

Report to Southern Wiltshire Area Board
Date of meeting 28 January 2016
Title of report Village Maintenance

Purpose of the Report:

To outline proposals to work with River Bourne Community Farm (RBCF) to offer a comprehensive range of village maintenance services, from Speed Indicator Device (SID) deployment to footpath maintenance.

The proposal:

RBCF are equipped to provide maintenance tasks for parish councils in Southern Wiltshire, including taking on the footpath project.

The benefits of working with a community organisation to provide such services are clear:

- It would provide a responsive and well-equipped local maintenance contractor
- RBCF are skilled in involving volunteers in maintenance tasks and can facilitate communities doing things for themselves
- Helps provide RBCF with income and opportunities thus supports the aims and objectives of the community farm

As a first step, parish councils might like to invite RBCF to tender for any maintenance work that arises in their parish. This would be done without commitment on either side. This would allow RBCF to build up experience of parish council work, with a view to publishing a tariff of charges in around 12 months, in the hope of becoming a preferred supplier to our parish councils. This could also include volunteer involvement where agreed between parish and RBCF. Parishes would pay per job directly to RBCF.

The Strimmer Project

At the last meeting, the Area Board agreed to fund 2 strimmers plus the associated training costs. Winterslow footpath group and Coombe Bissett and Homington Active Volunteers would take on the strimmers and commit 2 volunteers each to get trained up to use the tool.

Since then, RBCF have suggested that they can store, maintain and sign in/out the equipment to ensure access by a larger number of volunteer groups to the same tools. Also, they currently have machinery to maintain and provide mixed fuel for, therefore making it much easier for volunteers to use. By pooling the strimmers it will allow resources to be shared across more parishes and ensure the kit is well maintained. RBCF can also host the strimmer training for volunteers.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Area Board:

- Invites Parish Councils to give RBCF an opportunity to quote for work in the parish.
- Nominates RBCF as the custodian of the strimmers, maintaining them and loaning them out to trained volunteers across all 15 of Southern Wiltshire's parishes. A procedure is to be agreed between RBCF and parishes for loaning the equipment.

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