

## [Big Society, Big Nudge](#) [1]

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The latest disastrous weather is a golden opportunity to put into practice David Cameron's vision of the Big Society, egged on by the theory of Nudge economics.

As near as anyone can figure out, the Big Society means individuals doing things for the greater good, rather than counting on the government. Nudge economics believes government can encourage desired behaviour through low-level persuasion, rather than law or regulation.

Well, let's try these two big ideas on dealing with our current 'extreme' weather. In short, the government should encourage all households to clear the snow from their private lanes, adjacent pavements and the street in front of their property, followed immediately by a quick sprinkling of rock salt. Job done!

This won't solve all the nation's transportation woes but it's a cheap start to at least part of the problem, namely dangerously impassable local streets.

Striking now while the snow is still on the ground and more forecast in the coming days makes good sense. A single speech on the subject by Mr Cameron would top all front pages and news bulletins. Instead of gathering experts to decide whether there's been a longer-term significant change in winter weather, Transportation Secretary Philip Hammond could commission a quick'n'dirty advertising campaign to get the message out in cinemas and on television.

We all know that other northern countries deal with such weather as a matter of course. It's a no-brainer in these places to take half an hour with a shovel and a bucketful of grit to get things on the move again.

In this country, though, the shock from a couple of inches of snow is pathetic to see. Grownups venture out, get into their cars and are then dumbstruck when the wheels spin wildly. The sight of so many incompetents with no shovels, no gloves and inappropriate footwear reduced to cursing their local councils is at complete odds with a nation that built an empire upon which the sun never set and which stood alone against the might of the Nazi military machine.

So, come on, Dave and Phil! Here's your big chance to put theory into practice. Let's nudge the Big Society to shift that snow.

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