

5 January 2010

Tolson visits gritting depot

Jim Tolson MSP for Dunfermline West visited Fife Council's Dunfermline Transportation Service Depot at Milesmark to speak to the managers and the drivers coping with the current severe weather conditions. He later joined one of the drivers in a gritting lorry for a journey spreading salt in West Fife.

Jim commented "The drivers and mechanics are 'pulling out all the stops' at the moment just trying to keep the main roads safe. Fife Council is running a gritting service 24/7 looking after the roads – some other councils do not run their service throughout the night. The sub-zero temperatures mean that often roads have to be gritted more than once within just a few hours. The staff have been working 'around the clock' over the last few weeks in very low temperatures, including Christmas Day and New Year Day.

I am informed that Fife Council was badly let down by its suppliers of salt, despite ordering in plenty of time, receiving orders which were not only weeks late but reduced by 50%! All the salt is supplied for the country by just three mines in England.

Today I have written to the Cabinet Secretary, John Swinney MSP, seeking assurances that he can back up his promise of more salt for Fife with action. We need to ensure that Fife has enough salt to keep the roads open. I understand that Fife Council contacted the Scottish Government before Christmas requesting help with the low salt stock level but no help was received until a few days ago!"