

Parish Lengthsman Service

Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste

1. Summary

This report summarises the current Parish Lengthsman service, and explores the potential for community self help in undertaking highway drainage and cleaning works.

2. Background/Introduction

The June 2014 meeting of Place Scrutiny considered a report on working with Town and Parish Councils and Communication in relation to Highways and resolved that:

“a further report be submitted to the Committee on current practice and future options for the operation of the Parish Lengthsman service, including joint working with Town and Parish Councils”.

3. Current Lengthsman Service

The Parish Lengthsmen carry out minor highway drainage maintenance and cleaning works on a regular basis. Each parish has a number of days allocated to this work, and in recent years Lengthsmen working in pairs have been programmed to visit each parish 4 times per year. As well as clearing drainage features, trimming vegetation to gain access to drainage and other outlets, clearing debris and weeds and keeping signs clean, the Parish Lengthsmen reports any larger problems and uses his detailed knowledge of the area to anticipate where problems may occur in future. The Neighbourhood Highway Officer advises Parish and Town Councils when the Lengthsmen are programmed to visit and prepares a schedule of work for Lengthsmen, including input from the local Councils.

Unfortunately as a result of last winter's weather the normal programmed Lengthsman Service was suspended for the first few months of 2014, with the operatives and budget being deployed on reactive priority clean up and repair work.

In addition to the works of the Lengthsmen, an annual clean of drainage features such as grips and easements, and hand cleaning of drainage gullies, has been separately funded. As part of the Tough Choices budget reductions this funding was withdrawn from this financial year. The annual clean has now become a significant part of the Lengthsmen's duties leaving less time available for locally determined highway drainage and cleaning activities.

The combination of the suspension of the Lengthsman service earlier this year and the programmed annual clean of drainage features will mean that the Lengthsmen are only likely to be available for locally determined highway drainage and cleaning activities for a few months of this financial year.

Options for budget savings for 2015/16 will include further reductions in Lengthsman service.

4. Joint Working with Parish and Town Councils

Several Parish or Town Councils, either individually or as a small group, have supplemented the Parish Lengthsman service by employing their own operative to undertake similar highway maintenance activities, or employing a suitably qualified contractor directly. Interest in this as a way forward has increased with the limitations of the Parish Lengthsman service this financial year.

South West Highways are able to provide additional visits by Lengthsmen operatives to undertake work funded and directed by Parish and Town Councils. The Community Payback Service are able to offer a cost effective alternative to local Councils to undertake additional cleaning and clearing works at low risk locations.

Agreement has been reached with several Parish and Town Councils over the years to “opt out” of the programmed Lengthsmen visits, and for the County Council to transfer the funding that would have been spent to the local Council, for them to arrange appropriate highway drainage and cleaning works directly. With the budget reductions for 2015/16 this is unlikely to be an option in the future.

5. Community Self Help and the Road Warden scheme

The value of community volunteers in supporting the County Council in maintaining the highway network is valued, and there is a desire to expand on the established Snow Warden and Parish Paths Partnership schemes.

We have provided eight half-day training sessions in highway safety awareness for over 80 Parish and Town Council representatives. The sessions aimed to:

- raise the profile of safety while working in the vicinity of the public highway;
- enable participants to conduct risk assessments;
- provide an understanding of the basic requirements of traffic management.

Fifteen participants have subsequently registered to do four day Chapter 8/Sector 12D - T1/T2 training. Further safety awareness training is planned, as people continue to register their interest.

A formal Road Warden scheme is being developed using the trained Parish and Town Council representatives. They will become designated wardens able to organise and supervise community volunteers to undertake highway maintenance tasks including:

- sign cleaning
- finger post maintenance
- weed pulling
- vegetation clearance
- footway cleaning
- clearing debris from gully covers
- grip cutting and clearing
- bus shelter cleaning
- grass cutting in low risk areas

Details of the outline scheme are attached at Appendix I, and the scheme is being launched at the Parish and Town Council conferences this month.

6. Financial Considerations

The Lengthsman Service is funded from the Highway Maintenance Revenue budget.

7. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations relating to this report.

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Electoral Divisions: All Divisions

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		

tm140814pls parish lengthsman service
hk 02 030914

COMMUNITY ROAD WARDEN SCHEME

COMMUNITY ROAD WARDEN SCHEME

A GUIDANCE NOTE

Introduction

This Guidance Note contains information for both Town and Parish Councils who would like to undertake minor road maintenance on a voluntary basis. This maintenance will be delivered through a formal community self-help arrangement, overseen by a locally appointed Road Warden.

Communities are encouraged to come together and help each other to deliver much needed minor maintenance works occurring due to service reductions as a result of declining local maintenance budgets. It is vital that community self-help is well managed in association with Devon County Council to ensure that the resources on offer are used effectively.

Road Warden

The Road Warden is the primary point of contact between the local community and Devon County Council (DCC). The Road Warden will act in a coordination role and help identify the appropriate training to be delivered to all community self help volunteers and keep an up-to-date register of active volunteers. This will ensure the necessary requirements are in place for volunteers to be covered by DCC's public liability insurance.

A Road Warden must:-

- Be nominated as suitable by the Town or Parish Council;
- Have received the appropriate training by DCC;
- Agree to work within the guidelines as set down by DCC;
- Be registered with DCC.

A Road Warden will:-

- Be responsible for working with the community to identify minor works that can be undertaken by community self-help volunteers;
- Be responsible for carrying out the appropriate risk assessments to ensure that all practical considerations and precautions are taken into account before starting any minor maintenance works;
- Be responsible for the organisation of any small works programme from planning through to delivery;
- Be responsible for liaising with DCC on a regular basis to ensure that the noticing of intended minor works is issued in good time.

Town / Parish Commitment

Devon County Council would like to encourage Parish & Town Councils to agree to:-

- **Register** with the Road Warden Scheme. This will identify the individual who will act as the Town/Parish Council point of contact and

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will be accountable to the local community through the Town or Parish Council;

- **Determine** minor works that can be undertaken by community self-help volunteers. Town and Parish Councils should be accountable to the local community to ensure that these minor works are carried out;
- **Take Responsibility** for delivering local self-help and, where appropriate, ensure that the arrangements for the supply of materials are carried out in good time;
- **Demonstrate** that arrangements are in place to enable the supply of materials to be stored safely and securely for use by the local community self-help group;
- **Communicate** on a regular basis with DCC to ensure that all work programmes are up-to-date, that risk assessments have been undertaken and recorded and that any advance notice of works has been completed.

Devon County Council Commitment

Devon County Council will commit to:-

- **Train** Road Wardens as an integral part of the Community Self Help initiative;
- **Supply**, where appropriate, a limited range of construction materials suitable for the works that are being undertaken in accordance with the agreed programme;
- **Provide Public Liability Insurance** (but not other forms of insurance) as identified within the scheme.

Health & Safety Training

Devon County Council will provide Highway Safety Awareness Workshop Training and additional training as appropriate, to both Town and Parish Council representatives to allow them to participate in the voluntary Community Self-Help initiative.

The nominated Town and Parish Council representative will be the designated Road Warden who will act as the community co-ordinator of the voluntary self-help scheme. Road Wardens will be given the appropriate training and will undertake the role at their own risk while they engage in minor maintenance work within the community.

The **Training** sessions will:-

- Outline the maintenance role to be undertaken by the Community Self-Help group and managed by the Road Warden;
- Look at a model for setting up a voluntary community self-help scheme;
- Consider how maintenance works will be carried out in a safe and responsible manner;
- Discuss the legal implications of self-help schemes;
- Understand how to undertake risk assessments appropriate for the type of minor maintenance work ;

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- Empower the designated Road Warden to be able to set up a community self-help scheme, to recruit, register and manage community volunteers;
- Consider the ordering, storage and use of material and equipment required for planned minor maintenance;
- Think about how the minor maintenance programme will be delivered, ensuring that all notifications have been posted in advance of works being started.

Public Liability

In the unlikely event of a claim being made, Devon County Council will cover the public liability aspect of insurance for voluntary maintenance work undertaken on or in the area of the public highway or footway, providing that it is undertaken in a safe manner according to Devon County Councils advice. This, for example, would cover any claims by third party as a result of the maintenance works, which the County Council would defend if those maintenance works were carried out in accordance with DCC guidance.

Devon County Council will not provide any other form of insurance cover for maintenance activities which must be undertaken at the **volunteer's own risk**. So, for example, any damage to one's own person, property or vehicle would not be covered. If vehicles are to be used (e.g. farmers using tractors) then they must ensure that the vehicle is suitably insured for such activity – if in doubt, owners should check with the vehicle's insurer. If a community group considers that further insurance cover is required, then this should be sought from their own insurance company.

Supply of Materials

Devon County Council will provide a limited range of construction materials for minor maintenance works for tasks that require specific materials.

Devon County Council will provide guidance about the safe storage and use of materials supplied to carry out specific maintenance activities. The Road Warden will ensure that materials are used appropriately and ensure that any left-over following the completion of works are disposed appropriately.

Benefits of Road Warden: Community Self-Help Schemes

The benefits of Town and Parish Councils registering to become a member are :-

- Empowering communities to take local action;
- Being in a position to co-ordinate local effort and resources to where it is most needed;
- Provide a communication network between community groups and DCC local area staff.

How to enquire about registering your Town or Parish Council

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If you already have regular contact with your Neighbourhood Highway Team, please contact them in the first instance about becoming involved and registering for the Road Warden: Community Self-Help scheme.

If you do not have a local contact, please call My Devon Customer Service Centre on 03845 155 1004 who will be able to link you with your local Neighbourhood Highway Team.

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August 2014

COMMUNITY ROAD WARDEN SCHEME

ANNEX 1

COMMUNITY ROAD WARDEN SCHEME

Purpose and Role of the **Community Road Warden**

1. To act as the main liaison between the local community and Devon County Council on issues relating to the condition and operation of the local highway network, and to report back when associated works have been completed.
2. To draw-up and maintain a register of community self-help volunteers containing contact addresses and telephone numbers, levels of experience and any related training and qualifications.
3. To identify those minor works that can be undertaken by community self-help volunteers in particular areas of the locality (refer to (1) above).
4. To program those minor works that have been identified in relation to the resources available and the person(s) who will be undertaking particular tasks (refer to (1) above). And to ensure that the appropriate public notice for those minor works are in place before work starts.
5. To undertake Specific and Dynamic Risk Assessments for those small works identified and to ensure that they are recorded and logged.
6. To ensure that the maintenance works undertaken are carried out in accordance with the appropriate method statement and that the quality of the completed works meet the required specification.
7. To ensure that any mechanised tools and equipment used are operated by suitably qualified, competent people with up-to-date certification.
8. To seek advice from the Neighbourhood Highway Officer (NHO) where further clarification is required on a particular issue, method statement or working arrangement.

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DEVON HIGHWAYS
August 2014

COMMUNITY SELF HELP SCHEME

COMMUNITY SELF HELP SCHEME

A GUIDANCE NOTE

COMMUNITY SELF-HELP - 3 Activity Levels

1. Introduction

This Guidance Note has been produced to advise both Town and Parish Councils who have expressed an interest to undertake a range of maintenance activities on a voluntary basis through a formal community self-help arrangement overseen by a locally appointed representative or Community Road Warden.

Communities are encouraged to come together and help each other to deliver much needed minor maintenance works occurring due to service reductions as a result of declining local maintenance budgets. It is vital that community self-help is well managed in association with the County Council to ensure that the resources on offer are used effectively.

2. Background

2.1 Devon County Council (DCC) has a duty of care to maintain the public highway together with its legal responsibilities to ensure that the safety of both those working on the highway and the users of the highway is protected.

2.2 The main purpose of these Guidance Notes is to set down when and where town and parish community groups, working as volunteers, will be permitted to carry out activities within the boundaries of the public highway. These Guidance Notes will also give information in relation to the levels of experience, training and qualification required to maintain safe working within three basic categories:-

- LEVEL 1: Working at a safe distance from the live carriageway / footway or under a Temporary Road Closure ;
- LEVEL 2: Working within the boundaries of a live carriageway/footway in an established low speed / low risk environment;
- LEVEL 3: Working within the live carriageway/footway outside speed restricted zone and subject to national speed limits.

2.3 Currently, people working on the highway have received dedicated training in accordance with the minimum standards as determined through DCC Policy and Legal requirements.

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3. LEVEL 1. Working at a safe distance from the live carriageway / footway or under a Temporary Road Closure

3.1 **General** - Under this level of working, community self – help volunteers will be permitted to work on a range of tasks and activities that will not impinge upon users of a live carriageway or footway. Under these conditions, volunteers will be permitted to work individually or in groups. This will include the following:-

- Weed Clearance
- Sign Cleaning
- Gully Grating Clearing
- Grass Cutting
- Finger Post Repairs
- Hedge Cutting
- Special Events (Road Closure)
- Surveys (ecological, geological, historical)

3.2 **Safety Zone** – The safe working distance from the edge of a live carriageway and/ or footway where various supervised work activities can take place without the requirement for any formal traffic management qualification, is as follows:

- for roads with a speed limit less than 40mph = 500mm
- for roads with a speed limit greater than 40mph = 1200mm

3.3 **Training Requirements** – It is a compulsory requirement that any of the works types undertaken, as in 3.1 above, will be supervised a community representative who has attend the following:-

- Devon Highways Highway Safety Awareness Training half-day workshop.

Please note: In the case of special events and local events, it is recommended that the requirements given in the Devon County Council ‘**Event Planning Guidance (SE4)**’ and supporting documentation are strictly followed.

3.4 **Community Road Warden Role** – Where the community or group of communities have appointed a Road Warden, that person must have attended and hold the following qualification:-

- Devon Highways Highway Safety Awareness Training half-day workshop.

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4. LEVEL 2. Working within the live carriageway/footway in an established low speed / low risk environment

4.1 **General** - Under this level of working community self – help volunteers will be allowed to work on a range of tasks and activities that will impinge upon users of a live carriageway or footway where there is a speed restriction in force. Under these conditions volunteers must work in pairs, under the direction of the Community Road Warden, with one acting in the capacity as watchman/lookout while the other carries out the work. All associated temporary signage that is placed on the highway to advise road users that work activities are taking place on the highway must be installed by a suitably qualified operative (see 4.5 below).

4.2 The categories of carriageway where this type of controlled working is undertaken is as follows:-

- 20mph speed limit and 20 mph zones;
- Residential estates , cul-de-sacs and registered Home Zones;
- 30mph speed limits – where approved by the local Neighbourhood Highway Officer (NHO)

4.3 The type of works that will be undertaken by volunteer groups working under the community self-help initiative will include the following activities:-

- Weed Clearance
- Sign Cleaning
- Gully Grating Clearing
- Grass Cutting
- Finger Post Repairs
- Hedge Cutting
- Surveys (ecological, geological, historical)

4.4 **Training Requirements** – It is a compulsory requirement that people identified as community self-help volunteers should attend the following and hold the following qualification:-

- Devon Highways Highway Safety Awareness Training half-day workshop.

4.5 **Community Road Warden Role** – Where the community or group of communities have appointed a Road Warden, that person must have attended and hold the following:-

- Devon Highways Highway Safety Awareness Training half-day workshop and / or
- SWQR Unit 2 – Signing, Lighting & Guarding (City & Guilds).

5. LEVEL 3. Working within the live carriageway/footway outside speed restricted zone

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5.1 Under this level of working community self – help volunteers will be permitted to work on a range of tasks and activities that will affect people using a live carriageway or footway where the national speed limit is in force or where a temporary road closure is in force

5.2 The categories of carriageway where this type of controlled working is undertaken is as follows:-

- High Risk 30mph & 40 mph roads;
- Local roads within the National Speed Limit

5.3 The type of works that will be undertaken by volunteer groups working under the community self – help initiative will include the following activities:-

- Weed Clearance
- Sign Cleaning
- Gully Clearing
- Small Drainage Works
- Grass Cutting
- Finger Post Repairs
- Hedge Cutting
- Pothole and small surface defect repairs
- Surveys (ecological, geological, historical)

5.4 **Training Requirements** – It is a compulsory requirement that all community self-help volunteers should attend the following sessions and hold the following qualification:-

- Devon Highways Highway Safety Awareness Training half-day workshop;
- SWQR Unit 2 – Signing, Lighting & Guarding (City & Guilds), and / or;
- Chapter 8 / Sector 12D (T1 & T2) qualification.

5.6 **Community Road Warden Role** – Where the community or group of communities have appointed a Road Warden, that person must have attended and hold the qualifications as detailed in 5.4 above.

5.7 **Guidance** – Further guidance on the provision of traffic management where works are undertaken in the public highway is given in the Devon Highways:-

- Temporary Traffic Management Procedures Manual (Revision 2) - July 2013

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