



# HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Procedure for Extreme Weather

### **Snow/Ice Clearing Arrangements**

Under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 the Council has a responsibility towards the safety of all visitors to its premises and land. Therefore the Council must assess all the risks that the premises pose and aim to eliminate or reduce these risks as far as reasonably practicable. This will include any footpath from the street or car park to the main entrance/staff entrance for staff access and for the public if they are being invited to Council premises.

A risk assessment should be carried out (and reviewed) to enable the Council to highlight the procedures it intends to have in place to maintain the paths. Snow and ice will be one of the risks and the procedure should outline the measures to be taken in the event of snow/ice conditions.

In the event of snow/ice the first consideration is the impact to the access to the Council offices, car park and workshops. If the manual staff are unable to travel and gain access to the car park and workshops then it will be difficult to clear the area for other staff and the public to gain access safely. Under these circumstances and with consultation with the Chairmen of the Council and Finance Policy and Resources the offices should not be opened and a message placed on the reception telephone, and a notice in the window advising the staff and public that the offices are closed. If possible the local radio station should also be contacted and asked to broadcast the closure. Details of how to record a message and contact details of the radio station and councillors must be available in the reception area, to allow any member of staff to take this action if required. The Town Clerk is responsible for taking action or finding another member of staff to carry out this task. There should be an on-going review of weather conditions to ensure that the offices are opened as soon as practicable if they are closed. If the offices are open and the weather conditions worsen there may be a need to close early and send staff home to ensure they are able to safely return home.

If it has been possible for the Town Clerk and some of the manual staff to get access to the offices, car park and workshops then a review of the situation should take place in order to establish a plan to make safe the access for other staff and the public to the offices. It may be necessary to put back the normal opening times to the public and advise other staff not to attend the offices until later in the day when access has been made safe.

The review should take into account the number of manual staff, tools and grit that is available; to establish if access can be cleared and how long it may take. If there is insufficient grit (or sharp sand) then a decision not to clear snow and ice should be taken, as the remaining snow and ice will be an obvious hazard, unlike black ice that may form on cleared areas left untreated with grit or sharp sand.

Once it has been possible to provide safe access to the offices, car park and workshops a review of all other Council premises and facilities should take place, in order to establish a plan of clearance or publicity of closure as required.

The following premises and facilities should be reviewed and a priority list established depending on the planned/booked usage of the premises/facility:

- 1 Market Square (Youth Café)
- Cemetery
- Footpaths in Recreation Ground
- Footpaths at the Common Pond
- Footpaths at Maurice Thornton Playing Fields & Pavilion
- Footpaths to Ersham Road Triangle
- Access to Allotments at Battle Road and Common Pond.
- Car park access and paths in Country Park
- Access and footpaths in Play Areas: South Road, Battle Road, Stroma Gardens, Carpenters Way, Blacksmiths Copse, Cameron Close, Diplocks, Maurice Thornton, Diplocks Ball Park.
- Access and footpaths Public Open Spaces: Gleneagles Estate, Grovelands Barn/Orchard Park, Solway.
- Community Hall.

It is unlikely that the public will want to use the outdoor facilities during poor weather conditions such as parks, open spaces and play areas, and it is impossible for Town Council staff to be able to clear, or keep clear all these areas, but it is important to review the risk to these areas. As stated above the snow itself would be recognised as a natural hazard and it would be better to leave them rather than try and clear them and create additional hazards, and neglecting other premises.

It must also be remembered that it may be difficult for the manual staff to safely travel to these sites to carry out the works.

Once the priority plan has been established and actioned then it may be possible to utilise the manual staff to clear footways in the town centre and churchyard, in partnership with Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council. The Town Council should take an active part in any emergency planning carried out by East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council in order to be able to be in a position to assist as required in such circumstances.

Whilst the most likely extreme weather event is snow and ice, the same procedures should be adopted in the event of such events as a flood or hurricane etc.

The Town Council should review the aftermath of any extreme weather event to establish if any further changes to its procedures are required and if any equipment or other goods need to be purchased to reduce the impact of such events; such as grit spreaders and supplies of grit and sand.

### **Travel Childcare and Payments Arrangements**

In the event of extreme weather such as snow and ice, the issue of staff getting to and from home to work may arise. Individual staff will need to judge for themselves if they can safely travel to work and home again, whether by car, bus, on foot or by other means. If staff rely on public transport to get to and from work and this not available the Council will consider paying for taxi travel but this must be agreed with the Town Clerk in advance of booking any taxi service.

It is the responsibility of all staff to contact the office as soon as possible if they consider that they are unable to get into the office because of extreme weather. If staff consider that it is safe for them to travel in extreme weather conditions they should be sure that the offices will be open before they travel; and whilst every effort will be made to contact the staff directly if a decision is taken to close the offices staff be sure that the offices will be open before they travel. As part of contingency planning the Council will develop a system to notify staff in emergency situations.

In terms of payment for staff unable to get to work, the statutory position is that an employer is only required to pay an employee when they are ready and willing to work. In this situation all options will be explored with each individual employee to enable staff to continue to work, such as working from home; and agreed with the Town Clerk. If it is not possible for any employee to continue to

work either the time can be made up, leave taken, or a deduction from pay will be made as per Section 13 of the Employment Rights Act 1996. This must be agreed with the Town Clerk on an individual basis.

If staff have childcare or other family care issues as the result of the closure of schools or failure of other care arrangements during extreme weather, and need to take time away from the office to care for their family; the same principals should apply in respect of taking a flexible approach as detailed above.

The Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and Chair of Finance Policy and Resources should review the situation at least twice per day to consider whether there is a need to close the offices. If the offices are closed then the Council is removing the ability for employees to work that day/part day and under these circumstances staff will be paid.