



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Snow and Ice Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose

To provide staff and members of the public with a clear statement of the measures that will be taken by the Town Council in the event of snow and ice conditions occurring in the Shaftesbury area. The Town Councils objective is to use the resources available to assist in the continuance of safe access to businesses and facilities.

2. Background

The experience of the recent past winters highlighted the importance of co-operation between the various agencies and the value of the Town Councils' roles within its community. Shaftesbury Town Council does not have a statutory duty to prepare for and deal with snow and ice, but are in a good position to inform the principal authorities about local needs and we want to do whatever else we can do for our community.

Guidance has been published on preparing for winter events and on community resilience. This document draws from all of those in preparing The Shaftesbury Town Council Winter Management Plan which sets out to clarify what the community can expect from the principal authorities and what the Town Council has put in place so we can be better prepared to help ourselves. The plan will be reviewed annually.

3. Introduction

Dorset County Council is the Highway Authority for public roads. This means Roadways and pavements in Shaftesbury.

The County Council have a duty to ensure safe passage along a road is not endangered by snow or ice so far as is reasonably practicable.

To comply with this duty, roads are gritted to help prevent or remove ice and ploughed to clear snow.

Unfortunately, due to the severe winter weather encountered in the last few years there are areas which the County Council cannot access or fit into their priority schedule.

The Town Council has no responsibility in this we have approved a limited budget and whilst not obliged for this type of operation although it will carry out snow and ice clearance duties as far as is reasonably practicable.

Shaftesbury Town Council is working with Dorset County Council, to form a snow/ice clearing policy to make the Town a safer place during our cold winters.

Communication between Dorset County Council and the Town Council is vital to achieve the clearance of snow and ice from pavements, car parks and other accessible sites which are of high priority. Working closely together a greater area may be covered and therefore minimise the risk of accidents.

A web link is available on www.dorsetforyou.com/winter which will inform the public as to when the gritters will be on the roads and the latest weather conditions.

4. Legal Advice

Throughout the country people have been hesitant to clear snow because of fears of litigation if someone should slip on the treated area. This contrasts strongly with winters of a few decades ago when the community would mobilise to clear footways.

a) Litigation

In a recent letter sent by the Ministry of Justice it stated that “The prospect of a person who volunteers to clear snow from a pavement being successfully sued for damages by a person who subsequently slips on the cleared area and is injured are very small”.

A snow clearer does have a duty to clear with reasonable care so as not to create a new and worse risk.

Do's

- Follow the Town Council Winter Management plan
- Move snow to a porous surface such as grass verge or garden
- Spread salt / grit evenly and at the appropriate spread rates
- Clear any excess salt or grit once the snow/ice has melted.

Don'ts

- Use water to melt snow and ice, if there is a risk it will refreeze
- Move snow to a location where it will create another risk such as another part of the pavement, road or where people are likely to walk.
- Use excessive salt, grit or other material so as to create a new or worse risk.

Full details of the “Snow Code” can be found at www.direct.gov.uk.

5. Contacts

The General Manager (Operations and Services) of Shaftesbury Town Council will take the lead in co-ordinating local resources during adverse weather. The General Manager will receive a copy of the Daily Decision issued by DCC and liaise with other key personnel and local contacts as to any actions to be taken.

Co-ordinator

- Takes a lead in co-ordinating local resources
- Receives the Daily Decision from DCC Duty Officer via the Town Office (1st November to 31st March).
- Liaises with other key personnel and local contacts.
- Makes decision on triggering the implementation of the Winter Plan.

General Manager: - Miss Nicky Whitley

Tel: 01747 852420

Mobile: 07886082747

Email: nickywhitley@shaftesburytowncouncil.co.uk

6. Town Council Resources

In very severe weather conditions, the Grounds team will supply the General Manager with regular updates to allow timely decisions to be made concerning the limiting or closing of any services or facilities.

Contact between Shaftesbury Town Council and Dorset County Council will be established in serious conditions to communicate on badly affected areas or areas which extra resources are necessary.

Overall control of day to day decisions on Town Council resources will be by the General Manager.

The General Manager will be responsible for work prioritisation and staff organisation, making available suitable equipment and materials, stock check materials and order as necessary to ensure cover seven days a week if necessary.

7. Snow and Ice Procedure

If bad weather conditions are anticipated, the General Manager will make a decision whether or not to grit the Town Centre. Gritting will either be done by asking staff to stay after their normal working day finishes or to come in early prior to their normal starting time.

The environmental conditions, either current or predicted, can be categorised as follows:

Category 1 – Heavy snow, complete coverage of all surfaces, freezing

Category 2 – Heavy snow, complete coverage of all surfaces

Category 3 – Snow, light coverage, freezing conditions

Category 4 – Heavy frost, all surfaces frozen

Category 5 – Light frost (No response)

Category 6 – Freak changes in weather involving hail, ice, snow and blizzards

In the case of **Categories 1 / 2**, all Grounds staff should be alerted by the General Manager and will be expected to give assistance in the operation under the direction of the General Manager.

Where possible, staff will be asked to work after their normal working hours and/or attend work prior to 8.00am, or be invited to work weekends. Normal arrangements for additional hours/overtime will apply.

In the case of **Categories 3 to 5**, the level of response will be determined by the General Manager based on need and resources available.

In all cases, when the operation is underway the General Manager will update the Town Clerk at regular intervals as to the situation and progress.

Daily Assessments will be made by the General Manager and/or the Town Clerk throughout the operation and teams will only be disbanded when it is deemed that the situation has been dealt with and the Town is in a safe condition.

In the case of prolonged bad weather, the General Manager and Town Clerk will meet to discuss plans for the following day(s) and Grounds staff will be informed accordingly.

Usage of salt will be recorded in the form of a Log Book, which will give date, location, amount and signed by the member of staff once authorisation has been given by the General Manager.

Keeping records will not just show where it all goes, but also help estimations on the amount of salt required each winter.

We can use these records to identify areas which require grit bins to be topped up with the expectation that Dorset County Council will provide the grit/salt. Extra bins to be placed and to keep a check on areas which are over using the supply.

The corrosive nature of salt makes careful cleaning and maintenance of the vehicles and equipment essential.

5. Snow Clearance

A light covering of snow will be dispersed by spreading salt. However, if the snow is deep, then it will need to be cleared away before the salt procedure can begin. This should be done with snow shovels that will be located at the Bell Street Toilets and the Barton Hill unit. The routes to be cleared as priority are highlighted red on the town centre map which is included in this document as well as displayed in the toilet storage. For larger areas a snow plough may be required.

When clearing snow, it is impractical to clear the whole path or road. On the pathways, at least 1m wide should be cleared and, on roads, bends and junctions should be given priority. The moving traffic will transfer the salt onto the rest of the surface. The stopping of traffic flow should be avoided unless deemed too dangerous to continue.

6. Priority Areas

When assessments are made on the Town before/after snow and ice, decisions will be made on prioritising area's which are deemed high priority in relation to public safety.

Shaftesbury is split into 3 Zones (appendix a) -

Zone 1 – Red

Zone 2 – Blue

Zone 3 - Green

Zone 1 is the Town Centre; this is of high priority as it's the busiest part of the Town. The grounds team will clear the high street using the pedestrian spreaders. This must be attended too before work starts on other areas.

Zone 2 is to include Stoney Path; Jubilee Steps; Park Walk

Zone 3 is a pedestrian access route on Tout Hill and Coppice Street

Particular attention must be made to sloped areas and narrow paths close to the road.

Once the General Manager deems Zone 1 Safe, then Zones 2 and 3 can be attended to.

7. Methods for Salt Distribution

a. Method 1: Spreading by hand

This is done by filling a bucket with grit/salt and spreading on pathways with a trowel or scoop. To avoid an uneven spread, salt should be thrown from about waist height with an under arm bowling action. If it is spread by flicking it, it can end up in spots without clearing a good amount of the surface.

Spreading salt with bare hands should be avoided even if wearing gloves.

Although rock salt is non - toxic, it is very abrasive and will damage skin.

Staff must be aware that if bags of salt are being used, they are heavy to handle so safe lifting and handling procedures should be used. (See risk assessment – Manual Handling)

7.2. Method 2: Pedestrian Spreader

To operate, fill hopper with grit/salt, open the shutter and push if the salt stops running, close shutter and shake hopper, re-open shutter and continue. Repeat procedure until area is complete. This should only be used on small areas.

8. Materials used

All coarse grade rock salt used on the highway by Dorset County Council for winter service purposes is purchased by annual tender and is supplied to comply with BS3247 (Salt for spreading on highways for winter maintenance). English mineral rock salt complying with the current BS3247 is treated with Sodium Ferrocyanide as an anti-caking agent. To be most effective, the treatment should be applied before either ice forms or snow settles.

It is accepted practice that the following rates of spread be used when treating carriageways:

- **Precautionary salting** **15 and 20 gm/sq.m**
 - **Treatment of ice and snow**
- Plough where applicable and salt** **20-40 gm/sq.m**

It is advisable that for planned actions, salt is never spread at a rate greater than 40gm/sq.m.

NOTE:

Sustained low temperatures are rare in England. For each degree drop below 5⁰C the amount of salt needed to maintain the equivalent melting effect increases by about 14 gm/sq.m.

Salt will melt ice and snow at temperatures as low as -21⁰ C but below -10⁰C the amount needed increases to become environmentally and economically undesirable.

Melt water from thawing accumulations of snow on roads or verges, can spread over the carriageway and then re-freeze, particularly at night.

Extra treatment may be needed and potential hazards such as these should be closely monitored.

Rock salt will quickly rot or make rusty all the tools and equipment used so it is important to clean tools properly before storing.

Materials and equipment can be located at Bell Street Toilets with additional salt at Barton Hill Unit.

Low salt stock or equipment should be reported to the General Manager.

9. Protective Clothing

Gloves and wet weather gear should be worn where possible, although if manually spreading salt, it is quite possible to get very hot. Please ensure you put clothing back on when you stop moving. If using machinery, protective safety footwear must be worn.

10. Health and Safety

All works carried out by Town Council staff must be done so in a safe working manner. Particular attention must be taken while working alongside roads, Hi-Vis clothing must be worn and signs put out where appropriate.

The safety of staff and members of the public must be taken in to account before any works are started, and where appropriate risk assessments must be completed.

Staff should be trained in house or by another body, in the safe clearance of snow and ice.

Work should be carried out in teams of 2 minimum; communication equipment should be carried at all times.

Anything considered to be dangerous or unclear, must be reported to the General Manager.

11. Grit Bins

At present the Town has 28 grit bins (appendix b).

2 Bins on Tout Hill

1 Bin at the Knapp

1 Bin at the junction between Horseponds and Breach Lane

1 Bin at the junction between the A30 and Church Hill

2 Bins on Church Hill

- 1 Bin at the junction between Breach Lane and Umbers Hill
- 1 Bin at Hawksdene, 30m down from Abbey view medical centre
- 1 Bin at Layton Lane
- 2 Bins at New Road
- 2 Bins at Well Lane
- 1 Bin at entrance to Ratcliffe Gardens
- 1 Bin at Victoria Street
- 1 Bin at Haines Lane
- 1 Bin at the Town Hall
- 1 Bin at Wincombe lane cross roads
- 1 Bin at Wincombe lane/Kingsbere
- 1 Bin at Coppice Street
- 1 Bin at Frenchmill lane crossroads
- 1 Bin at Shooters Hill
- 2 Bins at Great Lane
- 1 Bin at Stoney Path
- 1 Bin at St John's Hill
- 1 Bin at Barton Hill car park

The salt supplied by DCC is for use on the public highway only. Each bin has a unique reference number and this should be used when reporting that the bin is empty. Misused or damaged grit bins must be reported to the General Manager.

Over salting damages the environment and the spread rate for hand salting should not exceed 20g/m² (this is about a tablespoon).

Appendix c – map showing DCC priority and community gritting route in Shaftesbury.