

Update for Malmesbury Area Board

Update From: Sherston Parish Council

Date of Area Board Meeting: 3 March 2010

Projects: Community Payback Scheme

- At the March 2009 meeting of the Malmesbury Area Pilot Board a presentation was given on behalf of Wiltshire Probation Service on the community payback scheme under which offenders sentenced by the Courts undertake unpaid work.
- We have had two successful projects in our parish carried out by the scheme. The first was a straightforward clear up of untidy vegetation alongside our skateboard park in October of last year. The second has been much longer and more complex.
- With the benefit of a grant from the former Area 1 Committee of NWDC we leased Grove Wood in 2008 for use as community woodland. The wood had not been managed at all for many years and much work was and is still required to it. In particular 500m of stock proof fence had to be replaced which was looking extremely expensive to complete particularly the labour element. The payback team has however taken this on and after clearing the entire old fence line, which was completely overgrown, will have finished installing the new fence by the end of February. The terrain is not at all easy as the ground is very stony with some 200m of the fence having to be constructed on a steep incline.
- We have been very impressed with the payback team's work on the fence as have neighbouring landowners. The winter weather has caused unavoidable cancellations of work days but we but we have always been informed of any difficulties in attendance when they arise. Two lady residents of Sherston volunteered to assist with supervision of the team and after attending a short training course found the experience rewarding.

- One problem has been the necessity to provide proper toilet facilities for the team. As the wood is some way from the nearest facilities we recently hired a portaloo so as to overcome the team having to leave the site.
- There is some paperwork to complete when first requesting the team for a particular project as well as an assessment visit. Whilst this process can take some time it is however not too onerous and help is forthcoming from the Probation Service should there be any difficulties.
- We have further projects in the pipeline for later in the year including footpath maintenance and construction. In addition our Village Hall is looking for assistance in repainting the building inside and out
- Our experience of the community payback scheme has been most positive and would heartily recommend it to other local councils and community groups.

Signed: Martin Rea (Vice Chairman)

Dated: 18.02.2010