

Dear **CLERK**

Re: Participation in the ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme

This letter is to confirm the interest expressed by **NAME** in participation in the ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme which will be operated this winter. Please return the attached sheet to Catherine Gaywood as acceptance of participation in the trial.

Salt bins are perceived as an important part of the local resilience in times of snow and ice by local communities. The use of salt bins is unregulated and reliant on the goodwill of the people living nearby and or using that section of the highway to spread the salt in times of need. Oh the whole this system works effectively. Unfortunately, as your own experience will testify, salt bins are often vandalised and the salt within them used for personal areas such as driveways, away from the highway. Last year, with the national salt shortage, a growing trend was the whole scale theft of the salt from the bins for resale and even the theft of the bins themselves in some cases.

At the end of last winter ECC underwent a review of our service and one of the areas identified as needing improvement was our management of and the resulting use of salt bins to maxims the benefits to local communities. Seeking best practice from our counterparts nationally we became aware of a scheme whereby salt bags were provided locally for management and distribution by the local community. This pilot is our attempt to understand all the practical implications of running such a scheme and to see if the use of salt is better managed as a result.

The Pilot – The parameters within which the pilot scheme will operate are as follows:

For every parish or town council that requested a salt bin this year will be refused but instead offered the opportunity to participate within the pilot. Those that agree to join the pilot will be provided with a one tonne bag of salt and sand mix. The one tonne bag must be stored in a secure location. If outside, the open top of the bag will need to be covered to ensure it is water tight. The salt is provided for use on the highway only; the highway includes roads and pavements. A nominated volunteer must be identified. The nominated volunteer will act as the lead contact between ECC and the parish or town council. It will be for the nominated volunteer to decide when and where to spread the salt within their local community once the pilot is operational. Training will be provided to the nominated volunteer and his supporters. One further salt bag will be guaranteed for delivery during the winter season. The nominated volunteer must provide feedback to ECC on his or her experiences of being part of the pilot.

With last years extremes of weather the demand for salt was high and the suppliers struggled to replenish stocks nationally. As a result central government set up a salt cell to monitor and control the distribution of salt – effectively rationing stocks. This year ECC will start the season with stocks at full capacity, however the salt suppliers have already indicated there are minimal reserved ready mined. If weather is again extreme ECC is anticipating that the salt cell will be reinstated.

ECC must priorities the precautionary network above all other activities. A range of measures with trigger points have been introduced to ensure this happens; if salt levels fall below a given volume the refilling of salt bins will be stopped until stock levels are more secure. By participating in the scheme your parish or town council will be guaranteed to be restocked with one further salt bag during the winter season.

I hope that you will participate in this pilot, the support you have expressed is appreciated and the feedback you provide us through the season on your experiences will be invaluable in developing future policy around the provision of salt bins and salt bags for the county.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Gaywood

## **Question and Answers**

### **If I join the scheme, will I be able to use the salt in our parish hall car park.**

No, the salt is for use on the public highway.

### **Do I have to always do the same sites.**

It would be advisable to identify key sites around your local area which are prone to snow drifts or ice patches. Having identified these key locations consider options of distributing and storing salt in that locale. Would it be possible to co-ordinate with local volunteers or the service providers to collect a bucket full of salt for them to store and use when needed outside their premises.

These could be roads which are: Steep hills, tight bends, locations where surface water commonly accumulates.

Or footways which are: Steep, pedestrian routes to key facilities such as health clinics, schools, residential homes or outside key attractions so have high footfall.

### **Can we lock the existing salt bins to manage their stock use**

Yes but only in consultation with ECC staff so we are aware of your intention and agree if locking the bin will be beneficial or may prove a greater risk.

Our highway salt bins are usually set out in specific sites of need. If a bin was to be locked we would need you to provide us with a plan of how the salt will be spread in this location. Therefore it may only be suitable if you have a volunteer of the scheme who lived nearby who was willing to take responsibility and co-ordinate the salt distribution in that area. That volunteer should let the other residents and businesses know what is happening and why. Where possible seek additional support and volunteers to participate.

We must be able to have access to the bin as needed.

### **Is it safe to work on the roads**

Any activity undertaken should only be done if it is safe to do so. Training will be offered to all volunteers to give them a general introduction into manual handling and risk assessment.

### **How much salt do we spread.**

The amount of salt applied to a surface varies depending on the forecasted temperature and conditions.

Typically

- 10 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when surface temperatures are forecast to fall between 0OC and -2 OC and ice or hoar frost is anticipated.
- 20 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when surface temperatures are forecast to fall below -2 OC and ice or hoar frost is anticipated.
- 40 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when snow is anticipated.

20 grams is a very small amount. You don't need a lot of salt to protect a footway. Use it sparingly. Over salting is damaging to the environment and a waste of a limited resource.



The white board in the above photo is one metre square and has 20 grams of salt / grit spread across it. You will observe that you do not need a lot of salt to protect the footways. Spread it evenly and your salt will last longer and cover a greater area.

The training will go into greater detail of how to clear snow, where to store it and how to spread salt as well as an explanation as to how salt actually works.

**Will the salt bins be refilled anyway?**

ECC has committed to refill all salt bins across the county which are located on the highway for the start of the winter season. The policy previously stated that all salt bins would be refilled as necessary. Last winter this was not possible due to the limited availability of resources and salt. The policy is being amended to reflect the changing circumstances and to reinforce our position which is “we will refill only when sufficient salt supplies are available which can be spared without affecting the reserves necessary to protect the primary network”. We are unable to guarantee the refill the bins beyond this first restock.

**Will you need to know everyone who is helping out on the scheme?**

Yes. A list of all volunteers and contact details will need to be kept by the nominated volunteer. It is advisable to include on that list what assistance that volunteer is able to offer. ie they can clear snow and spread salt in prescribed area, they have access to an open backed truck, can co-ordinate resources etc.

A copy of the names and a method of communication must be provided to ECC.

**Should we let people know we are storing salt**

The location of the salt and where it is stored needs to be secure to prevent the miss use of the stock. When you publicise the scheme to your local community it will be for you to decide if it is appropriate information to share the location of this stock.

Nationally there is a big push for the public to be proactive and undertake increased levels of self help during the winter. ECC will be endorsing this message in our publications. It is advisable that you also promote this message to your communities.

ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme

Name of the Parish or Town Council	
Contact details of the Clerk  Name Title Address  Telephone number Email	
Contact details of the Nominated Volunteer  Name Title Address  Telephone number Email	
Location at which the salt bag will be stored.  This will be the location to which ECC will deliver the salt bag to.	
Contact detail to arrange delivery of the salt if different from the Nominated Volunteer  Name Title Address  Telephone number Email	
Names of the volunteers who will be assisting the nominated volunteer  (If identified at this point)	