



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Winter Weather Policy

Outline

Wombourne Parish Council will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their facilities remain open as normal, but will not do so at the expense of the welfare of staff and the safety of customers and residents.

The approved code of practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that '*arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure*'.

However, each fall of snow is different, and in some circumstances it may be better to let the snow lie whereas other times will require the snow to be cleared.

Where it is beneficial to do so, paths around the Civic Centre and the car park will be salted in advance of snowfall, and regularly salted and swept when the snow lies.

At no stage however will the Parish Council guarantee to keep their property free from snow.

Clearance of snow and ice in and around the Civic Centre complex

The Parish Council will endeavor to ensure that they purchase enough grit at the start of the winter season to be able to treat the paths around the Civic Centre and car park in severe weather conditions.

The safety of the staff employed by the Parish Council is paramount and in extreme circumstances, the Parish Council reserve the right to completely close their private car park (rear of the Civic Centre) in the event that it is unsafe for their staff to treat it, or to put notices up warning people of the danger of snow and ice.

Priority of clearance

The **first priority** is to maintain the normal functions of the Council, so the areas to be gritted are the main entrances to buildings, steps and slopes thus;

1. Access to the Council Offices via the front of the Civic Centre
2. Access to the Council Chamber
3. Access to the Goode Tutoring Offices
4. Emergency exits around the Civic Centre building, including the disabled access to the rear of the building
5. Pathways around the Civic Centre building and the designated path to Gravel Hill Doctors Surgery from the car park
6. Staff parking area

At a **lower priority** and only to be gritted if possible;

1. The driveway around the Civic Centre building
2. The Civic Centre car park

Note that members of the public using the private Civic Centre car park do so at their own risk.

Areas that will **not be gritted**;

1. The public area around the public conveniences in the Village Centre. Note is it likely that the toilets will be kept closed in the event of adverse weather due to the risk of slips and falls on the tiled floor when wet.

2. Pathways / car parks in and around the public open spaces maintained by the Parish Council (Bratch Park, Brickbridge Playing Fields or Poolhouse Play Area).

It is not the Parish Council's responsibility or policy to grit public highways, private properties or car parks in the Village.

Appointment of delegated power

The Parish Council have nominated the Chairman of the Civic Centre Management Committee (or Vice Chairman in their absence) to have a final decision on whether or not to cancel an event or function at the Civic Centre in the event of adverse weather. The Chairman will liaise with the Clerk to the Council and the Civic Centre Superintendent on duty to make this decision.

The Met Office publishes severe weather alerts when the risk of snow is 60% or greater (Met Office yellow alert). These alerts are published widely and may be accessed through telephone, text message, iPhone app and the Met Office website.

The Clerk automatically receives the alerts and the Chairman should have a reliable way of also receiving the alerts (not necessarily via the Clerk in the event the Parish Council Office is closed).

Roads treated by Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire County Council are responsible for gritting the roads within the Parish.

The duty of a highway authority under section 41 of that Act is *'to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'*.

The primary gritting network covers A and B roads only. Other roads will only be gritted in severe weather.

For more information, or to find out if your road is on a gritting route, please visit:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/winterdriving/salting/Saltingroutes.aspx>

Grit / salt bins

Staffordshire County Council provide the following advice on grit bins. The salt/sand mix in the yellow salt bins is to be used on roads and pavements only. They are not for private use.

Careful consideration is given to where grit bins are placed so that they are present in places where additional gritting may be required. By using grit from the yellow bins on anything other than public highways you could potentially put road users at risk, should the bin run out of grit.

If you wish to clear your driveway or footpaths, salt can be purchased from local building suppliers and DIY stores. Or, as an alternative, you can use table salt or dishwasher salt.

To find the location of your nearest grit bin, please visit:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/winterdriving/salting/Saltingroutes.aspx>

If a grit bin near you needs refilling, you can report this to Staffordshire County Council quickly by going to 'Report It'.

To log a refill request, select 'Report a new fault', 'Weather related' and 'Grit bin refill'. The grit bins will be replenished just as soon as the crews are back in the location.

If you do not have a grit bin near you, you can request to have one installed. You can do this by filling out the online form at Report It. To request a new grit bin, select 'Report a new fault', 'Weather related' and 'New grit bin'. Locations which qualify for grit bins have been risk assessed against a set of criteria that includes but is not limited to: Steep gradients, Severe bends, Junctions onto major routes.

Conclusion

The presence of snow and ice does present health and safety risks, as the potential for slips, trips and falls increases significantly.

It is important that all persons on Council property adhere to common sense protocols such as:

- Walk, don't run
- Wear footwear with non-slip sole
- Try where possible to leave your hands free to aid balance and/or in the event of a fall you will be better able to minimise the effects of a slip, trip or fall
- Allow more time for your journey, don't rush
- Be mindful of slipping whilst walking, using ramps and steps
- If driving, be mindful of skidding or sliding when leaving your car in the car park

Time and resources are limited, therefore it is essential everyone remembers that they have a responsibility to take due care in adverse weather.

In short, gritting may help, but it is no substitute for care and preparedness on the part of the individual.