

## Brixham Town Council

<b>Report No:</b>	03-2019		
<b>Report Type:</b>	Public		
<b>Title:</b>	Snow Warden Scheme		
<b>To:</b>	Community Services Committee	<b>Date:</b>	25.02.19
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### Purpose of Report

To investigate the formation and implementation of a Snow Warden Scheme.

### Background

During the Full Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 members discussed and considered implementing a Snow Warden scheme in Brixham, Report 38-2018, Minute number 18123.

It was resolved that the Community Services Committee should, as a matter of urgency, look at the possibilities of such a scheme including the formation of a Brixham Emergency Working Group to be responsible for the coordination of volunteer support during flood, extreme weather or other major emergencies in the community.

It was further resolved that the Community Services committee re-evaluate the Flood Plan and incorporate the flood plan as part of an Emergency Plan.

### Snow Warden Scheme

In winter, Local authorities focus on gritting the major routes which carry the most traffic. This sometimes means smaller communities don't receive as much help as they would like. As stated in the previous report 38-2018, there is a real concern in Brixham where there are no Priority A or B roads.

- Priority A - Strategic routes and principal roads, important classified roads and bus routes.
- Priority B - All other classified roads, important unclassified roads and bus routes.
- Priority C - In prolonged periods of lying snow/ice, estate and minor access roads in hilly or exposed locations will be treated, and consideration given to important footway routes (e.g. shopping precincts etc).

Brixham emergency services are not located on priority routes.

<b>Emergency Service</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Primary Route</b>
Police Station	Rea Barn Road	Green (3 <sup>rd</sup> primary route)
Fire Brigade	Bolton Street	Yellow (4 <sup>th</sup> primary route)
Brixham Hospital	Greenway Road	Green (3 <sup>rd</sup> primary route)

More than 250 towns and parishes in the county have snow wardens in place as part of their self-help plans in case Devon is hit by prolonged severe weather.

Snow Wardens are the key point of contact between the local community and the Local Authority and provide vital support to the authority's winter service. The volunteers receive

advice and training from Devon County Council on how to clear snow and spread salt effectively. The authority also covers third party public liability for snow wardens.

Devon County Council offers free 'Snow Warden' training and equipment to Parish and Town Councils across Devon. This training and support is not available to Brixham Town Council because it falls under the responsibility of Torbay Council who are a unitary authority and therefore not part of Devon County Council.

The Deputy Clerk met with Torbay Council's Senior Emergency Planning Officer and Principle Highways Officer to discuss any opportunities for training and partnership working and to avoid duplication of services.

During the meeting it was confirmed that Torbay Council do not currently operate a Snow Warden Scheme, but they are happy to provide advice and support to the Town Council and look at ways the Town Council can assist the community.

### **Training**

Torbay Council do not offer any training, however the Senior Emergency Planning Officer agreed to offer a training session to volunteers once the Town Council has agreed a clear proposal. The training would include:

1. Explanation of weather alerts, what they mean and when to take action.
2. Assist with writing an emergency plan, if required.

Further to this the Town Council has been added to the 'winter weather' email which is circulated by Torbay Council Highways to organisations within Torbay. This email contains sensitive information and therefore, we are unable to forward it on to Councillors or members of the public. The information contained within the email is based on actual road temperatures and is used as a trigger to take action. We are also keeping a close eye on social media and as soon as Torbay Council make any announcements regarding weather, BTC shares their posts.

Torbay Council do not offer any physical training for snow clearance, grit spreading etc. and are unable to provide any equipment or grit.

### **Volunteers and Insurance**

The success of the working group will be on attracting and maintaining sufficient volunteers. The 'out of hours' responsibility should not fall on existing BTC Officers. However, there may be an opportunity to include this within the job description for the Town Lengthsman.

Volunteers should be Chapter 8 qualified to work on a highway and be covered by Public Indemnity, they are only covered by the Town Council public liability insurance once they have attended relevant training and are directly instructed by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk in her absence.

Volunteers who use their 4x4 vehicles to clear snow, spread grit or transfer members of public to work etc MUST be suitably insured through their personal vehicle insurance for any activity taken.

Due to the insurance implications mentioned above, this means that volunteers must be trained and therefore spontaneous volunteers cannot be utilised.

## **Brixham Emergency Working Group**

Rather than focussing on Snow Wardens it is more appropriate for the Town Council to consider forming an Emergency Working Group to provide volunteer support during extreme weather, flood, fire or major event in the community.

Representatives of the following groups should be invited to join the working group

- The Town Council
- Torbay Council Emergency Planning Officer
- Flood plan (current co-ordinator)

Reporting back to the Community Services Committee, the group would be responsible for:

- launching an appeal for volunteers.
- Co-ordination of volunteers in an emergency.
- maintaining an up to date list of volunteers.
- maintaining a list of volunteers with 4 x 4 vehicles.
- provision and storage of any equipment.
- insurance cover for volunteers, not vehicles.
- provision of training.

The first task of the group would be to agree the working group terms, followed by launching an appeal for volunteers.

It should also be noted that the Town Council has a sum of £3,000 in the earmarked reserves for a Town Emergency.

## **Recommendations**

A Town Emergency Plan will take time and is not therefore going to be ready for this winter season.

However, there are things that can be done in the meantime and it is recommended that the Town Council:

1. Continue to monitor the winter weather alerts received from Torbay Council and take necessary action.
2. Monitor and clear drains.
3. Monitor grit bins, advising Torbay Council when they are running low.
4. Review existing grit bin locations and request Torbay Council provide additional bins if necessary.
5. Purchase a large grit bin and grit to be located at the Town Hall for use by the Lengthsman and Facilities Manager.
6. Improve communication within the Community, raise awareness of where grit supplies are located and its proper use.
7. Hold an event in the Town Hall inviting the community to attend to ascertain if there is sufficient support within the community to amend the existing community flood plan to an Emergency Plan. If there is sufficient support, a new working group should be formed with one of their tasks being to seek funding in order to ensure that members of the working group carry out training.
8. Gives the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk in her absence delegated authority to spend the Town Emergency Fund held in the Town Council's earmarked reserves.
9. Adopts a policy / procedure on what the Town Emergency Fund is expected to be spent on.

