

Date: 15 November 2011

Dear Clerk

Re: Invitation to participate in the 2011/12 winter salt bag scheme

This letter is to invite town and parish councils across Essex to participate in the 2011/12 winter salt bag scheme. If you wish to participate your response must be received by 14th October 2011.

To support local communities to help themselves during periods of heavy snow ECC would like to make available one tonne of rock salt to each town and parish council. The salt will come as a one tonne delivery of packaged in 20kg sealed bags for ease of storage and distribution. The salt is for use by the community on the local highway. As this is the first year of the countywide scheme ECC would like to offer it free of charge to confirm interest and monitor outcomes.

A pilot was conducted last year and from the feedback best practice was identified. If you wish to participate and are wondering how to set up the scheme please considering the following points:

- Identify the priority areas of most concern to your local community (footpaths outside the local shops, doctors, and access routes to main bus stops etc).
- Seek volunteers in and around these areas
- Confirm that the volunteers are confident they are physically able to manually remove snow and then spread a thin layer of salt
- Confirm that the volunteers can store a couple of bags of salt in the dry (shed, garage, store area etc)
- A method to keep a record of this information and share it with volunteers

Please remember that priority areas must be part of the public highway network. The salt provided as part of this scheme is for use on use on the highway only and not for any other area such as private driveways.

If you wish to take part in the scheme please reply to this email and complete the attached table. Responses must be received by 14th October 2011. Responses received after this date will not be accepted on to the scheme. Deliveries will begin to be organised as soon as possible after confirmation of interest. Deliveries will be completed by the end of October.

Once we receive confirmation that your town or parish council wishes to take part, an information pack will be sent out. The pack will contain: A guidance note for your volunteers on how to clear snow and a few things they should consider for their own safety and security; a risk assessment form template for you to complete and share with volunteers for each priority area you have identified; and, information on how you will be contacted re the delivery of the salt which is being handled by a local logistics company.

General Winter update

Whilst I am writing to invite you to participate in the winter salt bag scheme, I would like to take the opportunity to update you on our general preparation for the forthcoming winter season.

Our winter precautionary gritting network

Our policy remains constant as to what highway roads are included within our precautionary gritting network. This totals 40% of all roads within the county and includes the following:

- All A roads ECC is responsible for
- All B roads
- All roads served by a regular bus service which has more than 4 return journeys per day 5 days a week.
- A rural link road connecting the main area of every parish of more than 50 settlements to the main network
- Access roads to hospitals, ambulance and fire stations.

One amendment that has been made is to update the policy to include access routes for sites of national significance; this includes such sites as ports, oil refineries, airports, etc.

A basic map showing our precautionary and reduced network is available on our website. We are working with our IT team to try to improve the quality of the image but this may not be possible this year.

Salt bins

We are beginning a full audit of all known salt bins across the county that ECC is responsible for. Each bin will be photographed to verify condition and location. It will be filled and a sticker added to the bin to confirm that the salt is for use on the highway only. ECC will not be installing any new salt bins this year, nor will we accept any new requests for salt bins to be positioned on the highway. Our priority is to understand what our current asset stock is before we begin to add new bins.

If your parish wishes to purchase a new salt bin and install it on your own land / private land that will be at your discretion and the bin will remain your responsibility. ECC are currently unable to take on responsibility for this bin, i.e., ECC will not provide salt to fill it or replenish it.

As with last year, we are planning for every ECC salt bin to be restocked in preparation for the start of the winter season. Beyond this, we can not confirm how often we will be able to refill the bins during the winter season as our resources must be prioritised to secure the precautionary network. For information last winter we were only able to authorise three refills which included the pre-season restock.

Communication

We are reviewing our winter web site at the moment with the intention of adding more information to it. If you or a member of your parish requires information during the winter please first visit our website at www.essex.gov.uk/winter before contacting us on the number below.

Town Centres

Last year we formed partnerships with every district and borough council across the county and asked their help to clear the snow from the main town centre key footways. The outcome of this partnership was really positive and resulted in several compliments on how clear the high streets were. Discussions are taking place now to maintain these partnerships and continue to seek support from districts during periods of heavy snow.

If you have any questions please first visit www.essex.gov.uk/winter where further information will be updated shortly.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Gaywood

Project Co-ordinator, Business Improvement

Telephone – 0845 603 7631 (8.30 to 17.00)

Internet: www.essex.gov.uk/winter

Email: winterservice@essex.gov.uk

Please only return your completed form to this email address winterservice@essex.gov.uk which our business services team will monitor.

Parish Council information	
What district or borough is your town or parish council within	
The name of your Town or Parish Council	
Name of the main contact	
Their daytime telephone number	
Their email address	
Delivery information	
<p>The delivery is being organised for us by a local distribution company. There will be one drop off per parish or town council.</p> <p>The salt will be delivered by a large lorry (a bit bigger than a dustbin lorry) and will be using a crane to unload the pack. The location you identify for delivery must be able to accommodate this. Please also consider that salt is often stolen so it is preferable to find a location which is reasonably secure if the salt is to remain at the delivery location for some time. The smaller bags should make it easier to distribute it to the volunteers and for them to store it in sheds / garages / store rooms etc.</p>	
Name of contact at the delivery location	
Telephone number of the contact at the delivery location	
Address of the delivery location	
Postcode of the delivery location	
Any additional information about the delivery location that may be useful to know	