

**STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR PAUL CROSSLEY TO COUNCIL
MEETING 20TH JANUARY 2011 ON GRIT BINS AND THE COUNCIL`S
POLICY ON NEIGHBOURHOOD GRITTING**

Council, after a long period of mild winters we have now had severe weather spells over the last two winters. Climate Change may mean that weather patterns will be far more variable in future years.

This Council has a gritting policy of clearing the main roads and the bus routes and gritting pavements in areas of need. It also keeps grit bins it has provided full.

However there are simply not enough grit bins and the policy of providing grit bins to residential streets is so restrictive that it becomes almost impossible to get a new one allocated.

What is clear from the bad weather this winter and also last winter is that communities are quite prepared to get out and clear their local pavements and streets if they are provided with the means. Providing more grit bins and grit, whilst it clearly has a cost implication, will benefit the economy as a whole as it will ease the ability of people to get to work, school or the shops and will mean less damage from slips and falls etc.

I would like the Cabinet Member responsible for highways to look again at the Council's grit policy and consider whether any of the following suggestions could be put into practice:

1. Providing more grit bins
2. Providing some gritting wheelbarrows to designated residents such as neighbourhood watch co-ordinators or volunteer 'snow wardens' as a trial to measure the effectiveness as compared to manual spreading using a spade
3. Committing to put grit piles or builders' drop bags out in locations not covered by grit bins in very bad weather
4. Working with the trade to publicise the ability for residents to buy packs of grit at the start of winter for their own personal driveways from various outlets
5. Addressing the myth that a resident who attempts to remove snow becomes liable for any slip/fall damage by a person walking on a cleared area – in November, the council promised to publish a self-help leaflet of winter advice, why has this not been done?
6. Building community cohesion and celebrating streets and communities that come together to clear snow away

7. Looking at the needs of isolated houses/communities

The new coalition government is promoting Big Society – one aspect of which is communities helping themselves and helping each other. By changing the winter grit policy to enable Communities to clear away snow B&NES can take a lead in building up the Big Society and improving self help. A small outlay on this project will bring in big dividends for us all as a community. By providing the correct tools for the job less grit is used. By ensuring residents are aware of outlets to buy grit for private use it will reduce the taking of grit from public bins for private driveways. These measures will provide a service that will benefit every Council Tax payer in the Authority.