

CVSF members were asked for their views. 8 responded and the feedback is summarised below. It is understood that Bevendean LAT has also made a formal submission.

### A) Strengths

The Council did a good job:

1. Countering the prevailing suggestions that clearing snow in front of ones property could leave you liable for prosecution
2. Harnessing 4x4 drivers to deliver meals on wheels
3. With the second bout of snow – i.e. the response was much better
4. Diverting City Clean staff to help grit.

### B) Weaknesses

The Council did less well, with regard to:

1. Gritting!
  - Grit stores where they do exist were not refilled
  - “Whilst it is reasonable that it takes time to get around the streets, we live on a steep hill and never saw any gritters, and though the pavements got cleared by groups of neighbours and some parts of the roads, it was unreasonable to assume that a few enthusiasts with spades, could have the same impact as a small gritter or plough. Once the roads are deemed to be impassable then nothing moves whereas one visit by a gritter would have then enabled the people who did need to get out to do so.”
  - Outlying areas (particularly Mile Oak, the top end if Queens Park and Bevendean) were not get gritted and did not move for days
  - The Trust for Developing Communities requested and subsequently promoted information on the location of grit bins and BHCC’s emergency responses. Although this information was apparently on the BHCC website it was not readily accessible (central page for ‘snow’ would have been helpful) and needed to better publicised in the Argus and on the radio.
2. Overly focusing on roads and neglecting pavements:
  - “Most of the Council’s effort went into clearing roads. Pavements were forgotten. This was especially noticeable on main bus routes such as Eastern road, (Brighton College area) where traffic was flowing, but pavements so treacherous it made getting to the bus stop impossible for many, and dangerous for those of us that risked it. The fast moving traffic made it dangerous to walk in the road as an alternative. The many broken limbs resulting from the snow are most likely to be suffered by pedestrians. Gritting major pavements saves money!”
3. Protecting cyclists:
  - “The clearing of cycle lanes was not done from what I could tell which pushed the braver riders into the roads (for some time after the snow had fallen).
  - Quite a number of cyclists have complained about grit causing punctures – is it the case that a different type of sharper grit was used when the gritting salt was in short supply? A lot of grit remains on the roads, particularly at the edges where cyclists ride.

#### 4. Opening schools

- “Many of the schools shut too readily and stayed closed for too long – causing a lot of problems for working parents. There were no contingency plans and teachers did not seem to be expected to either make their way to their nearest school to help out or to think about actually use other means of transport if their car was snowed in.”

Other comments about other service providers

“There was concern (and a lot of rallying round) by communities about older people, particularly in relation to their prescriptions. I think health did not respond as well as BHCC.

### **C) Proposed Solutions**

There needs to be more encouragement for communities to do things for themselves and work things out together.

1. “A longer term more sustainable and realistic approach would look at how we (third sector / statutory sector / communities) can work towards encouraging / motivating communities to become more resilient; where we come together when there is a challenge and help each other.”
2. “How we sort these things out together would look at communication and possibly getting the tools resources we need to enable us to do this, salt and grit”
3. “Whilst householders could have been reasonably expected to keep the pavements in the neighbourhoods clear, this emphasis did need to be promoted a bit more strongly so that community leadership could have been exercised. Also thought was needed for the pavements and alleyways which are not really seen to be the responsibility of any one group of houses. In areas where people had gone to the trouble of clearing their frontages, the whole thing was lost if 'common land' was uncleared.”
4. “The Trust for Developing Communities are discussing with community forums setting up emergency teams in communities that are prepared to help, have 4 by 4's etc. Portslade and Woodingdean have expressed interest in this”

These comments lend support to the ideas proposed by Cllr Bill Randall, around equipping local community groups to take a leadership role in snow clearance and in facilitating community engagement in relation to local needs and appropriate responses.

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