

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD

3 December 2015

Footpath project update

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the following:

- Volunteer Coordinator post
- Footpath event planned for April 2016
- Strimmer initiative

2. Volunteer Coordinator post

Due to the success of the project over the last 18 months, additional funding has been secured from Wiltshire Council's Public Health team to keep the Volunteer Coordinator position going until October 2016. The main focus of the work going forward will be to develop templates for communities to set up and run their own local footpath groups and work sessions. We will continue to work with River Bourne Community Farm, who employs the volunteer coordinator, Abby Sullivan.

3. Footpath event

As part of the move to get local footpath groups up and running across Southern Wiltshire we will be holding an event to showcase the footpath project, offering practical sessions on improving footpaths, legal issues and local environment. We are planning to hold the event at Hazel Hill Wood, which will enable us to incorporate hands on work in a beautiful countryside setting. This event will be held in April 2016 (exact date TBC). The event will be open to parish councils, members of the public and interested stakeholder groups. The aim of the event is to provide practical insight into setting up and running local footpaths groups and activity days across the Southern Wiltshire community area.

4. Strimmer initiative

To support local footpath groups we would like to provide some start-up kit as a pilot project. In particular multipurpose machinery that will enable volunteers to deal with annual growth on the footpaths. So far Winterslow's footpath group and Coombe Bissett's Active Volunteer group, both working alongside their respective parish council, have expressed an interest. Any volunteers using this machinery would need to be fully trained and as part of the project we would look to train nominated members of these groups. We have identified a local training contractor from who is able to run the training for up to 6 people per session. I would suggest 2 people from each group would suffice. The training could be held at Hazel Hill

Wood, Farley. This project would provide valuable insight for future initiatives and a full evaluation would be brought back to the Area Board in 6 months.

Costing:

Multipurpose machine tools (£800) x2	£1600
Training (£180pp) x 4 people	£720
Additional costs (venue)	£150
Total	£2470

5. Recommendations

- That the Area Board agrees to set aside £2470 for this project but request that parish councils consider contributing to the one off training costs for the volunteers.
- That an evaluation of this project be brought back to the Board in 6 months.

Report Author: Tom Bray Community Area Manager
Tel No: 01722 434252
E-Mail: tom.bray@wiltshire.gov.uk