

Contingency plans would help us prepare for the worst

AS I SIT writing this piece on Sunday morning the sun is shining brightly in a clear blue sky.

The snow has almost disappeared and it is difficult to believe it was only a day or so ago that you took your life in your hands if you attempted to walk on the ice covered pavement in Denne Road – a stone's throw from Horsham town centre.

Horsham District Council's response to the snow was patchy to say the least.

And the effects were seen most starkly in the pedestrianised areas of the town which did not benefit from the county council



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gritters or the passage of traffic.

More could and should have been done to clear a network of pathways through the snow.

We may have experienced a freak, once in a generation winter freeze but whatever the arguments about global warming it does seem that we are experiencing more extremes of weather and we

would be well advised to plan accordingly.

We need to be realistic about what it is possible to expect of the authorities.

The days are long gone when councils employed large numbers of outdoor staff who lived close to their workplace and could be diverted to deal with problems on an ad hoc basis.

Although we have become a society that expects everything to be done for us, the many stories from across the country of resourcefulness and mutual assistance show that we are capable of rising to the occasion.

Therefore what we need

are contingency plans which are shared with the public so we know what to expect will be done, and what will not. That would help us to make our own plans.

For example, if we know that the council is not going to grit the pavements we might choose to build up our own small stock of grit and salt.

And perhaps we could reinstate the grit bins that used to be placed by the roadside in strategic places.

Hopefully, Horsham council will undertake a review of its response to the snow.

A word with the Royal Mail might be useful; our postman maintained

virtually daily deliveries throughout the freeze.

As I said, it is Sunday morning and I strain my ears in vain to hear the bells from St Mary's Church, less than 200 yards away.

We used to be able to hear them loud and clear but for some reason a year or so ago the church baffled the sound so that unless one is standing virtually below the steeple the bells cannot be heard.

The sound of church bells is quintessentially English, reassuring in their familiarity, and comforting in their sense of continuity.

We are fortunate to have such a splendid peal of bells; why on earth have they been

muffled in this way?

Two of Horsham's greatest virtues were the sound of the bells of St Mary's and the smell of boiling hops from King and Barnes. It is too late to save the brewery but please can we have our bells back?

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town.

It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.

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