

# Droitwich Spa 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 Droitwich Spa area. The Town Council's 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 Council's roles within its community. Droitwich Spa Town Council does not have a statutory duty to prepare for and deal with snow and ice apart from on its own property and land, but is in a good position to inform the principal authorities about local needs.

Guidance has been published on preparing for winter events and on community resilience. This document draws from all of those in preparing Town Council's 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 on a regular basis.

### 3. Introduction

Worcestershire County Council is the Highway Authority for public roads in the Town. This means roadways and pavements in Droitwich Spa. The County Council has 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 in accordance with the County's agreed policies. As resources are finite, there is a priority rating: Red = Primary Routes and Blue = Secondary Routes.

There are areas where the County Council cannot access or fit into their priority schedule. Priority ratings for road maintenance can be improved by reference to the Local Ward County Councillor. Additionally, some limited snow clearance may be undertaken under the Parish Lengthsman Scheme. However, it should be noted that the Town Council has no responsibility for the clearance of highways.

Communication between Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District 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. The County Council has a direct telephone line specifically for use by Town and Parish Councils activated only during severe weather conditions, to report any issues in the town that require urgent attention. This telephone number is 01905 766955.

A web link is available on [www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk) 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 Worcestershire County Council's advice
- 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](http://WWW.DIRECT.GOV.UK).

### **5. Contacts**

If you have any issues or problems concerning the gritting of roads and highways or grit bins you can report an issue on the highway defects for, or alternatively you can contact the [Worcestershire HUB](#) on **0845 607 2005**

### **6. Town Council Resources**

Overall control of day to day decisions on Town Council resources will be made by the Town Clerk, who is also responsible for work prioritisation and staff organisation. In very severe weather conditions, the Town Clerk will make any timely decisions upon the limiting or closing of any of the Town Council's services or facilities. Whenever possible this will be done in consultation with the Mayor and/or the Chairman of Resources Committee.

### **7. Snow and Ice Procedure**

If bad weather conditions are anticipated, the Town Clerk will make a decision whether or not to grit the Town Council's property and land. Gritting will be done by the Caretaker above his normal working day and as early as possible. If there is a need for additional manpower then the Council's Handyman and/or Grounds Maintenance will be called upon.

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 Categories 1 – 4, the Community Hall path, St Richard's House path and the car park will be gritted. Given the Town Council's resources, both financial and in man-power, the decision has been made that no gritting will take place in Copcut Park nor on Spring Meadow, nor any of the allotment sites.

Daily Assessments will be made by the Town Clerk and in the case of prolonged bad weather, the Town Clerk will make full report to all Members of the Town Council.

Salt and grit usage will be monitored.

### **8. 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 kept in the compound at the Community Hall.

When clearing snow, it is impractical to clear the whole footpath or car park, so at least 1m wide should be cleared on pathways.

### **9. Operation of Salt Distribution/Protective Clothing**

Relevant operatives will be advised that this shall be done by filling a bucket with grit/salt and spreading on pathways with a trowel or scoop. Protective gloves should be worn at all times as although rock salt is non-toxic, it is very abrasive and will damage skin. 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. Operatives 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. Over-salting damages the environment and the spread rate for hand salting should not exceed 20g/m<sup>2</sup> (this is about a tablespoon per square metre). Rock salt will quickly rot or make rusty all the tools and equipment used so it is important to clean tools properly before storing. Any items of clothing removed during the physical exertion of gritting/snow clearance should be replaced as soon as possible thereafter.

Low salt stock or equipment should be reported to the Town Clerk.

Melt water from thawing accumulations of snow can re-freeze, particularly at night. Extra treatment may be needed and monitored.

### **10. Health and Safety**

All works carried out by Town Council staff or contractors 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.

Anything considered to be dangerous or unclear, must be reported to the Town Clerk.

### **12. Grit Bins**

At present the Town has 3 grit bins, one at the Community Hall, one at St Richard's House and one in the car park. Empty, misused or damaged grit bins must be reported to the Town Clerk.