

Malmesbury Area Board Footpath Group

Malmesbury Area Board Footpath Group was set up to coordinate and support the different parish teams of volunteers who look after local paths. A well-attended meeting was held online and all the parishes in the area have been asked for a SPOC (single point of contact) for the future. The shift of Area Board grant money towards the new LHFIGs (Local Highway and Footway Improvement Groups) should mean more funding is available for projects to make rights of way easily accessible and to improve links between communities. Additional funding could also be sought by dedicating new gates in memory of relatives or even dogs, or sponsorship from local businesses/individuals.

As well as Group meetings to share ideas, it is planned to have a website with links to various relevant pages, for example FAQs on the law on rights of way, on procedure including insurance issues for work parties, on approved suppliers of gates. Among other aims, Wiltshire Council is keen to replace stiles with gates or to even remove them altogether depending on whether they are required for stock control and landowner permission. While alterations to stiles require Section 147 authorisation (Highways Act 1980), we will aim to streamline this process for the groups.

Next event: It is hoped that a training day on installing gates will be arranged shortly for groups who are interested.