

An all-terrain mobility scooter that can go 'off road' is opening up Crickley Hill Country Park, on the edge of the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, to people who have difficulty walking.

The 'Tramper' scooter has been provided by the Devon charity Living Options Devon as part of a scheme to open up nature to people with disabilities. Called Countryside Mobility South West, the project has introduced Trampers to more than 26 sites across the south west region. It's proving extremely popular with people of all ages who want to get out and enjoy the countryside.

Julian Bendle, Sites Warden at Crickley Hill Country Park, said: 'We have been working hard over the past few years to make the reserve and surrounding paths at Crickley Hill as accessible to as many people as possible but due to the wild nature of the site this has been challenging. The Tramper we now have based here changes all that and means people who have difficulty walking can explore much more when they visit including a lovely section of the Cotswolds Way National Trail.'

The scheme is now up and running, to book the Tramper please call 01452 863 170.

Trampers can go up and down slopes, over bumps and tree roots, through shallow puddles, mud and soft ground. With a top speed of four miles an hour they can keep pace with the briskest walking companion. They are for use by anyone aged 14 or over who has a permanent or temporary condition that affects their ability to walk.

James Maben from Countryside Mobility said: 'Trampers are for everyone who wants to enjoy the countryside but can't manage much walking. You do not have to be registered as a disabled person, or have a Blue Badge. Many people have found that Trampers have given them back their freedom.' The scheme operates on similar principles to Shopmobility. People become members of Countryside Mobility, are trained to use the Tramper and can then hire one from any site where they are available.

The initiative has been supported with a grant from Natural England as part of its Access to Nature programme, funded from the Big Lottery's Changing Spaces programme.

Full details about Countryside Mobility, how to hire a Tramper and where they are available can be found <https://www.countrysidemobility.org>