

How to personally request winter gritting in Arkengarthdale

After the recent difficulties everyone experienced with the icy roads during the recent cold spell, Arkengarthdale Parish Council has been in contact with North Yorkshire Council to ask that they reinstate the gritting arrangements that used to be in place for the dale when gritting decisions were made by the now defunct Richmondshire District Council.

It has been made very clear to us that Arkengarthdale and the surrounding areas are a low priority (the Arkengarthdale Road and the Stang Road are classified as Priority 2 routes, other local roads are classified as Priority 3), and that there will be no changes to the gritting policy. NYC's winter maintenance policy is as follows:

"In widespread freezing and wet conditions Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes will be treated, as resources permit, but with preference to Priority 1 routes. Priority 3 routes will not normally receive treatment unless freezing conditions persist for more than 72 hours. Treatment of Priority 3 routes in advance of the 72 hour rule in certain weather conditions will be allowed."

(see: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel/winter-service/road-gritting/winter-maintenance-policy>)

The methods NYC use to determine which Priority 3 roads have sub-zero temperatures for more than 72 hours (i.e. forecast data based on sensors and thermal mapping; local Highway Officers making judgements when severe weather is forecast) did not, in the last cold spell, trigger any action at NYC for additional gritting in our area.

If this situation occurs again, and we find ourselves driving on ice again, we have been advised that in circumstances where the welfare of humans or animals is at stake, individuals can request emergency gritting. NYC state that *"we do have a mechanism to respond to requests for emergency gritting and would ask that in the first instance you make this request via telephone to our Customer Service Centre, 0300 131 2 131 in order that it can be brought to the attention of the Winter Duty Manager for consideration."*

The Parish Council has made a clear case for better monitoring of the roads in the dale in order that they are gritted proactively, but there has been no acknowledgement from NYC that the roads were hazardous and a risk to life in December. At present there is little more we can do. Next time, if the freezing weather comes and you find yourself in the same situation as in December, with a case for needing to get out, or a case for needing services or deliveries to get in (e.g. medical, business, educational, food supplies), please call the number above to request emergency gritting.

We would be grateful if you could let us, the Parish Council, know what response you get.