

### Covid-19 Coronavirus - Ramblers Activities can begin again

South Cotswold with some Social Distancing



Although Government is allowing led walks again, the ongoing presence of Covid-19 means that many walkers and leaders are still wary. Most people aged 50+ have had their second vaccination but with new variants coming through, the case figures appear to be on the rise again across the country. Many Ramblers are still walking on their own or with a small group of friends. Responses continue to be made to footpath issues and planning applications. Indoor meetings may be allowed in upcoming months.

### Cotswold Way Celebration Saturday 11th – Sunday 19th September



Ramblers, Cotswold Wardens, the Cotswold Way Association & the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly the AONB) are organising a series of events. A Baton relay of 10 - 12 mile walks begins on Sat 11th as part of the Bathscape walking festival. Many Ramblers Groups are organising walks along the trail during the week. Events culminate lunchtime Sun 19th at the Marker Stone at Chipping Campden with Ramblers past chair Kate Ashbrook. Various speakers follow at the school including Ramblers President Stuart Maconie. Robert Welch is producing a celebratory Chopping Board in the shape of the Way.

#### Diary Dates

Thu 8th July 7:30pm  
Zoom -Using Maps

Mon 30th Aug all day  
Winchcombe Country  
Show - See our stand

Sat 11 - Sun 19 Sept  
Walking Together Event  
Cotswold Way Celebration

Gloucestershire Ramblers  
Area Council Meetings

Thu 22 Jul 7:30pm Zoom  
(Meeting inc. CW50+)

Wed 22 Sep 7:30pm  
(End of year Meeting)

Wed 24 Nov 7:30pm  
(possible post year end)

Find us in Meetup  
and in Facebook



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## **Wadfield - Humblebee Path, Winchcombe**



The image above courtesy of Google Earth shows the way a well drained track near Winchcombe has been covered in soil. It's meant that for much of the year the path has turned into a quagmire and can become largely impassable. Local people raised a petition that is gaining nearly 3,000 signatures.  
<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-our-ruined-right-of-way-in-winchcombe>

Cleeve Group is collecting evidence from users to support a submission to GCC, which it is hoped will secure the path for the future and prevent further harm to this historic route. If you remember walking the path during the last 20 years and would like to help, please contact [footpaths@cleeveramblers.info](mailto:footpaths@cleeveramblers.info)

Meanwhile if you find crops growing across a footpath and the route has not been cleared or marked, please report the location via Pathwatch, or directly to the County Council GCC at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/public-rights-of-way/>

### **Planning and Rights of Way**

Several large scale housing developments are in early planning or phased construction stages around the county including areas around Whitminster, Whaddon near Gloucester, Twigworth, Sharpness and Ashchurch.

Ramblers are reviewing proposals and responding with comments to try to protect historic footpaths. DEFRA and the National Planning Policy Framework seek to ensure that green corridors are kept in place so that enjoyment and health benefits of walking are readily available in these new communities.

If you find plans or a blocked path please let us know at [countryside@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk](mailto:countryside@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk)



### **A417 Missing Link at the Air Balloon**

Highways England are now ready to submit their proposals to the Planning Inspectorate. Although it's claimed the scheme is landscape led and provides recreational enhancement, it closes or reduces access to a number of paths, tracks and local roads and amenities such as the Air Balloon and possibly Barrow Wake car park. Our comments will be included as part of a Statement of Common Ground. The planning process may lead to further updates and their aim now is to complete the road by 2026.

## **Don't Lose your Way!**

Continuing the theme from the February newsletter here is another Ordnance Survey map snippet highlighting an unmarked way. A number of footpaths meet a white road.

A Ramblers campaign, many years ago, led to access rights along white roads being shown with green dots. This one may have been missed. Without access along the white road, paths can become dead ends.

The right angle bend in the yellow road may also be of interest. In the past would there have been a continuation one way or another?



We're continuing to build a picture of Lost Ways, using various records and working with the County Council. If you're interested in maps, looking for missing paths and feel you can help please contact us at [DLYW@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk](mailto:DLYW@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk) or GRNews via the email address on this newsletter.

## **Basic Use of Online Maps - Thursday 8th July 7:30pm via Zoom.**

If you'd like to know more about use of Pathwatch, NMC-Ramblers or National Library of Scotland maps and would like to join in, please email [Maps@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk](mailto:Maps@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk) for a zoom link on the day.

## **Some Group and Area News**

There are seven Ramblers Groups within the Gloucestershire Ramblers Area :- Cirencester, Forest of Dean, South Cotswold, Gloucester, Cleeve, North Cotswold and Gloucestershire Walking Group. GWG has a 20-30s sub-group. A number of Affiliated Organisations are also represented at our Area Council meetings. Some 60 Ramblers Areas join together to form the Ramblers Association.

### **South Cotswold Ramblers**

When Ramblers Central Office let us know that we could walk in groups of 30 as restrictions eased we decided to limit our numbers to 10 which was the same rule as for the general public. We felt that if a large group was seen walking through a small community they may not be too happy. Again when the restrictions lifted further and we could walk in unlimited numbers we decided on 30 for the same reason.

It has been an uphill struggle but we're grateful to those leaders offering to create walks again. We are trying to be as flexible as possible and instead of keeping to our normal walk days letting the leaders choose their day and the numbers they are prepared to lead and feel comfortable with.

The general feeling is that until restrictions lift completely, hopefully on June 21st, and walkers no longer have to book a place on a walk things will not improve much but I am confident we will slowly get back to normal if we can remember what that was !!!

Ann Adams, [www.southcotswoldramblers.org.uk](http://www.southcotswoldramblers.org.uk)

### **Forest of Dean Ramblers**

There is little to report from the FoDR Group in these difficult circumstances. We have stayed in regular contact with our members. The latest communication was aimed at restarting our walks programme and although it is a slow start we have four walks planned over the next few weeks. Our approach is to support those leaders willing to put on a walk but not to place any pressure on anyone to do so; it really is up to the individual to decide. We know many of our members are still wary of walking in larger groups although some have been walking in small friendship groups which is great. Hopefully as confidence grows more leaders will come forward and we can build back to the full and varied walking programme of old. Hopefully this will happen over the summer.

We have continued to respond to footpath issues as best we can.

Jackie Huck [www.fodramblers.org.uk](http://www.fodramblers.org.uk)



## **Some Group and Area News (continued)**

### **Gloucester Group**

Our first 2021 programme of walks started in mid-April and has generally been well supported. This was for two months with a limit of 15 but we will shortly issue a programme for July and August which will relax the restriction on numbers and permit car sharing again if possible.

Another short programme for September-October will include a walk mid-September to celebrate over 50 years of the Cotswold Way. Subsequently we hope to revert to a four monthly programme.

We have welcomed 10 new members recently, 4 of whom have transferred from other Areas.

A working group has been established to monitor and improve signing for the Glevum Way and we are hoping to prepare an updated on-line guide rather than reprint the leaflet.

Gloucester Group, in consultation with Area Council, has objected to the extinguishment of footpath ETW6 at Twigworth, Gloucester. This is because the proposed replacement uses estate road footways rather than providing a green corridor in line with National Planning Guidance.

Social activities are still limited but a small group will visit Kingsbridge for a walking holiday in June and we are planning an evening walk and buffet at Brookthorpe on 21st July.

John Bent-Marshall [www.gloucester-ramblers.org.uk](http://www.gloucester-ramblers.org.uk)

### **Cleeve Group**

The walks programme restarted in May limiting numbers to 15 with pre-registration. The first along the banks of the Severn was in glorious sunshine, but the next attracted the persistent rain that was prevalent throughout the month, and was cancelled. The walks have attracted some of our new members, but overall the numbers attending have been lower than anticipated. To some degree this may be because pre-registration disincentivises those who want to make last minute decisions about walking. The group are now in the process of creating a walks programme for the July/October period. The programme is gradually being populated, but there are still many gaps. We hope to walk in both weekends of the Cotswold Way celebration in September.

Gerry O'Driscoll [www.ramblers.org.uk/cleeve](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/cleeve)

**Area mid week walks** are currently in abeyance but check on-line as some walks begin to take shape.

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### **Winchcombe Country Show Monday 30th August - Bank Holiday**

All being well, we're sharing a display with Winchcombe Welcomes Walkers (who hope to hold a reduced walking festival in October).

### **and finally ...The Countryside Code**

An updated Countryside Code was published in April. It's more extensive than previous and includes that countryside, parks, waterways and other recreational areas provide a welcoming environment. There are also clearer rules for dog walkers, advice to stay on marked footpaths except in open access land and not to feed livestock or horses.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

