



# WELWYN GARDEN CITY SOCIETY

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Dear Sirs,

As ever, when you start to look into the minutiae of who should be doing what and where in relation to clearing the snow from the Town Centre pavements, nothing is quite straightforward. For our part we are still seeking explanations from both Borough and the County and, so far, we are none the wiser: we are, however, persisting.

What is clear is that last year there was a dispute between the two authorities which was supposed to have been sorted out. What is also clear is that it is only our Borough in this County that has this dispute as it appears to take a singular line all of its own over who should be responsible for clearing of verges and pavements and, in consequence, who should carry the cost. It seems that once the Borough has swept those areas that it terms "priority" then it sits back and waits for the County to request it to sweep other areas. This seems to have the effect of passing the cost of clearing those other areas on to the County. It must be obvious to all, that when there is heavy snow, there is no way that the County will be able to address Town Centres immediately when their primary purpose must be to keep trunk and other busy roads clear. This seems to explain why our Town Centres and other local shopping centres are left to become ice rinks.

To make matters worse for our Borough, we detect that the relationship between the two authorities still leaves a lot to be desired after last year's dispute, as this Borough is increasingly seen as difficult – indeed, there has been more evidence of this earlier this winter when strange notices appeared advising pedestrians "Caution – slippery surface - wet leaves". These were put up by County when it is the Borough whose contractors usually sweep neighbouring pavements. One is led to assume that County is worried that some residual liability will fall upon them if the Borough is slow to clear them up. Frankly, most residents would see these notices as a waste of time and money: they just want the pavements swept. All of this however is beside the point: residents pay council tax that are passed to both authorities to ensure safety when on the highway – which includes most pavements. They could not care about a squabble between the two bodies: they just want the problem sorted. Our own Borough should also take note that penny pinching and being difficult with other authorities, on whom you in part depend, does not help residents. It simply means they are placed at the back of the queue for work to be done!

Could we suggest that the matter is, simply, sorted out? What people do not want is some lengthy spin about how everyone did a wonderful job, etc. etc. Residents have had enough of that!

Yours faithfully,

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