

Cinque Port Town of Rye

Rye Town Council

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The Editor
Letters Page
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Dear Sir

On behalf of Rye Town Council I would like to thank Simon Parsons for offering to assist with salt spreading during future periods of snowfall (Letters 7/1/11).

To address his suggestions for actions the Town Council could have taken the week before Christmas:

I was reluctant to publicise County's provision of a one tonne bag of rock salt in the Cinque Ports Street car park until its positioning had been confirmed. I was advised that it had still not arrived by the Tuesday morning so I chased this up from home as I was on leave that day.

The bag appeared the following morning. I immediately publicised the availability and purpose of the salt on the Council's web site and emailed the Chamber of Commerce, Hotels and Caterers' Association, Rye Police, Rye's County Councillor, Town Councillors, the Observer and the Chairman of the Rye Emergency Action Community Team (REACT).

Although town and parish councils have no statutory duty/power to keep clear public highways, Ewhurst, Salehurst & Robertsbridge and Mountfield Parish Councils recently purchased, under a 'non-specific' power, their own grit bins and salt to supplement those provided by the County Council. Historically few bins have been sited in Rye by the County Council, presumably because it is considered that the town benefits from County's policy of prioritising the gritting/plowing of A roads and Rye residents tend to live closer to these than their rural counterparts. The Highways Agency deals (usually very well) with the A259(T).

Rural parishes depend on volunteers (which may include Parish Councillors) to spread grit by hand to assist those without access to 4WD vehicles. Because there are often few services, rural areas are more likely to have developed a culture of self-help which may not be so evident in towns like Rye or Battle. However, there is no reason why this cannot be fostered in Rother's towns and I am sure Rye Town Councillors will be mindful of this when reviewing how the community responds to adverse weather and the role that the Town Council could usefully play.

Yours faithfully
Richard Farhall