

Community Approaches to Road Safety Toolkit

Communities improving visibility and road surfaces



As statutory authority funding has reduced, communities in all parts of the country have been prepared to take over aspects of road safety.

The Gloucestershire County Council Big Community Offer- [Highways Your Way](#) website page contains links to examples of the work of snow wardens, lorry watch, flood wardens, local grass cutting etc. The [SAFER](#) group in Coberley Parish improved visibility on a dangerous bend by trimming vegetation.

The Devon County Council website information regarding its '[Self Help Scheme](#)' shows how it provides training to volunteers doing work at a safe distance from the live carriageway or footway, or under a temporary road closure. DCC regards these as Level 1 works and include:

- clearing weeds
- cleaning signs
- cleaning gully grating
- [cutting grass](#)
- repairing finger posts
- cutting hedges road closures for special events
- ecological, geological and historical surveys.

The Devon County Council website explains how Bideford and Holsworthy town councils hold tidy town days where members of the community do works to improve the look of the towns. Eg as part of a 'Tidy Up Day' volunteers can clean street signs, carry out litter picks, clear overgrowth and clean, stain and varnish seats, and weed and rake landscaped areas.

Maintenance of road surfaces

The Devon County Council website explains how Bideford and Holsworthy town councils have also made their own local arrangements to repair roads damaged by floods/ cold weather. This was done in full consultation with the Local Highways Authority. In the case of Bideford and Holsworthy it was found that the community had the necessary skills and equipment and the community offered to carry out the work if materials were supplied by the local authority. Devon Highways provides 30 tonne of stone which was laid by two local farmers, who also provided Terram sheeting for the base to reduce the ingress of ground water.

In Gloucestershire the [Highways Local](#) initiative provides funding to communities, via their county councillor, to tackle highways works that are a priority for the community and in many cases this funding has been used to buy in the services of Highways teams to carry out road repairs.

Points to consider if improving visibility by trimming vegetation

- Gain landowner's permission
- Communicate with Gloucestershire Highways regarding your plans and use their advice to compose your risk assessment

- Safety is paramount:
 - Assess whether or not the location is a safe distance from the live carriageway (seek advice from Gloucestershire Highways).
 - Carry out a risk assessment
 - Use your local knowledge to select the quietest possible time to work, but when visibility is good
 - Ensure that volunteers are provided with clear instructions on safety and equipment use
 - Ensure high visibility jackets are worn by all volunteers and that signs are used as appropriate to let drivers know there is a workforce near the Highway
- Consider whether local landowners could carry out this work on behalf of the community on rural minor roads either in a volunteer or in a paid capacity (as they may already be suitably qualified eg to cut verges, clean ditches and plough road edges)
- Some communities prefer to pay for the services of a lengthsman on a day or week rate to carry out these tasks, using the Gloucestershire [Highways Local](#) funding, distributed via County Councillors.
- Gloucestershire Highways may offer additional training to groups seeking to use volunteers to carry out tasks
- Grants may be available to fund equipment purchase (parish councils could fund this in parished areas)
- Insurance cover should be in place (eg through the parish council scheme)
- Take advice about the best time of year to carry out any trimming, to increase effectiveness and to reduce the risk of damaging vegetation and natural habitats
- **Safety Zone** – The Devon County Council website states that the safe working distance from the edge of a live carriageway and/ or footway where various supervised work activities can take place without the requirement for any formal traffic management qualification, is as follows:
 - for roads with a speed limit less than 40mph = 500mm
 - for roads with a speed limit greater than 40mph = 1200mm

Cleaning signs

- The points above relating to clearing vegetation also apply to signage. Some additional points are;
- Warm water, detergent and a sponge should suffice to clean signage
- Begin by cleaning signs away from the carriageway – eg those nearer footpaths so that you learn in a safer zone
- This task should be conducted by a team- not by individuals working unsupervised.
- Take advice before setting up ladders etc near carriageways to reach tall signs

