

## Thorndon Parish Council 5.11.2015 County Councillor Report

### Winter Highways Team Gears Up

From now until early spring next year, the Suffolk Highways team will continue to closely monitor weather conditions around the clock to ensure the safety of the public as they travel on Suffolk's highways and byways.

Roads are prioritised into two main categories for winter treatment (Priority One and Priority Two); these two categories cover approximately 51 per cent of all roads maintained by Suffolk County Council. When ice or snow is forecast, a salt mix is used to treat all A and B roads, 24-hour fire stations, Accident and Emergency hospitals, and roads to/from main bus and rail stations.

Information from weather forecasts and the county's own weather monitoring stations around the highway network enable our staff to plan and deliver these winter services. The forecasts help to direct the timings of planned treatments to ensure they are completed before the onset of frost, ice or snow, using the right material to treat the conditions at the appropriate temperature.

Almost 1250 miles (2000km) of Suffolk's road network receive precautionary treatment to keep them ice-free. The county has 39 gritters located at eight depots (Ipswich, Rougham, Depden, Mildenhall, Brome, Halesworth, Melton and Mobbs Way). Suffolk retains a stock of over 24,000 tonnes of salt mix, as well as having access to further reserves should prolonged severe weather occur

This year, Suffolk Highways has produced a short video to showcase the work it undertakes each year to keep the county's roads clear of ice and snow during the winter months. The video can be viewed now on the council's YouTube channel.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cllr James Finch said: "Our winter service plan has been carefully developed to ensure that all of our winter operations maximise the resources we have available and the routes we have to treat. The video we have produced helps to inform residents regarding the important work that is on-going to keep us all safe and mobile when snow and ice comes.

Follow Suffolk Highways on Twitter @suff\_highways for updates on salting and gritting across the county this winter. For more information go to [www.suffolk.gov.uk/gritting](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/gritting)

### Suffolk Devolution

Since our last meeting much has happened with the Suffolk & Norfolk devolution proposals. There was a second pre-challenge session, attended by leaders, chief executives and officers working on the Challenge Session, on 27th October with Andrew Campbell, the LGA Lead on Devolution, to further test the ambitions and the details behind our emerging devolution proposals. The main focus of these proposals will centre on ways of boosting investment, productivity, housing and education and skills across our communities.

The aim is to both build on Norfolk and Suffolk's economic strengths and to address the two counties' comparatively low wages, low skills levels and under-delivery of required housing.

What happens next?

The finishing touches are being made to the presentation and proposal document that the Challenge Session Team will be delivering to Government for a robust examination on 4th November (today).

The Government 'team' will be led by Lord Heseltine and will include senior civil servants from DCLG. This session is very likely to result in further changes which will be then be considered by Leaders in Suffolk and Norfolk and reflected in the development of a final devolution 'deal'. The timescale for negotiating the final deal will depend on the outcome of the Challenge Session and it is anticipated that there will be a period of intense work leading up to the Comprehensive Spending Review on 25th November.

I will keep you up to speed, as soon I have any more information.

**VAS Signs**

I have had a conversation with John Simpson, as we are all unhappy with his conclusions. I will meet with him tomorrow to hopefully get some clarity and common sense into this issue.

**Broadband**

I am still trying to get detailed information regarding the next roll out, The details will be released pending a big announcement next week.

Sorry to miss two meetings on the trot, will cancel all engagements so I don't miss next months!

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