

Present: Mayor, Councillor J Brookes  
Councillor Miss S Evans  
Councillor Ms H Chandler-Wilde  
Councillor S Gawrysiak (substituting for Councillor Miss K Hinton)  
Councillor Miss L Hillier  
Councillor Miss S Miller  
Mr Richard Reed

In Attendance: Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk  
Ms P Price-Davies - Minute Taker / Committee Administrator  
Mrs H Barnett – incoming Town Manager

I Member of the Press

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor, Councillor J Brookes called for nominations for the election of Chairman for the municipal year 2016-17. It was **RESOLVED**

**that Councillor Miss S Evans be elected Chairman of the Christmas events and Decorations Sub Committee for the ensuing municipal year.**

Councillor Miss S Evans took the Chair.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Miss K Hinton, Mr R Rodway, Mr R Simmons and Ms G Nahum.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee meeting held on the 11 November 2015 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

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

7. **BUDGET UPDATE**

Members had before them an updated copy of the 2016/17 budget, attached to the agenda, which was noted.

Members requested that the Administrator approached local tree growers, The Tree Barn at Christmas Common to supply the Large Christmas Tree for Market Place this year at a competitive rate, following the unsatisfactory tree that Elveden Estate supplied the Town Council with in 2015.

## **8. LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR**

Members had before them an update from Mr R Rodway on the Living Advent Calendar (LAC) which was received and noted. The Chair congratulated him on the management and success of the event in 2015 and stressed the importance of the Town Council continuing to work in partnership with LAC over the 2016 festive season to ensure that local audiences were maximized and all Christmas events. Members discussed the location of the LAC at the Christmas Festival event and they unanimously agreed that it should continue to be held in Friday Street to aid spectators being drawn to all peripheries of the town on the evening. The Chair requested that Mr Rodway liaised with the various businesses on Friday Street to ensure that the event worked to their advantage on the evening itself.

## **9. HENLEY AT CHRISTMAS 2015 - FEEDBACK**

### **(i) Christmas Festival Event (4 Dec 2015)**

It was generally felt that restricting the majority of rides and attractions to Hart Street worked well but the few juvenile rides that were located on both Duke and Bell Street had caused unnecessary congestion rather than encouraging footfall to the end of these roads.

It was reported that there had been complaints about the high entrance fee for Santa's Grotto in 2015 that had been run by Acoustic@Magoos and Members felt that it was important that the cost of this attraction did not exclude any local children.

The Administrator informed the Committee that several food vendors were duplicating what they were selling so a more stringent booking system needed to be managed and adhered to.

### **(ii) Santa Fun Run (6 Dec 2015)**

It was unclear who was the key contact in charge of the event last year, this confusion had resulted in several logistical problems arising on the day itself. The booking system on the website needed to be clearer and information relayed. It was agreed that this year the Town Council would take overall control of the event and promote it as a Mayoral event and that the Quince Tree be approached to properly cater for it.

### **(iii) Small Christmas Tree Scheme 2015**

There had been several issues with the electrification of the infrastructure for this scheme due to the lack of maintenance and liaison from the electrical lighting contractors, Merlin Lighting. As a result of this breakdown, local contractors had to be called in several times to ensure that the necessary repairs to the festive display were undertaken swiftly.

## **10. HENLEY AT CHRISTMAS EVENTS - 2016**

### **(i) Cost of Stall Pitches for the Christmas Festival Event**

It was agreed that the cost of Charity pitches for the Christmas Festival would remain the same but for Commercial pitches they would be increased and that the Administrator would be more stringent on the type and number of food and drink stalls booked and that she would actively seek out and invite appropriate producers and exhibitors selling gifts, crafts and homewares which would seek to complement what local shops were selling. Members agreed that prices for Stall pitches at the 2016 Christmas Festival would be set at:

- Local Charity Pitches £10
- Commercial Pitches (*non-food & drink*) £60
- Commercial Pitches (*food & drink*) £75
- Local Businesses *Half price rates*

(ii) Layout of the Christmas Festival Event

It was agreed that all the attractions and rides should be limited solely to Hart Street and that the juvenile rides should be sited at top end at the junction with Bell and Duke Street and then the rides and attractions appealing more to the teenage and adult market should continue on to the end of Hart Street so there were clear age appropriate sections.

Members discussed alternative layouts for Market Place but it was agreed that the Charity Stalls should remain in this central location. Both Duke and Bell Street were considered to have become too congested so it was agreed that no rides should be located on these streets but instead just a selection of street stalls and appropriate entertainers or 'experiences'.

Members requested that the Administrator should research the costs of traditionally themed Christmas roving entertainers that could entertain the crowds at different locations throughout the evening. A Member also suggested that the children participating in the Illuminated Parade could carry percussion bells to make their procession more impactful.

(iii) Arrangements for Santa's Grotto

Members were adamant that there should be no entrance charge for the Grotto this year and it was suggested that ready gift wrapped presents could be bought for this attraction. Henley College art students were responsible for decorating the Grotto for the last two years, this partnership worked well and the Committee hoped this partnership would continue.

**11. TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME**

Members had before them the three tender submission quotes received for a new Town Centre Christmas Lighting Scheme for 2016.

**Company A**

- Option A - £20,500.00 +VAT per year
- Option B - £16,500.00 +VAT per year
- Option C - £5,450.00 +VAT per year

**Company B**

- Option 1 - £23,990.00 +VAT Three Year Purchase Plan
- Option 2 - £37,500.00 +VAT Three Year Purchase Plan
- Option 3 - £51,750.00 +VAT Three Year Purchase Plan
- Option 4 - £16,770.00 +VAT Three Year Purchase Plan
- Option 5 - £15,939.00 +VAT Three Year Purchase Plan
- Option 6 – Standalone Christmas Trees @ £895 each
- Option 7 – Options & Additions Christmas Trees @ £950 each

### **Company C**

- Option 1 - £16, 276.50 +VAT
- Option 2 - £14,818.50 +VAT

Each bid was assessed on its own merit and its enhancement of the design of the existing Christmas tree lighting scheme. It was **RESOLVED**

**that Company B (Light Angels Ltd) be appointed to undertake the design and installation of the new Town Centre Lighting Scheme subject to various suggested modifications to the design, budget and payment plan.**

### **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

*The meeting closed at 9.35 am.*

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Chairman