

To:

Parish magazine editors  
Parish Council chairs  
Rural community groups  
Farmers and landowners  
Rural visitor businesses

From: South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum  
c/o xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## News Release and Briefing Note

*Please see below a draft email for discussion regarding a possible press release making people aware of the opportunities which currently exist.*

### Grants for new public paths to help rural areas & businesses

Grants for creating new bridleways or footpaths - to attract visitors and improve local facilities - are on offer to rural businesses and communities. The £2 million 'Paths for Communities' Government grant scheme is now being highlighted by the South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum.

With help from the scheme, farm shop-cafes and visitor venues could create walks as added-attractions; equestrian centres could have footpaths upgraded to bridleways; or villages might seek new routes to fill gaps and make the local path network better connected and more attractive.

Forum Chairman \*\*\*\*\* said: "xx multi-purpose trails for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders have xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and become visitor attractions in their own right. Natural England wants to see 'Paths for Communities' funded projects across the country. The Forum is highlighting this as we want to see South Lincolnshire and Rutland's rural areas benefit from this opportunity."

Rural landowners and businesses need to collaborate on projects with local groups and councils. Bids need to show how businesses will benefit, and demonstrate clear community involvement. Natural England, who run the scheme, have grant officers to help partnerships with their applications.

Partnerships can get money for building, signposting and promoting new paths, where landowners agree to creating new or upgraded public rights of way. However projects must raise 25% of 'match funding', which could include volunteer labour but not public money from sources such as parish council precepts.

Paths for Communities is a competitive scheme, partnerships can bid for grants from £5,000 upwards. Projects need to be completed and the money re-claimed before April 2014, so bids for straight-forward projects with supportive landowners are more likely to be successful. The scheme is aimed at rural and urban-fringe areas which in this case means outside places with over 10,000 population.

Natural England highlights how attractive, easy to use, well-promoted path networks can bring visitors to rural areas and rural tourist venues. Spending by such visitors helps support local services and job providers such as shops, cafes, pubs, B&Bs, hotels, cycle hire and equestrian businesses.

### For further information on this issue

Full details are on the Paths for Communities webpage at: [www.naturalengland.org.uk/p4c](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/p4c)

Natural England's email address for enquiries about this is: [P4C@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:P4C@naturalengland.org.uk)

Natural England P4C Grants Officer for the Midlands is Angela Smith on Mobile: 07900 608 329

## **For more information on the Access Forum**

Access Forums were set up by Government to represent all the different groups with interests in countryside access, including farmers and landowners, and users such as walkers and riders. The Forum is an independent body though the County Council provides administrative support. For further information see:

<http://microsites.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside/prow-management/local-access-forums-lafs/what-is-a-laf/>

To contact the Forum email: xxxxxx@xxxxxx