

While the costs of all the falls and broken bones doesn't fall directly on the council, (the bill is picked up by the NHS and employers/individuals) making it possible for people to get out their neighbourhoods onto the main streets is essential if services are to be maintained during severe weather.

Neighbourhood pavements could be gritted by agency labourers brought in at short notice. Relying on salaried council staff in these exceptional conditions means there just aren't enough bodies on the ground to spread the rock salt! There was enough notice a) of the weather coming, and b) the snow staying and freezing for plans to manage the gritting processes especially on hilly streets and pavements.

While it is good to keep main streets open by gritting lorry it is much more enabling for the people who chose not to drive to be able to walk on gritted pavements.

It would be good if local hills were identified and salt/grit bins were sited on the places where they are either currently lacking or had been removed. For instance Hamilton Road, Brigden Street, York Villas, Howard Place and Terrace (there is one here but it emptied quickly).

Gritting Lorries equipped with grab cranes could be used to deliver those large bags of grit to sites rather than just tipping onto the roadside. That way there is better distribution and able bodied locals can take some responsibility for gritting the pavements.

We were shocked at the number of days the schools were closed locally and how staff just didn't attempt to make their way to school.

New SMS messaging was used well though (Blatchington Mill).

Staff need remote access to their websites as it was clear that they were only updated on opening if the staff managed to get in.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Ross Haffenden

Dear Brighton & Hove Council,

I am a city resident who was affected by the severe weather, and I would like to contribute constructively to this review. To summarise my case and comments:

- At the beginning of the frosty week before December's snow, I was cycling to work along my usual route. On the sloping junction of Sussex St. & John St., I suddenly skidded on invisible ice, falling heavily on a hip & causing it to fracture.
- It is too early to know if the NHS's major operation (involving screwing the broken bone together) will be largely successful in terms of me regaining most of my previous mobility; the bone may die away, requiring a further major hip replacement operation.
- Whilst awaiting an ambulance, several of the many passers-by reported other people falling on nearby roads & pavements, which whilst busy as usual with many pedestrian commuters (e.g. to American Express) & schoolgoers (e.g. Carlton Hill Schools & Tarnerland Nursery), had not been part of the previous night's "standard" gritting routes (e.g. on my home street, Southover).
- Your scrutiny group has been convened because the following weekend (18-21 Dec) "all hell broke loose" in terms of residents falling & breaking bones on icy pavements & roads. I add my voice to those many who feel the Council at that time experienced a severe management failure in terms of assessing how great the risks clearly were, and in not deploying sufficient resources or staff from other sections. The costs to the NHS (& employers/ the economy in terms of working days lost) must have been many times greater than that required to increase gritting to a publicly & politically acceptable level.
- My main point however is that you say you grit 40% of the roads in the city, but the general policy of just gritting major roads & bus routes misses out many such as the location of my accident which are busy (& sometimes steep/ sloping) due to being commuter routes, near schools, shopping areas, etc. If you really do grit such a %age of roads, then in future resources need to be available to make more of these busy local roads safe within a reasonable timescale, on those rare occasions when ice & snow remain for longer than a few hours.
- Finally I want to stress the overwhelming priority of gritting resources in the review of the winter service plan. If the Council appears to minimise this issue by emphasising "snow heroes", 4x4 vehicles, residents clearing their own snow, etc., you will only be attracting further mass criticism & complaints.

Public Suggestions

Item 6

Please let me know if I can attend in person @ Hove Town Hall on the morning of Wed.17th.March.

Thanks & yours sincerely,

Dick Page

I have a few cheap ideas of how the council could have assisted residents over the recent Christmas period.

1. Drop of piles or bags of salt/grit at the bottom or top of every residential street that is not on the Bus/priority routes, this would allow the residents to administer it themselves, in my street we cleared the pavements/road using spades only for it to refreeze due to no salt/grit being available.
2. Actually take calls requesting assistance as everybody in my street who phoned the council help line on the first occasion received an automated message that made it obvious the person who left it had run out of the door at 5pm on the Friday, the second time no one even bothered to phone due to the wasted time on the first occasion.
3. Make sure all bus routes are open, make sure all schools have enough grit/salt to enable them to open; this made it extremely problematic for those parents without understanding employers willing to pay the wages for days missed.
4. Contact local government in Canada/Eastern Europe to have them email the guidelines they follow (no need for a fact finding trip); they manage in far worse situations with limited budgets.
5. Listen to residents, in my street and many others we were forgotten, we had a pavement and road which was like an ice rink the grit bin 2 streets away was empty before the first bad weather, this bad weather was known to be coming and no one checked the bins!! , it almost felt like the bad weather fell on a bad time (the weekend) and as such the council was closed apart from a few gritters.

There's no point moaning about what's happened but next time listen, a few bags of salt dropped off in every street would have cost very little.

Phil

I would like to suggest that at the beginning of each winter e.g. 1st December, each household is given a bag of grit and is responsible for gritting the piece of road outside their house and the pavement too. The problem this winter was that so many of the side roads were not gritted and therefore it was almost impossible to get to the main roads, which were well gritted. This hopefully would mean better conditions for everyone

Thank you

Sue Thomas

Sirs,

I am the Secretary to the Goldstone Valley Residents Association, Hove, and a recently retired Civil, Municipal and Highway Engineer with many years Winter Service experience.

At a recent meeting our Committee discussed the Council's response to the recent snowfall events. It was agreed that the response failed to achieve the Council's objectives as published on its website.

In response, our local Member, Councillor Brown, has made our Committee aware of the Scrutiny Panel meeting and has suggested that I write to you and register our interest in attending the Panel. I, in view of my knowledge and experience, have been asked to attend and represent the GVRA.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Forrest, Secretary, Goldstone Valley Residents Association, Hove.