

SALT BAG PILOT SCHEME REPORT BY PRINCIPAL OFFICER ASSET MANAGEMENT ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

The pilot scheme is currently at mid-point through the season and as such Officers are unable to provide feedback on this ongoing project.

Seeking feedback from all participants is a key part of the scheme and this will be undertaken at an appropriate point. The method of collecting this information has not yet been determined, but may be done via questionnaire, telephone conversation or an open meeting. It may be a mixture of all three depending on the preference of the participants.

The main lessons learnt so far have been on the process and methods relating to Essex County Council's delivery of the project:

- Training is vital. The level of understanding regarding the process (i.e. what to do and how it all works) is limited.
- The training sessions need to be more interactive.
- The training must be run before any bags are delivered, as once received, interest and engagement drops off.
- Paperwork that will be of use to the participants must be available prior to the scheme going live (i.e. risk assessment forms and snow plan templates).
- The process of delivering salt must be done earlier in the year, ahead of the risk of bad weather and allows the storage to be organised in the dry.

Feedback received from the participants so far include:

- The one tonne bags are very large and once settled can not be moved. This made it difficult to share the salt with the volunteers.
- The delivery lorry is very big and cannot always access the sites suggested.
- The snow caused problems for delivery and not all bags were delivered when promised, which caused distress.
- The sand salt mix was sometimes wet, as the top of the bags were open. This product was difficult to go through hand spreaders.

The methods participants used for distributing the salt and co-ordinating volunteers varied considerably. Officers need to gain understanding of these different methods, in order to assess and identify best practice. Once all the feedback has been received and all the different ways that local communities worked together has been identified, Officers will collate best practice and use this to inform how the scheme is undertaken in the future. Officers are not currently in a position to pre-empt the findings or draw any conclusions at this stage.