

Introduction to Cotswold Taste

Cotswold Taste is an organisation for food and drink produced locally that promotes quality and in a way that does not harm the unique landscape and environment within the Cotswolds and the surrounding area. This is embedded into the Co-operative's Members Promise:

"...to support the outstanding natural beauty and special qualities of the Cotswolds. We commit to managing our business in such a way as to actively conserve and enhance the high qualities of the landscape, wildlife and natural resources, the rich heritage and thriving communities of the Cotswolds¹. "

Cotswold Taste was set up in late 2016 as a member-owned, not for profit co-operative. It is run by a voluntary management team supported by two Advisory Panels, (Technical and Communications). As membership organisation, it represents the local food and drink sector in the Cotswold area. Sustainability is at the core of Cotswold Taste's mission which is:

- To represent, promote and support all Cotswold businesses that sustainably grow, produce, manufacture, sell and service the finest, local and artisan food and drink including the Agri-food and hospitality sectors,
- To provide a service to the sectors, with the aim to grow its members revenues within and outside the UK, and to support the reputation of the Cotswolds, as an exciting and sustainable fine food hub in the UK
- To contribute to the local economy, looking after the Cotswold's countryside and heritage, maintaining a quality of life for its residents, improving the environment and attracting more visitors to the Cotswolds area.

In context, roughly more than £6 billion spending on food and drink takes place each year in the Cotswolds region by local residents, employees and tourists. A further amount is spent on "exports" from the region to London, other areas of the UK and internationally.

Members include food and drink producers, suppliers, retailers and hospitality outlets along with a number of business partner associates providing support services. These include PR and marketing companies, food photographers and video producers, exhibition organisers, publishers, heritage advisors, planning consultants, a range of specialised food and drink technical advisers, accountants and funders. **Cotswold Taste has three clear aims:**

1. To promote business resilience and success on the part of its members, as a member owned co-operative.
2. To encourage the growth of reasonably priced, quality local food for consumers.
3. To contribute to promoting and enhancing the unique Cotswold landscape, biodiversity, heritage and its attractions.

¹ Acceptance of the Cotswold Promise is included in the application form.

Cotswold Taste Membership

Criteria and Fees

Cotswold Taste operates on one level of membership aiming to keep this as simple as possible. Members have a right to speak and vote at the AGM and to use the Cotswold Taste logo on their business literature. The annual membership fee is £75 ex VAT.

To become a member the following need to be met:

1. As a **Producer**² ~ must operate on the Cotswold Hills landscape area, or within 15 miles of this area. As a **Service Provider**³ ~ must be able to offer your service to the food and drink sector in the Cotswolds (as defined by our geographical criteria) in person and on site if relevant or required.
2. Must have an interest in and affinity with the unique landscape of the Cotswolds and have an interest in and a desire to support the sustainability of the Cotswolds and to be open to moving towards a 'greener' future around net zero targets and support of a local and regional economy.
3. Be interested in and supportive of local food networks, supply chains and the protection of Cotswold heritage.
4. Is prepared to abide by the Cotswolds Promise.

A business registered as a member of Cotswold Taste Ltd is entitled to use the CT Logo on their business literature and sites.

Only Producer members are entitled to use the CT Quality Marque on their food products; however, to qualify to use the Quality Marque:

1. Food(s) must meet the criteria to qualify as produced or processed in the Cotswolds in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way. (These criteria are currently being reviewed and will be posted on the web site)
2. The business must have a licence granted by the Board to use the Quality Marque (Licences will be granted by the Board once the Technical Panel has reviewed an application).

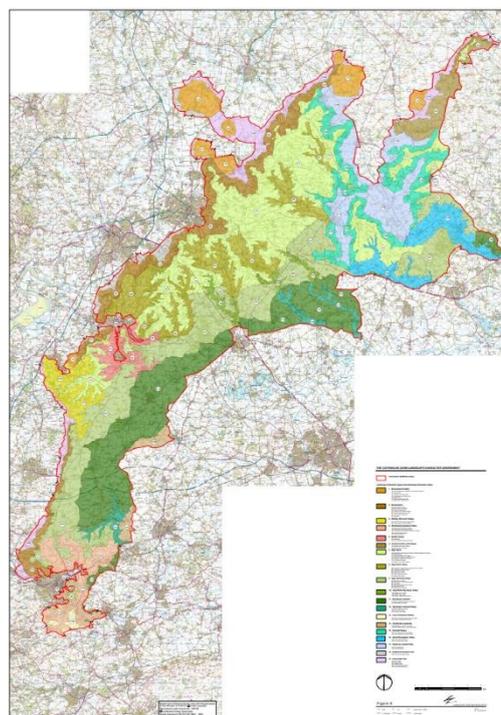


Figure 1: The Cotswold Landscape Character Area

² A Producer is a business involved in the farming/ food and drink industry from primary producers through to retail and food service/hospitality outlets.

³ A Service Provider is a business that can support Producer businesses and is ideally based within the geographically defined area set out in our criteria unless the service is so niche that is not possible or practical.

Benefits to Cotswold Taste Members

- Member profile on Cotswold Taste online business directory where each member has their own interactive profile on the Cotswold Taste website.
- Cotswold Taste members can use the Quality Marque/logo as part of promoting their business. (Only Cotswold Taste members with a Licence can use the Marque on products).
- Access to member only forums on the Cotswold Taste website.
- Free promotion in our members and customer email marketing when relevant, social media campaigns and inclusion in any relevant press releases around Cotswold Taste news.
- Access to workshops, webinars and advice sessions provided by industry partners and supplier members.
- Exclusive networking events and training courses.
- Opportunities to showcase produce via trade shows, member events and hospitality outlet links.
- Discounted access to professional services provided by industry partners.
- Representation at local and regional Government level through partnership link to Food from England.
- Access to regular updates and news from Food from England and other regional food groups.
- Cotswold Taste partnership with Too Good To Go offers Cotswold Taste members a waiver of their first-year administrative fee (£39).
- Signposting to relevant business, consumer and trade events.

Terms & Conditions

1. A business cannot become a 'Producer' member of Cotswold Taste unless it meets the Cotswold Taste's Qualifying Criteria.
2. Cotswold Taste reserves the right to inspect and/or audit a Producer member prior to approval of their application and at any time during the period of membership.
3. The member will inform Cotswold Taste of any relevant memberships of quality schemes and advise them of any changes in members of such schemes.
4. The member agrees to be bound by the Cotswold Taste website Terms & Conditions.
5. By signing Cotswold Taste membership Terms & Conditions, a member agrees to act in the spirit, mission and values as set out in Cotswold Taste's Charter, Code of Conduct, and to strive to adopt and implement sustainable operational practices as set out in Cotswold Taste's Sustainability Pledge.
6. Cotswold Taste reserves the right to refuse any application for membership if, in its absolute discretion, it considers that the applicant does not meet the standards required of members, as set out in the Cotswold Taste's Charter, Code of Conduct and Sustainability Pledge or in any other document published for that purpose by Cotswold Taste. The decision of Cotswold Taste will be final.

7. Membership is conditional upon payment of at the annual membership to Cotswold Taste. The annual membership fee may be collected monthly or yearly by direct debit, BACS payment where payments can also be made online. The membership term will be 12 months starting on the date of the first membership invoice raised by Cotswold Taste.
8. Each member will be notified of the renewal of its membership two weeks prior to the renewal date. Membership renewal will take place automatically, unless Cotswold Taste is otherwise informed by its member latest on the date of renewal.
9. In the event of non-payment, Cotswold Taste reserve the right to terminate or suspend a membership without further notice and all benefits of the membership will immediately cease or be suspended.
10. Membership will only be reinstated at the absolute discretion of the Cotswold Taste, upon full or any outstanding payments and any other monies owned.
11. Cotswold Taste reserve the right to refuse renewal or to terminate the membership of any member if, in its absolute discretion, it considers that the member has acted in a manner detrimental to Cotswold Taste or in a manner likely to bring Cotswold Taste into disrepute, failed to comply with, or maintain, the standard required of members as set out in the Cotswold Taste Aims and Mission, Code of Conduct and Sustainability Pledge or in any other document published for that purpose by Cotswold Taste. The decision of Cotswold Taste will be final in the event of terminating the membership on these grounds, notice of the termination will be given to the member and all the benefits will immediately cease, but there shall be no entitlement to a refund of any sum paid by the member.
12. If an application for membership is refused, or membership is cancelled, Cotswold Taste shall have no liability whatsoever for any alleged loss which may result.
Cotswold Taste may record and store and use information and materials members have posted, transmitted, sent or communicated on all Cotswold Taste produced websites. Information supplied via these websites will be retained by Cotswold Taste on a database and will be used for furtherance of its legitimate interests to update its records and to contact members with information about relevant initiatives, services or opportunities. Member details will be stored securely and will not be released to any other organisation. Cotswold Taste is the Data Controller for member information. Members who do not wish Cotswold Taste to use this information in this way should contact Cotswold Taste. Data will be kept for the duration of the membership and for such reasonable period thereafter as is necessary for the purposes of the operation of Cotswold Taste or compliance with any of its reporting obligations or the operation of it.
13. The member business will be entitled to use the Cotswold Taste Quality Marque, provided that such use is in accordance with the attached Terms and Conditions for using the Quality Marque and meet the Qualifying Criteria
14. In granting membership Cotswold Taste reserves the right to require any member to alter, remove or cease any form of sales production and sales of good associated in any way with Cotswold Taste that contravenes any current relevant legislations or brings, or is likely to bring Cotswold Taste into disrepute.
15. All intellectual property rights on and relating to Cotswold Taste websites and in the logos, including the quality mark, trademark names or other signs, vest in Cotswold Taste.
16. All marketing and other materials bearing the Cotswold Taste name or logo must only be used in conjunction with the Cotswold Taste brand guidelines. On termination of membership the licence granted to the member of Cotswold Taste to use the logo, marketing information or any other material of any description (“the materials”) is immediately terminated and the materials must, as its option, either be returned to Cotswold Taste or destroyed.

17. Each member is entirely responsible for the accuracy of information included on the site concerning that member. Information provided will be available to members of the public. However, Cotswold Taste reserves the right to reject, edit or remove at any time any information which it, in its absolute discretion, considers unsuitable for any reason whatsoever.
18. When members upload or post content to our site, or otherwise provide us with information to be included on the site, that member grants us the following rights to use the content:
 - a. a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, transferable licence to use, reproduce, distribute, prepare derivative works of, display, and perform that member-generated content in connect with the service provided by the website and across different media including to promote the site or service.
 - b. a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, transferable licence for other members, partners or advertisers to use the content in accordance with the functionality of the site to expire when the user deletes the content from the site.
19. Each member agrees that it must not misuse our site by knowingly introducing viruses, trojans, worms, logic bombs or other material that is malicious or technologically harmful. A member may not attempt to gain unauthorised access to our site, the server on which the site is stored, or any server, computer or database connected to our site. A member must not attack our site via a denial-of-service attack or distributed denial-of-service attack. We will report any breach of this provision to the relevant law enforcement authorities, and we will co-operate with those authorities by disclosing the breaching member's identity to them. In the event of such a breach, that the member's right to use our site will cease immediately.

Code of Conduct

DO:

1. Come along to in-person and virtual events and get to know fellow members.
2. Do follow up with members or non-members if you have exchanged cards or details at any of the above events.
3. Do link up with members and non-members you have met through Cotswold Taste across your social media platforms.
4. Do send us your news for sharing on our social media channels – this can include any special offers.
5. Do take part in any relevant press releases where you are integral to the story or where you have a legitimate voice.
6. Do let us know proactively if you are happy to take part in any relevant media activity as a case study or Cotswold Taste representative.
7. Do let us know if you partner up with other members with services, products or just for support so we can share that good news.
8. Do let us know if you would like your news included in one of our newsletters to members.
9. Do tag us on your social media so we can support your engagement.
10. Do feel free as a member to include our logo on your emails, marketing literature etc (we can provide relevant assets)

11. Do ask us if you would like some support or backing from the co-operative at your own events.
12. Do show kindness and courtesy. Let us treat everyone with respect and create a nurturing, collaborative environment. We are a 'bully free' zone. Bullying of any kind is not allowed, and degrading comments about things such as race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.
13. Do respect everyone's privacy. Being part of this group requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but may also be sensitive and private. Please use common sense in not betraying sensitive information shared in confidence within the membership or at any event or in a Cotswold Taste online event.
14. Do become an ambassador: for Cotswold Taste, its members and partners.

DON'T

1. Don't use Cotswold Taste as a means of adding fellow members to your own email marketing lists without their permission.
2. Don't pass on contact details of Cotswold Taste members to other contacts unless that's been agreed first. We support warm referrals, not cold calling.
3. Don't send round-robin blatant sales messages to fellow members you don't know – we regard this as spam.
4. Don't break our code of conduct on this – we will operate a three-strike policy – where any complaint will be investigated, a warning issued if deemed appropriate. Membership can be terminated without notice if a member ignores this guidance repeatedly and no refund will be given.

Sustainability Pledge and Mission

Cotswold Taste is striving to be a sustainable organisation, representing members by working with global to local strategic partners that are environmentally and socially responsible and are addressing the climate change agenda. Our aim is to help members to embed sustainability into their business model. Whilst we may have a long way to go, we are committed to make the transition to a sustainable organisation. The framework we have adopted to inform this journey is as follows:

1. Global Frameworks

The United Nations (UN 2015-30⁴) sustainable development goals build on the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2000-15). The SDG agenda covers 17 goals ranging from good health and equality to climate action and responsible production and consumption. Getting the planet and societies back on course needs concerted and inclusive actions from Governments, industry and civil society working together to reshape how people live, learn, work and consume.

From a business perspective, corporate responsibility starts with the principles and value systems of doing business. As a minimum, this means having fundamental responsibilities in the

⁴ UN SGG's ~ Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption whether you are a multi-national corporation or a local SME. The UN Global Compact⁵ have developed 10 principles for sustainable business; principles 7-9 focus on the environment, which is of particular importance to Cotswold Taste members:

[Principle 7](#): Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

[Principle 8](#): undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

[Principle 9](#): encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Any business can apply to become a recognised B Corporation by demonstrating that they meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability. Such B Corp members are driving the shift in global business culture through building a more inclusive and sustainable economy

2. Local Context

As a signatory to the SDG's, the UK Government, local administrations and many third sector organisations have embedded sustainability principles at the heart of their policies. For its part

the UK Government published in 2019 a voluntary national review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals⁶.

At the local level, the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly the Cotswolds AONB) have been defined into 19 landscape character types; however, these are subject to change due to the interaction of natural forces and human activity. Whilst change can lead to landscape deterioration and loss, the development of sustainable management strategies should allow development to occur while preserving the essential natural character of the area, its heritage and the viability of local communities and businesses.

Cotswold Taste, in its Members Pledge supports the aims and guidelines for landscape management as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment⁷. Furthermore, a number of members are Certified B Corporation under Global Compact as they have demonstrated locally.

⁵ Global Compact Principles. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>

⁶ HM Government Voluntary National Review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818212/UKVNR-web-accessible1.pdf

⁷ Cotswolds Landscape Strategy and Guidelines <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-strategy-guidelines/>

Membership Dispute Resolution

This document serves to define the process that will be followed in the event there is a dispute between Cotswold Taste and a membership business relating to all or any of the following:

- The misuse of Cotswold Taste's Quality Marque as referred to in the Terms and Conditions of Membership
 - Termination of membership by Cotswold Taste due to non-payment of the annual membership fee within seven days of the renewal date.
 - Refusal by Cotswold Taste to renew membership
 - Behaviour by a business in the membership as described in the Terms and Conditions, Qualifying Criteria, and Code of Conduct
1. Upon being made aware of the reason giving rise to the dispute, Cotswold Taste will write to the membership business, by email and by post via recorded delivery (or any subsequent similar service), outlining the circumstances.
 2. The membership business will be given seven working days in which to respond in writing to the allegation
 3. In the event of no response is received within seven working days the dispute will be upheld.
 4. The response to the allegation will be considered by the Board of Directors of Cotswold Taste and if required or requested, a face-to-face appointment maybe arranged, and notes made of such a meeting signed by both parties as true record within 10 working days.
 5. If it is not possible for an agreement to be reached between the membership business and the Board of Directors of Cotswold Taste, the membership business has the right to request the dispute is considered by the Chair of Cotswold Taste. Such as request must be lodged within seven days of the response, or the meeting referred to in (4) above.
 6. The decision of the Board of Directors, the Chair of Cotswold Taste, as appropriate, will be final.
 7. If a decision is reached to terminate the membership, notice of termination will be written to the membership business and all benefits will immediately cease. There will be no entitlement to a refund of any sums paid by that membership business for either membership fees or for any event paid in advance.
 8. Cotswold Taste does not accept liability whatsoever for any alleged loss which may result.

Thank you to 'Produced in Kent' for the use of the template for this Information Pack