

SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD
(27 September 2012)

Progress report: Rights of Way project

Purpose of the Report

To update the Area Board on the progress of this project.

Progress Report:

Following the Area Board's decision at its last meeting to back this project, a cross-parish meeting took place on August 7th where the development of this footpath project was discussed. In short, we are focusing on improving access to our footpaths by replacing around 80 old stiles with new kissing gates.

Number of gates:

Parishes and footpath groups were tasked with getting landowner consent for each of the sites suggested. So far we have written consent for approximately 38 kissing gates across the area. We are awaiting confirmation for another 41 gates.

A local supplier of wooden gates has been identified and they have started to make 5 gates that will be used in the New Forest National Park area. The first gate was installed on 17 September 2012 in Landford.

We have also made an order for the first batch of metal gates. These will be arriving the next few weeks.

Funding:

At the last meeting the Area Board set aside £8,000, Wiltshire Council's PIG scheme has confirmed £5,000, the New Forest National Park Authority has agreed to fund gates which are in, or which lead to, the New Forest and a number of Parish Councils have confirmed their financial contributions towards the project totalling £3175 and we are awaiting further confirmations.

Installing the gates – volunteer recruitment:

Our campaign to recruit volunteers is now underway. We have had about 8 people sign up online so far but we will need parishes to recruit people locally. Volunteers are urged to sign up online. The new website outlines the project in full and can be accessed here:

www.southernwiltshirewalks.weebly.com

We would like to recruit local tradesmen to help with the installations in return for some advertising in the walks publication. We will be working with the Ramblers who will assist with volunteer training.

Walks publication

At the cross-parish footpath meeting Susan Barnhurst-Davies from Downton agreed to take a lead role in this project. We will be discussing how to advance this project on Monday 17th September and will report at the meeting.

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. The publication would also advertise the local businesses who installed kissing gates. It would be made available throughout the community area.

Report Author: Councillor Leo Randall & Tom Bray

Tel No: 01722 434252

E-Mail: tom.bray@wiltshire.gov.uk