



# Guide to the Scheme

## Purpose of the scheme

The Cotswolds Conservation Board (the Conservation Board) is developing Cotswolds Choice, a local brand that recognises and promotes high standards of environmental and landscape management in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This development has included a year-long pilot project.

Companies that can demonstrate how their products support a high quality local environment are entitled to use the Cotswolds Choice name and logo through membership of the Cotswolds Choice scheme. The Cotswold Choice logo reflects the official logo of the AONB which can be found for example; on the official AONB websites (500,000 visits annually), the Cotswold Lion magazine (90,000 copies annually) and the 34 roadside AONB boundary markers.

## Administration

Cotswolds Choice has been established by the Cotswolds Conservation Board which is registering the name and logo as intellectual property.

The scheme is run by Simon Smith of the Cotswolds Conservation Board. He can be contacted on [simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk) or 01451 862031

## Membership

Membership is opened to any business with a product or products that both meet the qualification criteria (Annex 2) and can demonstrably be shown to help sustain or contribute to the high quality landscape of the Cotswolds. There are two levels of membership: Full Membership for businesses involved in the production, processing and retailing of qualifying products Associate Membership for organisations and individuals who wish to promote and support the scheme.

## The Scheme Area

The Cotswolds Choice area, is defined as the designated Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ([www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)) combined with the Cotswolds Natural Area (also called Joint Character Area) described by Natural England ([www.naturalareas.naturalengland.org.uk/Science/natural/NA\\_search.asp](http://www.naturalareas.naturalengland.org.uk/Science/natural/NA_search.asp)).

To qualify for Full Membership of the scheme, businesses must have operational premises located within this area, or within a 2km buffer around the edge of the area, as shown in Annex 1 below. Exceptionally, businesses located in a wider buffer of 2-5km from the edge of the defined Cotswolds Choice area may be considered for membership, at the discretion of the Conservation Board.

The Cotswold Choice area is also used in the Qualifying Product Criteria to ensure that branded products carry the integrity of the brand. For qualifying products, the boundary is that of the Cotswolds Choice area, without a buffer zone, unless otherwise agreed by the Conservation Board.

## Joining the Scheme

The scheme is designed to be 'light' on red tape; to join all you need to do is complete the Membership Application Form and product entry form(s) sending them to: Cotswolds Choice, Cotswolds Conservation Board, Fosse Way, Northleach, Gloucestershire, GL54 3JH or email it to [simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

The Cotswolds Conservation Board will use the forms to determine whether your products are suitable to carry the Cotswolds Choice brand. Please note that the decision of the Board is final.

In time the Conservation Board hopes to set up a panel of members to help determine new applications and guide the brands development. Please get in touch if you are interested in helping.

## Entering a Product into the Scheme

Use the product entry form to explain how you feel your product(s) supports the high quality landscape of the Cotswolds. Use a separate form for different products. Some of the ways that a product may do this include;

- Maintaining the Cotswolds' distinctive landscape character (land use and features) and its sense of place.
- Conserving wildlife through management and restoration of natural habitats, and conservation action targeted at distinctive species
- Protecting cultural heritage in archaeology, heritage buildings and constructed landscape features, local breeds and varieties or traditional products; earth heritage (geology and geomorphology)


Examples of the sort of products that qualify include;

- Wood products from wildlife friendly woodland management such as coppicing or where appropriate thinning
- Meat from animals maintaining wildlife rich grasslands through grazing.
- Arable crops from fields where conservation measures such as conservation headlands or skylark plots have been incorporated.

These are just some examples. The form has been left deliberately open, if you are uncertain if a particular product would qualify or wish to discuss entering a product please contact Simon Smith at the Conservation Board.

# Annex 1. The Cotswold Choice Area







**Scheme Area**

**LEGEND**

- AONB and JCA combined
- Cotswolds AONB
- Cotswolds JCA
- 2km buffer
- 5km buffer

0    10    20    30    40    50 km





## Annex 2. Qualifying Product Criteria

### Introduction

This document sets out the criteria that products licensed to carry the Cotswold Choice branding should meet. It forms part of the Scheme Licence Agreement with scheme members and should be read in conjunction with the Cotswolds Choice Promise within the application form.

### A. Unprocessed Livestock Products

These products include all uncooked cuts of meat and fish, and also honey.

Type of livestock or product	Criteria
Lamb and mutton	Products should be from sheep that have spent at least the last six weeks prior to slaughter grazing pasture in the scheme area.
Beef	Products should be from cattle that have either spent the last three months prior to slaughter grazing pasture in the scheme area (supplementary feeding is permitted) or, if yard or barn finished, should have been fed a ration at least 50% of which by weight has been grown in the scheme area.
Pork	Products should be from pigs that have spent at least six weeks of their lives outdoors (at rearing and/or finishing) in the scheme area.
Poultry meat and eggs	Products should be from poultry that is kept under free range conditions, meaning that the poultry must have continuous daytime access to the open air and stocking densities of at least one hen per four square metres.
Game, rabbit and pigeon	Game, rabbit or pigeon must be shot or caught within the scheme area by a person with the legal right to do so.
Wild fish	Wild fish must be caught within the scheme area by a person with the legal right to do so.
Farmed fish	Farmed fish must come from a fishery located within the scheme area.
Honey	Honey must be derived from hives that have spent at least two months prior to honey collection in the scheme area.

### B. Fresh Produce

These products include orchard fruit, soft fruit and vegetables (outdoor and protected) that are sold uncooked and whole (i.e. not processed).

Product	Criteria
Fresh produce	These must have been grown in the Scheme Area.

## C. Processed Products

These products include those that have been incorporated with ingredients and/or undergone significant treatment. They include processed meat products such as sausages and pies, dairy products such as milk and cheese, bakery products such as bread, cakes and biscuits and beverages such as cordials, beer, cider and wine.

Product	Criteria
Processed products	At least 25% of the ingredients by weight or volume must have been grown or reared from within the Scheme Area.

## D. Woodland and Craft Products

Woodland products include charcoal, firewood, furniture and coppice products such as hurdles and walking sticks. Other craft products include pottery, paintings and photographs.

Product	Criteria
Woodland Products	At least 25% of the ingredients by weight or volume must have been grown or collected from within the Scheme Area.
Other craft products	These must have been created within the Scheme Area. Paintings and photographs should depict or reflect aspects of the Cotswolds such as its landscape, heritage or people.