

Report to	Southern Wiltshire Area Board
Date of Meeting	7 December 2011
Title of Report	Finger Posts in South West Wiltshire

Purpose of Report

1. To allocate funding of up to £350 to Parish Councils who have registered their requirements with Highways and/or Community Area Manager of replacing or refurbishing finger posts on the highway in their area.

Parish Council	Amount
Donhead St Andrew	£350
Swallowcliffe Parish Council	£350
Segehill & Semley	£350
Tisbury	£350
TOTAL	£1400

- 1.1 The Area Board has emailed all Parishes in South West Wiltshire making them aware of the funding available from the Board to replace or refurbish finger post signs.
- 1.2 The email is attached to this report which sets out the scheme in more detail.
- 1.3 The Board has received 4 requests for this funding from the Parish Councils listed in the table above.

Recommendation: To approve the funding as set out in the table above with the condition that each Parish Council that receives funding to replace or refurbish a finger post must provide evidence of doing so within twelve months.

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Copy of the email sent to Parish Councils on 7th September 2011

At the recent Community Areas Transport Group (CATG) meeting it was decided to recommend part-funding of fingerposts for parishes. I attach an extract of a note written by our Local Roads Manager which gives the background. Also enclosed is a specification and price list.

In order to establish the scope of any expenditure, I am canvassing parishes for requests and, based on the returns, the Area Board will be asked to decide on a financial contribution. If the numbers are manageable the Board may be recommended to contribute up to £200.

Could you let me know your council's thoughts, in particular whether you would want to purchase a fingerpost with some Area Board funding assistance. Any reply will not commit you to purchase at all but it will give me a broad idea of potential take-up. Therefore I would not see it necessary to discuss at a formal council meeting. It may well be you know the answer already or a quick 'ring round' may elicit outline views. That's all I need at this stage. If you could let me know by 3 October that would be excellent, but don't worry if that is too short a deadline – let me know when you can.

Richard Munro

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Wiltshire Council Wooden Fingerposts Specification & Price List **April 2011**

Specifications

Timber must be of high quality, if service life is to exceed five years.

Posts: Tanalised spruce from sustainable source – 10' long, 6" x 6" square section.

Post detail: 2¼" weather 4 sided top to shed water; 4" space/gap to top arm, 2" space/gap to 2nd arm, 2" gap to chamfered corners on post which extends to within 15" of post base. Posts base to be left square.

Arms: Non tanalised spruce from a sustainable source 1¼" thick. Arms up to 6' long for double arm, 3' long for single arm.

Arm depth 7" or 9" depending on amount of lettering. Arms to be secured right through post by ½" hardwood dowels, 2 dowels per arm, tight interference fit.

Letters: Options are clean off and reuse existing letters if available; manufacture replacement letters in ¼" birch faced plywood or supply new metal lettering.

Paint Specification

It is assumed that all paints are of high quality and for outdoor use.

1 coat all purpose primer all over to bare wood, then fit letters.

1 coat white undercoat all over posts arms and letters.

- where post is white, 2nd coat of white undercoat

- where post is black, 2nd coat of grey undercoat

1 coat of white gloss where white

1 coat of black gloss where black

Rub down painted over letters to provide key then paint black, to match posts.

Posts – equal bands of black and white, approximately 18" starting with black at top. The black should extend to 2" below the lower edge of the bottom arm.

Prices

Manufacture replacement timber fingerposts to attached specification, sketch and example photographs. All prices ex VAT.

Single arm post: £556.00

Double arm post 180 degree orientation: £709.50

Double arm post 90 degree orientation: £807.50

Triple arm post: £910.00

Four arm post: £1,155.00

Above prices assume refurbishment and reuse of metal lettering from client's existing signs. Where old lettering is unavailable, price allows for replacement plywood lettering, as necessary. We can supply new metal letters at additional cost.

e/o supply new metal letters/numerals each: £13.85.

Maintenance of Wooden Fingerposts

Fingerposts are a very important part of the appearance of many of our rural roads and the restoration of them has been a personal project of my own since we began making them again in 2003. This followed a gap of nine years, when funds had been very short and such things could not be done. I am not willing to see if maintenance of these features ceases and so I am offering a number of options, which I hope the Council will consider very carefully. Any of these may enable us to not only continue but possibly increase the number of posts we restore.

I have had an indicative price list prepared and a copy this is enclosed, with this letter. It is the nature of these signs to be unique. It is also the case that we never know how many of the metal letters we may be able to recover from the old sign. (These are no longer made and so we have to cut our own.) It is because of these factors that each sign will be priced individually.

One of the most difficult aspects of replacing a sign, for a Parish Council is the installation. This involves researching all of the underground services in the area and dealing with the requirement of opening the verge. It also requires the highest level of public liability insurance, at £10 Million. It is in the light of this that I am offering an installation service to any Council wishing to fund the manufacturing costs of a new or refurbished wooden fingerpost. The costs associated with the removal or recovery of old signs and the planting of the new vary between £200 and £375. My resources are limited, as this letter suggests but I believe that I may be able to fund two or three dozen across Wiltshire each year by using the workforce that we have. If demand is strong I will look at other ways of funding this activity as I wish to assist as much as the Council can.

As an option to this arrangement a local Council may choose to seek additional funding in the form of a grant from another area. Options may include an AONB, an Area Board C.A.T Group or a private sponsor. The Cranborne Chase and North Wessex Downs AONB are most interested in these signs and appreciate the contribution that they make to the landscape. In such cases I would ask that the bid include a request for an additional £200 to contribute to the cost of the installation, which your local Highways team will arrange.

As a further option a local Council may wish to have the sign made by a local craftsman. In this case we can provide a detailed specification of the types of wood, the dimensions, the paints and how to refurbish or cut letters. I am certain that, if the letters presented a problem we could have them cut and supplied by our own craftsman. This approach has already been very successful, where we have supplied the materials to a Parish, to be assembled and painted by a local skilled carpenter. It is important that the Wiltshire specification is adhered to because it is the very appearance of the Counties signs helps to define our home from our neighbouring counties. Quality of manufacture can, regrettably, become an issue. In such cases I would ask that the bid include a request for an additional £200 to contribute to the cost of the installation, which your local Highways team will arrange.

I must insist that our Wiltshire specification is adhered to. This is because I do know of a tradesman who made a number of signs for a Parish in 2007 using inferior timber and inappropriate construction. One sign failed within two months and most of the others have had to be replaced.

The replacement of metal fingerposts, of the type used briefly during the 1990's will not form a part of this arrangement. These will be maintained by ourselves with regard to missing arms and only replaced with timber ones when the signs are lost or damaged beyond repair. In the event that a Parish would prefer to see a metal sign replaced by a wooden one, this can be arranged at the expense of the Parish.

These signs are not used on A or B class routes, as they do not conform to current traffic signs regulations. Wooden finger posts are not reflective and the letter size is simply too small to be read at any speed. The locations of these signs and the destinations, which they describe, must be as they were on the previous sign. Any new signs or requests for alteration to destinations must be agreed with the County Signs Engineer. Local buildings or other facilities are not previously signed

using these posts – they are road signs and may only be used to direct travellers to other nearby places. This can now be varied but only for public destinations such as churches, the village hall or recognised buildings of interest. I think that it is very important that we do not lose sight of the fact that, whoever is funding the signs, the objective of maintaining road safety and the appearance of the rural road scene must remain paramount in what we do.