

**SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD
(26 July 2012)**

Rights of Way – The Next Steps

Purpose of the Report

To set out our initial recommendations for progressing the Rights of Way collaborative maintenance programme as part of our theme for 2012.

Background:

As was discussed at the previous meeting, residents identified footpaths as a theme for 2012/13. A key reason for this was that Rights of Way represent an achievable and practical project that we can address as a Community Area.

So far we have asked parish councils to focus on the capital requirements to improve the rights of ways in their parishes. This has been determined by local parish representatives and residents walking the footpaths, creating an audit of the requirements and also documenting the maintenance issues such as over grown areas and poor surface conditions.

The requirements:

The enclosed table brings together all the requirements of the participating parishes to give a rough estimate of how much funding needs to be sought. Larger version at the back of report.

Southern Wiltshire Area Board - Rights of Way Theme 2012 - Capital Requirements

Parish Council	Footpath rep	Document submitted	Stiles	Kissing Gates	Gates	Signage	Waymarkers	Footbridge repairs	
Alderbury	Jane Copley	Alderbury Parish Council Footpath Inspection		3	1		3	2	
Coombe Bissett	?	Email from clerk			1				
Downton	Susan Barnhurst Davies	Downton application form to PIGS			11				
Grimstead	Sara White & Hayley Clark	Grimstead's submission (table & email)	7	14	3	1			
Landford	Mike Craddock & team	Reports 1&2 - plus email		17		1		1	
Pitton & Farley	Alan Shaw	PITTON and FARLEY – PATH SURVEY JULY 2012	2			7		1	
Whiteparish	Peter Jones	Whiteparish Rights of Way Maintenance	9	10	2				
Laverstock	Kat Hill	Email from clerk			1				
Odstock	Colin Berry	Email from clerk & map Avon Valley walk			7				
Further issues									
	Whaddon - Grimstead New Footpath								
	Landford to Nomansland Improve surface, gates etc.			2					
TOTAL REQUIRED (FULL)			21	64	5	12	2	2	
									TOTAL
Estimated cost			£462.00	£13,504.00	£600.00	£1,500.00	£16.00	£400.00	£16,482.00
Approximate costs per item			£22	£211	£120	£125	£8	£200	
Estimates are from RoW team and do not include VAT:			Per stile materials	Per Kissing Gate	Per gate	Per wooden finger post signage	Per waymarker	Per repair - very rough estimate!	
Estimated cost plus VAT at 20%			£554.40	£16,204.80	£720.00	£1,800.00	£19.20	£480.00	£19,778.40
Total for new improvements including VAT									£16,924.80

Note: The submissions made by PCs/footpath groups have been analysed by Tom Bray and therefore the required amount was deduced from their submission. It can be updated if not correct.

KEY

Grey area denotes items that could be achieved through RoW maintenance works

Non-shaded areas denote an access improvement from stile to gate.

It is important to note that although there is a total of 64 kissing gates being requested, it is likely that some will not be given permission by the landowners. Therefore, as we have had a really impressive take-up from parishes, Nick Cowen, Rights of Way Warden, suggested that in order to prioritise our funding, the Area Board project could centre on the improvement projects such as changing old stiles into kissing gates. Therefore more maintenance-type issues, like bridge repairs, could be dealt with by RoW team.

Taking this into account, and not including installation in the overall costings, we predict that we might need **approximately £15,000** to achieve all the kissing gates required.

The funding:

Possible funding streams are:

1. **Area Board theme funding** – To decide *an upper limit* that the Board would be prepared to put towards the project. **Recommended £8,000**
2. **Paths Improvement Grant Scheme** – Coordinator is keen to assist our project and will consider setting aside an amount to contribute to the project when landowner permission has been sought.
3. **New Forest National Park Authority** – Councillor Randall is liaising with the NPA to determine how much it might be willing to contribute. Also dependent on landowner consent.
4. **Parish Councils** – We have written to participating parish councils asking them to consider contributing to the funding.

The process:

Well done to all those parish councils and volunteers who did the physical work of walking the paths to find out what would improve our Rights of Way across the Community Area. To take this project to the next step we need to do the following:

	Task	When & Who
1	Area Board consider an amount it would be happy to set aside to fund Rights of Way improvements across the Community Area	Area Board – 26 July 2012
2	Parish Councils/Footpath Groups determine the following: 1. Permission from landowner for new kissing gates etc. Written consent is required. (Assistance from Nick Cowen) 2. Consider appropriate access for a vehicle to deliver materials to site of new gates etc. (Assistance from Nick Cowen)	Participating parishes – Now to end of August 2012

	3. Parish Council's determine how much funding they would be prepared to contribute to the project.	
3	Finalise list of requirements after landowner permission/access confirmed	Area Board to compile revised list – 20 August
4	Confirm funding streams amounts available: PIGS, NFNPA, Parish Councils	20 – 27 th August
5	Representatives from parish councils/footpath groups/Ramblers/RoW team to meet to discuss necessary prioritisation, logistics for installing new gates etc., and put together final funding bid to Area Board for confirmed amount.	1 st week of September – Tom B to organise. Report to Area Board on 27 September.
6	Bulk purchase of equipment by RoW team	Nick Cowen – 27 September onwards
7	Installations to be determined during stakeholder meeting discussed at point 5 above.	

Walks publication

As discussed previously, the idea is to produce a series of walks (short and long) in our community area to promote walking and enjoying our countryside. The walks could link up to special places of interest and also local shops and pubs.

In order to achieve this I would like to discuss this with the footpath representatives of each parish therefore it will form an agenda item at the meeting suggested in the above table (point 5).

Discussion

The amount of work that people have put in so far is impressive. It shows that we have some great people across our patch willing to put in the work so that the wider community can benefit and enjoy the countryside.

Although this project is about delivering new and improved physical infrastructure, it is also about developing community resilience too. Through this project we would also like people to help with installing the new gates, learning new skills and volunteering in the community which could serve to build up a greater sense of community stewardship over the rights of way across the community area.

There might be some issues with installation therefore a paid contractor might be more appropriate. However, although it might increase our costs somewhat to use a contractor to install the new gates, perhaps more importantly, we could miss out on a huge opportunity for people to get involved. The meeting of parish representatives will discuss this issue in more detail.

Recommendation:

That the Area Board sets aside a **maximum of £8,000** towards the footpath capital requirements; however it should seek proportionate funding from the other sources listed above to limit the amount of Area Board funding required.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Table of requirements

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