



Colton Parish Council

Tel: 01229 861408
e-mail: coltonpc@btinternet.com
web: coltonparishcouncil.org.uk

Clerk: Ms Mandy Lane
Lilac Cottage
Oxen Park
Ulverston LA12 8HG

27th April 2010

Diane Whitehead,
Cumbria County Council

Dear Diane,

LAP Consultation on Winter Maintenance of Highways - Colton Parish Council response

In relation to your listed consultation issues, we have the following comments:

1. Priority 1 and 2 gritting routes. The map enclosed in the consultation: "South Lakes Priority 3 Coniston" appears to show the C5022 Penny Bridge to Hawkshead route as a Priority 3 route, whereas it was promoted last winter to Priority 2. This promotion of this route was an absolute life-line* as it is the main route through the centre of our Parish and a school bus route. We regard it as essential that the priority 2 gritting status of this route be maintained. Without it, nearly the whole Parish (some 20 sq miles) would have been ice-bound and inaccessible for many weeks. *This could have had serious consequences in terms of supplies (there are no shops in the Parish), and access for emergency services. (For example, gritting of the C5022 meant that an emergency ambulance was able to get within 1.5 miles of an elderly resident who was then sledged down the hill from Ickenthwaite to meet it.)
2. Priority 3 gritting routes: None to our knowledge were gritted in Colton Parish during the entire winter. The gritting lorry was witnessed only once on a third priority route, traveling along the C5025 past Rusland Cross, during heavy snow. However, its snow plough was raised up and no grit was being distributed. Residents were even more angry than they would have been had they not seen it at all.
3. Grit bins and heap locations: We have been trying hard to 'improve the quality of the County Council's information on grit bins and heaps'. We sent Highways a map of bin and heap location requirements in the 20 sq miles of Colton Parish in October 2009, and then a list of existing bins and request for new/replacement bins in mid-January this year. Comparing these with your list, we have the following comments:
 - a) Existing bins: The list of existing bins is not up-to-date - only 2 of our 15 bins are listed. Please see our list again - enclosed.
 - b) Heaps: The location of required grit bins and heaps is on the map sent into Highways in October 2009.
 - c) New bins: See enclosed list for requirements for new bins - your list shows only 2 of the 8 requested.
 - d) Relocation of bins: See enclosed list under existing bins: Stott Park and Finsthwaite.
 - e) Replacement of damaged bins: Your list is correct! (also listed on enclosure)
4. Grit bin and heap replenishment: These had not been replenished since the previous winter, let alone re-filled. **The lack of any salt at all in the Parish is our main complaint.** This appeared to be down to a lack of organisation and communication; we urge you to address this issue as a priority.

5. Town and Parish Council support of winter maintenance services. This arrangement was perceived by us as a success only in as much as it was an emergency measure which we welcomed as a last resort.
- a. Feedback: The huge voluntary effort required to distribute the grit means that in our view it is **not viable as a regular solution**. In addition, it is now difficult to find a suitable location for a large heap of grit (our local council depot having been sold off). The lorries delivering the grit were unable to access the area designated because of the ice and in the end it had to be left in the Chairman's garage forecourt - far from ideal.
 - b. Other methods: In rural areas like Colton Parish, local people already put in enormous voluntary effort to keep the communities and services going, e.g. the Parish Council, village greens, maintenance of community buildings, community transport schemes, help for the elderly and so on. They simply do not have the spare time to salt the roads as well. The only realistic solution if County is unable to do the work, is to re-direct some funding locally for emergency winter maintenance of roads.
 - c. Farmers and Contractors: We would support a scheme whereby local farmers and local contractors received payment for clearing roads and bringing in grit from a local town depot.

Yours sincerely,

Mandy Lane
Clerk, Colton Parish Council