

Connecting Parishes project 2022-25

*GLAF Members enjoying a visit to one
of the Connecting Parishes Schemes*



The Connecting Parishes Project was an idea at GLAF to seek funding from National Highways Designated Funds, to improve some paths in parishes affected by the A417 missing link works to make them easier to use and add some new links.

The Connecting Parishes project was funded by National Highways through their designated funds to improve accessibility and connectivity to 18 separate path schemes. The aim was to help communities access paths across the Cotswold Hills using existing and some new footpaths, bridleways and other paths. The projects sought to make paths easier to access, linking urban to the Cotswold Hills and adding in links where they were needed. The

works included improved signage, wider ramped bridges, easier gates and drainage and surface works.

The schemes are listed below.

Project 1 added 150m of new bridleway behind Ebworth Lodge, close to the Calf Way B4070 road. It gives walkers, riders and cyclists a safer link between two existing bridleways avoiding the road. This links Cranham to the woods at Sheepscombe and was enabled by the National Trust as landowner.



Project 2 was the creation of a footpath at Birdlip Hill on a track in the woodland, formally recognizes the Cotswold Way National Trail route. The surface and drainage were improved by the project.

Project 3. A new permissive footpath at the National Star College has been set up in the grounds of the College at Ullenwood. The path will provide a safe link between a crossing point on the road near the entrance to Crickley Hill Country Park, the National Star College, Ullenwood Road and the Cotswold Way National Trail. It has been set out for use by motorised wheelchair as well as pedestrians.



Project 4 at Watery Lane, which is a bridleway that links the land around Painswick Beacon, Cudhill Common and the Portway, and the woods below, all near Upton St Leonards. Works were carried out to improve the drainage and surface on this and the nearby link bridleway by the Gloucester-Painswick road, which was very muddy and overgrown.

Project 5, Witcombe Villa car park (currently closed) and public right of way to the roman villa to Coopers Hill. This was a project that made the path easier to use, by the removal of brambles and vegetation and replacing stiles with kissing gates.

Project 6, This project helped improve the access for mobility vehicles at Coopers Hill on a circular route from the small car park through the woodland.

Project 7. A bridleway linking Witcombe village to the scarp and The Cotswold Way and on towards Cranham, was improved with drainage and surface improvement work in summer 2024. This should enable easier access for cyclists, horse rider and walkers as well as for mobility vehicles.

Project 8 sought to help with another Cotswold National Landscape tramer trail and make easier access for wheelchair users across a network of paths at Leckhampton Hill. Work to level and smooth the surfaces of mainly footpaths allows access to around 7.5 miles of accessible path. A ‘tramer trail’ (mobility wheelchair) route has been marked that covers a 2.2 mile section of the newly surfaced paths.



Project 9. An engineering business was engaged to carry out an options appraisal to determine the most effective way forward to tackle a long closed old railway footbridge near the Old Patesians Rugby field and Pilley Nature reserve in Cheltenham. The appraisal considered removing the footbridge and replacing it with either a modern bridge or ramps, along with consideration of the cost to repair the existing structure. The latter option was identified as the best way forward, but at considerable cost so work continues to facilitate the repairs.

Project 10. A footpath from the edge of Charlton Kings with Ravensgate Hill and the Cotswold way was improved with gate repairs, replacements and some sections of stone path. A narrow footbridge was widened to facilitate easier access.

Project 11. A short section of Bridleway linking the old A417 at Birdlip with a back road near Brimspfield was improved with the installation easily openable gates.

Project 12. A short section of footpath was made easier by removing a stile and clearing vegetation to link the path in project 11 to the new Air Balloon Way (currently the main A417).

Project 13. A long section of bridleway at the Cippetts had surfacing and drainage work and small gates were replaced with 1.5m wide bridle gates to allow easier access for walkers and riders alike.



Project 14. Greenway Lane, which links Shurdington village with the Cotswold Way near Ullenwood and the Star College was improved for walkers and riders by the installation and upgrading of drainage and surfacing of several sections along over 1km of the lane.

Project 15. Two footpaths linking Brockworth with Mill Corner, Witcombe, was improved for walkers by the removal of fallen trees, replacing narrow and damaged bridges with wider ones, clearer signage and replacing several old stiles with gates.

Project 16. A footpath that links Brockworth with Coopers Hill was made easier with some drainage and surface works, and improved gates.

Project 17. This improved an old lane and footpath that link Shurdington village with the edge of Cheltenham. The works smartened Betty Roberts Lane, and some improvements near Morrisons



Project 18 involved the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens replacing steps and improving the support to the path with recycled plastic. This path forms part of the Cheltenham Circular Walk through woodland at the top of Ravensgate Hill.