

Chairman's Announcements

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| Subject: | Paths for Communities – Grant Opportunity for Parishes |
| Officer Contact Details: | Michael Crook, Countryside Access Development Officer 01225 713349 |
| Weblink: | http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/rightsofway/p4c.aspx |
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Summary of Announcement:

Natural England has launched a new Paths For Communities Grant scheme enabling community groups and partnerships to improve their local public rights of way network. The fund totals £2 million, to be spent before May 2014.

Paths For Communities grant is designed to improve the rights of way network and must include a new right of way either in the form of a new physical path or higher rights such as upgrading a footpath to a bridleway or restricted byway. Funding has come from the Rural Development Programme for England and any scheme must be able to demonstrate benefit to the rural economy and rural populations.

Applications for funding from £5,000 to £150,000 can be submitted by local communities or broader partnerships. Landowner support, in agreeing a voluntary path creation, is essential at the outset. The Fund is open NOW and all application agreements have to be made by the end of December 2013. The process is competitive so it's important to ensure your project secures as many benefits as possible.

As with all grants no work on the project can start before the application is approved. Natural England's Local Grants Officer will discuss any potential projects with the applicant following submission of an initial "Expression of Interest". This form is available on the website above.

Normally 75% of the project will be funded and no additional public funding is allowed for the remaining 25% and this includes National Lottery money. However, there is some flexibility to allow up to 100% funding.