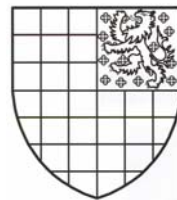


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

To: Cllrs Barker; Dean; Li; Milner; Murray (S); O'Keeffe; Sinclair

A Meeting of the Working party formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes will be held on **Thursday 16th December 2010**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am** which you are requested to attend.

S Brigden, Town Clerk
8th December 2010

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

To receive apologies from members of the working-party who are unable to attend.

2. MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

To note declarations of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

3. MINUTES

To agree minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2010

(attached page 3)

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To receive any questions from members of the public.

5. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

To continue the work of previous meetings, in assessing practical issues involved to meet the aims of the working-party, and evaluating information gathered so far.

In particular; this meeting will address the issues of:

- a) ESCC review of Lewes on-street parking scheme *Various background documents attached*
- b) Winter clearance of snow & ice from footpaths* *Various background documents attached*

* NB Remit for this issue: *(Council minute FC2009/93.1) The Traffic Issues Working Party be asked to investigate the issue of Winter clearance of ice and snow from footways, and recommend to Council an appropriate role in the matter and/or action to be taken.*

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council and its Working Parties – questions may be heard at the start of each meeting with the Chairman's consent, and subject to time available. Questions or requests to address the Council should, whenever possible, be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk at least 24 hours in advance. **PLEASE NOTE:** As space is limited in our rooms, we would appreciate advanced warning if you plan to attend in a group; perhaps with neighbours, or to bring a party of student observers. We may be able to arrange for the meeting to be held in an alternative room. General questions can be raised at our offices between 9am-5pm Mons- Thurs; 9am-4pm on Fridays – our staff will be pleased to assist.

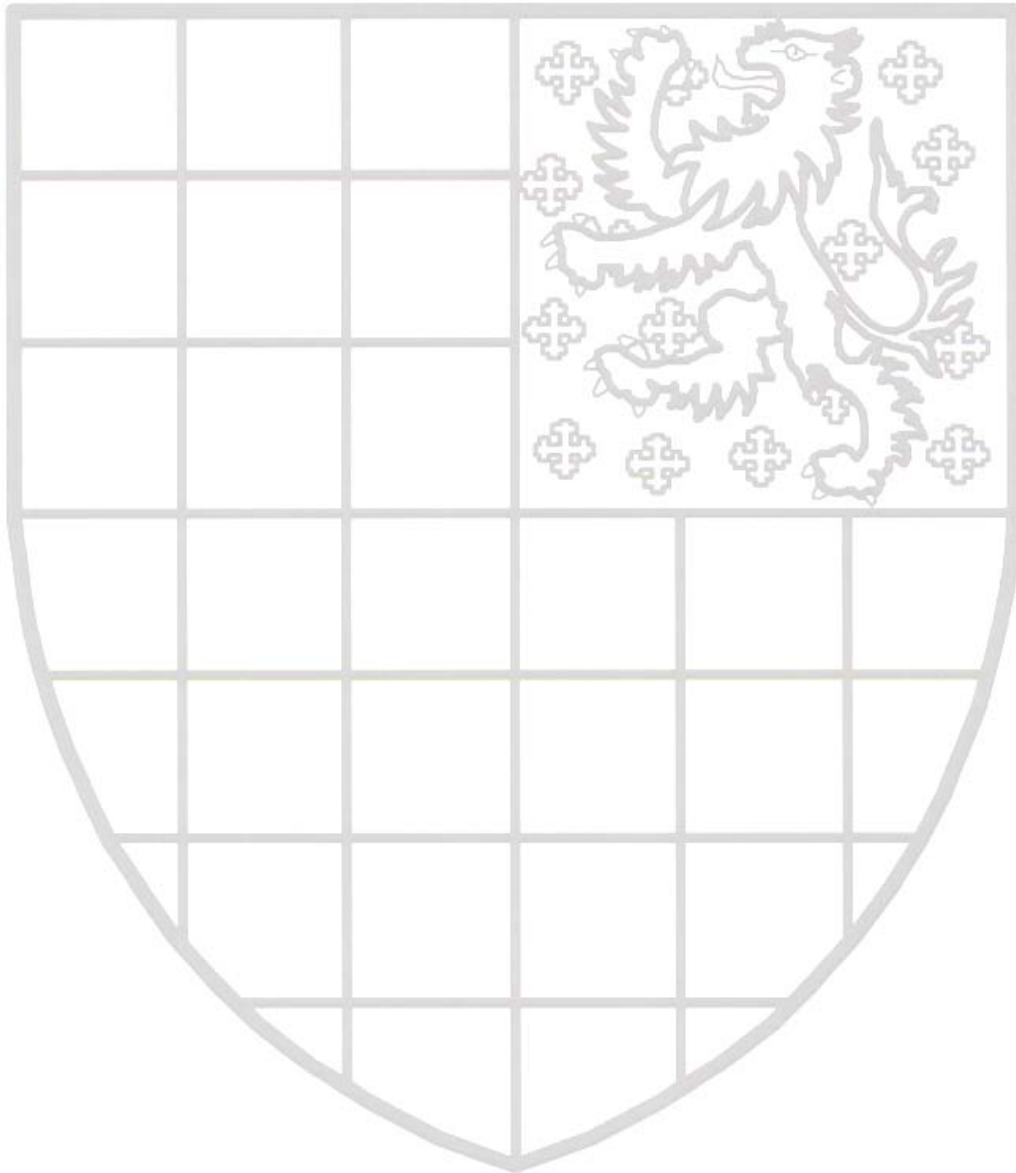
For further information about items on this agenda please contact the Town Clerk at the above address.

Distribution: Cllrs Barker; Dean; Li; Milner; Murray (S); O'Keeffe; Sinclair
and **ESCC Cllr Matthew Lock, ESCC Cllr R St Pierre, Mr Rupert Clubb ESCC Director of Transport & Environment**

Copies for information:

All Councillors; Lewes Library; T/Hall Noticeboard; LTC website; Sx.Express; E.Argus; Sx.Police; N Baker MP; ESCC; LDC; Friends of Lewes

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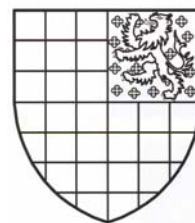
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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes held on **Tuesday 24th August 2010**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **7:00pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs A Dean; L F Li; M Milner (*Chairman*); S Murray; R O’Keeffe; ;

also present (*not nominated to serve on Working party*): Cllr J Stockdale

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

TIWP2010/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Barker, due to a work commitment, and J Sinclair, who had a problem with his mobility scooter.

TIWP2010/02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none

TIWP2010/03 **MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting 3rd March 2010 were signed as an accurate record.

TIWP2010/04 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS:** There were none. (No public or representatives of the press were present)

TIWP2010/05 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

Pedestrian crossings – The Council had earlier agreed to fund basic crossings in Lewes, based upon East Sussex County Council’s (ESCC) list of those locations assessed as most-urgent, using comprehensively revised criteria (2008). Funding was included in the 2009/10 budget and repeated in 2010/11 for continuation of the programme. Council intended to provide a crossing in Church Lane, Malling, but this decision was later revisited in light of a proposal to upgrade/relocate a crossing near to The Nurseries on the A26 Malling Street to provide a full pedestrian-controlled crossing, utilizing funds obtained by means of a s106 planning agreement. Subsequently, ESCC suggested a revised estimate which entailed an increase in cost of £30,000; to over £80,000, although no detail was provided. Members considered that; in view of the time elapsed whilst this project was considered and the currently-prevailing economic conditions, a review of the latest position might evince different priorities. It was decided to establish the up-to-date ranking of assessed sites, and any ancillary factors, to better-inform this decision. It was considered that the Malling Street position was unlikely to be clarified in the current financial year and; on the presumption that Council would maintain in 2011/12 the present level of annual financing of reserves for this purpose, a basic crossing could be installed in Church Lane without further delay, in line with the original decision.

Parking regime – Members were very interested to read an article from the Eastbourne Herald published on 6th August (*copy in minute book*), which related to a significant recent meeting in Eastbourne between ESCC Lead Member Cllr Matthew Lock; traders; hoteliers; residents and business figures, at which a comprehensive review of Eastbourne’s scheme had been debated. This prompted remembrance of Cllr Lock’s promise to meet LTC members at County Hall prior to a Lewes review, and it was agreed that this should now be arranged. This was also an appropriate opportunity to request current statistics and financial performance data for the Lewes scheme.

Snow & Ice clearance from footways – Members had undertaken to “map” locations of

grit bins across the town, although an agreement was subsequently reached with the local Scouts organization for this to be carried-out as a summer exercise by some of their young members. Results were awaited.

Parking on grass verges in Malling - Members considered correspondence (*copy in minute book*) between a local resident and ESCC officers regarding the continued damage to grassed areas in Malling due to parked vehicles. The Working Party had discussed this issue before, and had believed the situation to be improving. It was a matter of some concern that ESCC officers appeared to refer the enquirer to the Town Council for a solution; inappropriately quoting an obscure piece of legislation. Members noted that this echoed the situation, earlier in the year, when ESCC had routinely advised the public that parishes alone were responsible for grit-bin provision. TC intended to take-up this issue with ESCC's Director of Transport & Environment. Meanwhile, further enquiries would be made in an attempt to identify the relevant landowner(s) and to seek a practical solution to the problem.

Ringmer cycle track - The works, currently in progress, to install a cycle track along the B2192 road between Ringmer and Lewes were welcomed. Unfortunately, this would run Westward from Paygate Corner, Ringmer, only so far as the electricity sub-station on the North side; roughly one-third of the distance to Earwig Corner (A26/B2192 junction). Beyond this point, the designation changed to footpath, and improvements continue only up to the Malling Hill lay-by. A Ringmer parish councillor had written with details of a (personal) proposal to complete the remaining distance, although he acknowledged that the final section presented many problems for traffic engineers, and that his was only one possible solution (*copy in minute book*). His intention was to highlight the matter and to ask that it be borne in mind when local funding opportunities, such as developer-contributions ("s106 agreements"), arose in future.

C7 Kingston Road, adj Cranedown - The condition of the only available pedestrian footway in the vicinity of Cranedown/Stanley Turner was discussed. It was agreed that: when presenting to ESCC the various questions arising from the meeting, enquiries should include an estimate cost of improvement to this path.

Traffic flow at junction of A275 Nevill Road/Spital Road/DeMontfort Road - It was reported that this junction suffered badly from issues of traffic-flow and visibility which made it difficult for drivers to negotiate safely. Drivers exiting DeMontfort Road were unable to determine the intention of Southbound traffic on the A275 that indicated a turn East - which could be into *either* DeMontfort Road or Spital Road. Drivers exiting Spital Road or DeMontfort Road, Westward, and wishing to turn Northbound onto the A275 had no clear view of traffic flowing North from the Prison Crossroads (approaching from their left) until their vehicle was dangerously committed to the manoeuvre. It was suggested that this should be reviewed by traffic engineers, to identify any improvement measures such as signage; a viewing mirror, or road-marking/flow-control. Members recognized that this three-way junction was inherently difficult, but felt that some improvements should be possible with careful thought.

Members briefly discussed the possibility of a viewing mirror to assist drivers exiting Market Lane Westbound into Fisher Street, and proposed a request to ESCC and the owners of the Star Brewery building, to which the mirror would necessarily be affixed. Further; it was reported that several Malling residents were concerned about the effect of cars parked (legitimately) near the junction of Old Malling Way with Church Lane, which obscured sight-lines. It was suggested that parking on the opposite side (currently prohibited) would be less obstructive and safer. In discussion, it was noted that ESCC may propose to extend the controlled parking zone to this area during the imminent review, when such adjustments might

be included, and local residents were exhorted to ensure that the wishes of the majority were clearly established in this regard.

TIWP2010/06

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS to COUNCIL:

It was agreed that:

1. Council should be asked to initiate the early construction, by ESCC, of a pedestrian crossing in Church Lane, Malling; financed by LTC's existing fund held in reserve for this purpose.
2. Council should be asked to endorse the principle that completion of the B2192 cycle path should be given priority when funding opportunities present themselves.
3. TC would write to ESCC's Director of Transport & Environment to arrange a meeting with appropriate Members and officers prior to any review of the parking regime in Lewes.
4. In writing; ESCC should be asked:
 - ⊕ For information on current financial performance of the parking scheme.
 - ⊕ For historic usage statistics on the parking scheme.
 - ⊕ For details of the estimated cost of upgrading the pedestrian crossing on the A26 Malling Street to a controlled type.
 - ⊕ For confirmation that (subject to LTC funding) a basic crossing can be installed in Church Lane, Malling as soon as practicable.
 - ⊕ For the latest prioritized list of assessed sites for pedestrian crossings
 - ⊕ For advice on the present status and issues affecting crossing-sites assessed for Mountfield Road, and Brighton Road (near Clevedown).
 - ⊕ For advice on the options for route; likely cost, and other issues affecting completion of the cycle path along the B2192 Paygate Corner, Ringmer, to Earwig Corner, Lewes.
 - ⊕ For advice on the likely cost and issues affecting suggested improvements to the footpath along the C7 road near Cranedown.
 - ⊕ For advice on the issues affecting traffic at the junction of A275 Nevill Road/Spital Road/DeMontfort Road.
 - ⊕ For advice on the issues affecting traffic at the junction of Market Lane and Fisher Street.
 - ⊕ To clarify its officers' understanding of the Town Council's position with regard both to the provision of grit-bins and control of parking on grass verges, and to ensure clear and unambiguous information is given in response to public enquiries.

The meeting closed at 8:25pm

Signed:

Date:

Lewes Parking Review

Background Information

Historical Background

Responsibility for on-street parking control throughout the administrative District of Lewes passed from the Police to the County Council in September 2004. This was originally known as “decriminalised” and is now known as “civil” parking enforcement (CPE). The County and District Councils agreed that, at the same time, the County Council would take over responsibility for enforcement and day-to-day management of the District Council’s car parks.

The Lewes Joint Parking Board was established to oversee these arrangements. Each Council appoints three elected members to the Board.

Following competitive tendering, NCP (now NSL Services) was awarded a five year contract to administer the scheme. This contract was subsequently extended by two years and expires in 2011.

NSL operate under the direction of the County Council’s parking manager in accordance with operational principles set by the Joint Parking Board. All challenges against parking tickets (more correctly known as Penalty Charge Notices, or PCNs) issued by NSL are considered by Council officers. NSL is paid a fee for the work that that its staff do and all income accrues to the County and District Councils.

The County Council publishes an annual report on the performance of the Lewes (and other) parking schemes. This includes financial information and a statistical analysis of the operation, including the numbers of PCNs issued, challenged and cancelled. The report is on the County Council website at:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/parking/policies/annualreport.htm

At the same time that CPE was introduced across Lewes District (September 2004), a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), was established in central Lewes. Within the Lewes CPZ, on-street charging applies and permits are available to residents, businesses and others.

The introduction of these controls followed exhaustive consultation over a number of years and was a key element of the wider transport strategy for the town. Prior to the introduction of the controls, the difficulty of finding a convenient parking place in the centre was a widespread concern to the business community and people living in the town centre.

No changes were made to parking controls elsewhere in the District at that time but subsequently, some (relatively minor) changes were made.

The last comprehensive review of parking in the Lewes CPZ was undertaken in 2005, shortly after the CPZ was established. The review included objective analysis and consultation with local residents and businesses. In the light of that review:

- the CPZ was extended to include parts of the Houndean, Winterbourne and Wallands areas;
- the controls in the western part of the CPZ would no longer apply on Saturday; and
- a number of other (relatively minor) changes were made.

Scope of the Proposed Review

The review will not be a referendum on the future of the parking scheme. The controls have been in place for some time now and, for the most part, work well. Before the controls were introduced in the centre of Lewes, things were chaotic. If you wanted to go shopping or if you lived in the town centre, it was often impossible to find anywhere convenient to park because all the spaces were taken up by commuters. Buses were held up in congestion and making deliveries was very difficult. It was bad for the environment and bad for local business. Things are now much better.

However, there is always scope for improvement. Circumstances change and it is good to take stock of things from time to time. There are some specific locations where we know that things are not quite right or where people have already requested changes and we want to look particularly at these.

We have appointed independent transport consultants, Atkins, to consult local residents, businesses and organisations in the main review area (the town of Lewes and the immediately surrounding parishes) and to report on their findings. This will be published.

We will then ask Atkins to draft specific proposals to address the issues that people raise through the review as well as issues that we are already aware of throughout Lewes District (see below). People who might be affected by any changes will then have a chance to comment on the proposals and to suggest refinements, before plans are finalised. Atkins will produce a report on this second round of consultation and this will also be published.

Finally, we will publish draft Traffic Regulation Orders to give effect to any changes to parking controls. There will be a right to object to the draft Orders and any objections will be considered by the Council before a final decision is taken about what changes, if any, should be implemented.

In summary, therefore, there will be three main stages at which local organisations and members of the public will have the opportunity to be involved, namely:

1. To make general comments and suggestions about parking issues in the review area;
2. To comment on specific draft proposals across the District; and
3. To object to draft Traffic Orders.

Atkins' first job will be to establish a timetable for consultations. We have told them that we want to move things forward as quickly as possible. People are always very busy in the run up to Christmas so the first consultations, including local exhibitions across the review area, are likely to be in January. The subsequent stages in the consultation process will follow but the precise timing will depend, in part, upon the outcome of the first consultation.

Although the review itself will only cover part of Lewes District (principally the town of Lewes) we are already aware of a number of specific locations across the whole District where things are not quite right or where there are specific issues that we need to address. These include:

- Protecting the village of Falmer from the impact of event traffic at the new stadium.
- Local problems and requests for changes in The Grove, Chapel Street, Evelyn Avenue and other streets in Newhaven
- A number of other local issues concerning disabled bays and other aspects of the controls.



ELEANOR COURT 2



BUCKWELL COURT



NEWTON ROAD



EAST STREET CAR PARK



NORTH STREET CAR PARK



MALLING COMMUNITY CNTR



EAST STREET



WEST STREET



ELEANOR COURT 1



ABERGAVENNY ROAD 2



THE AVENUE



THE GALLOPS



ABERGAVENNY ROAD 1



MONTACUTE ROAD



NORTH COURT



CUILFAIL TUNNEL NORTH



HARVEY'S WAY.



CHAPEL HILL.



CUILFAIL TUNNEL SOUTH



BISHOP'S DRIVE



HIGH STREET



BROOMANS LANE



MOUNTFIELD ROAD



EASTGATE STREET



CLIFFE HIGH STREET



Whatever St.

Blah!

Winter maintenance:

Information pack - 2010/11

This information pack was sent out to parish councils, councillors and other interested parties in November 2010. It contains:

- a copy of the Your County article – Planning for snow, sent out to every household in the county in November 2010
- a summary of our Winter maintenance policy 2010/11
- answers to frequently asked questions, compiled using information obtained from our call centres
- information on clearing snow and ice
- a list of facts, figures and myths, to help clarify all aspects of our policy
- a copy of our fact sheet on obtaining additional grit bins.

We hope that this information will be of use to residents and other interested parties. Please contact the Highways Contact Centre if you need further information.

Phone: 0345 60 80 193

Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

Winter maintenance:

Your County article – Planning for snow

Last winter was a challenge for everyone in East Sussex. The severe weather was arguably the worst we have experienced for more than 30 years.

The effect on residents prompted a review of our services, and this was a good opportunity for us to look at how we and other organisations coped, and identify what lessons could be learned.

If we experience similar weather this winter, it is crucial that we work together with residents and other authorities to help maintain essential services. Last year we helped transport staff to and from hospital, delivered hot meals to the most vulnerable using our four wheel drive vehicles, worked with care home providers to ensure vulnerable and isolated people received vital care, and redirected staff to help in residential care homes.

Prioritising major roads

We have over 10,000 tonnes of salt ready for use this winter. When icy conditions are forecast our fleet of 25 gritters salt more than 860 miles of the top priority roads, with an extra 130 miles of secondary roads salted when snow is forecast. Despite this,

we can't guarantee that treated roads will always be completely clear. It takes time for the salt to become effective, and in very cold weather even salt won't prevent roads from icing.

We don't salt pavements and pedestrian precincts, but we are working with district and borough councils and residents' associations to review the locations of grit bins, particularly where these organisations might wish to purchase additional bins. We are also looking at providing salt storage bags at key locations. If you can, take steps to clear pavements of snow and ice outside your home or business, because whilst everyone would like their road and pavement gritted, we have to prioritise major roads rather than pavements to prevent the most serious accidents. Route gritting maps are being sent to parish and town councils to show which roads are gritted and this information will also be available on our website.

Staying safe and well

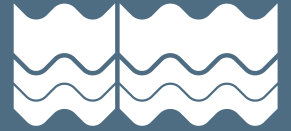
As we move into the winter months, we are talking to residents about how they can best prepare. We do everything we can to keep the county running but it is really important people take responsibility for their own safety. We ask that everyone takes time to

check on vulnerable neighbours, particularly in rural areas.

We advise that residents heat their homes well, dress warmly with plenty of layers, stock up on tinned and frozen foods, and use appropriate footwear with good grips, even shoe spikes, in extreme weather. We recommend that you travel only if absolutely necessary and according to the conditions.

We also suggest that you listen to local radio for updates and, for information on school closures, you can subscribe to our email system or RSS alerts for individual schools. Above all we ask that residents look after themselves, and their neighbours, to ensure that we all stay safe and well this winter.

Call Social Care Direct on 0345 60 80 191 for information on keeping well or contact our Highways Contact Centre 0345 60 80 193, or visit eastsussex.gov.uk/weather



Winter maintenance

Summary of policy 2010/11

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Winter maintenance

Summary of policy 2010/11

Introduction

This document is a summary of the Winter Maintenance Service Policy¹. It provides a straightforward guide for reference by the general public.

Legal responsibilities

Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003 states that a Highway Authority must ensure, so far as is reasonable, that passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice. The purpose of the Winter Maintenance Service is to ensure the safe movement of all highway users on designated roads throughout the county, while also keeping delays and accidents, caused by adverse weather conditions, to a minimum.

Weather monitoring

East Sussex has four weather monitoring stations located at Ashcombe, Golden Cross, Mark Cross and Guestling. These weather stations are equipped with sensors to monitor air and road surface temperatures, precipitation, humidity, road surface conditions, residual salt on the road surface and wind speed. Information from each of the stations is retrieved and managed through a specialist bureau.

Weather forecast

A weather forecast provider supplies daily forecasts of the weather in East Sussex. The road forecast uses information from our four weather stations to provide a detailed weather forecast. This tells us if the road surfaces are likely to fall below freezing during the next 24 hours and where we need to salt.

Roads that are routinely salted

Routine precautionary salting is carried out on pre-determined routes to help prevent the formation of ice. These routes are consistent with the principles of the Local Transport Plan and the Transport Asset Management Plan. We treat two types of roads:

Primary routes

These are roads that are normally salted during the course of a winter period as a priority. They consist of A and B roads and about 75% of the C roads, which are the most heavily used roads in the county. The normal salting routes cover 860 miles of road, or 42% of the total road network. They would normally be treated when the following weather conditions are forecast:

- Snow.
- Road surface temperatures falling close to, or below, freezing where moisture may be present.

We only salt where it is considered necessary. Even on a cold day, the roads can retain enough heat to prevent the need for salting.

The roads are treated at different times of the day depending on the weather forecast. Wherever possible salting is planned to occur:

- after the evening rush hour, if the forecast indicates low overnight road surface temperatures; and
- before the morning rush hour, where low morning temperatures have been forecast.

Secondary roads

These roads are not normally salted unless snow or severe icy conditions are forecast. They tend to include those major bus routes not included in the primary routes, link roads into a village/hamlet/urban estate, and main feeder roads to local hospitals. The secondary salting routes currently cover 130 miles of road, representing an additional 7% of the total road network.

We do not routinely salt footpaths or pavements.

Gritter fleet and response times

There are 25 gritters available, which are used to salt both primary and secondary routes.

When primary routes need salting it takes an hour for the gritters to start work. This allows for the drivers to get to a depot, load the salt and refuel the vehicle. It will then take up to three hours to treat all of the roads within the primary routes.

When secondary routes need salting it takes 30 minutes for the gritters to be re-loaded and vehicle checks undertaken, before salting can re-commence. It will then take an additional 1½ hours to treat all of the secondary roads.

It takes approximately six hours to treat both primary and secondary routes².

Treatment during snowy conditions

Once primary and secondary routes are clear, operations can move to other roads with priority given to:

- hospitals, fire, ambulance and police stations;
- bus and railway stations and other public transport stations;
- main shopping areas, schools etc; and
- difficult sites (very steep hills etc).

Minor rural and urban roads will be left to thaw naturally.

Hand salting of pavements will only be carried out if staff and equipment become available. The pavements in main shopping areas and busy urban areas will be treated as a priority.

Using farmers during snow

The Council retains a list of farmers that are prepared to clear minor roads local to their farms during snowy conditions. They are provided with a Council owned snowplough which can be mounted onto tractors. They have been instructed to clear specific minor rural roads.

Roadside grit (salt) bins

These have been provided throughout the county, so that pedestrians and motorists can help themselves by salting small areas of road or pavement. It is current policy to only maintain the existing grit bins and new grit bins will not be provided³. However, new bins can be provided by recognised bodies such as parish councils or resident's associations⁴. The location of these bins would require written approval from the local Highways Office. (See Winter maintenance: provision of grit bins: ESH11.)

The Council inspects and fills all its grit bins during the autumn. If there is snow, the bins will only be re-filled if staff and equipment are available to undertake this work. The salt in the bin should be used very sparingly. Salt does not aid grip and is supplied to assist in preventing the formation of ice and with the melting of snow, which will only occur after it has been churned by traffic. The salt is provided for use only on public roads and pavements, and should not be used or transported anywhere else. Grit bins will not be refilled on demand.

Self help

Householders and businesses in East Sussex are encouraged to clear snow and ice from public areas near their properties during periods of severe winter weather. They are also encouraged to assist neighbours' who may not be able to clear snow themselves. The following extract from a Ministry of Justice⁵ letter may be of interest to anyone who is concerned about their legal position:

'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 is very small.'

'A snow-clearer does have a duty to anyone who passes along the pavement to do the clearing with reasonable care so as not to create a new and worse risk, but the only person who is at risk of being sued is a person who clears the snow so badly that things are worse than before and that common sense would indicate this was so. A job done very badly indeed which makes the pavement clearly more dangerous than before might give rise to a risk if a person who would not have slipped otherwise slips and is injured as a direct result of that more dangerous state of affairs.'

Facts and figures

Total road length	3200km (2000miles)
Primary route length	1380km (860miles) or 42% of the road length
Secondary route length	208km (130miles) or an additional 7%
Salt in storage at start of season	8500 tonnes
Salt used to treat primary route	210 tonnes (light to medium application)
Salt used to treat secondary route	30 tonnes (light to medium application)
County Council revenue budget	£337.2m
Band D Council Tax	£1,158.30
Winter maintenance revenue budget	£1.52m or 0.45% of County revenue expenditure.
Band D council tax contribution	£5.21 per year, equivalent to 3p a day during the winter period.

Reference Documents

1. Winter Service Policy and Plan 2010/11.
2. Meeting of the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment dated 4 February 2002 resolved to amend response and treatment times.
3. Meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee dated 30 September 1997 resolution on roads to be gritted and provision of grit bins.
4. East Sussex Highways – Fact Sheet ESH 11 – Provision of grit bins
5. Letter from Ministry of Justice to Nicholas Soames MP dated 28 February 2010.

Other useful documents

- i) Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Transport & Environment Scrutiny Committee of the 15 September and the Scrutiny Review of Winter Services in East Sussex.
- ii) East Sussex Highways – Fact Sheet ESH 04 - Winter road maintenance

Getting more copies of this leaflet

You can get all our leaflets in large print, easy read format, in Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in other languages. Please phone 01273 482976. They are also available in PDF form, which you can download from our website at eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex County Council

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Fax: 01273 481261

Website: eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus

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**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Winter maintenance:

Frequently asked questions

1. Why is my road not gritted?

We can't grit all roads, but we have a list of our primary roads that we do grit, which gives priority to the busiest roads in order to avoid the most serious accidents. This includes the major A, B and about 75% of C roads, some 860 miles or 42% of the total road network. During snow and very severe icy conditions we treat an additional 130 miles of road (known as secondary roads), giving a total coverage of about 49% of our road network. Once the busiest roads are clear we give priority to roads leading to:

- hospitals, fire, ambulance and police stations;
- bus and railway stations and other public transport stations;
- main shopping areas, schools etc; and
- difficult sites (very steep hills etc).

Minor rural and urban roads are left to thaw naturally.

2. When is my road going to be gritted?

If your road is not on the primary or secondary road list it will not be gritted.

Our gritters treat the roads to try and stop frost and ice forming before temperatures fall below freezing. We schedule the gritting process based on the weather forecast. Where possible we try and plan the gritting operation to occur after the evening peak hours, or before the morning peak hours.

3. Can I see a map of which roads will be gritted?

We have compiled a map of roads that will be gritted during severe snow and ice. It will show the primary roads that will be gritted, and you can search by postcode to check the roads relevant to your journey. Some secondary roads may also be gritted, once primary roads are completed, but these are not shown on the map. You can find the map on eastsussex.gov.uk/winterroads

4. My road is on a steep hill leading to a busy junction. Why is it not gritted?

See question 1.

5. Why has one side of the road been gritted but not the side that my house is on?

The gritter only needs to drive along one side of the road, as the salt spreading mechanism is designed to deliver the salt across the full width of the road.

6. Why was your gritter going along the road but not treating it?

Our gritters follow a detailed route, so that they can grit the primary roads within a specific area. When designing this detailed route we take into account the length of road that the gritter can treat when it has been fully loaded with salt. To maximise efficiency and reduce the time taken to salt the roads, the gritter has to travel across some intersecting roads to be able to salt the primary roads. It is not feasible to salt these intersecting roads as the gritter would not have sufficient salt to treat the primary roads.

The gritter may be empty and returning to the depot after completing its run.

When the gritter lorry is using its snow ploughs, salt is not always applied.

7. Why don't you grit pavements?

We don't routinely salt footpaths or pavements. We have to prioritise major roads rather than pavements to prevent the most serious accidents. Hand salting of pavements will only be carried out if staff and equipment become available, with pavements in main shopping areas and busy urban areas treated as a priority. We encourage householders and businesses to help themselves by clearing snow and ice from public areas near their properties.

8. Can we have a grit bin?

We currently have over 750 bins spread around the county. We do not provide additional grit bins. However, we are working with district and borough councils, residents' associations and businesses to review the locations of grit bins, particularly where these organisations may wish to purchase

additional bins. (See Winter maintenance: provision of grit bins: ESH11)

9. When will you fill the grit bin?

We inspect and fill all of our grit bins in the autumn. If there is snow, the bins will only be re-filled if staff and equipment become available to undertake the work. The salt should be used very sparingly, as it does not aid grip but is supplied to assist in preventing the formation of ice and melting of snow. It is provided for use only on public roads and pavements, and should not be used or transported anywhere else. We do not refill grit bins on demand.

10. I'm not on the main gritting route but have an emergency. Can you come out and grit my road?

If there is a real emergency and we are requested to provide assistance by the emergency services, then we will respond positively.

11. Why don't you grit all roads leading to schools?

See questions 1.

12. Can I buy grit/salt from you? If not can you give me contact details for a grit supplier?

We do not provide salt to private individuals or businesses, unless the business or a residents' association has purchased an approved grit bin from East Sussex County Council. Rock salt can be obtained from some builders' merchants and DIY stores.

For further information on purchasing approved grit bins, please refer to our leaflet 'Winter maintenance: provision of grit bins ESH11.'

13. My relative has run out of food and can't get to the shops. Can you grit the road please?

We do not have the resources to respond to individual requests to salt roads. Should anyone need advice or information on the support available for a vulnerable adult, they should contact Social Care Direct on 0345 60 80 191.

14. If I slip on an untreated pavement, who is liable? If I have an accident on an untreated road, who is liable?

If an accident occurs on either an untreated pavement or road, the individual concerned must prove that the County Council is liable. There is no automatic right to compensation and all claims will be treated as an insurance claim and assessed on the basis of the Council's legal responsibilities. Any claimant must be prepared to prove in a Court of Law that the Council's winter maintenance policy was not reasonably practical.

If a person wishes to pursue a claim then details of the incident can be provided to the Highways Contact Centre on 0345 60 80 193 or highways@eastsussex.gov.uk.

15. Should I be gritting the pavement outside my house?

Householders and businesses are encouraged to clear snow and ice from public areas near their properties during periods of severe winter weather. We also encourage people to assist neighbours' who may not be able to clear snow and ice themselves.

16. If I grit the pavement outside my house and someone slips can they sue me?

The prospect of a person, who has cleared snow from their pavement, being successfully sued by someone who has

subsequently slipped on that pavement is very small. However, the snow-cleared has a duty to ensure that they clear the pavement with reasonable care so that they do not create a new or worse risk. As long as, in clearing the pavement, the resident has improved the condition of the pavement and made it safer to walk on than before it was cleared, they should not be liable if someone slips. (See Winter maintenance: summary of policy 2010/11.)

17. A gritter sprayed onto my car and has caused damage. What can I do?

We use a small size of rock salt grit (6mm grading) which is extremely light and not very dense, and is unlikely to cause damage to vehicles. However, should a driver wish to pursue a claim then details should be provided to the Highways Contact Centre on: 0345 60 80 193 or highways@eastsussex.gov.uk. This will then be forwarded to our contractor who is responsible for the manner in which the gritting operations are carried out.

18. Will the bus service be running as normal with the ice on the road? How can I find out?

Bus companies are responsible for determining whether they are prepared to run a service. You will need to contact the bus company responsible for the route to determine if they are running the service.

19. How do I find out if schools are open?

- Local radio broadcasts school closures.
- You can subscribe to our email system or RSS alerts on eastsussex.gov.uk/schoolclosurealert for individual school closures.
- visit our website at eastsussex.gov.uk

- Your child's school website will also carry information about closures.

Winter maintenance:

Clearing snow and ice from pavements and public spaces

Householders and businesses in the county are encouraged to clear snow and ice from pavements and public spaces. This guide provides information and advice to help you clear areas safely, and assist neighbours' who are unable to clear snow themselves.

Will I be held liable if someone falls on a path I have cleared?

There is no law preventing you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces.

It is very unlikely that you would face any legal liability, as long as you are careful, and use common sense to ensure that you do not make the pavement or pathway more dangerous than before. People using areas affected by snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves.

What can I do to help clear snow and ice from pavements and public spaces?

Our Highways department offers the following advice:

- Start early: it is much easier to remove fresh, loose snow rather than compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.

- **Do not use hot water.** This will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- Be a good neighbour: some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths leading to, or fronting their property. Snowfall and cold weather can make gaining access to and from a property or walking to the shops extremely difficult.
- If shovelling snow, think about where you are putting it, so that it does not block people's paths or drainage channels. This could shift the problem elsewhere.
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then you can shovel the snow from the centre to the sides.
- Spreading salt on the area you have cleared will help to prevent ice forming. Table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as it may damage them. A few grams (a tablespoon) for each square metre you clear should

work. The salt found in salting bins should **mainly** be used to keep roads clear.

- Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep gradients to ensure snow and ice is removed. You might need to apply additional salt to these areas.
- Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight.
- If there is no salt available, then a little sand or ash is a reasonable substitute. It will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but should offer grip under foot.

Where can I find out more information about what to do in an emergency?

The Preparing for Emergencies web pages on Directgov contain useful information on how you can prepare for the impacts of all emergencies. The pages can be found at direct.gov.uk/preparingforemergencies

Winter maintenance:

Facts, figures and myths

- We don't use grit, but rock salt instead which is considered to be the best practice within the industry.
- Between 1 December 2009 and 28 February 2010 we used approximately 9,500 tonnes of salt.
- In an average year we would expect to use 6,000 tonnes of salt.
- We started the winter season with 7,190 tonnes of salt in our depots, and the contractor had an additional 1000 tonnes on call from Shoreham Harbour.
- ESCC doesn't buy salt directly. It is purchased and owned by May Gurney and we pay for it to be spread on the highway. Typically, salt costs between £30 to £35 per tonne.
- There are two main suppliers of rock salt in the UK: Cleveland Potash and Salt Union, with a further supplier in Ireland.
- May Gurney buy the majority of their salt from Cleveland Potash, combining their ESCC buying with several of their major highways contracts across the UK.
- Salt is delivered to Shoreham Harbour by boat and then distributed by road to our depots.
- We operate a fleet of 25 gritters, and keep three spares in case of breakdowns or accidents.
- Each gritter operates on a pre-planned route that takes approximately two to three hours to complete.
- Generally gritters are used when the forecast or conditions dictate. This can be in the evening or early morning, avoiding peak traffic flows where possible, to try to limit the

likelihood of frost/ice forming on the road. It is for this reason that most gritting operations go largely unnoticed.

- So far this year (until the end of February) we have used our gritters 70 times.
- There are a number of fixed costs in providing the winter maintenance service, these are

Leasing of vehicles	£480k
Maintenance of vehicles (servicing etc)	£164k
Basic facility (for example standby, depot management etc)	£168k
Weather forecast/bureau/ice detection costs	£ 30k
Snow fence (A259 East Dean)	£ 10k
Total fixed costs	£852k

The winter maintenance budget for 2009-2010 was provisionally set at £1.42 million

- When we salt, we pay the contractor based on the length of road each individual gritter covers when treating a scheduled route or snow route. This has to be funded from the remaining winter maintenance budget after deducting the fixed costs.
- The gritters are driven by trained May Gurney staff.
- Gritters are specialist pieces of equipment, but for eight or nine months of the year they are largely unused.
- Our gritters operate from six depots: Ringmer, Sidley, Heathfield, Maresfield (Mill Pond), Polegate (Mile Oak) and Cripps Corner.
- Salt is stored under cover and we can store up to 15,000 tonnes at our six depots.
- Rock salt provides no friction/abrasion, it simply prevents the formation of ice on the carriageway and aids the melting of snow and ice.
- Salt alone doesn't remove/melt snow, it relies on traffic to 'churn' the snow.
- Rock salt becomes less effective at temperatures below -5 degrees C.
- Rock salt is distributed at the rate of between 10g/m² and 40g/m² (½ ounce to 2 ounces) depending on the forecast and severity of the weather conditions.
- We treat 860 miles of highway, a mixture of A, B, C and unclassified roads, amounting to 42% of the total road network. This is one of the highest percentages of treated road networks for a highway authority in the South East:

West Sussex	40%
Kent	30%
Hampshire	26%

- In addition, we treat an extra 130 miles of highway during snow, equating to a total coverage of over 49% of our road network.
- There are approximately 750 grit bins distributed across the county.
- 99% of these grit bins are owned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The remainder are the responsibility of parish councils.
- Eastbourne Borough Council and Hastings Borough Council are responsible for winter maintenance salting decisions in their own boroughs (on behalf of ESCC) under their Highways Agency Agreements. The decisions are taken based on ESCC policy and usually in consultation with their ESCC colleagues.
- During snow fall, snow ploughs are fitted to all gritters. However, snow ploughs don't clear all snow from the highway. Instead they operate approximately 75-100mm above the carriageway, to avoid damaging the road surface and the plough. When driven with ploughs attached, the vehicles have to be manned by two people.
- We have 30 local farmers who can be called upon to clear snow from rural roads.
- The decision to use gritters is made on the basis of detailed weather forecasts, which are formulated using data collected from our local weather stations at four locations across the county: Ashcombe (nr Lewes), Guestling, Mark Cross, and Golden Cross.
- The total estimated cost of winter maintenance for 2009/10 is £1.58 million. The current overspend will be accommodated through budget transfers from the winter maintenance reserve fund.

Winter maintenance:

Provision of grit bins ESH11

Can we have a grit bin?

The County Council will provide new grit bins where the costs are met by residents' associations, businesses, or the local parish, town or district council and there is a suitable location for the new bin. If you would like a grit bin please contact your local parish, town or district council in the first instance to find out whether they would be willing to provide one.

If your parish, town or district council agrees to your request, they will contact us. Alternatively, you can contact us using the details on this leaflet. We will then review the request and, if approved, agree a suitable location. The bins can be located on the highway, private or local Council owned land providing the owner gives permission.

When the bin is empty, how do we get it filled?

New grit bins will not be refilled automatically. The relevant owner or responsible person must make a request for a bin to be refilled by contacting our Highways Contact Centre and making an advance payment. We will then arrange

for the new bin to be refilled when we refill our own grit bins. In periods of high demand grit may be reserved for use on priority roads and this might prevent grit bins from being re-filled.

When a new grit bin is provided the following costs apply (these costs will be reviewed annually):

Cost for initial installation

Grit/salt bin	£145
Installation and first fill	<u>£130</u>
Total	£275
Refill	£ 70

The use of grit

Grit is another name for 'rock salt'. It helps to keep roads safe by reducing the risk of ice. The grit works by lowering the temperature at which water freezes. It relies on the action of vehicle tyres to spread it over the road. It can, however, get too cold for the grit to work - at below minus 5 °C the effectiveness of grit is reduced and roads may still freeze. Rain or snow can wash the grit away leaving roads prone to re-icing, so gritting should take place after the rain but before the water freezes. The grit has been

specifically provided for the treatment of public roads and pavements and should only be used in these areas.

Spreading grit safely

Safety is the most important factor.

- Only spread the grit when there are no vehicles or pedestrians nearby.
- Wear bright clothing to ensure that you can be seen easily.
- Don't assume the road or pavement is safe just because it has been gritted.
- Look after the environment - use the minimum grit necessary. A shovel full of grit will be sufficient for 20-30sq.m of road.

Local Area Highway Offices

Highways Office
East Sussex County Council
Ringmer Depot
The Broyle
Ringmer
Lewes
East Sussex
BN8 5NP
Phone: 0345 60 80 193
Fax: 01273 482955
Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

Eastbourne Highways
Eastbourne Borough Council
68 Grove Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 1DF
Phone: 0345 60 80 193
Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

How to contact us

For more information about our services and to view our series of fact sheets, visit our website or contact our East Sussex Highways Contact Centre on:

(calls charged at the local rate)

Phone: 0345 60 80 193
Fax: 01273 482955
Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk
Website: eastsussex.gov.uk
eastsussex.gov.uk/fault (to report a fault online)

Highways Office
East Sussex County Council
Sidley Depot
Ninfield Road
Bexhill-on-sea
East Sussex
TN39 5EZ
Phone: 0345 60 80 193
Fax: 01273 482955
Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

Hastings Highways
Hastings Borough Council
Aquila House
Breeds Place
Hastings
TN34 3UY
Phone: 0345 60 80 193
Email: highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

NOTICE OF MOTIONS PROPOSED

Notice has been received, as described below, of motions which are proposed for consideration by Traffic Issues Working Party at its meeting on Thursday 16th December 2010

NOM 011/2010 – received from **Cllr R O’Keeffe** on 5th December 2010, in the following terms

It is proposed that:

Lewes Town Council recognises that there is the opportunity to purchase grit bins from the County Council for the use of Lewes residents in icy weather to make pavements and side roads not on the County Council gritting routes safer through self help, and undertakes to look at specific proposals from residents' groups with a view to assisting them by making such purchases.

Supporting Information from Councillor O’Keeffe

Supporting information can be found by visiting the ESCC website and looking at the Winter Maintenance Policy and Information Pack 2010-11. In addition here is information from a residents' group in Castle Ward which they submitted to the scrutiny committee in the bad weather of last Winter

Cllr R O’Keeffe

5th December 2010

Continues

Paddock Residents Association

Snow and ice in Lewes, winter 2009/2010: observations and recommendations

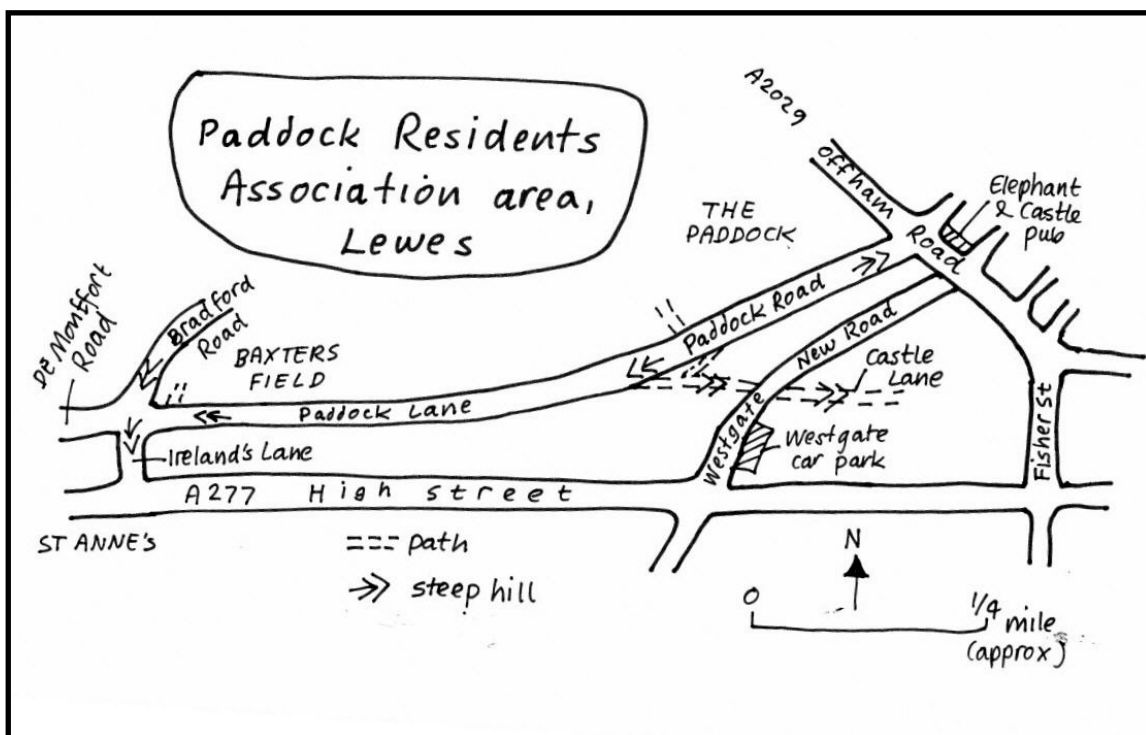
The Paddock Residents Association was formed in 2004 and covers Paddock Road, Paddock Lane, Paddock Terrace and New Road in central Lewes, a residential area of some 100 households just north of Lewes High Street. We were collecting observations and recommendations from residents throughout the two periods of snow and ice in December 2009 and January 2010, and would like these to be taken into account by the local authorities when considering the lessons learned and planning for the future.

Extent of the problems

Although we are in places only a few hundred yards from Lewes High Street, our area is on a north-facing slope and was among the worst affected in Lewes by the snow and ice. From the overnight freeze on Saturday 19/Sunday 20 December until the thaw on Wednesday 23 December, and from the second snowfall starting Tuesday 5 January until Friday 15 January, Paddock Road, Paddock Lane, New Road and the pedestrian path connecting New Road and Paddock Road/Lane were totally covered in packed snow rapidly turning to sheet ice, hazardous to pedestrians and impassable to most vehicles. The pedestrian path, which is sloping and in deep shade, was the worst affected. These routes consist of approximately three quarters of a mile of road and pathway.

Westgate and Castle Lane, which provide access to New Road and the pedestrian path, remained covered in ice for much of this time as did the crossroads at the top of Paddock Lane (junction with Irelands Lane, Bradford Road and De Montfort Road) which provides the vehicle exit from Paddock Lane/Paddock Road.

ESCC were not observed carrying out any snow and ice clearance in this area, apart from one night during the first episode of snow and ice when workmen hand grinded at the crossroads at the top of Paddock Lane.



Effects on residents

For 14 days residents were exposed to danger from slipping on the ice every time they went outdoors. Beth Wade of New Road broke her leg badly in a fall on the ice in nearby Westgate car park and had to lie there for **three hours** waiting for an ambulance, with no pain relief. She subsequently had severe difficulties getting to follow-up hospital appointments, missing one and having to be transported from her house by sledge for the other. Her full story is attached.

Deliveries of post and goods and rubbish collections were suspended for much of the time, taxis and ambulances were unable to reach residents' homes and those with cars were unable to use them: indeed Paddock Road was blocked by stuck vehicles for several days.



Many people of all ages were unable to carry out their usual activities, including shopping, gardening, and walking. Older and physically disabled people were particularly vulnerable and became dependent on friends and neighbours for errands and food supplies, and isolated from their normal social and family contacts and visits around Christmas and New Year.

Sir Geoffrey Wardale of Paddock Lane, in his nineties, was unable to do his usual daily drive to visit his wife who is being cared for in Barons Down nursing home. During the first period before Christmas he attempted to do the journey on foot but slipped near the top of Paddock Lane and, unable to get to his feet again on the slippery surface, experienced the embarrassment of being brought home on a sledge by passers-by. He was not able to visit his wife again during the icy period.

Philippa Thomas of New Road, who has multiple disabilities including partial sight, severe mobility problems and temporal lobe epilepsy, was confined to her house for the entire period, dependent on neighbours for fresh food supplies and household help as her normal carer could not get to her from Ringmer. She had three scheduled hospital appointments cancelled.

Many residents made efforts to clear the paths and roadways but without adequate salt/grit supplies these efforts were largely ineffective and in some cases made the surface more slippery. The only salt to be found was in bins at St Anne's and County Hall car park, but these were not re-filled after the December episode.



Clearing ice in Paddock Lane on 23 December during the first thaw

Legal position

We understand that ESCC has had a policy of not gritting smaller roads and pavements since 2004. We also understand that ESCC were a party in a test case in 2000 which appeared to absolve Highways Authorities of liability in case of ice and snow. However as a result the law has since been changed to require that as far as reasonably practicable, safe passage along a highway (which we understand to include pavements and pathways) is not endangered by snow and ice. In addition, equalities legislation now requires assessment of the impact of the policies of public authorities on groups such as older and disabled people.

In particular there may be a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) issue. The County Council's policy of not gritting pavements and small roads impacts disproportionately on people with disabilities, both in isolating them at home and in greater risk of accidents, and is therefore arguably indirectly discriminatory. Was the policy ever subjected to an equality impact assessment, and in particular was the public equality duty (s49a DDA 1995) considered?

Taking the above into account we believe that ESCC's policy of not treating pavements at all is incompatible with either highways or equalities legislation, or both.

We also feel that ESCC has made itself open to personal injury claims, particularly relating to the January episode, in that the problems associated with this policy were foreseeable and the bad weather was widely forecast. One of the issues in establishing negligence is how foreseeable an injury of this kind was at the time. Given that before the January freeze (i) we had had repeated severe weather warnings, (ii) we were going into the second snap of dangerous weather conditions this winter and (iii) that there had been reporting of very high levels of slipping accidents resulting in fractures during the first snap, it must now be more likely that negligence actions will succeed.

The relative burden on the public purse of providing grit/salt as against NHS costs and compensation costs/increased insurance premiums must surely make best value arguments lie firmly in favour of acting now to plan properly and prevent another stack of accidents if future episodes occur.

Recommendations

ESCC, Lewes District and Lewes Town Council should have a **joint, coordinated emergency plan** for dealing with snow and ice around the town rather than, as we saw this year, falling back on legalistic statements about the limitations on their respective responsibilities. There may be lessons to be learned from Brighton and Hove City Council's response to the same difficulties, which was reportedly much more timely and effective.

The local authorities should jointly identify staff and/or contractors who could be directed to carry out ice clearing and hand gritting activities during ice emergencies in Lewes and make the necessary arrangements for contracting and training them. Obvious examples are the parking wardens, refuse collectors and recycling staff who were unable to carry out their usual duties. We understand that (to their credit) some parking wardens cleared and sanded Castle Lane in Lewes – presumably on an unofficial basis.

We accept that residential areas may not be the first priority for clearance and would like to help in the planned response. However we do not consider that residents should have to pay for the tools needed to do the job. **Residents should be enabled to self-help by being given free access to salt/grit supplies.** This could be in a variety of ways.

- residents able to keep a sack or a small container of salt securely at home could obtain one to be delivered free, well in advance (e.g. in the autumn). According to Highways Agency figures UK-produced salt is sold at £25-30 a tonne. The costs to councils should not be prohibitive.
- lockable, non-flammable salt bins should be reinstated around town. In our area suitable locations would include near the top of Paddock Lane (by the Baxters Field entrance), in the lay-by opposite no. 77 Paddock Lane (where there was previously a bin before the parking machine was installed), in Westgate car park or by the top of the pedestrian path, in Paddock Road near the entrance to the Paddock, and on Offham Road (White Hill) near the horse trough opposite the Elephant and Castle. Nominated residents or associations could hold the keys

- vital access roads to residential areas should be kept clear as a priority to enable emergency vehicles such as ambulances to get closer to housing
- during an ice emergency, builders' bags of grit should be delivered to key access points (in our area, Westgate, Ireland's Lane, and the Offham Road/Paddock Road junction) as the quantities of grit in bins and sacks is likely to be insufficient. Householders should be told when they will be arriving so that they can ensure they are used appropriately.
- Residents Associations should be able to obtain snow shovels free or at wholesale cost price.

Paddock Residents Association contacts: Tony Murrell, Chair, 87 Paddock Lane, Lewes BN7 1TW murrelltony@yahoo.co.uk, 01273 487728, or Anne Locke, former Chair, 73 Paddock Lane, BN7 1TW anne.locke@talktalk.net, 01273 475381

Beth Wade's experience

On 20th December at about 11am I fell over on the snow/ice in Westgate car park. After I fell an ambulance was called but because of the tremendous number of people that had fallen in the area, I had to lay on the ice in the car park for about 3 hours. I was lucky that a passing man happened to work voluntarily for the ambulance service and although off duty stayed and helped me during this time. When the ambulance arrived in the car park, conditions for moving me were equally as treacherous and it was not easy.

When admitted I learned that here were 160 people waiting for operations for broken limbs, others had been told to wait at home.

Metal plates were fitted to my broken tibia and fibula on my right leg (a 5 hour operation). I was discharged from hospital on 24th December and stayed with a friend. Social services have advised me that no help is available to me because I am not permanently disabled. I have been extremely lucky and grateful that friends and family and local residents have helped so much.

Two weeks after my operation I had an appointment to return to hospital to have my stitches removed however snow had fallen again and had frozen and so I was unable to leave the house. No cars could drive down the road due to the treacherous road conditions. Were my road to have been gritted I would probably have made my appointment at 2.30pm. I was quite concerned that I could not get to hospital because I was worried that my stitches might have been infected.

The following week I was in exactly the same predicament. Prior to this my mum and I had spent lots of time trying to find help/somebody with a 4x4 to help get me up the road (my parents live in Devon and both work in schools so have had to make special visits to help me, another relative has travelled from Yorkshire to care for me regularly during the last 11 weeks).

We spoke to a local Councillor (David Gray) who managed to find a local resident with a 4x4 and who contacted me. On the day of my appointment we realised that the weather was quickly worsening and so borrowed a sledge from a neighbour to transfer me to a car at the bottom of New Road. Luckily two local police ladies were nearby and helped to pull me down the road to our car. We made it to hospital and I had the stitches removed/new plaster fitted. When we returned we could not get back down my road and by a stroke of enormous luck, the coastguard were on my road and offered to drag me down the road on a portable hammock sledge.

Since the 20th December I have managed to work part time for a week only as complications have occurred which have caused me to be signed off again. I probably will still not walk for at least another month, probably two assuming there are no further complications.



Waiting in westgate car park for an ambulance

I can't help feeling that if the car park and my road had been gritted I would not have had to undergo the traumas that I have. I would hate to think of how bad this may have been for one of the older residents. I am 37!

I apologise for the great detail but I do feel quite strongly that this traumatic experience and the months of difficulty I have still to go through to get back to some normality would have been avoided if gritting had taken place.

Beth Wade
New Road, Lewes
22 February 2010



Beth being transported by sledge in New Road