

Co-ordinators Newsletter:

We are sending out a full newsletter this month as we move full steam ahead improving the highway service.

While we make these changes, there will be challenges and learning experiences and inevitably some disruption. The improvements will be phased in over a period of time and we will keep you informed as we continue to move forward.

As is usual this time of year we have a number of co-ordinators, engineers and support staff who are moving to new roles. This means there could be a change of contact for parish and town councils and we will advise of any changes once they are known.

September Bulletin

The Landscape Group to undertake grounds maintenance, street cleaning and small highway repairs

On 1 September 2015 Balfour Beatty Living Places transferred their sub-contract with The Landscape Group (TLG) to Wiltshire Council.

TLG directly under the management of Wiltshire Council is now providing the local services for grounds, street cleaning and minor maintenance

To support this new model we are moving to an 'identified need' service delivery. This is a move to works being undertaken where there is a known requirement.

For town and parish councils and resident issues, works can be reported and prioritised through the MyWiltshire App. Town and parish councils are also asked to report issues in their areas directly on the MyWiltshire App rather than directly to the local coordinator. The co-ordinator will then prioritise the work from the information given. The more information provided at the time of the report, the quicker a decision will be made on its priority and in some cases whether the work is required to go ahead.

Maintenance work will be given to TLG based upon the priority of the work identified by the council, using the MyWiltshire App system. This will help focus the resources on known issues on the network and will maximise the use of the limited resources to the maintenance of the network.

To allow this to happen, programmed work will cease and be replaced by a rolling review system (with the exception of grass cutting), where each day the assessment of outstanding works are gauged, with the highest need work being given the priority.

This means that Community Days and maintenance programmes (not the major maintenance schemes) will end and be replaced with the new reactive service. Hence any programmed work you currently were issued is no longer applicable. Please can you ensure this information is no longer used, as it may cause confusion.

To ensure the parish and town council issues are addressed it is vital that reports are made through the MyWiltshire App system. This can be accessed by our website, through the mobile phone app or by phoning the council on 0300 456 0105.

The council will be introducing a web-based reporting system to allow more strategic matters to be reported, with live updates on progress being undertaken. More information will be issued when the details are known.

Return of Parish Steward Scheme April 2016

We are currently working on preparing the new highway contract for 1 April 2016 taking into account local views and the innovations and improvement priorities to be introduced.

As stated earlier in this newsletter the Community Day Service has now ceased, however, in its place the council intends to return the Parish Steward Scheme in the new highway contract from 1 April 2016.

We have used the local highways' annual parish and town council Involvement evening findings to consider how service delivery should be amended to achieve the maximum benefit. It has been clear from the feedback from town and parish councils that one of their top priorities is a return of the Parish Steward Scheme

The Parish Stewards provide a vital link between Wiltshire Council and local councillors. They report issues and undertake repairs and maintenance themselves, meaning they are a 'one stop and done' service. Twenty two parish stewards are being appointed to prioritise the needs of their patch including roads, pathways, drainage and verge maintenance.

They will be directed locally by the parish and town councils to undertake the local priority minor maintenance highways work.

Grass Cutting Arrangements 2016

Through the winter we will be reviewing our grass cutting arrangements for the 2016 season and we are interested to hear from any parish or town council that has a view on the provision in their area.

We would also ask for town and parish council comments on whether there are any areas of Wiltshire land that they would be interested in transferring to their responsibility. This could be achieved through asset transfers and service delegation. Alternatively parish or town councils may wish to enhance the provision of service from Wiltshire Council through the use of voluntary groups or making payments direct to Wiltshire Council's contractor for enhanced levels of service.

We ask that the parish or town council when responding to this request, confirm that the comments have come from the nominated responsible parish or town council officer. We are asking for responses to your Wiltshire Council Local Highway Coordinator by 1 November 2015 to allow us time to consider the comments.

Hedge maintenance.

With the arrival of the shortening daylight hours, comes the change in our ground operations from grass cutting to hedge/ shrub maintenance.

The government delayed the start of the hedge maintenance season this year to the end of September due to the bird nesting season.

We will begin hedge and shrub maintenance during October, with all grass cutting arrangements ceasing to support the grounds service. No further grass cutting will take place until March/ April, with the exact date being dependent on the weather conditions. We are currently prioritising the areas for hedge and shrub maintenance. If you have any concerns about hedge or shrub maintenance in your area, please ensure your nominated town/ parish representative contact their local coordinator with the details, so the request can be considered alongside the other priorities.

Gearing up for winter in Wiltshire

Our highways team is fully prepared for winter and arrangements are all in place to keep traffic on the county's roads running smoothly.

Since the end of last winter, we have been servicing our gritting vehicles, revising routes and developing close working arrangements with parishes and other agencies.

We have 14,000 tonnes of salt in stock which is strategically placed throughout the county and there are three new salt depots with undercover salt storage.

Philip Whitehead, cabinet member for highways, said: "We have a dedicated team which does an amazing job in very difficult conditions, and we are more prepared than ever this year."

"We can, of course, never predict how severe a winter will be, but the wealth of experience we have means we will be in a better position than most should bad weather hit the county."

On average it can take up to 140 tonnes of salt each time we grit Wiltshire's A and B class roads and 230 tonnes to salt an extended network during prolonged cold weather.

During severe winters local farmers also have an important role to play, with many assisting by clearing snow in their local areas when required.

The council also has a scheme where interested parish and town councils can arrange for delivery of a one tonne bag of salt. It will be delivered to an appropriate location within their parish, and then can be distributed as they wish. Many town and parish councils also have a snow warden and the council can give advanced notice to them about severe weather. In addition, salt is supplied to many schools to maintain the car parks and keep their facilities open.

During winter people can have updates on both the weather and road conditions on Twitter by following @WiltshireWinter and @WiltshireRoads

Gulley emptying

We have amended our gulley emptying service to prioritise high risk areas which are recorded on the local highway house flooding or highway safety risk list.

We will ensure all the gullies that are on our high risk area list are emptied yearly.

When gullies in high risk areas are reported as blocked they will be given priority over all other gullies for emptying.

Gullies in low risk areas will be emptied when resources allow, and the decision on whether these gullies will be emptied will be left to the local highway office.

Non-urgent blocked gullies should be reported on the MyWiltshire App, on the council's website or on the council's highway 'One Number' 0300 456 0105.

Emergency flooding (houses or causing a road safety issue) should be reported immediately on 0300 456 0100 (24hrs a day).

Wet winter weather preparation

With the advent of autumn we will inevitably see wetter weather and a greater risk of flooding.

We are reassuring residents we are doing all we can to be ready for any adverse weather. We are also reminding community groups and residents to consider how a wet winter may affect them, and to prepare by taking the appropriate action.

If a resident thinks a gulley is blocked superficially, with leaves or grass, they can, with care on the highway, clear it themselves. If the blockage is not easy to clear or they have any other concerns, these can be reported to us using one of the following methods:

- On line at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts where you will be able to leave your email address and receive updates
- Or using the MyWiltshire app on a smart phone, again you will receive updates.
- By telephone on 0300 456 0105 – the customer services team will give you a log number
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Link to flooding page:

Residents can also manage their own flooding risks. Further advice is available from : The Environment Agency on this <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood>

Public convenience consultation

Please remember to give us your views on our public convenience consultation which ends on 11 December at

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/publicconveniencessurvey.htm>

