

Members are requested to:

- NOTE this report, with the information provided to be passed to the new Footpath Working Party
- CONSIDER the Project for submission to the Area Board
- NOTE the other requests received for the Working Party to consider

Area Board Grant

The Clerk was asked to contact the Area Board regarding the £3,000 grant awarded to the Parish Council for a footpath project that was subsequently abandoned.

The Area Board responded as follows:

Please can you submit a community grant application specific to the new project and the creation of a new footpath, ready for the March Area Board meeting. The meeting is on the 15th March and the application deadline is 4 weeks prior to this. This gives around 6 weeks for you to confirm costs and a project plan, I hope this works for the parish and please let me know if you need anything else. In general, the Councillors understand the need and are supportive.

The Area Board has been made aware that the Council will be considering the recommendations from the Working Party at the 3rd March Parish meeting, and has agreed with the timescale.

Proposal from Councillors who wish to form a Footpath Working Party. (Cllrs Allsop, Cole, Hacker, Hill-Wheeler and Selwood)

This is to be a four stage project

- a. To clear and enhance the long neglected Footpath 38 from Greatfield (near Garden Centre) to Lydiard Green (Pillbox) and clear the areas around the pillboxes that are alongside the footpath
- b. To create a Historical Walk to encompass the pillboxes, explaining their history via the installation of an interpretation board
- c. To connect Footpath 38 to Footpath 45

Recommendation:

Members to AGREE to the proposal as presented, and REQUEST the Working Party and Clerk attain the costs associated with a and b above – for consideration at the next Parish Meeting.

TO NOTE the following:

Other Areas of Work for the Working Party to discuss:

Community Meeting

At the community event held in November, improving footpaths was one of the most popular suggestions (16 gold stars) and stiles were also raised

December Parish Meeting - Minutes

Members AGREED to discuss further at the next meeting, the following points: the formation of a working party, possible clearance of overgrowth by Handyman/Volunteers, checking that all footpaths are accessible, repair of stiles, digital map of footpaths, a noticeboard displaying footpaths and other Points of Interest in the Parish. The creation of a safe footpath across the Neighbourhood Field. The Council to consider using funds from the ear marked reserves set aside for Parish Projects. Clerk to check ownership of stiles with WC Countryside Access Officer.

Councillor Meeting with WC Countryside Access Officer

Councillor Cole and Councillor Hill-Wheeler have met with Stephen Leonard on how to progress footpaths within the Parish. A full report on this meeting will be presented to the Working Party members by Councillors Cole and Hill-Wheeler, to help formulate the aims and objectives of the Working Party.

January Parish Meeting – Public Question Time and subsequent email received from another resident

- During Public Question Time – A resident asked if CATG could be approached to finish the Lydiard Green footpath started in 2013, that was to be created in 10 phases. Phases 1-4 has been completed, but phases 5 -10 need to be done to complete the path - Bagbury Industrial Park to bottom of Greensend. He asked if the Council could investigate, he agreed to pass to additional information to the Council.
- Email received: Regarding the extension to the Lydiard Green footpath. In about 2014 when the footpath was initially proposed and they were gauging residents' opinions. They assured me that the path would only be constructed as far as Bagbury Park (which is what happened) and that it could not be extended any further ie towards Greenhill, as that would entail purchasing land at the end of their gardens from homeowners on that side of the road as there was no 'space' otherwise to have a path. Narrowing the road to accommodate a path was not viable during to safety concerns especially on the bend.

Rights of Way Responsibilities

The duty to maintain the Public Rights of Way network is shared between Wiltshire Council, as the Highway Authority, and the landowners/occupiers of the land over which the path exists

Wiltshire Council Responsibilities

- Making sure Public Rights of Way are free from obstructions.
- Clearance of vegetation growing from the surface of the path.
- Signposting rights of way where they leave a road and waymarking the route where appropriate.
- Maintaining bridges over natural watercourses.
- To provide a minimum of 25% contribution towards any costs incurred by a landowner in maintaining stiles and gates on Public Rights of Way.

Landowner Responsibilities

- Maintain stiles, gates and other boundary crossings.
- Obtain consent from Wiltshire Council Highway Authority before erecting new stiles or gates on Public Rights of Way.
- Cut back encroaching hedges or overhanging vegetation that is growing from their land.
- Keep paths clear of obstructions, such as padlocked gates, electric fences etc.
- Make sure that no misleading signs are placed near Rights of Way that might deter people from using the path.
- Cross-field footpaths and bridleways (but not byways) can be ploughed where it cannot reasonably be avoided as long as they are reinstated within two weeks of ploughing.
- Field paths must be kept clear of crops to the width recorded in the Definitive Statement or, where no width is recorded, a minimum width of:
Footpath: 1m across field and 1.5m field edge
Bridleway: 2m across field and 3m field edge
Other Rights of Way: 3m across field and 5m field edge