

Present: Councillor Mrs J Wood (Chair)
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor Mrs P Phillips
Ms G Nahum
Mr R Reed
Mr I McGaw

In Attendance: Mrs P Price-Davies - Minute Taker / Committee Administrator

50. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Akehurst, Councillor Mrs J Bland, Mr R Rodway, Ms M Francini and Mr R Simmons

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

52. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

53. MINUTES

(i) The minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee meeting held on **22 October 2014** were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

(ii) The informal notes of the inquorate Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee meeting held on **11 November 2014** were noted.

54. BUDGET

Members received and considered an updated copy of the 2014/15 budget, attached to the agenda for review which was noted.

Members were positive about the surplus income over expenditure figure of £1,059.53 considering all the investment that had gone into the new lighting display in the trees in the Market Place and the small Christmas Tree Scheme. The Chair highlighted the fact that there were still outstanding expenses to be paid and that some costs needed to be attributed to the new 'Switch on and Shop' initiative

55. LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR – WASH-UP

Mr R Rodway had submitted a brief update on the Living Advent Calendar (LAC), stating that the event had received a lot of positive feedback and he had already received enquiries from potential performers for 2015. Well ahead of schedule, he will be investigating potential venues imminently. Members thanked Mr Rodway for all his hard work and dedication in his successful new management of this established event and extended this gratitude to the rest of the team. Members were in agreement that the new partnership between the Council and LAC was a welcomed development. The following comments and suggestions were made with regards to the 2014 LAC that would be forwarded to Mr Rodway:

- Confirmation of the attendance figures would be helpful.
- Confirmation of the amount of money raised through donations and the raffle would be useful.

- Some of the acts were overlong which resulted in loss of impact and turned the events into full performances rather than showcases. For the outdoor venues especially during the cold weather, these lengthened performances changed the dynamic and hence the commitment from the audience.
- It was felt that some of the new outdoor venues were unsuitable due to conditions under foot causing audience members to feel unsafe.
- The element of anticipation and surprise is key to the event and some of the new venues were not able to accommodate this metaphorical opening of a door or window therefore this aspect was lost on a couple of the performances.

56. 21 NOVEMBER 2014 SWITCH-ON & SHOP - WASH-UP

Unfortunately, the Town Centre Manager was unable to attend the meeting. The Committee Administrator gave brief verbal feedback on this new joint initiative with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). Members gave feedback from local retailers and recognised that as this was a new event there had been some confusion about the difference between this event and the annual Christmas Festival but it was hoped that if it were to continue it would gain its own reputation. It was felt that in order for the event to be successful; the following points should be considered by the organisers:

- A Thursday late Night Shopping event would be more appropriate and the provisional date for 2015 was suggested as Thursday 19th December.
- The Town Team should be made aware of this initiative and engage with local retailers over the value and worth of organising it again.
- The Stage should be erected in Market Place in front of the Town Hall where local performers could be showcased and not obscured by any other events or visiting markets.
- It was recognised that it was important to support the retailers and businesses in the town too but they had to embrace and promote the event to ensure a successful event for all concerned.

57. SPONSORSHIPS

The Chair gave a verbal update on the Sponsorship opportunities for the Christmas Festival and confirmed that thank you letters had been written to all the companies and organisations involved in the event in different capacities.

Members made various suggestions of companies and individuals that could be approached to sponsor various elements of Henley-on-Christmas. It was agreed that the Administrator would liaise with the Business Partnership on developing contacts and new partnerships. The new lighting in the trees in Market Place was permanently installed so could be illuminated over the regatta and festival period, this potential sponsorship opportunity and the erection of festoon lighting in Riverside should also be explored.

The Chair confirmed that Invesco Perpetual had confirmed their continued commitment to sponsor the large Christmas tree in 2015 to the sum of £1,750.00 and that the company had been invoiced for this amount already.

58. 2014 SMALL CHRISTMAS TREES SCHEME - WASH-UP

The Committee Administrator confirmed that 174 small Christmas trees had been sold, 54 of these were within the new loom infrastructure and 120 were outside it. Regardless of the location, all customers were charged the same rate and the Council had absorbed this additional cost within the budget of this Committee as previously agreed.

The Administrator gave a verbal update on the logistics of the installation of the scheme and the issue of consent from the property owners regarding the installation of the cabling and the proposed extension of the scheme. She confirmed that SODC had agreed to help with regards to this matter and that she was also receiving assistance from the Town Centre Manager. Members were in agreement that the scheme should

be extended to include other roads and areas within the town if the budget allowed and that the grant payment was awarded. They asked the Administrator to explore alternative contractors who would be able to undertake this work.

59. 5 DECEMBER 2014 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL - WASH-UP

Members were in agreement that the Christmas Festival event was regarded as a success and had been extremely well received. The following comments and suggestions were made:

- HTC needs to have a stronger presence for the duration of the event, an information stall needs to be positioned in Market Place which is fully staffed throughout the evening and acts as a central hub for all staff, marshalls, stallholders and attraction providers, to allow any problems or issues to be dealt with swiftly and effectively on-site.
- The addition of the sleigh, leading the Children's Lantern parade was deemed to be extremely successful and this new partnership with the Henley Round Table should continue.
- A Marshall meeting 2/3 days prior to the event was a crucial information exchange session that must continue to be scheduled and fully attended.
- The Administrator must acquire exact details of what stallholders were selling, well in advance of the event to avoid duplication of food stalls wares.
- The inclusion of the rides and attractions for adults and teenagers were welcomed but they needed to be more segregation between those and the juvenile rides. It was agreed the Administrator would arrange for Mr S Crabbe and his associate to attend the next meeting to enable a plan, list of rides and rental income for the 2015 event be agreed well in advance and that they would also take on the responsibility of positioning the rides according to the site plan to avoid any issues arising on the evening.
- It was imperative the By-Law issue be further investigated and implemented to avoid any further presence from the pedlar fraternity.
- All litter bins need to be labelled up and positioned much earlier and a map of where they have been placed to be issued for ease of locating them after the event.

60. 2014 SANTA FUN RUN – WASH-UP

A Member spoke of her frustration and disappointment that the erection of the boards publicising the event was hindered and delayed by an ex member not surrendering the display boards to the organisers in time to give reasonable notification to potential entrants. Nevertheless, she confirmed the Santa Fun Run had been extremely successful and although unable to confirm the number of entrants, over £600 had been raised through this popular event which would go to supporting the Mayor's charities. The Committee thanked the HTC Accountant, Mrs E Jones for all her help with regards to managing the Santa Fun Run website at such short notice.

61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The following date was proposed for the next meeting: **Thursday 12 March at 9.30am.**

The meeting closed at 3.56 pm.

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Chairman