

STALMINE-WITH-STAYNALL PARISH COUNCIL

13 December 2018

CLERK'S REPORT

Council documentation

A number of council documents have been kept in storage at RBS in Poulton since 2002. Now that the branch is closing the documents have had to be removed and need to be kept securely by the council as they relate to land and leases for which the council is responsible.

Liaison with Hambleton Council re sharing lengthsman

An approach has been made to the clerk at Hambleton to see if there is scope to share a lengthsman for summer planting and plant bed maintenance work – a response is awaited.

New legal guidance

New regulations covering the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications came into force on 23 September and apply to local councils, county associations and NALC. The requirement to meet accessibility standards does not apply for existing websites until 23 September 2020, to new websites published on or after 23 September 2018 until 23 September 2019, and for apps, 23 June 2021. While a step in the right direction for accessibility, it has been described as something that may pose a challenge for the sector and NALC is raising this with the Government, including requesting support.

Lancashire County Council winter

The county's 45-strong fleet is as ready as it can be for the coming winter with 29,000 tonnes of salt in stock and gritters based at operational depots ready to go whenever needed. Local forecasts for each area of the county are received, which allow the team to take the appropriate action.

Every effort is made to keep traffic moving on priority roads and the team members are open about the fact they cannot grit every road in Lancashire. However, they treat all the A roads, all B roads, and some C roads, which adds up to around 1,500 miles of road – around a third of the total in Lancashire.

Even if the team had the resources needed it couldn't grit the roads quickly enough to make a real difference. No council does this.

It is important people understand there are limitations to the service provided. That is why residents are asked to take steps to make sure that when severe winter weather strikes they are prepared and able to manage.

We need your support to help manage public expectations and help communicate our winter policies and procedures, and the circumstances in which we implement them.

Our advice to the public is to stay alert to road conditions during the winter – the key thing to remember is that just because a road has been gritted it doesn't mean it won't be icy. It takes

time and the action of tyres to mix the salt with the ice and make it work by lowering the temperature at which the water freezes. Road conditions can vary considerably over quite a short distance and it's vital to use your judgement and drive according to the conditions.

- Website - www.lancashire.gov.uk/winter
- Twitter - www.twitter.com/lancashirecc
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/lancashirecc

United Utilities Priority Services Register

United Utilities is the water and wastewater company that serves more than 7 million customers in more than 3 million homes right across the North West, and we have been doing a lot over the past couple of years to improve our services in giving more support to those who need it most.

We all need a little bit of extra help at some stage in our lives. This could be due to age, ill health, a disability, mental health problems, financial worries or even language barriers. By registering for our free Priority Services scheme, customers could benefit from additional free services from us, to support their particular needs, including:

- A free phone number connecting them to a dedicated, externally trained team, to listen, help and support
- Nominate a carer, family member or even a friend to speak to us on their behalf
- A knock and wait service, so if they have mobility needs we'll always wait, allowing them enough time to answer the door
- We'll notify them of any planned interruptions to their water supply
- Bills and letters could be printed in braille, large print or even on coloured paper
- Add a password to their account as added protection from bogus callers
- Translation services if English isn't their first language
- Help and advice if they're struggling to pay their water bill

For customers with internet access, there's even an online accessibility tool, changing the look of our website to suit their needs. All they have to do is click on the 'Accessibility Help' button on the bottom right of each page of our website.

This is where we need your help as offering the service is the easy part. As the onus is on the customer to register, if we don't know they are experiencing difficulties, we can't help. We are already working with many charities and organisations to help us promote the scheme, including Rural England, Age UK, MIND, Macmillan Cancer Support, Citizens Advice, Disability Awareness, Autism Together, Lancashire Fire Service and Silver Line. We feel it's also extremely important to target our customers that live in rural areas in our region, however, getting information out to them can sometimes be difficult, so knowing your important role within these communities, we hoped our Parish Councils could also help us in encouraging those people that need additional support, to register for Priority Services.

You don't even have to be the account holder to join and registration really couldn't be easier. You can either:

- Visit our website unitedutilities.com/priorityservices and complete a simple online form
- Call our friendly Priority Services team direct on 0345 072 6093
- Also, when someone registers with us, with their consent, we could also add their details to a similar free scheme with Electricity North West (who manage the electricity network in our region). If eligible, this would provide additional support if there was ever a loss of power too – so two for the price of one!

Please let me know if there's anything additional I can provide you with, such as sending you our literature and applications forms or perhaps someone from United Utilities visiting a Parish Council meeting to help promote the scheme. Either way, my contact details are below and I'd be more than happy to help.