

Highways Update – Martyn Midgley - Gloucestershire County Council

Winter

At the height of the snowy weather our fleet of 29 gritters treated and ploughed over 1,000 miles of primary road network continuously for almost 4 days. Our primary road network is one third of the county's entire road network including all the A, B and roads that lead to hospitals, fire stations, main shopping centres and most of the high frequency bus routes etc. Before the snow we treated the primary network each night during the bitterly cold week of the 'beast from the east' leading up to the snowfall. Since the snow melted we have had no respite as our drivers have salted the primary network every night except one night due to overnight frosts. In that overall time period (Tues 23rd to today 8th) we have used 4,000 tonnes of salt.

On Sunday 25th in advance of the forecasted cold period we treated our secondary network which is about another 700 miles of our most important minor roads, those roads linking villages and schools to the primary road network. This network was treated again on the Thursday just before the snowfall, and ploughed over the weekend.

We had some brilliant media coverage at national and regional level including an ITV reporter spending 4 hrs in the gritter ploughing the Bisley-Stroud area and rescuing two young lads who were trapped in their car on high ground in a snow drift. The attachment details the full list of media coverage and links to interviews/TV footage/websites and social media etc.

Operation Road Rescue

Yes, it's pothole season. As part of 'Operation Road Rescue' all available resources are focused on pothole repairs presently - the high number of emergency and urgent potholes classed as either needing attendance within 2 hours or by the end of the next working day continues to impact on us being able to programme the best efficiency out of our pothole repair crews. Crews are working weekends in our efforts to catch up.

There will be quite a bit of information, updates and related video content going onto our website as part of 'Operation Road Rescue'. You can watch Martyn Midgley, Area Highways Manager for Gloucestershire County Council, explain 'Operation Road Rescue' here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1QneMZEC70&feature=youtu.be>

'Operation Road Rescue' is a three step process – Worst First, Patching and Resurfacing.

Step One: Worst First – Our teams prioritise the worst potholes first for the safety of road users. It is essential that we do this to make sure the most dangerous defects are repaired as quickly as possible and could mean that you see some potholes on a road fixed while others are left until later. We don't forget the less serious potholes – they will be repaired as soon as the major work is complete and teams are available.

Step Two: Patching – Our teams identify locations that can be repaired through larger patching schemes. Our safety inspection teams prioritise areas where we carry out patching works to repair larger clusters of potholes. These schemes often require additional patching crews and staff to manage temporary traffic signals for the safety of our workforce and road users. We aim to deliver £1M of patching works in the first quarter of 18/19 from our local depots to target pothole clusters / rough bits of roads to take the pressure off the pothole crews.

Step Three: Resurfacing – We regularly re-prioritise the resurfacing programme to take into account the damage from severe weather and heavy traffic flows. The county council is investing £150 million into our roads, effectively doubling the resurfacing programme over the next four years. This is our biggest ever investment in roads but even so this is a limited pot of money so it isn't possible to resurface every single road in the county.

Repairing the damage to our roads is a mammoth task. We ask that road users please remain patient and remember to drive carefully while our teams work hard to repair the county's roads and keep Gloucestershire moving.

For more information on *#yourhighways* you can visit our digital story board here: <https://social.shorthand.com/GlosCC/j2WrlUV3ou/yourhighways>

£150M Capital investment / new Tarmac contract

Gloucestershire County Council has awarded a two-year resurfacing contract to Tarmac to deliver part of the £150m investment into county's roads. Following cabinet approval in September 2017, the council began a competitive tender process inviting providers to bid for the county's new resurfacing contract. After a full evaluation of providers the council has awarded the new resurfacing contract to Tarmac from April 2018. As part of the council's commitment to the county's highways over the next five years, the new contract will deliver £10 million of resurfacing works in its first year and £20 million in its second year. Tarmac is also one of the main sub contractors for the Amey contract delivering capital resurfacing works so they are well known to the GCC officers & engineers.

Cllr Vernon Smith, cabinet member for highways, said: "We've been doing our homework very thoroughly. I'm confident the award of the resurfacing contract will make the most of the council's investment and deliver value for money. Making sure our highways are in great condition helps keep the county moving and the new resurfacing contract is crucial to delivering on our £150 million investment."

Paul Fleetham, managing director of Tarmac's contracting business, said: "We're delighted to have secured this surfacing contract with Gloucestershire County Council. We have worked closely with them to deliver highway maintenance schemes over the past twelve years and look forward to continuing this partnership in a direct capacity."

One of the first schemes will be the A4173 (Brookthorpe to A46 Pitchcombe junction) resurfacing starting 10th April – this will be a major resurfacing scheme.

2019/20 Term Maintenance Contract (post Amey contract)

This new contract is for the depot side of the highways business - managing the upkeep of gullies, winter gritting and snow clearing, potholes / repairing damages to the road and cutting back verges and grass etc. The contract procurement continues and the Council's next step is to review contract quality submissions from 5 bidders: Balfour Beatty, Griffiths civil engineering and construction (now owned by Tarmac), Ringway, Skanska and Volker Highways. The best 3 bidders will then be asked to submit a tender based on price before the contract is awarded Sept-Oct 2018 ready for the start date of 1st April 2019.

Amey has decided not to tender for the contract as the new contract model is fundamentally different and Amey felt they would need to make significant changes to make sure the new contract was financially viable and offered the service levels expected by GCC for the local community. Amey is committed to continuing to deliver highway services in Gloucestershire until the current contract's natural end at the end of March 2019.

2018/19 GCC Highways Budgets

For our revenue budget (depot based day to day highway maintenance: potholes, gully cleaning, grass cutting, sign & lines renewals etc) we continue to feel the squeeze including a bit less Highways Local money this year (£20,000 per member not £30,000) although the popular Lengthsmen scheme will continue. The capital funding investment should take some pressure off as we intend to get the most we can out of the £150M investment by making every resurfacing scheme count but we may not start to see the significant effects of this on our day to day highway maintenance for a year or so.

Question were asked with the following themes:

Q How many primary and secondary treatments (gritter runs) have we done this winter?

A We have carried out 89 primary treatments and 5 secondary.

Q How much salt have we used?

A We have used just over 17,000 tonnes. In an average winter we use 9,000 tonnes. We have 4 domes positioned across the county (Cirencester, Cannop, Stroudwater, Moreton-in-Marsh) that can hold just over 10,000 tonnes of salt at the start of the winter season but the regular resupplies have kept our stocks healthy.

Q How many miles of roads have we salted this winter?

A We have salted and snow ploughed nearly 100,000 miles this winter – that's equivalent to 4 times round the Earth's equator.

Q How many miles of roads have we ploughed?

A We ploughed all the 1,000 miles of our primary road network – several times over – from Thursday (01.03.18) night to Sunday, plus 700 miles of our secondary road

network over the weekend. We were still ploughing some areas of high ground on Monday (5.03.18) and Tuesday (6.03.18) this week.

Q *What was the deepest snow drift?*

A *At least 2m!*

Q *Was the A38 South (Whitminster) resurfacing carried out by sub contractors?*

A *This was surface dressing carried out by one of our main sub contractors (Kielys - we have used them in Gloucestershire for many years). There were issues with the surface dressing (historically called tar& chip) being laid over the existing white hatching lines on the road. In some places the existing white lines were relatively high (compared to the general road surface) due to them being repainted several times over the last decade. Every time a car drove over the line it wore away the new surface dressing after the lines and before the next line - effectively this accentuated the height of the white lines with the surface dressing on top making them appear ridged and creating 'rumble lines' in the road in places.*

Q *What are we doing around new technology to improve sub surfaces ie pot holes next to each other.*

A *We are researching into new technologies but unfortunately we don't hold out a lot hope on resolving the pothole situation.*

A well built road is built up of foundations, tarmac and kerbs. To build a "proper" road to improve the subsurface would cost around the annual full budget to just rebuild a few roads. We have a duty to protect all our 3,000 miles of roads, so we have to have a halfway.

Q *Recently work was carried out on Prestbury road to repair the potholes, this work was carried out very promptly however the repairs were very poor and the potholes returned a few days later. When a pothole is repaired well there is a seal around them and this didn't have that. I have reported the matter but not heard back. Does the quality assurance actually exist as I haven't seen the evidence (photos) ?*

A *Unfortunately due to the severe weather we have got a back log of customer enquiries - as you can imagine the team is prioritising the most urgent ones. Potholes are sealed around the edges but at this of year with the freeze-thaw-freeze action of winter it's not uncommon for potholes to appear overnight. As part of our quality assurance process, before and after photos are taken of the repairs so that we can encourage a high level of workmanship across the crews and protect ourselves against any speculative claims that are made against us. Gloucestershire County Council has one of the lowest pay out on claims. (Martyn will look into this repair)*

Q *How is the Jet patcher working?*

A *The Jet patcher is used more for a temporary pothole fix - some repairs will last as long as a conventional pothole repair but it's main advantage is to allow us to make the roads safe whilst giving us some breathing space to programme more conventional repairs, patching or resurfacing.*

Q *Why is the work at Highnam taking so long - 11 weeks is not acceptable as the traffic lights are causing huge problems.*

A This is a Highways England Junction and therefore work that they are carrying out. As officers we have done all we can to lobby Highways England to get this work completed as soon as possible but it is for them to prioritise in accordance with the other issues they have across the entire motorway and trunk road network that they maintain and operate.

Q Is it a statutory duty that we grit the roads?

A Yes, Section 41 Highways Act 1980 "duty to ensure, as far as is reasonable practicable, that safe passage is not endangered by snow and ice..." & Section 150 "duty to remove any obstruction of snow and ice"...

Q Will the lengthsman scheme continue?

A Yes. The scheme has been approved and will be ongoing for 2018/19 and again for 2019/20. To take advantage please provide a list to your local councillor of the jobs that you would like carried out. However the jobs need to be more manual work rather than ones that require large machinery and equipment types. The types of jobs most suited are:

- Fill small holes in road / footway
- Clean sign faces and bollard reflectors
- Straighten sign posts, verge posts / bollards
- Clear drainage gully grills and grips
- Prune / trim overhanging & intrusive vegetation
- Tidy up footways (vegetation siding and re-bed loose slabs / setts)
- Reset loose kerbs and gully grills

Please visit the Lengthsman page on our website:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-rights-of-way/communities-and-parishes/parish-and-member-services/the-lengthsman-scheme/>

Q The A435 snow clearing seemed to be a problem.

A I am not sure what the issues were here – in general we experienced a lot of drifting of snow from adjacent fields onto the road where it caught the verge edge and started to mound and form a drift. As soon as we ploughed the snow off more would drift across from the fields.

Q Was there a communication problem around when to advise the snow wardens to go out and plough and there seemed to be some confusion?

A Highways staff rang all of the Parish snow wardens to make sure that they were prepared. All snow wardens / parish ploughs should notify highways when they start and finish their ploughing. In a limited number of cases the contact details were out of date – we always review them during the summer but do rely on parishes alerting us when people change

