

Lengthsman Update

2015/16 - Required expenditure

Although we have a significant budget pressure due to high uptake of the scheme, all contractual amounts will be made available to parishes subject to completion of the relevant paperwork and submission of evidence. However the invoices received to date for funding has been low and in order for us to ascertain the final position of the scheme and hence ensure we make adequate accruals we would ask that all parishes provide the following:

- Completion of the attached **Expenditure 2015/16 form** outlining your total expected expenditure for 2015/16 and indicating any grant that is not required to be submitted by March 2016
- Submission of **invoices and evidence** to support this expenditure to be received by May 2016. Invoices will not be accepted after this date.

Any unspent grant for 2015/16 will not be carried over to 2016/17.

2016/17 - Expression of interest

Following our previous briefing note you will be aware the following decision has been made in relation to next year (2016/17) schemes

1. **No further parishes to be accepted** into the Lengthsman and Parish Paths Partnership Schemes(P3)
2. Grant levels for 2016/17 for individual parishes to be maintained at 2015/16 levels.

In order for us to effectively plan the grant spending within our budgets we need the following information by the dates stated:

- **Expression of interest form** returned by end of February 2016
- **Annual Plan** returned by end of March 2016 clearly indicating required grant levels

However, if this does not fit with your parish meeting timetable then please contact us on Herefordshireparishes@bblivingplaces.com .

2017/18 – Proposed scheme

During budget consultation last year the scheme was not seen as a strategic priority for Herefordshire and indication was given that parishes should be encouraged to take on more responsibility for delivery of the services.

As a result we have been looking at options for reducing the grant funding from Herefordshire Council into the schemes over the period to 2019/2020. The following is the current recommendation:

- **Eligibility** – The schemes will be open to any parish that would like to join including those not previously in either of the lengthsman or P3 schemes
- **Mandatory contribution** - A contribution from the parish will be required in order to access either of the grants. The levels required are highlighted in the table below.
- **Lengthsman grant** – in 2017/18 the grant will be reduced to 25% of the level today ie £30/km and then reducing to £0 in subsequent years
- **P3 grant** - retained at 100% of the level today ie £50/km for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 and then reducing to £0 in subsequent years.

There are a number of factors in proposing that the schemes be weighted in favour of retaining longer the level of P3 grant:

- The PROW maintenance budget is limited and the P3 grant effectively tops this up by 100%. By reducing the grant would have significant impact on money spent on PROW maintenance in the county. The equivalent % of lengthsman to highway maintenance is small so would have little impact if removed.
- There has been for many years a significant backlog in repairs to PROW defects with only hazards and published routes being maintained. P3 grant has allowed an alternative means of getting some of this backlog reduced.
- PROW has many legal obligations so having access to funding for P3 can reduce financial risk from increased maintenance liability and legal challenge.
- Due to the requirement to have a volunteer Parish Paths Officer this means the grant has the added benefit in leveraging in significant volunteer support.

	Lengthsman grant		P3 grant	
	HC contribution	PC contribution	HC contribution	PC contribution
17/18	25%	£60/km	100%	£15/km
18/19	0%	100%	100%	£15/km
19/20	0%	100%	0	100%