

PRESENT: Councillor S Miller (Chair)
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Miss L Hillier (Vice-Chair)
Mayor, Councillor Miss K Hinton
Councillor D Eggleton
Councillor J Brookes (substituting for Cllr S Abey)
Mr R Reed

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms H Barnett – Town Manager
Ms P Price-Davies – Administrator
Mrs N Taylor - Administrator

Mr S Crabbe – Fair and Rides Co-ordinator
Mr L Morris – Lawrence Menswear
PC B Taylor – Thames Valley Police
PCSO Mrs C Hewitt – Thames Valley Police

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Sara Abey (Councillor Julian Brookes substituting) Sam Evans and Donna Smith and Mr Richard Rodway.

81. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

82. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

83. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No public present.

84. BUDGET UPDATE

The Chair confirmed that the updated budget 2017/18 would be an agenda item at the next meeting of the Events Committee once the RFO had reconciled the budget.

85. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL EVENT - 1.12.17

Members had before them feedback from various contributors to the festival including retailers, performers, stall holders and attractions, that formed the basis for discussion and the salient points raised were:

Performance Area

This was a welcomed new addition to the festival and brought different ages and talent together and introduced a central focus to the festival itself. The programming worked well alongside the Living Advent Calendar launch act and the Marlow Town Band's accompaniment of the carol singing. It was agreed that for 2018 staging should be installed in Market Place to enhance both the performers and the

audience's experience and it was suggested that this would be something that the Living Advent would be able to assist in sourcing.

Stalls and Attractions

The attractions and rides co-ordinator, Mr S Crabbe agreed that Duke Street would have benefitted from additional attractions and stalls and felt that the Council had the right balance of stalls located in Hart Street and informed the Committee that they had all proved extremely popular throughout the evening. Although the Council had only wanted one juvenile ride to be located in Duke Street, he felt that there should have been attractions for families to enjoy at this end of the festival site and the Committee agreed.

Bell Street Food Court

The Co-ordinator of the new Food court, Mr G Dinning had provided comprehensive feedback on the event and most of the food stalls reported that they had sold out of produce and that customers thought the new layout was easier to navigate. It was extremely busy and the Committee agreed with his feedback that more litter bins needed to have been located in the food court area and although all rubbish was removed by the next day, operations would have benefitted from more bins. Members were in agreement that the variety and quality of food on offer was a welcomed improvement and that the stalls were more in keeping with the event. It was agreed that this year there would be a prize for the best dressed stall to encourage more stallholders to embrace the festivities.

Although the Street Food Court had proved to be popular there was concern about it being too overcrowded at times during the evening.

Duke and Friday Street

The Committee had originally planned the festival layout to complement the Festive Shopping Sunday Event being held the following weekend. The idea was that that event would focus more on Duke and Friday Street with the Grotto being hosted on Friday Street to draw shoppers to that end of town, instead the location of that event changed and as a result that end of the town centre had not benefitted from either event.

The Committee agreed that this year more stalls and attractions would need to be located on Duke and Friday Street to ensure that these areas enticed festival goers. It was pointed out that many of the retail outlets on Duke Street had informed the Council that they did not want any stalls or attractions located outside their premises which hindered this area's inclusion. It was agreed that the Committee would consider ideas for the inclusion of a key feature in this area as part of this year's event. It was also suggested that street entertainers could be feature in this area.

A retailer on Duke Street commented that as a result of this lack of stalls and attractions on Duke Street, his evening's takings were significantly down on previous years. A business on Friday Street informed the Committee that they had decided to close for the evening due to the same issue.

Children's Lantern Parade

The Committee agreed that the new route of the lantern parade was a great improvement and resulted in the River and Rowing Museum (RRM) and various businesses and retailers on the periphery of the festival site to feel more included.

Various retailers came out to wave on the parade and give the children treats which was thoroughly enjoyed by approximately 200 people. There was concern aired about the darkness of some sections of the river towpath and it was agreed that the route could be altered with this in mind and the Parade would benefit from more marshals on the route.

The RRM felt that starting at the Museum gave the children an opportunity to view the Mayor's Christmas Card exhibition in the Community Gallery and that as the lantern workshops were delivered as part of the Museum's educational outreach programme (funded by the Council) it set the lantern parade in context and they were keen to host it again this year.

The Grotto at the Kenton Theatre

It was reported that the Grotto had received approximately 250 children throughout the festival and that the Grotto had opened at the earlier time of 4pm to cater for the younger children and this had proved popular. The partnership with the RRM was deemed successful as they had undertaken face painting and other activities to entertain the queuing families. This relocation of the Grotto was deemed a success and had also encouraged festival goers down Bell and New Street. The theatre had covered the costs for decorating the Grotto and Tesco had donated the chocolate presents. The Committee hoped that the Kenton would be able to host it again as part of this year's Christmas Festival.

Road Closures

Committee Members discussed the issues of safety and road closure timings and they agreed that for 2018 it would be worthwhile applying for an 11pm road closure to allow sufficient time for the food stalls selling hot products to clear up. It was unanimously agreed that having all road closures scheduled for the earlier time of 3pm allowed all stallholders more time to set up with all unnecessary vehicles removed before the start time, therefore ensuring a clearer and safer festival site.

Security

Officer PC B Taylor reported to the Committee that her team had not experienced any issues during the event within the festival site and that the new layout worked well from a security point of view and that all safety precautions and procedures had been adhered to during the event planning and that they had been consulted. If the Council felt that they would like to employ professional security for the event in 2018 then the Administrator had recommended contacts and quotes for consideration. The only incident reported on the evening itself was after the festival had finished and was not within the festival site itself.

86. FESTIVE SHOPPING SUNDAY EVENT – 10.12.17

The Town Manager reported on the Festive Shopping Event, the main issue with the event was that the weather had had a negative impact on attendance, the number of retailers that were able to open and had also prevented some of the attractions being delivered. This resulted in some stalls being relocated into the Town Hall due to the adverse weather conditions. The slide attraction in Market Place was deemed a success and the Grotto in the Council Chamber was well attended.

The Town Manager proposed that the event was not repeated again this year and instead she suggested an 'Independence Day' initiative that was more retailer led

and reported that she planned to address this at the upcoming Retailers Forum on Wednesday 21 February and would report back to the Committee.

87. LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR EVENT 2017

Members had before them a written update from Mr R Rodway on the success of the 2017 event which had been successful in raising more funds than ever before with an increase of 11% on the previous 2016 record total. He felt that the operation had been a lot smoother this year and that a lot of venues had taken control of their events. The changes this year in no obligatory food and reduction in raffle prizes had made the events more streamlined. It was suggested that the outdoor events could be shorter as it had been a particularly cold season. The Committee expressed their thanks to Mr Rodway and his team on all their hard work and commitment and that the Henley LAC had set a precedent that other UK towns and cities were replicating.

88. FESTIVE LIGHTING SCHEME

The Administrator gave a verbal update on the festive lighting scheme, explaining the issues that had been endured at the beginning of December with regards to certain sections of the cross-street lighting fusing and some locations of the small Christmas Tree scheme not illuminating. These issues were eventually resolved by the contractors and she was confident that this year, following a meeting with the contractors in question, it would be a smooth operation.

89. HENLEY AT CHRISTMAS 2018

Members were in agreement that this year's Christmas Festival Event would take place on Friday 30 November 2018 as the following week would fall too late for the festive period as there were only three shopping weekends this December and would have a detrimental effect on town centre retailers. They also agreed that the Festive Shopping Sunday event would not take place this year and that instead, the Town Manger would explore alternative initiatives to support local retailers.

The Administrator suggested that it would be useful to have retailers represented on the Events Sub Committee and members agreed that this should be instigated.

90. HTC SUPPORTED EVENTS

The Chair gave an update on this year's May Fayre which is scheduled to be held on 7 May 2018 and said that she would distribute further information as the planning of the day's programme developed over the next few weeks.

91. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that a proposed schedule of 2018 meeting dates for the Events Committee would be circulated to committee members.

The meeting closed at 10.45am

ppd

Chairman