

# MID COTSWOLD TRACKS AND TRAILS GROUP

## NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010

**WEBSITE** Steve Radcliffe has been very busy updating and redesigning our website. Do have a look <http://www.midcotswoldtrails.org.uk/> - it looks great!

**COMMITTEE MEETING** The Committee did not meet in March but will be meeting again on 14<sup>th</sup> April to discuss amongst other things:

- progress on the Cotswolds on Horseback update (see below);
- arrangements for a ride during BHS Access Week (see below);
- arrangements for a social event for members (see below);
- what we can do to increase our membership.

If you have any matter you wish the Committee to discuss please let me know before 14<sup>th</sup> April.

**COTSWOLDS ON HORSEBACK UPDATE** Further to my report in the last newsletter we are still looking for people to offer to trial the new instructions being drafted for the proposed routes to be included in the new edition of the CoH book. Please contact Lois if you feel you can help. [lois\\_eyre@hotmail.com](mailto:lois_eyre@hotmail.com).

**ACCESS WEEK** BHS Access Week this year is to be held between 21<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May. In case you are not aware of the purpose of Access Week, this is what the BHS describe it as on their website: The British Horse Society's Access Week gives staff, volunteers and affiliated bridleways groups the opportunity to raise the profile of the work they carry out to defend, extend and promote the equestrian off-road network. Launched in 1999 and held annually in May, Access Week brings a UK-wide focus to our work, and that of our volunteers.

The BHS encourages affiliated groups such as ours to: Raise funds for The British Horse Society's Access Fighting Fund by organising a ride with your friends and equestrian community. The fund was started in 2007, after a judge allowed BMW's application to stop up a right of way which had existed for 2,000 years, without any requirement for an alternative equestrian route. In this case, fighting for the rights of riders cost the BHS around £30,000 in costs.

We supported this last year when Lois arranged a (rather wet) ride in the Chedworth area and we are looking to organise something in the Badminton/Hillesley area this year. So please put the dates in your diary and I will let you know in the next newsletter which day we will be arranging the ride on.

**MCTTG SOCIAL** The Committee thought it would be a good idea to organise a social event for members during the summer (May or June). This might involve some fundraising (eg bring and buy) and provide an opportunity to recruit new members (eg by advertising more widely than our membership and encouraging you to 'bring a friend').

If you have any ideas and/or are willing to help organise such an event please let me know if possible before the Committee meet on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

**MOWING GRASS VERGES** Lois has become aware of this advice which is included in a policy statement of the Cotswolds Conservation Board. *"For all main routes, and for those minor routes where pedestrian safety is an issue, a one metre swathe adjoining the carriageway should be cut regularly by the responsible authority: this should be extended to two metres where cycle or horse riding safety is also an issue."* This recommended good practice appears in a document entitled 'Managing Roadside Verges - a brief guide for Parish Councils'. The guidance dates from

October 2008 and the general flavour is about not cutting too often and trying to conserve wildlife and flora.

There is a full position statement on verge management on the website - [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk). However, Lois has also learnt from Jean Rose, Riding & Road Safety officer that the Council's budget (we assume she means Glos Highways) for road safety for horseriders has been cut, we think to nothing!

**CYCLE PATHS PETITION** One of the issues we raised with Alan Bently when we met him last month was the benefits of allowing multi use of cycle paths. We are keen for GCC to adopt a policy generally favouring such multi use but, to date, they prefer to consider each case on its own merits. This tends to lead to a lack of constructive action! This is not a matter which is of interest just to this Group and you will find on our website at [http://www.midcotswoldtrails.org.uk/Pages/cycle\\_paths\\_petition.htm](http://www.midcotswoldtrails.org.uk/Pages/cycle_paths_petition.htm) a petition which you may wish to support.

### **HAPPY EASTER!**

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