

Frome Town Council Constitution

Frome Town Council Grit Bin Policy

Frome Town Hall
Christchurch Street West
Frome
BA11 1EB

01373 465757
info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

Date adopted March 2026
Review Date March 2028

A copy of this document is also available in different formats such as large print, Braille, audio or in a different language. Please contact the office if this is required.

Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Legal and Policy Framework.....	3
3. Scope.....	3
4. Principles	3
5. Eligibility Criteria	4
6. What Grit Bins Are (and Are Not) For	4
7. Application Process.....	4
8. Installation Standards	5
9. Maintenance, Filling & Replenishment	5
10. Misuse, Damage, and Removal	5
11. Equality & Accessibility	6
12. Data Protection	6
13. Communication & Transparency	6
14. Review	6
Appendix A — Frome Town Council Grit Bin Request Form	7
References / Sources	8

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out when and how Frome Town Council will provide and maintain grit bins to support community self-help during winter conditions. Grit bins can allow de-icing material available to be made available at locations where targeted, local application can reduce risk on public footways and carriageways.

Grit bins are discretionary and support the Highway Authority (Somerset Council) in their duty “so far as is reasonably practicable” to ensure safe passage is not endangered by snow or ice (Highways Act 1980, s41(1A)).

There is no statutory requirement to place a bin at every requested location. Councils must prioritise resources and a grit bin policy sets out the criteria to be used to assess a grit bin application.

2. Legal and Policy Framework

- Somerset Council as the Highways Authority is guided by the Highways Act 1980 (England & Wales)
 - s41(1A): Duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- Parish and Town Councils are guided in their discretionary decision making by benchmarking of the approaches by other councils:
 - Many UK councils use criteria such as gradient thresholds, accident history, distance to nearest bin (often ~200 m), and exclusion where routes are already gritted to guide decisions. This aligns with common practice seen in the policies from other town councils (for example Belper Town Council, Keighley Town Council and The Highland Council).

3. Scope

This Policy applies to grit bins serving publicly adopted highways (roads and footways) within the Frome Town Council area.

It does not cover bins for private land, car parks, schools, hospitals, parks, or other premises. For public information on gritted routes and winter service coverage, residents may also consult the highways authority (e.g., County or Unitary Council) resource pages. [Somerset Council information on Snow and Ice](#)

4. Principles

1. **Risk-based & Proportionate:** Provision focuses on locations where local application of grit is likely to materially reduce risk.
2. **Complementary to Winter Service:** Bins do not replace planned gritting of priority routes.

3. **Community Self-help:** Bins support residents in treating small areas of public highway locally (e.g., footways near steep sections).
4. **Efficient Use of Resources:** Decisions consider whole-life cost, operational access, vandalism/abuse risks, and proximity to existing bins.

5. Eligibility Criteria

A location must satisfy at least one Criterion from List A and all Criteria from List B.

List A — Risk Indicators (at least one required)

- **Gradient:** The road or footway section has a gradient $\geq 5\%$ (≈ 1 in 20) or a locally significant slope that increases winter risk. *Stronger priority where gradient $\geq 10\%$ (≈ 1 in 10).*
- **Accident/Incident History:** Documented winter collision or fall history, police/highways reports, or repeated ice-related incidents.
- **Vulnerable Users:** High concentration of residents with mobility impairments or older persons' accommodation adjacent to the proposed site.
- **Water/Icing Issues:** Known run-off, spring, or shading that causes recurrent localised icing.

List B — Minimum Conditions (all required)

- **Public Highway Use:** Bin serves public road or footway (not private drives/land).
- **Distance Threshold:** The proposed site is ≥ 200 m from the nearest grit bin (measured along the pedestrian route). Where local geography makes 200 m impracticable, ≥ 150 m may be accepted with justification.
- **Not on a Priority-gritted Route:** Bins are normally not provided on routes already covered by the highways authority winter treatments.
- **Safe Siting:** Does not obstruct pedestrian passage (≥ 1.5 m footway clearance), sightlines, dropped kerbs, or driveways; allows refilling from a small vehicle/van.

6. What Grit Bins Are (and Are Not) For

- **Permitted Use:** Treating public footways and carriageways immediately adjacent to the bin location.
- **Prohibited Use:** Private paths, driveways, or private land; removal of material for personal/contractual use is considered misuse/theft and may lead to enforcement.

7. Application Process

1. **Submit Request:** Applications can be made using the form in Appendix A and should include:
 - Proposed location (map pin or what3words)
 - Rationale referencing **List A** criteria and local observations
 - Photographs and any incident reports (if available)
2. **Initial Screening:** Officers check proximity to existing bins, priority routes, and siting constraints.
3. **Site Assessment:** A council officer visits the location to verify gradient, sightlines, access, and usage.
4. **Decision & Notification:**
 - **Approve:** If criteria met and budget allows, and applicant notified, bin siting permission is sought, bin is ordered and installed and added to the asset register, and added to list of bins for main council to refill annually
 - **Decline:** Provide written reasons referencing criteria and any alternatives (e.g., use of nearby bin).
5. **Appeal/Review:** Applicants may request a case review with new evidence (e.g., incident logs) within 30 days of decision.

8. Installation Standards

- **Type & Capacity:** Robust, lockable bin (typically 200–400 L), high-visibility colour – usually yellow
- **Siting:** On firm, level ground; not on tactile paving, bus stops, crossings, or narrow footways; avoids utility covers and ensures vehicle refill access.

9. Maintenance, Filling & Replenishment

- **Pre-winter Filling:** All approved bins are filled once at the start of winter (typically October/November) usually by Somerset Council, subject to supply and weather.
- **In-season Refill:** Replenishments are prioritised during sustained cold spells and subject to resource availability.
- **Inspection:** Bins are inspected at least annually for damage, contamination, or obstruction.
- **Reporting:** Residents can report low levels or damage via info@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

10. Misuse, Damage, and Removal

- **Misuse:** Non-public use or removal of grit may lead to **warnings** and, where appropriate, referral for enforcement.
- **Persistent Issues:** Bins subject to repeated vandalism, contamination, or misuse may be temporarily removed or relocated following an officer review.
- **End-of-life:** Irreparable bins are replaced subject to budget and ongoing need.

11. Equality & Accessibility

When applying the Policy, the council will have due regard to the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, considering the needs of disabled people and older residents—especially where bins could materially reduce risk for vulnerable users (e.g., near sheltered housing).

12. Data Protection

Application records are processed under the council's **Privacy Notice**. Personal data is retained only as long as necessary for decision-making, asset management, and review.

13. Communication & Transparency

- The grit bin map/asset register (locations and IDs) will be published on the council website.
- Decisions (approval/decline) will reference Policy criteria to ensure consistency and fairness.

14. Review

This Policy will be reviewed as needed following changes in relevant legislation or council plans.

Appendix A — Frome Town Council Grit Bin Request Form

Applicant Name:	
Address:	
Contact Details (email/phone):	
Proposed Location (address, map link, what3words):	
Nearest Existing Grit Bin (distance and location):	
Please tick applicable List A criteria (at least one):	
☐ Gradient $\geq 5\%$ (attach photo / brief description)	
☐ Accident/incident history (attach references)	
☐ Vulnerable users nearby (describe)	
☐ Known water/run-off/icing issue (describe)	
Confirm all List B minimum conditions (all required):	
☐ Public highway use only	
☐ ≥ 200 m from nearest grit bin (or ≥ 150 m with justification)	
☐ Not on a priority-gritted route	
☐ Safe siting (≥ 1.5 m footway clearance; sightlines; vehicle refill access)	

Supporting Evidence (photos, reports, signatures if community-backed):	
Declaration: I confirm the information is accurate and understand bins are for public highway use only ☐	
Signature:	
Date:	

References / Sources

- Local Government Association – Winter service FAQs & legal context
Clarifies statutory duties and practical limits on gritting coverage; emphasises reasonable practicability and use of grit bins/community schemes. [\[local.gov.uk\]](https://www.local.gov.uk)
- Highways gritting information (GOV.UK portal)
Signposts residents to find which roads and pavements their council grits and how winter services are planned/communicated. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)
- Council policy exemplars (distance/gradient/eligibility patterns):
 - Belper Town Council: Grit Bin Policy & Procedure (criteria incl. gradient, safety, 200 m proximity rule, siting standards).
 - Keighley Town Council: Grit Bin Policy (criteria, **200 m** rule, siting, community support).
 - The Highland Council (Scotland): Grit Bin Policy (gradient threshold $\geq 5\%$, intervals c. 200 m, public highway use and misuse).
- Case law/precedent on “reasonably practicable” actions:
Illustrative discussion of liability where an authority failed to act despite police requests and known collision risk (Smithson v Lynn & North Yorkshire CC). Helps frame risk-based decision-making but does not impose a universal bin duty.