

Chairman's Announcements - 9 November 2011

Wiltshire Council Prepared for the Winter

Wiltshire Council's highways team is fully prepared for winter, and is on standby to keep traffic on the county's roads running smoothly.

Since the end of last winter, the council has been servicing its gritting vehicles, revising routes and developing close working arrangements with parishes and other agencies.

The council has 14,000 tonnes of salt in stock which is strategically placed throughout the county. There are three new salt depots with undercover salt storage for some of this salt.

Dick Tonge, cabinet member for highways, said: "We had a dedicated team which does an amazing job in very difficult conditions, and we are more prepared than ever this year.

"We can, of course, never predict how severe a winter will be, but the wealth of experience we have means we will be in a better position than most should bad weather hit the county."

On average it can take up to 140 tonnes of salt to routinely grit Wiltshire's A and B class roads and 230 tonnes to salt an extended network during prolonged cold weather.

Local farmers also have an important role to play, with many assisting by clearing snow in their local areas when required.

This year, primary school children have been invited to enter a competition to name a front line gritting vehicle from a number which are new to the fleet this season.

The council also has a one ton bag scheme where interested parish and town councils are given a bag of salt. It will be delivered to an appropriate location within their parish, and can be distributed to locations they feel require attention. Spreaders are also supplied for local use.

In addition, salt is supplied to many schools to maintain the car parks and keep their facilities open.

During winter the council has a dedicated media officer who gives daily updates on local the radio providing the latest information on the progress being made with overnight gritting and the proposals for the day ahead.