

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: Monday 5 December 2016

Agenda item 8: Proposed changes to Small Grants Scheme Process guidance 2016/17

The Small grants scheme (SGS) has been the core of the grants programme offered by Hampshire's countryside services for a number of years.

It has been recognised by both Panel members and the Service, that the scheme has been struggling to maintain the submission of high quality bids and projects delivered. As part of the Countryside Access Plan (CAP) Policy B1, the Service has committed to continue to develop and seek to extend (where appropriate) the SGS.

To re-energise the scheme, the service has made two initial changes:

1. Appointments of the Community Engagement Rangers, amongst other duties these officers are responsible for working with communities, councils and individuals to facilitate the development and submission of high quality bids and to assist when needed in the delivery of the improvements.
2. Through a discussion with the SGS Panel and the Community Engagement Rangers, the following alteration have been discussed and agreed. They are submitted to the NFAF for the Forum's approval and your recommendation to make the changes to the Scheme.

Small Grants Scheme Guidance Updates 2016/17	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the requirement for Parish Council approval, to informing the Parish Council instead. 	Agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All projects must be discussed with the Community Engagement Rangers. 	Agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider changing the amount awarded. 	Agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult Mark Holroyd from New Forest NPA regarding NF contribution. 	Agreed that this should remain at 25% of schemes within the New Forest area, on top of the amount contributed by HCC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the amount the volunteer hours can make up of the total grant e.g 50% 	Agreed however with stipulation that this should only be under exceptional circumstances and discussed with the CER at point of contact. Should be dependant on size of grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification for 100% funding if parishes can prove lack of funding 	Agreed but should be stated at possibly 75% with the panel having discretion of 100%
What is funded	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include: tools for volunteer groups, insurance, training, environmental projects – improve access experience. This could be monitored by applicant submitting annual reports 	Agreed though also add seating

Who can apply	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include volunteer/community groups with permission from landowner and notification to Parish Council 	Agreed but must be a constituted group
Other comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAT – do we pay or not? Should be clearly stated In the form • Environmental funding – make it clear that there may be other funding available with links • Rotating chair – panel asked that this be changed to a permanent chair • Forms – prepopulate forms for most common types of application e.g surfacing/gates etc 	

JW
Nov 2016