



Farming in Protected Landscapes: Guidance for Applicants

Linking your project to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan

This document is intended to help grant applicants develop project proposals that clearly support the purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape
2. To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape

This is because all projects funded via the Farming in Protected Landscapes must:

1. Support at least one of the programme outcomes which apply to all protected landscapes in England, under the themes of climate, nature, people and place, **and**
2. Deliver these outcomes in ways that also support the aims and objectives of each protected landscape's management plan.

Separate sections are provided in the grant application form for you to explain how your project delivers against both points. The themed outcomes correspond neatly with our local ones, so it shouldn't be too difficult to develop proposals that satisfy both requirements and clearly demonstrate why a project is a good fit for the Cotswolds.

How to use this document

Each of the following pages explores one of the programme themes: climate, nature, people and place. Under each theme we have listed the supported outcomes which apply to all protected landscapes. Projects must support at least one outcome from one of these themes.

We have then listed the corresponding outcomes and policies which can be found in Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan. Eligible projects will demonstrate how they support at least one of these outcomes **and** the overarching purposes of the management plan.

Lastly, we have listed a few examples of suitable projects. These are by no means exhaustive or prescriptive; they simply illustrate some potential options that would work well in the Cotswolds. Please feel free to pitch anything you think may be eligible, and aim to achieve as much as you can.

In addition to using this document and referring to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25 for further details, we strongly advise grant applicants to consult any other available sources of relevant advice, information and guidance, including:

- [Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines](#) - use this to inform project design and specifications for different landscape character areas
- [Position Statements](#) - check these to see if we have published any relevant to your project

Please also contact us for advice and guidance before submitting an application. Our Farming Engagement Officers are here to support applicants and help them develop good proposals - we want people to get in touch. Email farming@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk or call Scott Brown on 07841 663 601.

Climate

Supported outcomes for all protected landscapes

- More carbon is stored and/or sequestered
- Flood risk has been reduced
- Better understanding among farmers, land managers and the public as to what different habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage and reduced carbon emissions
- The landscape is more resilient to climate change

Corresponding outcomes and policies in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25

Outcome 1 (Climate Change)	The National Landscape is a place that is mitigating and adapting to climate change, and has a clearly defined pathway towards Net Zero emissions.
Outcome 2 (Natural and Cultural Capital and Ecosystem Services)	The natural and cultural capital assets of the National Landscape - and the services which they provide – are better understood, conserved and enhanced.
Policy CC1.2: Mitigation	Climate change mitigation including the sequestration of carbon should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management, and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape
Policy CC2.3: Adaptation	Climate change adaptation should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms, in the National Landscape.
Policy CC4: Soils	<p>1. Soil degradation should be halted and reversed by managing soils in a way that: (i) increases organic content, water retention and carbon sequestration; and (ii) minimises erosion, water pollution and compaction.</p> <p>2. Soil management should remain a key component of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.</p>
Policy CC5: Water	Water resources should be carefully managed and conserved to: improve water quality; ensure adequate aquifer recharge; ensure adequate river flows; and contribute to natural flood management systems.

Examples of suitable local projects

- Producing a Natural and Cultural Capital Assessment for a group of farms, which is used to create a set of linked Whole Farm Plans.
- Purchasing new drilling equipment to under-sow crops with grass or cover crops.
- Reverting arable land on the floodplain to pasture, or establishing wide floristically rich margins along the watercourse where this is not feasible.
- Introducing herb-rich leys and buying electric fencing to facilitate mob grazing.
- Working with the Environment Agency and Catchment Partnership, a group of farmers collaborate on a series of NFM interventions appropriate to the landscape including leaky dams, low bunds, restoring meanders, tree planting and wetland creation.

- Buying a toothed roller for a farmer group to de-compact pasture and increase permeability.
- Undertaking a carbon audit to understand a farm's carbon footprint and begin implementing plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Nature

Supported outcomes for all protected landscapes

- There is a greater area of wildlife rich habitat
- There is greater connectivity between habitats
- Existing habitat is better managed for biodiversity
- There is an increase in biodiversity

Corresponding outcomes and policies in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25

Outcome 2 (Natural and Cultural Capital and Ecosystem Services)	The natural and cultural capital assets of the National Landscape - and the services which they provide – are better understood, conserved and enhanced.
Outcome 9 (Biodiversity)	There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature - conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of distinctly Cotswolds habitats and species.
Outcome 10 (Rural Land Management)	Land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the National Landscape whilst balancing the competing pressures of recovering nature, tackling climate change, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.

Examples of suitable local projects

- Gathering data and evidence to help inform conservation and farming practice.
- Creating new wildflower rich grasslands by over-sowing pasture and reverting an area of arable with locally collected wildflower seed, connecting three unimproved grasslands, including an SSSI.
- Establishing a collaborative extensive grazing system with a newly set-up local livestock business supported with a mobile crush, electric fencing and new water supply; some of the meat is sold locally through a box scheme.
- Extending an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland close to a river with an area of woodland creation grading into wood pasture with areas of scrub; reverting arable land on the floodplain to meadows and linking new wetlands to the river by a series of created and renovated backwaters.
- A group of farmers work with an advisor to assess the condition of habitats on their landholdings; they use the evidence gained to develop land management plans and begin a programme of joined-up management interventions, supported by a local conservation charity, to enhance biodiversity.

People

Supported outcomes for all protected landscapes

- There are more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape.
- There are more opportunities for more diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape.
- There is greater public engagement in land management, for example through volunteering.

Corresponding outcomes and policies in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25

Outcome 10 (Rural Land Management)	Land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the National Landscape whilst balancing the competing pressures of recovering nature, tackling climate change, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.
Outcome 12 (Health and Wellbeing)	The National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental and physical wellbeing of those who experience it.
Outcome 13 (Access and Recreation)	The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.
Outcome 14 (Sustainable Tourism)	Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

Examples of suitable local projects

- Replacing stiles with gates on public footpaths, for easier access.
- Creating new permissive rights of way.
- Creating a series of short self-guided farm trails exploring different aspects of the landscape, farming and food production; improving an old hard-standing to provide car parking and renovating the old dairy building to provide an indoor teaching space with toilets and additional hand washing facilities.
- Working with the Cotswold Wardens, a group of neighbouring farms create disability access routes for wheelchair users and a longer route for all-terrain mobility scooters by upgrading existing public rights of way with permissive connections.
- A project engaging with local care homes and adult learning centres reconnects elderly people and people with learning difficulties with their landscape through short walks and sensory activities in nature; an area of arable land next to the farm is 'converted' to community supported agriculture growing fruit and vegetables supported by a horticultural apprenticeship working with the Adult Learning Centre and care home.

Place

Supported outcomes for all protected landscapes

- The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced.
- Historic structures and features are conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively.
- There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy.

Corresponding outcomes and policies in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-25

Outcome 4 (Landscape)	The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make
Outcome 5 (Local Distinctiveness)	In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.
Outcome 7 (Dark Skies)	Fewer areas of the National Landscape are affected by light pollution.
Outcome 8 (Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage)	The historic environment and cultural heritage of the National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.
Outcome 10 (Rural Land Management)	Land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the National Landscape whilst balancing the competing pressures of recovering nature, tackling climate change, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.
Outcome 14 (Sustainable Tourism)	Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape
Policy CC8: Working in Partnership	Communities and businesses within and around the Cotswolds National Landscape should be encouraged to value and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape and to contribute to the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation

Examples of suitable local projects

- A locally branded food initiative that promotes the links between the product and the landscape in which it is produced.
- Bringing an Iron Age Hillfort - close to a right of way and at risk from rabbits and scrub - into good condition; a local archaeology group undertakes a study of the site through a community archaeology project and interprets the location's historic significance.
- Restoring a stone-built sheep wash adjacent to a road by clearing overgrowth and repairing stonework, then erecting an interpretation board.
- A group of farmers collaborate with their local community to reduce the impact of artificial light by retrofitting yard lights, security lights and lambing shed lights with dark sky friendly lighting and shielding; star gazing events are set up with the local Astronomical Society increasing the occupancy of farm holiday cottages and B&Bs; an application is made to the IDA to become recognised as a Dark Sky Community.

Appendix A: The Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape

The Cotswolds are a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological¹ and ecological features. The special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB are:

1. The unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material.
2. The Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape.
3. The high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately arable landscape with commons, ‘big’ skies and long-distance views.
4. River valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames, with high-quality water.
5. Distinctive dry stone walls.
6. Flower-rich grasslands, particularly limestone grasslands.
7. Ancient broadleaved woodland, particularly along the crest of the escarpment.
8. Variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness.
9. The tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution.
10. Extensive dark sky areas.
11. Distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular with high architectural quality and integrity.
12. An accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail.
13. Significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations dating back 6,000 years, including Neolithic stone monuments, ancient drove roads, Iron Age forts, Roman villas, ridge and furrow fields, medieval wool churches and country estates and parks.
14. A vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, famous composers and authors and traditional events such as the Cotswolds Olympics, cheese rolling and woolsack races.

¹ Geomorphology is the physical features of an area, strongly influenced by geology.

Appendix B: Cotswolds National Landscape Priority habitats and species

This list of priority habitats and species for the Cotswolds National Landscape is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

The habitats and species listed below are considered to be: (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and / or (ii) those for which the Cotswolds AONB is considered to a stronghold of those particular habitats or species.

There are other priority habitats and species within the AONB, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above. Habitats with an asterisk (*) are not on the NERC Act list but have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Habitats	Species
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Farmland birds, such as skylark, lapwing and corn bunting
Lowland beech and yew woodland	Pasqueflower
Wood pasture, parkland and veteran trees and large areas of tree, scrub and grassland mosaic.	Pearl-bordered fritillary
Lowland wildflower rich calcareous grasslands and neutral grasslands	Arable plants
Flushes, streams and rivers	Juniper
Arable field margins important for birds and plant species	Cotswold pennycress
Hedgerows	Bats
Common box woodland	Dormouse
Areas important for bats ('batscapes')*	Water vole
H7720 petrifying springs with tufa formation (Crataneurion)*	Brown hare
	Limestone grassland butterflies
	Marsh fritillary
	Violet click beetle
	White clawed crayfish
	Native brown trout
	Bath asparagus*
	Common box*
	Rockrose pot beetle
	Rugged oil beetle
	Ancient woodland ground flora, such as helleborines and angular Solomon seal.
	Ancient grassland flora such as musk and fly orchid.

Appendix C - A Cotswolds Vision: A National Landscape for Everyone

A time of opportunity

The Cotswolds is good for us; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us. In recent years we have been reminded of the intrinsic relationship between ourselves and the natural world – and the condition it is in. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, regeneration, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Challenges lie ahead

We are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Our awareness of ongoing social and economic inequalities is heightened. In the Cotswolds, these concerns are 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 – in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourage 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. We must avoid complacency, and not adhere doggedly to past beliefs – this will 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 natural beauty, 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' 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 the 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.