

Cradley Parish Council :

Lengthsman & Parish Path Partnership [P3] Schemes

Monthly Report : April 2017

Dear Councillors ,

This month is the start of the 3rd year of the Cradley Parish Lengthsman and Parish Path Partnership scheme [P3] and the start of our Lengthsman's second year . Balfour –Beatty's poor administration of the schemes continues to create a significant amount of totally unnecessary work . Their latest ineptitude is to only send out the 2017 -2018 contracts for PC approval / signature on 12th April ! Surely contracts should be in PC hands well before the start of the new contract year [1st April 2017] .

Currently we have no Chairman or Vice-Chairman . I consulted our Clerk and we thought the best plan was to return the contract , duly signed by G Fielding , acting as CPC Councillor and Scheme Administrator on behalf of CPC , in lieu of a Chairman's signature . This was done by return . To date [30 / 04/2017] we have had no acknowledgement or return of a contract signed / sealed by HCC !

What a Shambles . I cannot produce a back to back new Lengthsman's contract until HCC / B-B get their act together . I will rejoice when the Grants / Contracts with HCC come to an end at 31 / 03/2018 . Thereafter the PC will have full control of finances and contracts , etc , assuming that the community wishes the work to continue .April this year has been exceptionally dry and has enabled us to make very good progress with pothole repair work .

A big effort to get to grips with the repair and maintenance of our two recreation Areas has also dominated the work . Councillor Thomas will report separately of progress with planning for the remedial works for the mini-football pitch at Chapel Lane .

Our Locality Steward has been working with us to get the winter potholes at Grttlesend , Halesend , Coombe Lane , etc divided up between B-B and ourselves . Now all reccied by us and an allocation of repairs agreed . Around Cradley village , pothole repairs will continue throughout the summer as there is always plenty to do . Only Time and finance limit our scope .

On the Lengthsman front :

- Chapel Lane [U65621] has had extensive pothole repair work done and is now in tolerably satisfactory condition .
- The road U65620 [Finchers corner to Kingsbridge] is a nightmare . The old road surface is long past its use-by date and is worn out and riddled with ruts , etc . Much pothole repair work has been done by our lengthsman but we chase our tail in an effort to keep the road safe . B-B refuse to resurface and even turn down our Locality Steward's requests to deal with bad potholes beyond our contract remit !
- Verge cutting , overhead vegetation clearance , footway and highway debris clearing and safety railings fitted at Poundbridge have all been carried out in the month at Brookside , Sandy Lane , Chapel Lane , Vinesend Lane and C1172 [various sites]
- Chapel Lane Recreation Area : Roadside hedge cut and verges strimmed . Adventure mound strimmed . Whole of perimeter hedging / path verges have been cut back , strimmed and cleared . A professional Mole Catcher has been commissioned to eradicate the serious mole problems at both Chapel lane and Buryfields [more anon] . Annual health and safety inspections on both sites have been arranged for early May. Monthly inspections of play equipment , etc is now being carried out monthly and results posted of CPC Website . Litter Bins emptied and relined .

PROW work :

- CD28 /CD32b Junction : R & M to dilapidated stile . Erection of new signage to highlight the PROW over Wolds Farm grassland / ditch crossing .
- CD35 : Maintenance of stepway and gated start of CD35 at the C1172 /CD35 junction

Footnote ; It is worth recording that the efforts put in to looking after the parish /village infrastructure are bearing fruit . Sincere thanks in particular , to Heather Hughes , Ivan Smart , Charlie Greco , Lynn Mitchell and Di Merker for taking up the baton and helping smarten up our beautiful parish . Geoff Fielding [Scheme Administrator]