

FP Officers Report Sept 24

Since our last meeting, before the summer break, I'd like to confirm that I have been continuing, on an ad hoc basis as time allows, to keep the central village footpaths clear both underfoot, and to at least a metre wide, using the strimmer purchased by the Parish Council. As a result, no further costs have been incurred for FP maintenance since the invoice paid in May, for work completed the month prior.

We have finally had notification from Herefordshire Council of the PROW grant funding, first mentioned by them at the beginning of the year. I initially asked for £4k and subsequently requested a further £2k as it became apparent that more funds may be available.

I am pleased to say that the actual grant the Parish Council received, based on our detailed submission, was just short of £8k. Being public money it, of course, comes with several caveats, not least of which that it can only be claimed retrospectively, meaning money will need to be spent up front, and all invoices will need to be submitted by the end of this financial year. Both of which have the potential to present administrative difficulties moving forward.

It is hoped that installation work of gates and stiles will be able to be completed by a combination of the efforts of landowners, contractors and volunteers playing their part. The ubiquitous Risk Assessments will need completing before any work can be undertaken by myself, or any volunteers, and insurance cover will need to be in place.

For the work to be completed by either a contractor or a volunteer, written permission must be obtained from the landowner and submitted to Herefordshire when claiming the grant funding. Should landowners be kind enough to do the work themselves then a statement is still required from them to claim the funding.

None of this will be particularly easy from an administrative perspective and I rely totally on the goodwill, of all concerned, to make it happen and bring about what will hopefully be a vast improvement to the footpaths of our parish.

Additionally, it is hoped that the bridge over Blue Ditch, to the East of Kingsland, can be put back on its footings which will reopen that stretch of footpath towards Cholstrey.

Finally, at the last meeting, payment was authorised to professionally print and provide footpath leaflets for the use of our parishioners and visitors. A draft has now been produced and, subject to final approval by the Parish Council, will be printed as soon as possible.