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An inspirational partnership



Northamptonshire
County Council



Northamptonshire
Highways

Highway

Warden

Scheme

Handbook

Northamptonshire Highways

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Northamptonshire Highways would like to thank you for your commitment to your local community , and we look forward to a strong and positive partnership with you in the future

Illuminated signs bollards

These will either be illuminated internally or with an external lantern, whilst these are Northamptonshire Highways responsibility they are maintained via the street lighting contract rather than the highways contract, defects should be reported via Street Doctor reporting line (0300 126 1000).

Cleansing / sweeping

All highway cleansing activities are the responsibility of the District / Borough councils. This includes road sweeping, footway sweeping, litter picking, removal of any fly tipped materials and removal of dead animals. Northamptonshire Highways may act in extreme circumstances where there is an issue to safe passage on the highway however we would usually only move debris rather than remove it.

Dog Fouling / Litter

Anything to do with cleanliness is either Parish, District or Borough responsibility.

What Northamptonshire Highways can do

Safety defects such as potholes will be repaired under the Intervention criteria and timescales laid down in NCC's Highway Maintenance Plan. General structural maintenance will be carried out on a planned basis dependent on funding. For aesthetic works where the primary concern is appearance (muddy verges from parking / overriding) the resource available for this kind of works is the Community Enhancement Gangs and funding for these is extremely limited.

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce the Northamptonshire Highway Warden Scheme. This scheme represents an important and valued contribution between Northamptonshire Highways, Parish & Town Councils and Local Community Groups.

Who are we

Northamptonshire Highways is a collaborative working arrangement between Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and MGWSP, which is tasked with maintaining the highway network within Northamptonshire County.

Volunteering as a Highway Warden will mean becoming a vital link between your local community and Northamptonshire Highways. This link will provide not only valuable information which assists in maintaining the highway network, but also ensures the views and requirements of the local community are represented.

In order to improve support for the Highway Wardens Scheme the county is divided into three separate areas (see page 14). An Area Manager and CLO (Community Liaison Officer) have been appointed to each of the three areas and are responsible for the network in that area. Our team of Area Managers and CLO's will work with you and provide any advice or support you may require to fulfil your role as a Highway Warden.

Contact details for each of the teams can be found in your Induction Pack. We look forward to working with you.

Front Cover - Nobottle Road Roundabout

All photos c/o MGWSP

Aims and Objectives of the Scheme

Accesses Licences

Any works within the highway that are carried out by anyone other than the highway authority require permission and a licence from Northamptonshire Highways. So if a parish wishes to install a village seat permission would have to be sought. Anyone constructing an access to their property similarly needs a licence. In addition to the above anyone working within the highway that will interfere with traffic flows needs to obtain permission from Northamptonshire Highways. This is so that works can be coordinated to minimise disruption to the general public and insure that they have sufficient insurance cover. You can contact the Regulations Team at regulations@mgwsp.co.uk.

Obstructions on the highway

Temporary signs such as estate agents boards on the grass verge sandwich boards on pavements outside shops and pubs that cause obstructions to pedestrians etc. Stones on grass verges to deter cars from overriding. These are generally illegal and can actually leave the owner vulnerable to insurance claims should an accident occur the responsibility for action on these lies with Northamptonshire Highways enforcement team.

Road Signs

In general signs within the highway are the responsibility of Northamptonshire Highways with some specific exceptions:-

Street name plates. These are either screwed to boundary walls or on very short legs (Orchard Close, School Lane for instance). These are the responsibility of the District / Borough Councils.

Mowing

Verges within the village envelope are mowed according to county policy this is based on safety not aesthetics. Northamptonshire Highways allows villages to opt out of the county mowing regime and arrange for this work to be carried out by suitably qualified and insured contractors the parish is paid a grant equal to the amount that it would normally pay for this work this allows parishes to subsidise this activity from their own funds and achieve more cuts and thus a more aesthetically pleasing result. Some borough councils (Kettering for example) carry this work out for the parishes and subsidise it from their own funds. Mowing between villages this is carried out county wide on a cyclic basis we would normally mow roadside verges to a width of 1.2m (4ft) three or four times per year with bends and areas that require visibility being mowed wider. This is purely a safety cut to limit the height of vegetation. The between village cut will end at the village nameplate or 30mph signs whichever the driver comes to first the village mowing extends to the village nameplate or 30mph signs whichever is furthest out of the village.

Road closures district and county road works

In recent years changes in attitudes towards health and safety and more stringent guidelines have meant that we increasingly find it necessary to close roads whilst works are in progress. This is usually a planned operation where advance notice can be given however there are occasions where this is not possible.

We always try to limit closures to when we are physically working on site and limit start and finish times to cause least disruption. On major routes we try to do works under night time closures, again to minimise disruption.

Aims of the Scheme

The aim of this scheme is to better involve Parish & Town Councils and Local Community Groups in helping to manage Northamptonshire's Highway Network.

The objective for this scheme is for Northamptonshire Highways to provide services that help respond to community needs, based on the information provided by you.

We will endeavour to ensure that, with this scheme in place, the Transport and Highways service provided by Northamptonshire Highways is sensitive to the needs of the local communities within Northamptonshire.

We are keen to work with you to help grow your understanding of the services provided by Northamptonshire Highways as well as to share information about developments in the service.

Our aims for the scheme moving forward are for Highway Wardens to become a vital link between Northamptonshire Highways and the local communities within Northamptonshire

It should be noted that you are not expected to enforce any road legislation as part of your role. You are encouraged to work in partnership with local landowners or occupiers to provide amicable solutions to any issues that may occur.

What is expected of a Highway Warden

As this is a volunteer scheme, you can develop the role to suit your own time commitments. Suggestions of areas that you may wish to focus on are to:

- Act as a liaison between your local community and Northamptonshire Highways.
- Report any problems encountered on the network to the local Area Manager or CLO (as appropriate). Also to complete a brief yearly report form, which provides useful information for Northamptonshire Highways.
- Provide communication and act as an information conduit for highways issues.
- Improve community understanding of budget allocation, pressures and network management policies.
- Raise awareness of planned work across the highway network in advance.
- Make requests for minor works in their area, for example dropped kerbs, speed limit amendments etc.
- Be able to attend a Health & Safety/Training course at least once during the year.
- Help lead on minor works funding applications from their local community.

Drainage grips

Much of the rural network has no positive drainage. Water is channelled into ditches and roadside verges by grips. Grips are depressions in the verge that allow water to run off, some of these have a concrete base whilst others are merely scraped out of the verge. These grips are cleaned on a cyclic basis based on need but usually annually.

Trees

Hedgerow Trees are almost always the responsibility of the adjacent landowner we would only take action where there is an urgent safety issue for the travelling public otherwise this would be an enforcement issue.

Trees within the highway verge, village greens etc. may be the responsibility of the Parish, District, or Northamptonshire Highways and we can give guidance to parish councils on a parish by parish basis.

Planting trees within the highway requires a licence from Highway Regulations. When contemplating this activity or any excavation within the highway please bear in mind that our roads and verges conceal a host of services (water, gas, telephone, internet, and electricity amongst others.) Trees planted by parishes remain the responsibility of the parish so thought should be given to long term maintenance costs and liabilities. You can contact the Regulations Team at regulations@mgwsp.co.uk.

Highway Drainage

Highway Drains (Gulleys) are emptied on a cyclic basis, usually annually. Gulleys are designed to catch silt/detritus/leaves from the highway to prevent it entering the drainage system it is usual for there to be some accumulations, this will not affect the operation of the gully. Where we identify gullies that are blocked and causing a hazard we will arrange treatment on an ad hoc basis. Drainage of highway water is the responsibility of the highway authority from the drain (gully pot) to the connection with the main drainage system. The drainage system itself is only highway responsibility if it only takes highway water, systems that carry a mixture of highway water and surface water from other sources are either the responsibility of the water authority or joint responsibility of all users of the system. Drainage of non-highway water is not highway responsibility.

Ditches and hedges

Ditches and hedges that border the highway are almost always the responsibility of the adjacent landowner, unless there is a problem of immediate safety this would be an enforcement matter and Northamptonshire Highways as the "owner" of the highway would have to write to the landowner to force them to carry out their responsibilities. We do occasionally have disputes with new developments where the developer has erected a boundary fence on the garden side of the hedge, in most cases the householders will be unaware that the centre of the hedge is actually their boundary and that the responsibility for the hedge (and ditch) is actually theirs.

Northamptonshire Highways Support

Northamptonshire Highways are here to support you in your new venture. We will provide the following:

- Full induction training will be given to you. This will include details of the scheme, what support is available, maintenance issues and information on the local highway network.
- On-going support and advice will always be available from the Area Manager or CLO responsible for the area. The team will endeavour to contact you regularly throughout the year.
- Northamptonshire Highways will provide Highway Wardens, so far as is reasonably practicable, with appropriate training and instruction on Health & Safety Issues. This will include advice and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) should it be deemed necessary.
- The Highway Warden will act as the eyes and ears for their local area. You will work with Northamptonshire Highways to ensure your community's needs are fed into Northamptonshire Highways, in order that we can best serve you.

Community Enhancement Gangs (CEG's)

Community Enhancement Gangs exist to help serve the community, for the community. They are provided by Northamptonshire Highways to give communities more control regarding minor improvement and maintenance issues which fall inside the intervention criteria.

CEGs are available (upon request) for 1 day per year .

We envisage that in the future all requests for CEG's will come through the Highway Wardens.

CEG's can help with issues such as:

- Sign Cleaning;
- Improving/Refurbishing Bus Shelters
- Improving/Refurbishing Village Seating
- Cutting back overgrowth (e.g. back of footways, kerb edges etc.)
- Repairs to Signs
- Isolated Pothole repairs
- Kerb Repairs
- Strimming verges
- Painting of Bollards or other aesthetic works

Winter Maintenance

The primary gritted network has been designed such that as many villages as possible have one gritted route to connect to the main road network.

The secondary gritted routes cover the next level of distributor roads these will only be gritted during prolonged spells of sub-zero weather once the main network has been dealt with.

Estate roads will only be gritted on an ad hoc basis as resources allow. Footways will only be treated in high priority areas.

Northamptonshire is an extremely diverse county, with both large towns and very rural areas. As such the service provided to maintain the Highway Network is also very diverse. Below are just some of the headings that Northamptonshire Highways work with:

Public rights of way

Public rights of way such as field footways and bridleways are looked after by the Rights of Way team. Please contact Katie Brown (Rights of Way Team Leader) for more information KBrown@mgwsp.co.uk (01604) 883451.

Street lighting

Depending on its function this may be Parish, District or Borough responsibility. In general lighting on main roads is County responsibility.

The Highway Network

Northamptonshire Highways is responsible for the maintenance of all adopted highways, footways and rights of way within the county. The Highways Agency is responsible for trunk roads and motorways within the county. As such, the county has no responsibility for the M1, A14, or the A5 in its entirety. Some sections of the A43 & A45 are maintained by Northamptonshire Highways, but the majority still lies with the Highways Agency

Northamptonshire Highways have their own work routines set out for each part of the year. With the information you provide us, we will be able to better fit works specifically for your area into these plans, providing a more efficient service. Parts of this service are described below:

Inspections

All highways and footways within the county are the subject of a safety inspection on a programmed basis dependent on road hierarchy as a minimum this is carried out annually. (Town centre footways would be walked monthly and main roads would have a monthly driven inspection.)

Grit Bins

Grit bins are provided and filled as necessary at locations on the network that meet criteria laid down by the county. The salt within these bins is for use on the Highway Network. It is not for private drives and pathways. Prosecution for misuse cannot be ruled out. Where a location does not qualify for a Highways funded salt bin it may be possible for a Parish Council to purchase their own bin which they would be responsible for maintaining and filling, the CLO can be contacted for further details.

Area Contacts and Service Requests

Service Requests

Requests for service that are not maintenance related should be directed to your area CLO. They may deal directly with the issue, or work with the appropriate department to address it. CLO's have a small budget allocation each year for minor works within their areas. This has to cover requests from all Towns and Parishes within the area so the scope of works that can be funded is very limited.

Types of Issues which may be considered:

- Dropped Kerbs & Road Markings
- Pedestrian guard railing
- Signs / chevrons/ marker posts
- Speed limits amendments
- Tourist signing / local direction signing
- Parking restrictions
- Speed management
- Salt Bin Purchase

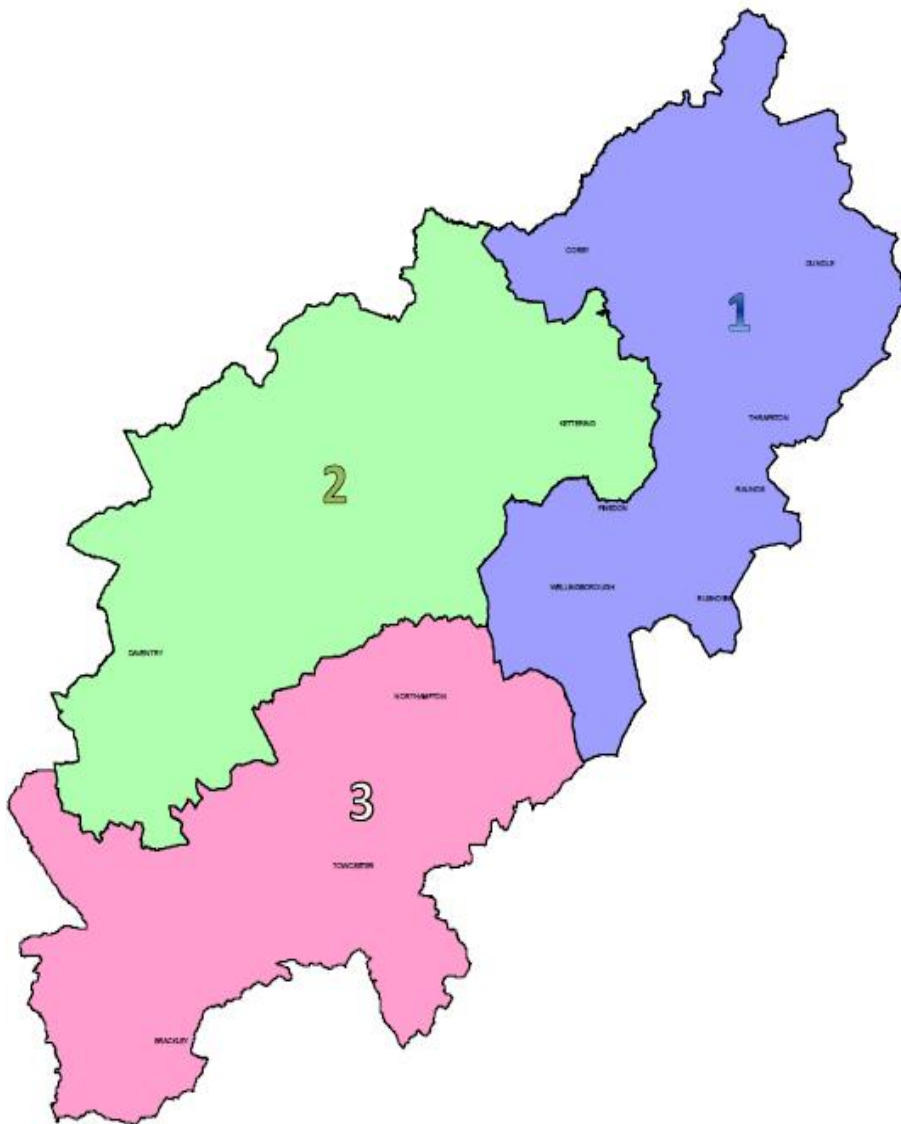
Types of Issues which will not be considered:

- Hardening of verges
- Bollards to prevent parking
- Amenity weight restrictions
- Signing for private businesses
- Traffic mirrors

Specific issues should be reported via the fault reporting system (Street Doctor). For more general enquiries it will be the role of the Highway Warden to liaise with the area teams and become the link between the parish council and the maintenance team.

Information on the Highway Network

Area Map



A more detailed map can be found within your induction pack.

Area 1 - Wellingborough, Corby & East Northants

Area Manager—Contact Details

Name - Ciaran Murphy

E-Mail - cmurphy@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



CLO—Contact Details

East Northants & Corby

Name - Sarah Barnwell

E-Mail - sbarnwell@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



Wellingborough

Name - Helen Howard

E-Mail - hhoward@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



Area 1 Depot - Details

45-49 Bradfield Road

Finedon Rd. Industrial Estate

Wellingborough

NN8 4HB

Area 2 - Daventry & Kettering

Area Manager—Contact Details

Name - Ian Smith

E-Mail - ismith@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



CLO—Contact Details

Name - Ian Boyes

E-Mail - iboyes@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



Area 2 Depot - Details

Brixworth Depot

Harborough Road

Brixworth

Northamptonshire

NN6 9BX

Area 3 - Northampton Borough & South Northants

Area Manager—Contact Details

Name - Carl Evans

E-Mail - cevans@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



CLO—Contact Details

Northampton

Name - Andrew Leighton

E-Mail - aleighton@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



South Northants

Name - Helen Howard

E-Mail - hhoward@mgwsp.co.uk

Phone - 01604 883400



Area 3 Depot - Details

Towcester Depot

Old Greens Norton Road

Northamptonshire

NN12 8AX