

Footpaths Working Party Report June 2022

Appeal for volunteers

In response to the articles in the Lydiard magazine and on our website in May , fourteen people expressed an interest in volunteering for footpath maintenance in the parish, of whom nine attended the subsequent meeting on Thursday 26th May (see notes from meeting below).

During the meeting each volunteer was given a copy of the volunteer contractor agreement (identical to that currently used by Purton Parish Council for their volunteers). This makes clear that the volunteers are an autonomous group who are responsible for their own risk assessments and training. There was subsequently much discussion about the document, with a number of people being unhappy with the content although perfectly content to proceed with the job without signing the document. There was also some discussion about insurance and the need for more detail.

The need for a coordinator was also discussed, and the group were asked if anyone would be willing to have a go at this crucial role. Since the meeting Amelie Claydon-Smith has kindly stepped forward.

Since the meeting, to comply with data protection, each volunteer has been asked to confirm that they are happy for their email addresses to be shared among the group, and we are in the process of receiving their replies. Once done Amelie can start to communicate priorities to members of group.

Footpath Volunteer Insurance.

In response to my request Mr Richard Collins the Purton Parish Council Finance Officer provided the following information re their insurance for footpath volunteers.

“The Footpaths Team works independently, unsupervised and untrained by the council, and use potentially hazardous equipment. Although the council’s general cover includes volunteers it was felt that this goes beyond and they should have separate cover. Our policy is with Hiscox and has £10,000,000 cover for both Public Liability and Employer’s Liability plus cover for personal injury/death. It also includes many other things that we don’t really require but they are just part of the standard policy. cost £369 this year, from the £1,000 budget also covering materials and PPE.”

Recommendations from the Working Party

The Working Party would like the Council to consider the following:

1/ Set up an annual budget of £1,000 for footpath maintenance to cover the following:

Insurance for volunteers (see further details above).

Footpath consumables, eg 3 types of nail, staples, marking paint, PPE (gloves, first aid kits), etc.

2/ Consider whether Volunteer Contract Agreement is really necessary. Can our Parish Clerk research whether this is normal practice?
Can volunteers start maintenance now, while this subject is discussed further?

3/ Please can Parish Clerk consult with Purton Council (probably best contact is Richard Collins, Finance Officer) to get further details of their insurance for Footpath Volunteers?