The fifth Walking Festival was blessed with perfect weather and was a roaring success. We received many compliments on the variety of the walks, the social aspects of the festival through to the well run management team of volunteers who helped make the festival such a success. Special thanks also go to the many businesses which found time in their workload to accommodate walkers keen to learn. Toddington Manor, Stanway House, Hayles Fruit Farm, Huntsmans Quarry, Guiting Manor Farm, and Cleeve Common Conservators all gave up their time to give interesting talks and make the walks special.

People visited from all over the UK, Canada and America with many staying at local pubs, B&Bs and self catering - so all accommodation providers in Winchcombe benefited from the festival.

From our survey: 20% spent over £100 in local economy - actual quote from one reply “About £450 in total - money well spent!” The festival injects money into the local economy through the use of local coach companies and visits to Stanway House & Watermill, Hayles Fruit Farm, and GWR to name a few.

Next year’s Walking Festival dates 15-17 May 2015

Riverside Path update

WWaW has successfully raised the capital needed to improve the surface and gradient of the path from Castle Street to Broadway Road adjacent to the River Isbourne. There has been a delay whilst the recently privatised Rights of Way has transferred to Arney. However, we are hoping there is light at the end of the tunnel and work will start soon. There will be some inconvenience to users of the path whilst improvements are carried out, for instance a temporary diversion of the path may be required.

Cotswold Visitor Giving Scheme

WWaW working with the Cotswold Conservation Board and Winchcombe Town Council

In 2011 the Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome group created the Winchcombe Way, a 42 mile walk around the north Cotswolds. However there was a 30 metre section of path missing where the route crossed Abbey Fields between the play park in Back Lane and the church in the centre of Winchcombe. Walkers faced a steep drop in gradient and a muddy section before rejoining the path at the entrance to St Peter’s Churchyard.

Contributions from visitors to the Cotswolds Visitor Giving Scheme has gone towards laying tonnes of stone and soil to re-profile the gradients and provide an all weather hard surface. Now walkers and parishioners have a more scenic route through to the town centre across the former fishponds and gardens of the old Benedictine Abbey from Back Lane to the church.

The Isbourne Way

This new waymarked trail, launched at Winchcombe’s Walking Festival in 2014, follows the River Isbourne from its source on Cleeve Hill to its confluence with the Warwickshire Avon at Evesham, a distance of some 14 miles.

The Isbourne Way weaves existing footpaths into a route which starts at the Washpool on Cleeve Hill, passes through Winchcombe, Toddington, Wormington and Sedgeberrow to Evesham.

A guidebook is available at local stockists and more information can be found on our website.

Thank you to all the businesses who recognise and support our activities

- Plaisterers Arms
- The Lion
- Food Fanatics Deli
- Sudeley Castle
- Vesey House and Bar
- 5 Vineyard Street
- Old Cider Press
- 64 North Street
- Upper Hill Farm B&B
- One Silk Mill Lane B&B
- Just In
- Postlip Hall Farm B&B
- Elms Farm B&B
- Swallows Rest
- Wold Cottage
- Cotswold Walks
- Corner Cupboard
- Keelings Newsagent
- Kingfisher Cottage
- Wood Stanway B&B
- Byways B&B
- Folly Cottage
- Vine House B&B
- The Secret Garden Tea Rooms
- White Hart
- The Lodge B&B
- Garnter B&B
- Homelands B&B
- Blacksmiths Cottage
- Cider Mill Cottage
- Stableyard Cottage
WWaW and Cotswold Tourism launch Cotswold Great Outdoors
Winchcombe Walking Festival launched the Cotswold Great Outdoor Campaign in May.

This Cotswold wide campaign was launched at the Winchcombe Conservative Working Mens Club which was a great venue to promote the Walking and Cycling Campaigns for the Cotswolds. Guests heard about the forthcoming plans for promoting the Cotswolds, the importance of tourism and the forthcoming launch of a map showing cycle rides including some centred on the town. This was another opportunity to promote Winchcombe as a base for walking and cycling, with those attending having a great opportunity to access the beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

In the picture, Robert Talbot is explaining the new footpath created by Sudeley Castle in 2010 to guests.

WWaW financially supporting community projects

WWaW are a sustainable community group who manage their basic running costs without any grants. Any surplus funding generated is ploughed back into community projects.

This year we are fully funding:
- Publishing the new Isbourne Way Guide
- An advert promoting Winchcombe as a walking centre
- Contributing towards the cost of:
  - Improving the surface of the riverside path
  - An engraving to signify the beginning and end of the Cotswold Way
(Withcombe benefits greatly from the Cotswold Way)

Comment on the web

“I cannot tell you how much I love Winchcombe. It is my favorite place in the world, after Edinburgh and London, but it is right up there. It’s prime walking country and I always have an annual visit”.

Have you looked at some of the photographs taken at the Walking Festival. If you have a few minutes why not take a look. Also visit our festival page to see a summary and a few of the many comments received.

The winner of the questionnaire survey was a Mrs A. Bray from Barnsley.

WWaW and The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens
Improvements to the Gloucestershire Way

As a result of a request by WWaW to the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, an environmental improvement project is underway to improve the very slippery and muddy conditions underfoot on the Gloucestershire Way from Flukes Hill towards Monk’s Hole.

A work party has made a start and will continue periodically for the remainder of 2014 to improve the footpath. The canopy is being opened up to allow the light and wind to dry out the ground. In time the grass and wild flowers are expected to return making the path more pleasant despite the steep slope!

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In October members of the WWaW steering group will be attending the WaW annual Get Together in Chepstow for a chance to network with other member towns and exchange ideas.

There will be workshops on:
- Fundraising and generating income
- Visual Impairment Awareness and Sighted Guide Skills
- Efficient Use of Media, PR & Partnerships
- Walks with Wheels
- Step forward – Towards an excellent Walks Organiser

Our Chair, Sheila Talbot will be running the workshop on fundraising and generating income.

Come and visit us at the Country Show

WWaW will be at the Country Show in August. Please come along and let us know your thoughts on the footpaths, ideas and how we can continue to market Winchcombe as a walking centre.

WWaW and Japan Airlines

In the May edition of Japan Airlines inflight magazine appears an article about the Cotswolds with a section on Winchcombe and the Cotswold Way. The article emphasises the role of the Cotswold Way volunteers, who ensure the route meets National Trail standards. There are four wardens who cover a stretch from the top of Cleeve Hill to Stanton.

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