

HELPFUL  
TIPS AND  
INFORMATION  
FOR LOCAL  
COUNCILLORS

# HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

## Getting into Gear

Winter highways service started on 22 October

Our highways winter service started from Monday 22 October this season. Our duty decision-makers are eyeing the longer-range weather forecasts carefully, for any clues that might point to a repeat of last year's relatively severe spells of weather.

Last season we delivered the equivalent of 108 county-wide salting runs, almost twice as many comparable treatments as the previous year.

## Comment Councillor Kevin Bentley

Deputy Leader,  
Essex County Council  
and Cabinet Member  
for Infrastructure

“Welcome to this edition of Highways Highlights where we are focussing on our winter service.

“Thank you to those county Members who attended our briefing, there were many of you and thank you for the reception you gave the team.

“Keeping our roads safe is of paramount importance and depending on the weather during the winter months means gritting teams can be out several times a day or evening.

“I would like to pay tribute to them for the way they have and will continue to respond to weather conditions. I hope you find this helpful and enjoy reading!”



# Getting into Gear

From 22 October our 62 gritter lorries (and 2 mini-gritters) will be out, often in the small hours when people are safe asleep indoors, to ensure that our 2000 mile, 57-route gritting network is salted and ready for careful use. Our salt bins are full; our partners have their partnership salt bags, our routes have been driven, and our driver rosters are sorted.

Every year we aim to improve the service provided. This year we have invested in an additional salt barn in Halstead, enabling us to hold even higher levels of salt in the county, and refill quicker

locally when gritting routes in the north. We are also going to trial ‘route-based forecasting’ – see separate article to find out more.

There is loads of information on-line, including a map of our routes, self-help tips, and our always popular ‘gritter tracker’ (we monitor where they have been, where they are, and the speed they are moving at).

We even have a new Winter Service information video for you to watch! See it on YouTube, and share this link: <https://youtu.be/tvp0DX91STc>



## Is your community in the Salt Bag Partnership?

During periods of extreme weather, communities and individuals can do a lot to help themselves and others. ECC operates a Salt Bag Partnership scheme, designed to help local communities support themselves during periods of heavy snow.

One tonne of bagged salt, delivery and a support pack is provided, free of charge, to help County Councillors and Parish Councils organise the scheme and provide helpful information to volunteers. It is also an opportunity to think about how your community will be ready for winter. If your community is not yet in the scheme, please consider it – we usually issue the invitation to join it in May each year.

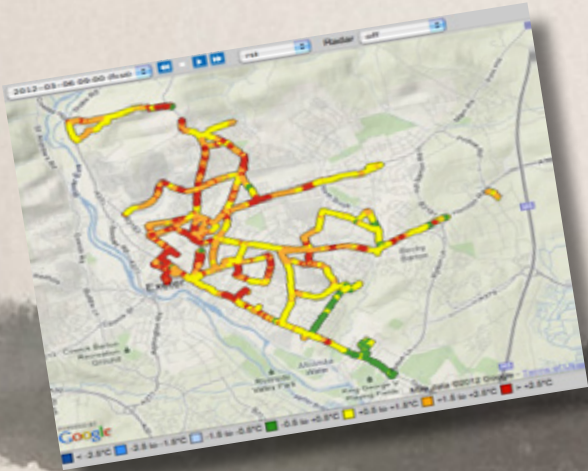
Watch a couple of short videos about the partnership, and find out more, at [twitter.com/status/1056956116708589568](https://twitter.com/status/1056956116708589568) and [www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Roads-and-Pavements/Winter-travel/Salt-Bag-Partnership.aspx](http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Roads-and-Pavements/Winter-travel/Salt-Bag-Partnership.aspx)

And you can download and print off a general snow/ice clearance self-guidance sheet at [www.essexhighways.org/uploads/LRF/Winter\\_Self\\_Help\\_Snow\\_clearing\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/LRF/Winter_Self_Help_Snow_clearing_leaflet.pdf)



# Route-based forecasting

Science, knowledge and experience



We invest significant resources to provide a safe winter route network. As well as our gritter fleet and salt barns, we have a number of weather stations and road surface sensors.

These gather data which is transferred to professional forecasters, who then give us daily forecasts specifically for the county, split into inland and coastal areas. This enables us to consider sending gritters out only in those areas that need coverage.

This year for the first time we are trialling route-based

forecasting. This combines thermal road mapping; weather forecasting, local topography and prior knowledge into insights allowing us to identify the likeliest cold spots on each route. In turn, we will use this knowledge to decide which specific routes to grit.

For now this is a trial on each overall route we cover, but as technology and experience grows, we may, in future years, be able to consider gritting only those 'frost hollows' and exposed areas that the data highlights is an ice or frost risk when temperatures fall away.

## Potholes fixed

Potholes fixed per district/city/borough in September are as listed below: When considering these numbers, remember that there are many more miles of road in Uttlesford than in Harlow, for example, and the balance of types of road (main, secondary, local) are different too, so a direct comparison is misleading. Pavement (what engineers call footways) defects fixed in August are in the fourth column.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED
BASILDON	66	50	22
BRAINTREE	12	115	5
BRENTWOOD	4	28	1
CASTLE POINT	3	54	5
CHELMSFORD	2	22	5
COLCHESTER	11	56	24
EPPING FOREST	30	295	42
HARLOW	7	53	7
MALDON	18	4	0
ROCHFORD	4	44	4
TENDRING	20	66	12
UTTLESFORD	9	27	0
A127	-	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL (ALL)</b>			<b>1093</b>

## Gullies cleared

Gullies cleared per district/city/borough in September are as listed below: The difference between districts should even out to an extent (remembering some areas more drains than others) as crews work to do roads in one area before moving on to the next.

BASILDON	37
BRAINTREE	117
BRENTWOOD	70
CASTLE POINT	2
CHELMSFORD	417
COLCHESTER	54
EPPING FOREST	20
HARLOW	1898
MALDON	2739
ROCHFORD	1031
TENDRING	0
UTTLESFORD	0
A127	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>6385</b>

## Follow the feed!

Follow us on twitter for winter gritting updates and other useful highways info. To read all our winter service information, visit our winter webpages, at: [www.essexhighways.org/Roads-and-Pavements/winter-travel.aspx](http://www.essexhighways.org/Roads-and-Pavements/winter-travel.aspx)

