

Lydiard Millicent Footpaths Working Party Report 25/04/22

On November 6th last year a “Meet the Councillors” event was held to enable parishioners to express what they considered to be the most important things that needed to be done in and around the parish. The subject which most people identified was the need to maintain and improve public rights of way. Residents clearly appreciate having these facilities, and recreational walking has increased following the pandemic.

In order to address this need councillors held a meeting with Stephen Leonard (Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Officer) in early December to discuss the best way forward. As a result it was proposed to copy the example that Purton has already successfully developed, that is forming a group of volunteers who will be responsible for auditing and maintaining rights of way.

This project was formally defined in the document “Green Spaces and Footpaths Outline Plan and Budget” of 06/01/22 enlarging on Approach, Milestones and Timelines and Budget. In March a Footpaths Working Party was set up to progress the project.

So far the FWP has obtained detailed information from the Purton Parish Clerk on the setting up and running of their volunteer groups, together with costs and potential grant assistance available.

We also have copies of “Walks Around Lydiard Millicent”, booklets which describe fourteen walks around footpaths in the parish ranging from three and a half to seven miles, (although these need to be amended to include footpath references and degrees of difficulty before reprinting). Nevertheless once amended they will provide a valuable resource for walkers.

To attract potential volunteers to carry out the maintenance an appeal was posted on Facebook in April and a number of people have already expressed their interest. This will be followed by an appeal in the May Lydiard magazine. In mid May all those who have expressed an interest will be invited to attend an introductory meeting, after which it is planned to start footpath maintenance by volunteer groups.

The Ramblers Association is also being contacted in order to build a relationship for exchanging information on the condition of paths and suggestions for improvement.

It is also proposed that meetings will be held twice yearly in the parish between the FWP, the volunteers, the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Officer and parishioners.

The purpose of the meetings will be to discuss and resolve any issues that have arisen during the previous six months, and to agree any changes required to further improve the process.