New Wiltshire Council Highway Contract

Local Highway Element

**Parish Steward Scheme**

**Introduction**

The council will be reintroducing the very successful Parish Steward Scheme this summer.

The service will commence 1st April be fully operational by October 2016.

The Parish Steward Scheme will deliver the safety statutory local highway works and is the identified delivery point for all the local community discretionary highways works. Parish and town councils will be asked to identify a single point of contact for the council and to prioritise the discretionary local highway work priorities for their areas. To ensure as much discretionary work can be completed as possible, the work will need to be programmed in advance.

The Parish Stewards shall be assigned to work within one of 17 defined community area boards, with two Parish Stewards assigned in the following community areas:

* Warminster,
* South West Wiltshire
* Chippenham

Salisbury Community Area Board has an assigned Masonry Gang as their work demand is more suited to this type of maintenance.

Typical planned local highway work routinely undertaken by Parish Stewards includes:

* hand clearing, and cutting of growth from drainage grips and drain gully covers
* hand clearing of blocked gullies
* rodding of drainage systems
* clearing of small culverts, pipes and pits
* clearing storm debris
* trimming encroaching hedges and vegetation from around road signs and railings
* cleaning and straightening small road signs
* hand cutting small visibility areas
* removal of ragwort (hand pulling or strimming of defined areas)
* treatment/removal of weeds
* sanding and painting barriers
* graffiti and fly posting removal
* siding out of footways and carriageways

**Parish Steward Programme**

The parish steward resources are fixed at twenty members, hence as and when issues arise this will disrupt the programme.

The parish steward allocation will be continually reviewed, with the future programmes being based upon the engagement from parish and town councils.

**Specific tasks/periods during the year**

During May and August visits are conducted without prescribed dates. This break enables Stewards to respond rapidly around their area to collaborate to achieve greater objectives or simply to introduce a higher degree of flexibility to the programmes to accommodate annual leave.

During May, grass and other small plants grow very quickly indeed. This can create safety concerns at road junctions and other sensitive locations. It is very important that the Parish Stewards are enabled to address this need.

Ragwort is an invasive weed with a nasty tendency to bring about accumulative liver failure in horses and other creatures exposed to it. The Council has maintained a determined effort to reduce this plant’s presence to a minimum. During the end of June or start of July one week is allowed for Parish Stewards and some other resources to remove these plants for incineration. Stewards are of course active in removing this plant at other times as a general duty.

There has always been a need to focus the available public resources on safety matters. It has always been equally clear that all communities respond to the tidy appearance of public and private property. During August Parish Stewards are assigned to the latter area. Hand rails, bollards, parapet rails and ancient mile posts will be prepared and re-painted. When combined with the general duties of traffic sign cleaning the appearance of much of the highway scene it will allow an improved asset. This work is both valuable and popular and makes a clear statement of Wiltshire Council’s interest in all of its communities.

Throughout the year a wide variety of emergencies occur across the 2,762 miles of Wiltshire roads. Parish Stewards are the provider of last resort and will be required to respond, if no other resource is available. During the winter months the twenty Parish Stewards participate fully in keeping as much of the county’s network clear and as free of ice as possible.

Throughout the year the weather provides the service with a multitude of challenges; flooding, land slips, fallen trees and collapsed buildings to name but a few. The Parish Stewards work with other resources to meet these challenges whenever or wherever they present themselves.

**How your parish or town council can get the best out of their Steward**

Parish and town councils have already been issued with their priority sheets.  This allows them in advance of any visit to advise the Parish Stewards (through the Area Office) of the local discretionary priority work needing to be completed.

Parish and town councils need to nominate a contact point for the Parish Steward to make contact and to discuss any works being undertaken.

**Masonry Gangs**

All works for the masonry gangs will be prioritised according to the council’s highway inspection manual.

Only requests meeting the inspection manual criteria will be undertaken.

All works must be reported through the MyWiltshire system (Wiltshire’s Web Site, Wiltshire Contact Centre or Mobile App).

All works reported will be inspected against the inspection manual to ensure only appropriate works are undertaken.

**Gully Emptying**

High risk (road safety or house flooding) gullies will be emptied on a yearly.

Any requests for additional gully empties will be prioritised according to their perceived risk of house flooding or road safety.

If the highway office believe there is a low risk of house flooding or road safety the request for an additional empty will be rejected.

All works must be reported through the MyWiltshire system (Wiltshire’s Web Site, Wiltshire Contact Centre or Mobile App).

All works reported will be considered against other gully emptying prioritises to ensure only appropriate works are undertaken.

**Tractor Drivers/Operations**

There are three tractors available for the whole county.

Obviously tractor operations are limited and must be programmed to maximise efficiencies.

Ringway will schedule the tractor operations.

Work priorities are identified by the highway office.

All works must be reported through the MyWiltshire system (Wiltshire’s Web Site, Wiltshire Contact Centre or Mobile App).

All works reported will be considered against other tractor prioritises to ensure only appropriate works are undertaken.

**Sweeping**

The council has four days a week scheduled to address local sweeper priority works.

Obviously sweeping operations are limited and must be programmed to maximise efficiencies.

Ringway will schedule the sweeper operations. Work priorities are identified by the highway office.

All works must be reported through the MyWiltshire system (Wiltshire’s Web Site, Wiltshire Contact Centre or Mobile App).

All works reported will be considered against other sweeping prioritises to ensure only appropriate works are undertaken.

**Town and Village Highway Weed Control**

Only a very small area will receive a scheduled weed spray. Town and parish councils will need to identify additional weed spraying works with the Parish Steward.

**Lines and Sign**

The council has allocated £100k budget per annum for lines and signs. It is vital that as damage occurs we identify the responsible party so the council can reclaim the costs. Currently the vast majority of responsible parties damage goes unreported and this has to be covered by the council. A set of barriers can easily cost the council £20k. Hence if the money is spent on this work it is not available for street name plates, signage or lines. The council needs your help. Currently the council must focus on safety issues. Any discretionary requests will be rejected as the funding is not available.

Parish and Town Council Involvement Evenings

The council is running its annual town and parish council involvement evenings in April.

We would be pleased to see you all there.  We have put indicative areas to venues, but you are most welcome to choose a more convenient alternative if you wish.

The usual topics will be discussed, but this year we have the new: highway contract and arrangements; contact arrangements following the split in services; parish and town council involvement initiatives; public convenience policy.

The dates and times of the events are listed below.

Please could you confirm your attendance with your local Coordinator by the 1st March 2016.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Community Area Board | Date | Time | Location |
| Amesbury | Wed 20 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | City Hall, Salisbury |
| Salisbury | Wed 20 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | City Hall, Salisbury |
| Southern | Wed 20 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | City Hall, Salisbury |
| South West | Wed 20 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | City Hall, Salisbury |
| Warminster | Tues 12 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | County Hall, Trowbridge |
| Westbury | Tues 12 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | County Hall, Trowbridge |
| Melksham | Tues 12 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | County Hall, Trowbridge |
| Bradford on Avon | Tues 12 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | County Hall, Trowbridge |
| Trowbridge | Tues 12 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | County Hall, Trowbridge |
| Corsham | Tues 19 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham |
| Malmesbury | Tues 19 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham |
| Chippenham | Tues 19 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham |
| Calne | Tues 19 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham |
| Royal Wootton Basset and Cricklade | Tues 19 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham |
| Pewsey | Wed 6 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Kennet House, Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes |
| Devizes | Wed 6 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Kennet House, Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes |
| Marlborough | Wed 6 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Kennet House, Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes |
| Tidworth | Wed 6 April 2016 | 1910hrs – 2100hrs | Kennet House, Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes |

Public Convenience Consultation

The council is nearing the end of its transfer of the facilities to town and parish councils where this is possible.

The council’s public convenience service contract finishes on the 1st April 2016.

The majority of town and parish councils wish to continue the operations.

Urban Grass Cutting Arrangements

I am sure it will not have escaped anyone’s attention that last autumn and winter was warm and wet.  Ideal grass growing conditions.  This means that the grass length is considerably longer than we would like.  This will inevitably lead to a slower first cut and visual issues before and after cutting.  Wiltshire Council and TGL will endeavour to minimise any issues.

The urban grass cutting will commence when conditions allow in March, weather and ground conditions allowing.  As a circle will take approximately four to five weeks, this means that some grass will not be cut until in April.

The below link details the urban grass that will be cut.

<http://www.realitygeo.com/explorer.aspx?cfg=wiltsgr>

If you have an area of concerned that is not marked, this can be cut by the Parish Steward on his scheduled visit if that is your local priority.

Shrub and Hedge Maintenance

Through the winter the priority amenity hedges have been cut and the shrubs maintained.  In March the amenity hedge and shrub maintenance ceases.  Any amenity hedge or shrub not maintained at that time will not receive a visit until the autumn/ winter.  If you wish an amenity hedge or shrub maintained that has not managed in 2015/ 16, this should be reported on your Priority Sheet for the council’s attention next season.

Rural Grass Cutting Arrangements

The arrangements will be identical to the 2015/ 16 arrangements.  The same rural verges will be cut at approximately the same time in 2016.  If you have a verge that you do not wished cut please put this on your Priority Sheet for the council’s attention for this summer’s cut.

Litter Bins

Wiltshire Council will not be providing any additional litter bins.

If town and parish councils wish to provide and empty litter/ dog waste bins the council will be pleased to give advice on their proposed locations.

The council will discuss the options for further litter bin provision at the Town and Parish Council Evening Meetings to gauge the local community willingness to assist further.

Litter Collection

The council spends over £2million a year on clearing litter. This cost could be removed if waste was disposed of correctly by the producer.

The council is reminding everyone of the cost of illegally depositing of waste and correct procedures you should follow.

Littering is easily avoided, simply take waste home and dispose of it in your waste/ recycling bins.

If you see someone illegally disposing of waste report this to the council, as it is your taxes that are paying for their waste to be collected.

Fly Tipping

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of waste on land. Such tipping occurs on a frequent and geographically wide-spread basis across England and Wales. Its blight is not just visual and can have serious health and safety effects; and the costs of dealing with it are substantial. Increasingly, it occurs on an organised basis that significantly amplifies its detriment to the local environment and contributes to the growth of serious crime.

Fly tipping is an offence under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990). The maximum penalties for fly tipping on summary conviction are a £50,000 fine and/or twelve months imprisonment, and on conviction in a Crown Court an unlimited fine and/or five years imprisonment. In addition, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for small scale fly tipping which causes litter problems can also be issued (Currently £75). Those found guilty of fly tipping may also have to pay legal costs and compensation, which can greatly increase the financial implications of illegal dumping. In addition, under the Proceeds of Crime Act (2002), offenders can have assets frozen and confiscated.

Preventing fly-tipping in the first place is a key factor in combating fly tipping. One effective way is by helping householders and businesses to understand their obligations to dispose of waste legally i.e. raising awareness of the ‘Waste Duty of Care’. Both householders and businesses have a legal duty of care to manage their waste and ensure that it is disposed of lawfully. Failing to do so can lead to individuals or organisations being prosecuted for unlawful waste management.

Residents and businesses around the County can fall foul of the law regarding their own duty of care in managing their waste. Under the domestic waste ‘Duty of Care’, householders are responsible for ensuring that their rubbish is only passed on to authorised waste carriers. Some people pose as legitimate waste carriers and then fly tip rubbish that they have been paid to dispose of properly. If any fly tipped waste is traced back to the household it came from, the householder could be prosecuted or fined for breaking the law. This applies to any waste including; domestic everyday waste, bulky household items and garden/green waste i.e. garden improvement work, tree or hedge maintenance. Similar requirements regarding businesses are detailed below.

Household Waste Duty of Care

If you are a householder, you are required to take reasonable steps to check that people removing waste from your premises are authorised to do so.

Before you let someone other than the council take waste away for you, you should:

•         Ask the person taking the waste where it will be going and ask to see their Waste Carriers Licence. If they don’t have one, don’t use them.

•         Check whether they are registered by calling the Environment Agency on 03708 506506 for an instant waste carriers validation check, or by visiting the Environment Agency's Public Registers web page:

* <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publicregisters/default.aspx>

•         Keep a record of any paperwork they give you, the dates you used them, their name, telephone number and registration number so that if they do fly tip your waste you will be able to pass their details to the council. Reputable, licensed waste removal businesses will issue you a waste transfer note which is used to record the removal details and demonstrates safe and lawful waste management.

•         Report anyone who is not registered to the Environment Agency on 03708 506506.

Business Waste Duty of Care

Any business that produces, handles or disposes of controlled waste has a statutory obligation to ensure it is managed correctly under Duty of Care legislation.Controlled waste’ is effectively all waste that arises from business premises. This includes waste that is collected for recycling as well as waste that is disposed of to landfill or incineration.

Under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) all businesses must:

•         Stores their waste correctly i.e. it must be properly contained

•         Ensure their business waste is collected by registered waste carriers

•         Ensure all collections are covered by a valid Waste Transfer Note that includes a written description of the waste to enable anyone handling it to do so safely and appropriately

•         Hold records of Waste Transfer Notes for at least two years (legal requirement)

•         Be compliant with the laws surrounding lawful waste management - ignorance of the law is no defence if your waste is found fly tipped.

Council officers can inspect business documentation at any time to ensure they are complying with the law. If businesses cannot provide the requested documentation i.e. not able to demonstrate lawful waste management, they can be issued a FPN (Currently £300) under the Environmental Protection Act (1990).