

Great community working in Buckinghamshire paves the way

Two projects to build vital footpaths for the Great Brickhill, Wing & Ivinghoe Local Area Forum have now been successfully completed. Both met longstanding community needs but needed additional support and funding to become a reality.

Cheddington Parish Council has been working to complete a footpath link from Cheddington to the canal and nearby villages for the last six years. Meanwhile, Ivinghoe Parish Council was keen to create a footpath linking Ford End to Great Gap, meeting a need identified by residents in the 1960s.

In Cheddington, letters of support were written backing the scheme, including pupils from the village Primary School and neighbouring communities, which demonstrated a wider need for this footpath. Half the cost of this £42,000 project was provided by the Parish Council, with another quarter coming from the Local Area Forum's Transportation and Local Priorities budget. Locality Services then worked with the Parish Council to raise the rest of the required £12,000 from the Comma fund.

The Ivinghoe project was taken forward by Locality Services with the Rights of Way team. It was apparent that by extending the new footpath to link with the existing public footpaths, a circular walk could be created. A local landowner agreed to be compensated for turning an 850m strip of land into a dedicated footpath, so the project could go ahead with funding from a range of bodies including Aylesbury Vale Community Chest and Awards for All.

The local community and neighbouring parishes supported the applications. The awards were granted because this scheme enables healthy walks and opportunities to access amenities in a local area but also it is a partnership in terms of work and finance between many groups.

County Councillor Avril Davies, and is also Chairman of the Great Brickhill, Wing & Ivinghoe Local Area Forum, says; "This is a fantastic example of communities working together to create a safer and happier environment. I would like to thank all those that got involved with this for their help. Everybody pulling together has helped these two projects become a success."

Rob Grant, Chair of Cheddington Parish Council, says they're delighted to announce that the footpath from Cheddington to Cooks Wharf is now complete. This project has been ongoing for several years and was completed in four separate phases. The final stage, completed in January 2011 finally linked the two locations making a safe route for pedestrians from the canal and surrounding villages to Cheddington.

He says; "Construction of the footpath was only possible with the support and commitment of local residents and through partnership with, and the continuing support of the Local Area Forum, without which this project would not have been possible. The Parish Council will be hosting an official opening of the footpath and supporters and all residents of Cheddington will be invited to share in celebrating this great community achievement."

Karen Groom, Chair of Ivinghoe Parish Council, says "It's a great asset to the village, it's nice to see people from Great Gap being able to walk safely up the footpath to the village. The contractors have been brilliant, have worked really hard and also the Local Area Forum has been superb."