

## **SNOW SPECIAL!**

The unprecedented amount of snow that we suffered in December 2010 led to many problems on the village roads, not least the High Street. Unfortunately it is not on Highways' gritting programme, which concentrates on main through routes. We did contact them asking for assistance and pointed out that it was used for access to the Surgery, but they were unable to help other than by keeping the grit bins filled. Many thanks to everyone who helped clear as much snow as possible from the village roads. It should be noted that the grit bins are available to anyone for the purpose of making safe areas of public use, i.e. roads or pavements. They are not, however, to be used for paths on private properties.

Some people are uncertain about whether to clear/treat snow and ice as they fear the possibility of litigation if anyone slips. Even if you think we've had enough snow for one winter, it may well make an unwelcome return, so the following information may be helpful.

### **The law on clearing snow and ice from public spaces**

There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces. If an accident did happen, it's highly unlikely that you would be sued as long as you:

- are careful
- use common sense to make sure that you don't make the pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than before.

*People using areas affected by snow and ice also have a responsibility to be careful themselves.*

### **Tips and advice on clearing snow and ice**

- start early – it's much easier to clear fresh, loose snow than compacted ice that has been compressed
- don't use hot water – this will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury
- be a good neighbour – some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths from their property
- if shovelling snow, think where you are going to put it so that it doesn't block people's paths or drainage channels
- make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on
- spreading some salt on the area you have cleared will help stop ice forming – table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as they may be damaged by it
- pay particular care and attention to steps and steep gradients
- use the sun to your advantage – removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight
- if there's no salt available, sand or ash are good alternatives.

### **BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR**

Make sure elderly and vulnerable people you know in your community are OK. There is a 24 hour non-emergency telephone helpline number for people to call for advice and support if they need urgent assistance – 01522 782189. This number can be used if you have serious concerns about a person's welfare as a result of them not being able to get out of their homes to buy food, replace medication or if they are without heating fuel supplies.