full programme of free guided walks throughout the year. These are published in the *Cotswold Lion and "Stroud News & Journal*. These walks can benefit local businesses and services and usually involve a pub or café.

They help with school assemblies and days out exploring the Cotswolds.

Wardens establish a stall at shows and give talks promoting the value of the Cotswolds.

Their labour is entirely free of charge and they donate annually c. 50,000 man hours to activities. However, they welcome voluntary contributions from ramblers enjoying their guided walks. All donations go to the "Cotswold Conservation Board Countryside Fund." Such funds are used to source materials for projects endorsed by Wardens in order to conserve and enhance the Cotswolds, or to promote understanding and enjoyment of them.

If you would like to find out more about their services, please contact [jagchg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jagchg@yahoo.co.uk) . He is a warden and also a parish councillor at King's Stanley. Further information on the Cotswolds AONB, guided walks, and Cotswold Voluntary Wardens can be found on [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/).