

# Cotswolds Conservation Board

- Secures major support for Cotswolds projects - like £1.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Caring for the Cotswolds' which gives grants to landowners and local communities
- Works on public transport projects to help promote the use of buses and trains to explore the Cotswolds and to encourage walking and cycling throughout the AONB
- Provides a strategic overview of the Cotswolds, for example landscape character assessment and local distinctiveness reports
- Raises awareness of the current state of farming and its future needs including farming studies
- Runs over 300 guided walks and events every year
- Supports local people in their research and restoration of heritage features, such as Cotswold sheep washes
- Works closely with farming groups to give advice to local landowners
- Publishes two issues of the 'Cotswold Lion' newspaper each year - full of AONB news, information and walks
- Supports projects that promote local products
- Runs competitions and training courses in traditional skills like dry stone walling and hedgelaying
- Supports new gateway boundary markers into the AONB
- The Cotswolds Conservation Board has a small team of staff - supported by more than 300 Cotswold Voluntary Wardens - based at Northleach, a market town at the heart of the Cotswolds AONB.

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# Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# The Cotswolds



**The Cotswolds is considered by many people to be one of the most beautiful areas of England - the quintessential English landscape.**

It is also a very special area: one of only 41 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales, it is protected by Government as being of great value to the nation; this ensures the very qualities and features that attract people are there for future generations to enjoy.

The natural qualities of the AONB are unique and limestone gives the Cotswolds its distinctive, unified appearance, visible everywhere in buildings and walls, whole towns and villages which subtly blend with their surroundings.

The Cotswolds is a place of immense diversity: rolling landscapes with breathtaking views and open skies contrast with intimate valleys, villages and pastures; ancient beech woodlands, rare flora and limestone grasslands alternate with broad swathes of arable fields; pre-historic hill forts are found close to the fine craftsmanship of manor houses and stone cottages.

The area is cared for by the Cotswolds Conservation Board - a new independent organisation, launched in December 2004, responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

The Board is the only organisation to look after the AONB as a whole and is responsible for preparing an AONB Management Plan.

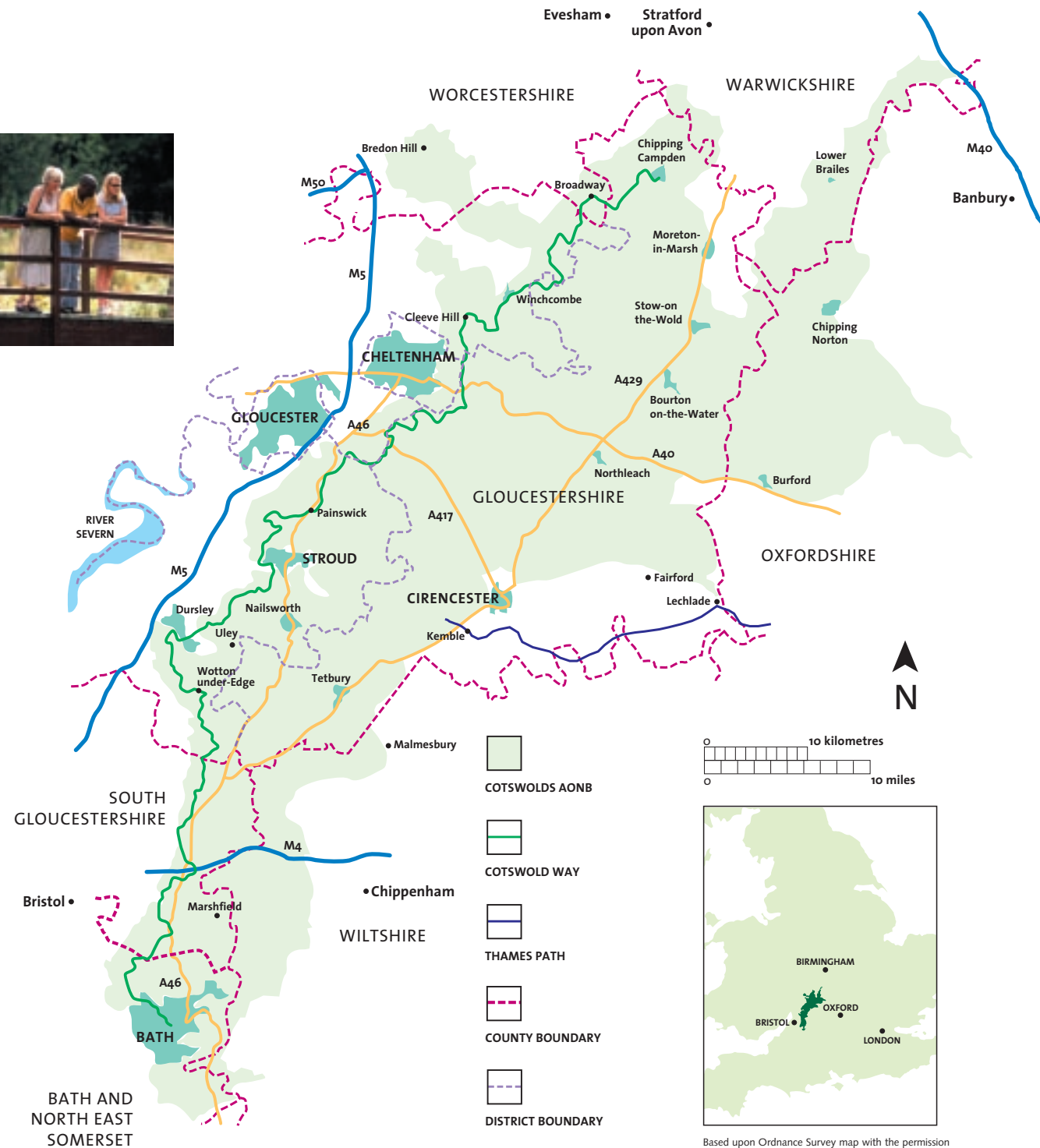


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# The Cotswolds AONB



- The Cotswolds became an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966
- Being an AONB means that the Cotswolds is protected as a very special landscape - a living, working landscape of national importance
- AONBs are equal in landscape quality to National Parks
- The Cotswolds is the largest of 41 AONBs in England and Wales, covering 2,038 sq kms (790 sq miles) and 126 kms (78 miles) from north to south
- It is larger than Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks combined
- People have lived in and shaped the Cotswolds for over 6,000 years; today more than 157,000 people live in the AONB
- More than 80% of the Cotswolds AONB is farmland
- Almost 9% of the AONB is woodland
- Over half of the UK's total Jurassic unimproved limestone grassland is found in the Cotswolds as well as important ancient woodlands, particularly beech



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- Stone from local quarries has been widely used for Cotswold buildings which are known and loved the world-over
- There is a network of over 6,000 kms (approximately 4,000 miles) of dry stone walls across the AONB - equivalent in length to the Great Wall of China
- The Romans arrived in the Cotswolds around AD47, building roads and great towns like Cirencester
- The medieval wool trade made the Cotswolds rich - the local breed of sheep is the 'Cotswold Lion', known for its long, thick fleece
- The AONB attracts millions of visitors each year and has large populations living close by
- Tourism is the number one industry in the Cotswolds
- The AONB includes two National Trails - the Cotswold Way and a small part of the Thames Path which starts in the Cotswolds.