

# BILBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

## Adverse Weather Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

The Parish Council (the Council), as the owner of Bilbrook Village Hall and car park, acknowledges its Duty of Care under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957. The Council will take reasonable steps to manage risks associated with adverse weather, including snow, ice, extreme heat, high winds, and flooding. While the Village Hall is managed daily by the Twentyman Playing Fields Association's Management Committee (the Committee), the Council retains responsibility for the external grounds and the operation of the car park gates.

### 2. Personnel and Capacity

- **2.1 Part-time constraints:** Council staff work part-time hours (3–20 hours per week). Maintenance and gate operations will usually be performed during scheduled shifts only. A 24-hour monitoring or emergency response service is not provided.
- **2.2 Safety of staff:** Staff are not expected to travel to the Hall or work outdoors if weather conditions (e.g., Met Office Red/Amber warnings, floods, or extreme heat) suggest the journey or the task is unsafe.
- **2.3 Flexibility of hours:** Where a scheduled shift is disrupted by inclement weather, staff should coordinate with the Clerk to either perform alternative tasks that allow for homeworking, or make up the lost hours once conditions improve and it is safe to return to site.
- **2.4 Homeworking:** During Amber or Red weather warnings, or when site conditions are deemed unsafe, staff may work from home on any suitable tasks that allow for remote completion to ensure Council business continues.

### 3. Car Park Gates and Access Control

- **3.1 Authority to close:** The Council reserves the right to keep the car park gates locked if the environment is deemed to present an unacceptable risk (e.g., ice, flooding, or danger from falling debris during high winds).
- **3.2 Shared responsibility:** To ensure public safety when Council staff are not on duty, a nominated member of the Committee is authorised to lock the gates if they identify a significant hazard.
- **3.3 Operative emergency authority:** If a staff member on-site determines the car park is unsafe, they are authorised to keep the gates locked. They must make every reasonable effort to inform the Parish Clerk or a member of the Committee as soon as the decision is made. They must follow the communication procedures outlined in **Appendix B**.
- **3.4 Communication:** The Council will notify the Committee as soon as a decision is made to close the gates. Conversely, staff or Committee members must notify the Clerk as soon as practically possible if emergency action is taken, using the contact directory in **Appendix B**.
- **4. Risk Mitigation and Maintenance**
- **4.1 Winter Weather:** The Council will take reasonable steps to improve traction by clearing snow and applying salt. It is not possible to guarantee that any surface is entirely free of ice.
- **4.2 High Winds & Storms:** Following high wind events, staff will conduct a visual inspection of the car park and Hall perimeter for fallen branches or loose roofing before reopening gates.

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- **4.3 Extreme Heat:** During periods of extreme heat, heavy manual labour should be scheduled for the early morning or postponed. Staff are encouraged to take frequent shade and hydration breaks.
- **4.4 Flooding & Heavy Rain:** The Council will maintain a stock of sandbags specifically for use at the Village Hall entrance to mitigate the risk of water ingress during heavy rainfall or local flooding.
- **4.5 Discretionary Village Gritting:** The Council may, at its absolute discretion and subject to available resources, attempt to grit certain heavy-use areas of the village. This is a non-guaranteed service. Any such activity will only occur during staff's scheduled working hours and only when it is deemed safe for them to do so.

#### **5. Contractor and Third-Party Assistance**

- **5.1 Coordination:** The Council may, at its discretion, coordinate with local contractors or farmers to assist with snow clearance or emergency site works. Any third party acting on behalf of the Council must provide proof of valid Public Liability Insurance.

#### **6. Materials and Maintenance**

- **6.1 Material choice:** The Council will use appropriate de-icing salt for surface traction. Staff should ensure internal floor mats are used to minimise residue being tracked into the Hall.
- **6.2 Drainage:** During heavy rain, staff should ensure external drains near the Hall entrance are clear of debris to prevent localised pooling.
- **6.3 Storage:** The Council will maintain a stock of salt and sandbags to ensure they are available for use by staff or authorised Committee members as required.

#### **7. Health and Safety of Staff**

- **7.1 Suspension of Duties:** Litter picking and outdoor maintenance are generally suspended during snow/ice cover, thunderstorms, high winds (typically exceeding 40mph), or extreme heat.
- **7.2 Manual Handling:** To protect staff, the Council aims to purchase materials in manageable weights (e.g., 10kg). Where heavier bags (e.g. 20kg) are in use, staff must use trolleys or perform team lifts. Manual carrying of heavy bags over distances is not permitted. Where practicable, the walk behind spreader should be used to spread salt.
- **7.3 PPE:** Mandatory PPE includes high-visibility clothing, slip-resistant footwear, and thermal waterproof gloves for winter/flood work, and sun protection for summer.

#### **8. Documentation**

- **8.1 Records:** Staff will record all gate closures, weather-related inspections, and any mitigation performed (gritting/sandbagging) in the Staff Diary. This provides an evidence trail that the Council has acted reasonably within its capacity.

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Description of Revision</b>
Feb 2026	New Policy

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**Appendix A: Seasonal Check (To be completed in October):**

- Salt stock checked and ordered?
- Spreader mechanical condition checked?
- PPE (High-viz, boots, gloves) inspected?

**Appendix B: Emergency gate closure contact list**

Operative Authority: If you determine the car park surface is unsafe for vehicles or pedestrians due to snow or ice, you are authorized to keep the gates locked.

**Instructions:**

1. **Attempt Contact:** Try to contact the Parish Council or the Village Hall Management Committee using the numbers below as soon as the decision is made.
2. **Record:** Note the time and reason for closure in the diary.
3. **Inform:** Ensure a "Car Park Closed" sign is displayed on the gates to inform the public and a post is put on social media.

**Official Contact Numbers:**

- **Bilbrook Parish Council:** 01902 840007
- **Bilbrook Parish Council Clerk:** 07513 297212
- **Bilbrook Village Hall:** 07511 339598