

Notes of Christmas Lights Working Party held on Monday, 18 July 2006

Present:

Cllr N Chard, Cllr P Chambers, Cllr Mrs B Charlton, Cllr D Cracknell,
Mrs N Wood and Mr N Welsh

In Attendance:

Terry Simpson

1. Election of Chairman

Agreed that Councillor Neville Chard be elected Chairman of the Working Party.

2. Notes of Meeting Held on 30 January 2006

Agreed that the notes of the meeting held on 30 January 2006 be approved as a correct record.

3. Financial Resources

(a) Ringwood Town Council

It was reported that the Town Council had made a budget provision of £10,080 for the 2006/07 financial year. In addition, underspendings in previous years amounting to £5650 had been carried forward as a provision for Christmas lights. Normally such underspends would have simply been transferred to the Council's reserves but the Town Council had, on the basis of the partnership agreement with the Chamber, retained this sum in its budget as a contingency figure. It was noted that the electricity supply company had not yet submitted its invoice for the electricity consumed but it was expected that this would be received and the costs would have to be met from those funds carried over from 2005/2006 budget and referred to above.

(b) Ringwood Chamber of Trade

Councillor Charlton, as President of the Chamber of Trade, indicated that she did not expect the Chamber to be able to guarantee a contribution of £2500. At this stage it would only be possible to guarantee £500 for the current financial year but enquired whether it would be possible to determine the final amount later in the year. The Town Clerk explained that as commitments to spend needed to be made, it was essential for the Town Council to know the total funds available so that Policy & Finance Committee the following evening could make decisions relating to the lights for the current year. The Working Party noted that only three years ago the Town Council's budget for Christmas lights amounted to £1100 with a much smaller contribution from the Chamber of Trade. Over the past two or three years, the Town Council had increased its budget provision very substantially to the current level but this was based on a partnership approach with the Chamber also contributing £2500. It was important for the partnership approach to be maintained. The Chamber explained that as a result of restructuring its membership arrangements, it was experiencing some difficulties in retaining existing members and recruiting new members. In any event the lights were not singularly of benefit to the traders but to the town as a whole. Whilst the amount available this year was lower than the last two years, the 2005 contribution took most of the Chamber's

resources. If the Town Council could continue the improvement in the lights by incurring additional expenditure in the current year then this could encourage Chamber members to make a bigger contribution in future years.

Whilst accepting the financial difficulties being experienced by the Chamber, some Councillors were concerned about the dilution of the partnership approach and the very small contribution now proposed by the Chamber. They reminded the Chamber representatives that as a local authority the Town Council was the guardian of the public purse. In line with currently accepted national policies, the Town Council was being encouraged to develop services on a partnership basis and with match funding from the private sector such arrangements did not necessarily mean that both partners needed to make an equal contribution in financial resources.

(c) Sponsorship

It was noted that this possibility was still being investigated.

Agreed that Jon Grant be asked to carry out further investigations.

4. **Matters Held Over from Previous Meeting**

- (a) Noted that Jon Grant had initially offered to investigate the possibility of the properties in Christchurch Road contributing towards the cost of the installation of new electricity supply, the possibility of Peverills agreeing to the attachment of festoons to their development and the owner of 25 Market Place agreeing to affix a supply box to their building.

Agreed that in view of Jon Grant's absence these matters be deferred to a later meeting.

- (b) Noted that the County Council was not, on road safety grounds, prepared to allow the installation of a lit Christmas tree on the main roundabout from the A31. In addition, the County Council had indicated that the electricity supply to the roundabout was insufficient to light any tree.
- (c) It was noted that the Chamber did not intend to arrange any additional attractions on the evening of the turning on of the lights in 2006.

5. **Estimated Costings 2006**

The Working Party considered the estimated expenditure included in a report circulated with the agenda on committed and uncommitted expenditure for 2006.

Agreed:-

- (a) That the expenditure to erection and dismantling of existing displays at a cost of £4588 be noted.
- (b) That in view of the environmental benefits from the reduced power required and their much longer estimated life, LED coloured bulbs be used on all festoons at an estimated cost of £1015 in place of the incandescent bulbs.
- (c) That the lights from Fridays Cross be extended, subject to approval for catenary fixings, to approximately Lunns Newsagency or the adjoining opticians.

- (d) That as those flashing white lights used last year did not work throughout the whole of the lighting period, all unused flashing lights acquired but not fitted in 2005 be sold.
- (e) That the possibility of a cross street display at Darryls be retained in case any additional funding becomes available for this purpose. In this connection it was noted that to achieve such a display it would be necessary to agree fixing points on buildings on either side of the road and also tap into the electricity supply in one of the two buildings by the provision of an external socket controlled from within the building. The property owners would therefore be responsible for the cost of any electricity used.
- (f) That the two wall mounted supply boxes held over from last year be affixed to premises in the Market Place, to facilitate the installation of loose cabling for trees affixed to buildings or cross street displays, at an estimated cost of £896.16.
- (g) That works for the installation of a feeder pillar, electricity service to the feeder pillar and ducting from the feeder pillar to four trees in the Market Place near the Old Bank House at estimated costs of £465.50, £678.62 and £1456 respectively be undertaken.
- (h) That bright LED pea lights be installed in each of the four trees.
- (i) That the lights used last year for the Christmas tree in the Market Place be installed in the deciduous tree adjoining the sun dial in the Market Place.
- (j) That no Christmas tree be provided in the Market Place in 2006.
- (k) That in all cases, the lights be installed in accordance with current electrical requirements, which it is understood will require the light bulbs to be at least 2.5m above the surface of the pavement.
- (l) That detailed costings be obtained for the provision of artic cable with appropriate commando sockets for each premises in the Market Place.
- (m) That the unit cost of the provision of a Christmas tree (artificial or real) together with tree lights and installation costs be obtained.
- (n) That in view of the charging arrangements for the supply of electricity, which is to be met by the Town Council, all lights on Christmas trees served by the artic cable be obtained from one source and supplied to individual traders who are prepared to meet the cost thereof.
- (o) That in the event of most traders in the Market Place undertaking to meet the cost of the provision of trees, lights, installation and the provision of the artic cable, arrangements be made for these to be obtained and installed centrally.
- (p) That in the event of most traders in the Market Place not agreeing to meet the costs outlined at (o) above, the loosing cabling be not installed.

6. Arrangements For Turning on of Christmas Lights

Agreed that the Christmas lights be turned on, on the 1 December 2006 but that the time be determined at a later date in order to fit in with the reindeer parade.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Agreed to fix the next meeting after the Chamber of Trade's Christmas lights committee meeting on 23 August 2006.

TRS/TAN
19 July 2006