

COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE – 20TH NOVEMBER 2013

WINTER SERVICE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council aims to provide a winter service which, as far as practicable, facilitates the safe movement of traffic and keeps to a minimum delays and accidents caused by adverse winter weather conditions. In practice this is achieved by taking precautionary measures to pre-salt designated routes, taking account of weather forecast and local observations. The response also aims to, ensure access to essential Council premises, OAP homes, education establishments, hospitals, doctors surgeries, town centres, major bus stations and emergency services is maintained where possible.
- 1.2 Priority is primarily given to the 'A' and 'B' roads (the authorities core transportation network) and bus routes. The primary objective is to achieve the precautionary application of salt to these elements of the network prior to the predicted time for the onset of sub-zero road surface conditions.

2. WEATHER FORECASTING.

- 2.1 Throughout the winter season, CCBC receive forecasts from the Met Office for the day ahead. A 24 hour detailed winter maintenance forecast, along with a 5 day outlook. A decision is usually made (but can be deferred pending a later update) on the 24 hour forecast for the winter action for the rest of the day and night ahead. Further to this, CCBC have the use of 5 Road Weather Stations for additional information. These stations are located at:-

- A469, Tesco's roundabout, Ystrad Mynach
- Outside Markham Rugby Club, Markham
- A467, Morrisons roundabout, Risca. (in collaboration with Newport)
- A472, near the county boundary, Hafodyrynys. (in collaboration with Torfaen)
- A469, near Butetown, Rhymney. (in collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil)

3. GRITTING FLEET

- 3.1 CCBC operate a fleet of 13 unibody vehicles. These vehicles are primarily used for day to day functions such as tarmac patching and scheme work, but can also be fitted with salt spreading spinners and snow ploughs during the winter. 11 of these are 2-wheel drive, but there are also two 4-wheel drive vehicles that are generally used in the north of the borough where the weather tends to be more challenging. In addition, CCBC also have the use of a snow blower, which can be fitted to a JCB for more remote locations when there is significant snow. There also a number of 7.5t tipper lorries, 6 of which can be fitted with snow ploughs, 3 Toyota 4X4 pickup trucks that can also be fitted with snow ploughs and gritter bodies and 2 grounds maintenance tractors that can be fitted with ploughs and spreaders.

4. GRITTING ROUTES

- 4.1 The Caerphilly highway network is approx 1150Kms. CCBC grit approx 485kms on every full gritting run. This equates to 42% of the network. Logistics and finances doesn't allow for full coverage of all of CCBC's network. In extreme conditions when salt stocks are low, 3no strategic routes (mainly covering the A roads) have been devised. These routes will only be implemented following high level discussion/approval. These routes would cover 15% of the network.

5. PERSONNEL

- 5.1 Highway Operations Group have 54 personnel available for winter operation. Under extreme weather events, the workforce is split into a shift system in order that a full 24 hour cover is maintained. Additionally, during recent snow events, clearance of town centres, doctors surgeries, school approaches & OAP complexes etc. have been undertaken by cleansing staff, grounds maintenance staff, agency staff and sub contractors under the direction of Highway Operations staff.

6. SALT STOCKS

- 6.1 CCBC used to hold approx 4000t of salt in stock. During the recent extreme winters, this salt stock has run dangerously close to being exhausted. In light of this, CCBC decided to increase its own salt stock. This coupled with a regional facility at Ebbw Vale, means that CCBC now has an additional 6000t of road salt at its disposal. Each full precautionary salting run uses approx 60-80t of salt. This figure can increase to 150t if snow is expected. In extreme snow events, salt usage of up to 400t per day can be expected. When salt stocks are low, it may be prudent not to fill the grit bins, as each full run of grit bin refills can use as much as 300t of salt.

7. PUBLIC CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

- 7.1 Caerphilly County Borough received 1816 calls for snow/ice to be cleared off its roads over the last winter period. This was in addition to 327 requests to have local salt bins refilled and 343 requests to have a new salt bin placed. All requests for assistance are screened. This helps in prioritising resources, grouping areas together and to avoiding repetitive visits to locations.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 8.1 Highway Operations Group have agreed the use of tractors from Grounds Maintenance which can also be fitted with snow ploughs and gritting attachments. In order to improve salt usage, 30 pedestrian spreaders for use by cleansing personnel in town centres were purchased. There are 855 grit bins placed at strategic locations throughout the borough. These bins are placed on a self help basis for use on the public highway. There are also a further 17 bins placed in the 4 major town centres (Blackwood, Bargoed, Caerphilly & Risca/Pontymister) which are removed at the end of the winter season. There are at present 426 requests for new salt bins throughout the authority.

- 8.2 In extreme conditions, resources are targeted at the higher priorities. The authority generally receive calls to clear roads to enable people to attend medical appointments, people who have health visitors attending their homes and funeral services that are to take place. There is particular priority given to assistance for dialysis patients, where treatment is critical and cannot be missed. Other areas where help has been provided is getting pregnant mothers to hospital for the birth of babies, getting registrars to weddings, assisting in getting feed to animals on remote farm locations along with assisting GP's where possible. There are many other urgent priorities that Highways consider and try and assist with the limited resources that are available.
- 8.3 Through the summer, an evaluation of the previous winters service is undertaken, with all Councillors and Community Councils approached asking for any suggestions for amendments to gritting routes that they would like considered as well as new locations for grit bins. The current Winter Service Plan was recently redrafted. A full consultation with all members, community councils and all the emergency services, in addition to key service providers was undertaken during its development. A further review of this document will be undertaken during the summer months of 2014.
- 8.4 Community/Town Councils would have had the Winter Maintenance plan circulated to them to allow them to comment during the summer and would have been included in the final circulation. This document has more detailed plans. Further information is available on the website where you will find details of winter road treatment and a section on frequently asked questions. The following link will take you directly to the map:- http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Transport_Streets/salted-road-network.pdf