

Winter Maintenance FAQ's 2026/27

Information regarding the Council's Winter Service Plan and Gritting Routes can be found here: [Winter service - West Sussex County Council](#)

Question	Response
1)What will the Winter Maintenance Plan include?	The Winter Maintenance Plan sets out how we respond to icy and snowy weather during the winter period. The Plans includes details of the 'Winter Service Network'. This network focuses on areas of local importance and includes roads such as major bus routes, Police Stations, Ambulance Stations, Fire & Rescue stations, hospitals and routes to large industrial establishments. It is important that we focus our efforts on treating these roads during cold weather to reduce the potential for ice forming. Under the new plan, we continue to keep watch on the winter weather forecasts, ready to deploy gritter's on a priority basis, and to keep main routes open and passable with care.

2) What is the Winter Service Network and how does it differ from the Winter Resilient Network	The Winter Service Network is the network we treat as a precaution to help prevent ice forming. It is a larger network than the Winter Resilient Network. It comprises areas of local importance and includes roads such as major bus routes, Police Stations, Ambulance Stations, Fire & Rescue stations, hospitals and routes to large industrial establishments. The Winter Resilient Network is a smaller network which focuses on key roads in periods of severe weather. Further information is available via the link at the start of this document.
3) What is the Winter Resilient Network?	The Winter Resilient Network - This is the extent of the network that will be treated/ploughed in the event of heavy snowfall (5cm+). This network will be driven in both directions on all roads with only the nearside lane being driven on dual carriageways/multi-lane roads.

	The Winter Resilient Network is based on the Resilient Network and has regard to: • Connectivity between major communities; • Links to the strategic highway network; • Connectivity across authority boundaries where appropriate; • Links to transport interchanges; • Access to emergency facilities including Fire and Rescue, Police, Ambulance Services and Hospitals; • Links to critical infrastructure (ports, power stations, water treatment works etc.); • Principle public transport routes, access to rail and bus stations, and to bus garages and other depots; and • Other locally important facilities.
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4) During a significant snow event how does the Winter Resilient Network differ to the Winter Service Network	See Q3 - The Winter Resilient Network is similar to the Winter Service Network, meaning that customers will not experience a major change in service during significant snow events. The focus of the resilient network is to keep major roads and important links open during a significant snowfall event (emergency service/hospitals etc). Further information can be found in the Winter Service Plan via the link at the start of this document.
5) What is considered when deciding gritting routes?	We have taken into consideration the requirements of the National Code of Practice. A Winter Resilient Network has been developed to ensure that it provides: • Connectivity between major communities; • Links to the strategic highway network; • Connectivity across authority boundaries where appropriate; • Links to transport interchanges; • Access to emergency facilities including Fire and Rescue, Police, Ambulance Services and Hospitals; • Links to critical infrastructure (ports, power stations, water treatment works etc.); • Principle public transport routes, access to rail and bus stations, and to bus garages and other depots; and • Other locally important facilities. We have; • Focused on the A & B road network (The M23, A27 and A23 Trunk Roads are the responsibility of National Highways)
	• Invested in upgrading weather stations – for more accurate forecasting • More active community support – over 155 Parish & Town Councils, and at least 50 farmers/ volunteers supporting their communities. Over 1060 Grit bins are place around the county.

6)Why grit the main roads when drivers can't get out of local residential roads?	The National Code of Practice, Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, requires, in conjunction with legislation that, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. The Code of Practice further states that, "Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Service, it is not considered reasonable either to: • Provide the service on all parts of the network; and • Ensure carriageways, footways and cycle routes are kept free of ice or snow at all times, even on treated parts of the network." It is, therefore, very important that motorists drive according to the conditions of the road and with extreme caution, regardless of whether the roads have been gritted or not.
7)Why is the road to my school not gritted as it will be dangerous for teachers and children to get to school?	Priority is given to major and other important roads giving connectivity between significant communities, links to the strategic network, links to transport interchanges and access to emergency services and hospitals. Consideration is also given to critical infrastructure such as power stations and water treatment works. It is recognised that it is not possible to treat all parts of the highway network or all bus routes. Those who drive on public highways should do so in a manner and at a speed that is safe, having regard to such matters as the nature of the road, the weather conditions and the traffic conditions. Drivers are first and foremost themselves responsible for their own safety.

8)Is there provision for the Parish/Town Council to pay WSCC highways gritting contractor for roads to be gritted using precept funds?	This facility isn't currently available. A number of other local gritting contractors within the county currently work with Parish & Town Councils to support local Community Winter Plans or Emergency Plans. This includes: • EFP Gritting https://efpgritting.co.uk/ based in Balcombe • Sussex Manures https://sussexmanures.com/gritting_and_winter_services.php based in Findon
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Winter Management Offer 2026/27 - Frequently Asked Question's

Question	Answer
9)Can the existing Winter Plan roll over to this winter?	All existing plans and agreements with local farmers/contractors need to be reviewed annually in case there are changes and resubmitted to WSCC. You will need to review and highlight any changes including: • Contact Details of nominated persons. • Gritting and Snow Clearing routes identified in the plans. • Locations of salt bins/bags and highlighting any additional bins or bins that have been removed. • Check your local farmer/contractor is still happy to support your winter plan. If the plan is as it was for the previous year, please indicate this by responding to this email.

10)What is the prearranged financial contribution towards local farmers and contractors?

To be eligible, you must submit the following information by Friday 13th November 2026:

WSSC will contact by email Parish & Town councils who have signed up to the existing scheme to confirm the following information:

- A plan showing the roads that the Farmer/Contractor will be gritting and/or snow ploughing - which is agreed by the local Area Highway Manager.
- Email addresses for 2 key contacts that will receive the Winter Trigger Information – one of whom should be the Farmer/Contractor.
- Farmer/Contractor details and contact information.
- A valid Public Liability Insurance (covering November 2026 to April 2027) document for the Farmer/ Contractor.

If your Parish & Town Council is new, and has agreed to work with a local farmer/contractor to clear your local roads please contact active.communities@westsussex.gov.uk

WSSC will enter into an Agreement with the local Farmer / Contractor based on the information provided in your plan.

11)How much is the pre-arranged financial contribution towards local Farmers/ Contractors?	Financial Contribution consists of: In line with national agreed standards with the NFU and other neighbouring authorities, WSCC will: • Provide £35 per hr towards farmers/local contractors to carry out precautionary salting to local roads identified in the agreed Local Community Winter Maintenance Plans as a result of a WSCC notification in advance of a significant snow event. • Provide £35 per hr towards farmers/local contractors to clear snow as a result of a significant snow event, from local roads identified in the agreed Local Community Winter Maintenance Plans and whose activities have been activated through the agreed Trigger Mechanism In order to take part in the “Local Farmers and Contractors Agreement” the contractor must be covered by their own Public Liability Insurance at the date they carry out the work.
12)What is the Trigger Mechanism to activate Winter Maintenance Plans and Farmers/Contractors?	The Winter Management Plan is intended as a response to significant weather events ONLY. WSCC Highways will issue an email directed at the particular areas forecasted to experience significant weather event. Example Email: <i>(Insert Appropriate Location Name)</i> is forecasted to have a significant snow event in the next 3 to 4 days’ time please put your Winter Maintenance Plans into Action. • Precautionary Salting: Advisory email of a significant weather event will be the trigger mechanism for paying farmers and/or local contractors to move bulk bags, undertake precautionary salting. • Snow Clearance: Advisory email of a significant weather event will be the trigger mechanism for paying farmers and/or local contractors' for snow clearance - 2” (50mm) of accumulated snow. WSCC have no objections to local councils/community groups using the salt provided at their discretion and cost.

13)How do we pay the local Farmers/Contractors for any work relating to our Winter plan?	WSCC will only cover the costs of filling salt bins, precautionary salting and snow clearance when the trigger has been activated. If the trigger is activated, the payment from WSCC will be made directly the local Farmer/Contractor. This will only happen where there is an agreement in place.
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14)What are the arrangements to fill the bins this winter?	• Salt/Grit held locally: If you have salt/grit stored at a local farmer this needs to be used to fill up the salt/grit bins before requesting further supplies from WSCC. • No salt/grit held locally: WSCC Highways will top up bins less than 75% full and identified through the community audit submitted by the end of August 2024. No salt bins will be filled after 14th October 2026
15)The Parish or Town Council or Community group would like some new bins. Is this possible?	WSCC will not be supplying any new bins. The procurement and maintenance of salt bins is the responsibility of the Parish and Town Councils. If you would like to place additional salt bins on the Highway, you will first need to obtain an agreement to do so. You can do this by submitting a general inquiry, whereby it will be allocated to a relevant officer and go through a licensing process.
16)Existing Hippo bags – Removed or Moved	WSCC will not remove or move hippo bags once they have been delivered. If communities wish to move existing hippo bags, they can utilise any local agreements with Farmers/Contractors at their own cost.

17)Bins/hippos bags where salt has risen to the top, gotten wet or is clumpy.	Salt/Grit mix is still usable if the salt has risen to the top or become clumpy/solidified. It can be mixed by a stick or broken up using a shovel/spade. If salt/grit mix has become very wet, it should be left to dry out and it then can be used again. To keep grit/ salt mix dry, place the hippo bag on a wooden pallet and cover with tarpaulin.
18)How will Daily Decisions by Highways are communicated?	Daily forecasts will be monitored between October and April and appropriate action taken where necessary. A Daily Decision will be issued to all interested parties via @WSHighways sign up here
19)Salt/grit supplies in the event of either a prolonged or several extreme winter weather events	In the event of prolonged or several extreme weather events, priorities will be the Winter Service Network for gritting, and the Winter Resilient Network for snow clearance. We will have to consider whether any salt/grit would be available more widely at that point on a needs' basis e.g. the areas that have had snow will get priority.