

Members are requested to NOTE this report and CONSIDER the recommendations

A meeting of the Working Party has taken place.

Background

At the Parish Council meeting 3rd March 2022 (minute reference 249.21), Councillors approved a project to clear and enhance footpath LMIL38 (Greatfield to Lydiard Green). For the first part of the project, it was agreed to employ a contractor to:

- Strim the undergrowth and clear overhead branches (debris to be stacked in tidy position)
- Clear and re dig ditch using mini digger
- Add stone to create a hard surface track 1.5m wide
- Cut and remove the bramble thickets next to the pillbox on Lydiard Green.

Estimated costs for the this were £2,680 (excl VAT). This work has now been completed by the contractor and the invoice received.

It was also noted originally that there is a tree overhanging the pillbox on the green which would need permission to remove at a cost of approximately £200. The next phase of the project is to erect interpretation boards showing the history of the pillboxes and how the war affected Lydiard Millicent. The total estimated costs were £6,640 with £7,000 approved, including a grant of £3,000 from the Area Board.

Now that this stage of the work has been completed, it has been noted that several trees on the Green at the side of the road may also need cutting back for which permission may be needed. There are overhead power/telephone lines (including the telephone line to the farm) which run through the trees so care must be taken to ensure these are kept clear.

The area of the Green behind number 8 has been cleared and at the moment looks completely bare which has raised concerns with the residents. It has been described as looking “like the Somme” but once it rains a lot of the previous vegetation will grow back. The clearance means that the size of this area looks larger than when it was covered in brambles and nettles.

We need to agree whether to leave this area to nature which will allow nettles, brambles and other such plants to regrow or whether to sow grass and wild flower seeds and make efforts to make it more attractive than previously. Our original plan was to ensure that the two pillboxes on the farmland were visible from the footpath.

The area of Green next to the road has now been included in the grounds maintenance contract along with the Cemetery and JCH and other areas in the village which are maintained by the Contractor.

The Footpath Group, headed by Amelia Claydon-Smith, can now take over maintenance of the footpath behind number 8. In order to make the whole path usable, more signage and improved access is needed particularly around the farm further along the path towards Greatfield.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

The Footpath Working Party recommend:

- Councillor Cole becomes the Council representative to the Footpath Volunteer Group, their activities to be reported under Council and Community representation
- Photographs of trees to be taken, the Clerk to liaise with WC regarding tree management and permissions required for tree works
- Decision to be made on either regrowth of environment or sowing of seeds
- Working Party to move forward with information for notice board content