

## **Appendix 6: Snow Wardens and Snow Plough Operator roles and responsibilities**

### **Snow Wardens**

#### **General Duties & Responsibilities**

1. Snow Wardens are volunteers normally appointed by Parish Councils. Full contact details should be provided to the parish council and the parish clerk should be kept update on any changes.
2. During periods of severe winter weather, information regarding snow conditions should be provided to the Area Office by Snow Wardens each morning - ideally before midday. This will allow the Area Highways Manager to make a comprehensive review of weather and road conditions across each area of the county before the West Area Highways Manager considers countywide conditions. The information provided should include:
  - The extent and estimated depth of snow including degree and direction of snow drifts
  - Location of blocked roads
  - Progress already made in clearing blocked roads and snow drifts
  - Locations that are causing local communities the greatest problems
3. The primary objective of Snow Warden's is to assist in making arrangements for the clearance of blockages on local roads and routes leading to villages and hamlets whilst GH's resources are prioritised in maintaining the strategic road network.
4. The Area Office will request that the snow warden brings into operation any available local snow ploughs as necessary. In the event of extreme conditions the warden may initiate such operations as are appropriate to open a priority route to each community and to overcome emergency situations. Snow Wardens shall report emergency actions at the earliest opportunity to the Area Office.
5. Local self-help plays an important role in helping to deal with snowfall particularly when GH's resources are prioritised in maintaining the strategic road network. Self help arranged by the Snow Wardens should be carried out in accordance with the DFT guidance document; "Snow Code".
6. The aim of the snow warden is to foster and encourage local self-help from the voluntary spirit that is so apparent in emergencies to organise and direct local resources to best effect.
7. Prior to and during severe winter weather conditions wardens should establish contact with local Snow Plough Operators and with wardens of neighbouring Parishes. They should familiarise themselves with the geography and road system in the parish and with the normal routine of transport services such as school buses and milk tankers.
8. The Snow Warden should pass on to the Snow Plough Operator any advance adverse weather information received from the Area Team during the winter season. This is normally by telephone call following the lunchtime forecast update and would allow the plough to be prepared for action.
9. If a Snow Warden is unable to operate temporarily at any time during the period November to March (e.g. because of sickness or absence from home) a deputy

should be appointed and briefed on the duties by the warden or by the Parish Council. The Area Office should be advised accordingly.

10. Where Parish Councils have accepted a locally controlled stockpile of salt from Area Team, the Snow Warden should co-ordinate the appropriate action of the volunteers by either salt spreading as previously agreed between Parish Council/Area Team and/or the replenishment of existing grit bins.
11. Where parish councils have not accepted a locally controlled stockpile of salt from the Area Team the Snow Warden should monitor existing grit bins and report to the Area Team if they require refilling or any misuse of the salt stock.
12. The snow warden should keep a record of all authorised snow plough activity and forward approved expenses claims from the Snow Plough Operators to the Area Team at the earliest opportunity. Where a Snow Warden is also the operator of plant it is essential that certification of records is made by an independent person able to agree on the work carried out from the local Parish Council. Any claims received directly by the Area Team will be checked against Area Team ploughing records or confirmed with the appropriate snow warden.
13. Records and claims for payment shall be submitted as soon as possible after completion of work (and not later than the end of March) using the form of invoice provided by the Area Team. [ Document Reference – GHWIN08]
14. The Snow Warden shall supply and keep up to date a list (or plan) of all grit bins located within the parish boundaries.
15. It is intended that Snow Warden will also operate in the event of widespread flooding and gale damage where traffic routes are disrupted. Emergency response activities during these conditions will be managed by GH's Area Highways Managers. Snow Wardens may be called upon to provide information on local conditions including blocked roads and recommended alternative routes.
16. Requests for assistance by Snow Wardens outside of the normal interests of GCC as a highway authority should be made directly to the police.

## **Snow Plough Operators**

### **Operations**

1. During periods of severe winter weather the Area Office will request that the Snow warden brings into operation any available local snow ploughs as necessary. In the event of extreme conditions the warden may initiate such operations as are appropriate to open a priority route to each community and to overcome emergency situations. Snow Wardens shall report emergency actions at the earliest opportunity to the Area Office.
2. Ploughing should ideally be commenced when traffic starts to have difficulty and when drifting begins, and should be continued as snow melts to remove the slush which otherwise may become compacted by traffic.
3. When heavy snowfall and drifting persists, efforts to clear certain lengths of road may become a 'losing battle' and operations should be diverted to an alternative route if that may be readily kept open. (Diversion signs should be arranged via the Area Office if resources are available).
4. Snow Ploughs and other equipment provided by GCC are solely for use on the public highway for the general community benefit. Other than in providing an essential route for community use and in providing assistance on request from the emergency services, requests for clearance of routes to individual premises and of private roads should be resisted and referred instead to private plant operators who can make their own arrangements with the individual requiring assistance.
5. GCC has no authority to deposit snow on private land. In exceptional circumstances when this action is unavoidable to enable an obstruction to be cleared Snow Plough Operators must take every care to minimise damage to private property. When fences, walls and other private property are damaged, whether by accident or by deliberate action, the details including the extent and reason for the damage shall be reported as soon as possible to the Area Office
6. Snow Plough Operators should contact the area office prior to the start of ploughing giving details of their proposed route. They should contact the office again on completion of operations. In Parishes with more than one Plough Operator, the Snow Warden for that Parish can (by prior arrangement) notify the Area Office for all operating snow ploughs.

### **Payment**

7. GCC will pay for equipment operated on the legitimate authority of a Snow Warden or Area Office at operation rates/prices based upon those fixed annually. GCC will not pay for any additional manual labour used without the prior agreement of the Area Office.
8. Records of all equipment and approved labour used by Snow Plough Operators shall be recorded on copies of the record sheets provided by the Area Team and passed to Snow Wardens for certification before forwarding to the Area Office. Where a Snow Warden is also the operator of plant it is essential that certification of records is made by an independent person able to agree on the work carried out from the local Parish Council.
9. Records and claims for payment shall be submitted as soon as possible after completion of work (and not later than the end of March) using the form of invoice provided Area Team. (GHWIN08 and 09)

10. The rates have been previously agreed between GCC and the National Farmers Union. The rates are inclusive of all bonuses, insurance, fuel and operator charges but exclude V.A.T. (GHWIN10)

### **Inspections**

11. Periodic checks will be made as to the accessibility and condition of ploughs and tractors by area officers. Any change of tractor for which there is a snow plough ready should be notified to the Area Office so that a check can be made on the mounting/attachment. (Document Ref. GHWIN06 and 07)
12. Plough Operators will be issued with safe working practice guidance prior to the start of the Winter season. (Document Ref.GHWIN05)

