

## **LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Telephone: 08458 727374

:

**County Councillor J K Weighell**  
**County Hall**  
**Northallerton**  
**North Yorkshire**  
**DL7 8AD**

Dear Parish Councillor

### UPDATE ON SEVERE WINTER WEATHER FROM NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

You will all know that we are experiencing one of the most severe winters for decades. North Yorkshire has been at the heart of this particular winter storm experiencing very cold temperatures and falls of snow, somewhere in the County, on an almost daily basis since well before Christmas. At the time of writing this note there is a slight thaw taking place in lower lying areas of the County but the upland areas are still having some snow and cold nights still require main roads to be treated. Following this extreme period of weather I thought it would be helpful to update you on the latest position.

The County Council started the winter with 55,000 tonnes of salt, 15,000 tonnes more than last year and has bought in significant additional quantities since the start of winter. We have extensive facilities of covered barns across the County and the service has been in a very good state of readiness in order to deal with winter. Throughout this period we have utilised our full fleet of 90 gritters and snow blowers. We have mobilised our 130 farming contractors, who have done brilliant work on our behalf, and highways teams have been working around the clock to keep our roads open. The County Council is estimating that it will have spent £3m more than the annual budget of £6.2m on winter maintenance for the current financial year.

The severity of the winter weather in North Yorkshire has meant we have used a considerable amount of our salt stocks, we have only a very small reserve remaining and because of the national situation and the control being exercised by Government on the countries two salt suppliers we are finding it extremely difficult to obtain fresh supplies of rock salt.

As a result of this position we have taken steps on a graduated basis to try and help preserve rock salt and focus on the highest priority parts of the network. We have had to stop treating Priority Three routes with salt (these are estate roads and minor/unclassified roads in the County). However, we will continue to plough snow from these routes when appropriate and use grit and hard sand. We are currently unable to refill salt bins except in exceptional circumstances and we are restricting our treatment of footpaths to major footpaths in town centres only in snow conditions. We realise that there is a large part of the County's road network that has remained snow bound for some time. We sympathise with the public for the frustration and difficulty that this would have caused but I hope that you would agree that we have, through this difficult period, been able to keep the County's main routes well gritted and largely free of snow.

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As a consequence of these restrictions that the Government has placed on us obtaining any further deliveries of rock salt we now have to announce further modifications to our winter treatment procedures. We will be reducing the number of Priority Two routes that are treated, we will try and maintain a single access point into villages and communities but we will stop treating with salt routes that are of a lesser priority for access. This reduction will affect approximately 25% of Priority Two routes. In terms of the remaining Priority Two routes we will be treating these routes with a 1:1 mix of salt and grit. Details of the routes that will be treated with salt will be provided on the County Councils website at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/gritting](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/gritting) and if you would like any further information please contact our Customer Service Centre on 08458 727374. It may well be possible that if the cold weather continues or if we are not able to obtain new supplies of rock salt we will have to take measures to reduce further the amount of the road network that is treated. If this happens I will update you further. Please be assured that within the bounds of managing our salt stocks we will continue to do everything that we can to provide access on the roads for the public and businesses.

Finally, the severe winter weather has provided difficulties for us all to manage and the help that communities and people have provided to each other has been very evident across the County. The County Council will continue to do all it can to help the public and businesses and to work with our District and Parish and Town Councils.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Weighell', written in a cursive style.

JOHN WEIGHELL  
Leader of the Council