



Winter Maintenance

ETE Scrutiny Committee

18th March 2013

Roger Williams
Head of Highways

Finance

- The 2012/13 winter maintenance service budget is £1.48m, of which approximately 60% of the budget is spent on fixed costs, such as the leasing and maintenance of the gritting vehicles, while the remaining 40% is used to fund the gritting operations, i.e. salt and staff salaries.

Preparation

- We were prepared for the winter having learned lessons from the previous two winters, specifically:
 - we increased the level of salt stocks at the start of the season to 10,000 tonnes, compared with the stock level at the start of the previous winter of 8,000 tonnes.
 - Secondary gritting routes had been revised to include all bus routes, and of particular note is the access to the bus depot in Hastings;
- • A 'dry run' of the primary and secondary salting routes was completed to ensure that the drivers were thoroughly familiar with any route changes;
- •

Preparation - contd

- The County's 600 grit bins and over 120 grit tubes (pipes in the hedge) were filled in readiness;
- Over 240 private or local council grit bins were also filled;
- We have changed supplier of weather stations data which allows thermal mapping of our gritting routes



This Winter

- The winter of 2012/13 has been exceptionally mild, with the primary gritting network treated only 15 times up till the end of January 2012, and no treatment of our secondary routes.
- The weather in the first week of February 2012 deteriorated, culminating in a heavy countywide snowfall overnight on the 4 February. From the 1 February to the 8 February the primary gritting network was treated 12 times and the secondary network on a further 8 occasions. However, this is still considerably lower than the 49 combined primary and secondary treatments that would be anticipated during an average winter (Appendix 1).

Communications - contd

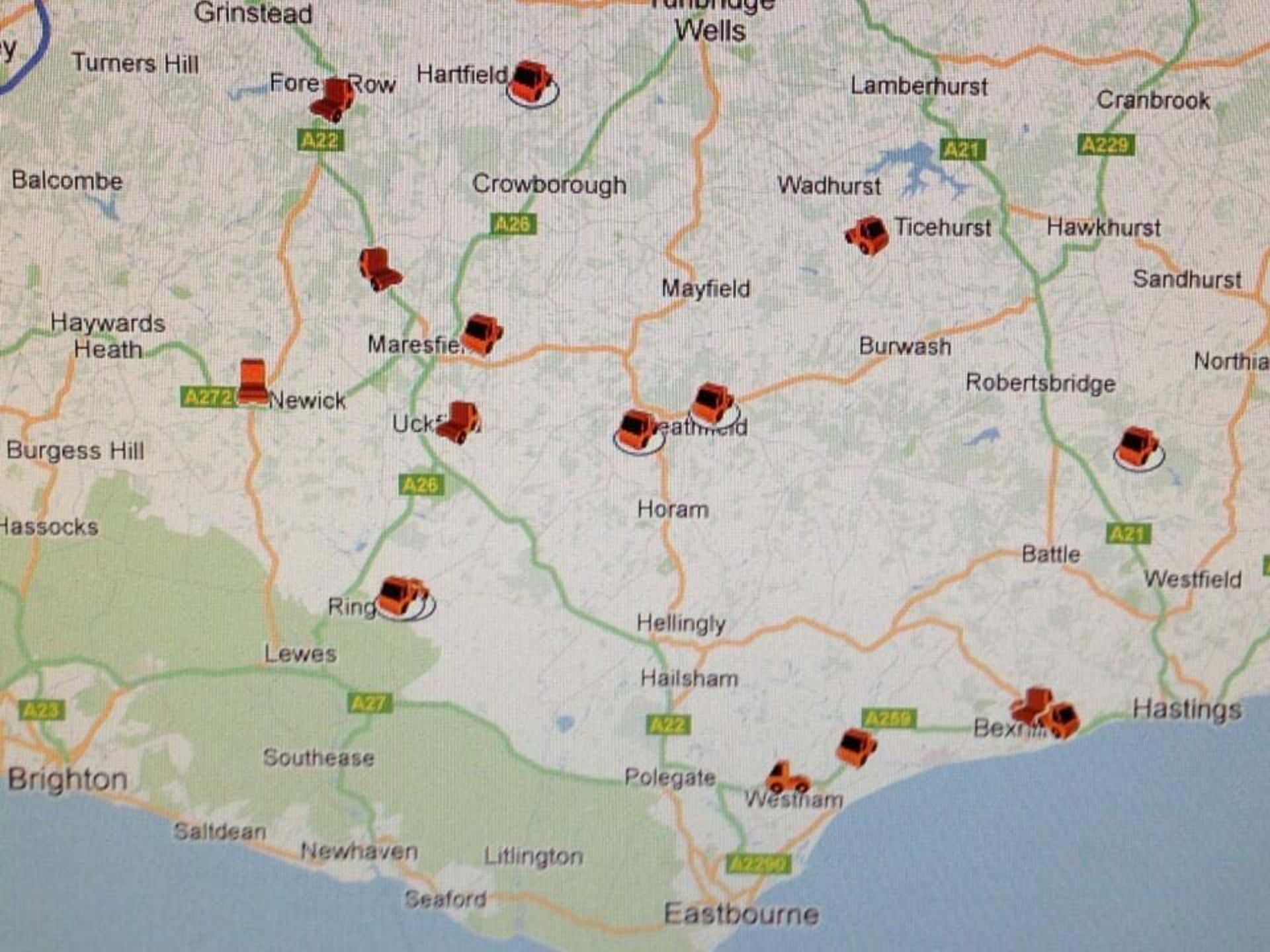
- Gritter Twitter'. Our @escicroads twitter feed or "Gritter Twitter" really came into it's own during the snowfall on 11th March and the subsequent freeze. Not only were we able to tell local people what was happening on the roads, but we were also able to respond immediately to people getting in touch with queries and problems. This new service goes from strength to strength and we have had over 1000 followers in the last week.

Communications

- All forms of communications had been reviewed, with the web site updated with the latest information along with changes incorporated to the gritting web map;
- • All salting activity is now published on the ESCC website; and
- • A Twitter feed, @ESCCroads, which has over 4500 followers and is “retweeted” to over 50,000 twitter users. Twitter has been introduced to try and ensure that the public were better informed of the action the County was proposing or had taken.

Resource Management

- We track all our gritters so we know where they are and have an audit trail once they have returned.
- This has been invaluable this week



Last week!

- Following the severe weather conditions that we endured over the last few days, I thought I would just let you know a few facts of what we have done over the period from around 18:00hrs on Sunday to around 22:00hrs on Tuesday.
- In a 48hr period, we completed:-
- A total of 9,912miles of standard primary routes were covered.
- A total of 500 miles of secondary routes were covered (we wanted to concentrate on keeping primary routes clear)
- Approximately 2,000 ton of salt was put on the county's highways. (71.42 ton per hour)

This week! - contd

- A total of 1,660 man hours, this was just manning our 24 Gritters and ploughs.
- We had 15 gangs out hand salting during the day on Tuesday.
- The snow blower was used for the first time in over 15 years, on the A259 at Beachy Head. It was also used on Wednesday at Ditchling Beacon.
- We helped numerous stranded motorists that were stuck on hills

This Week! - contd

- Regrettably there is little evidence that people in the County are prepared to take action to clear snow and ice from pavements outside their homes and businesses. Town and parish councils also need to be encouraged to be pro-active; they may wish to consider investing in salt spreaders as they are relatively inexpensive and far more effective at spreading salt than a shovel.
- In addition motorists seem to be ill prepared and expect that the roads will be like a summer day, after heavy snow fall.
- We need to encourage motorists to take more responsibility.

Questions