

**Notes of Christmas Lights Working Party held on Monday,
30 January 2006**

Present:

Cllr N Chard (Chairman), Cllr P Chambers, Cllr Mrs B Charlton, Cllr D Cracknell, Cllr Mrs N Wood, Mr J Grant. Ms B Kennar and Mr N Welsh

In Attendance:

Terry Simpson

1. Lights 2005

The Town Clerk reported that all of the arrangements planned for the 2005 Christmas lights in High Street and Southampton Road were achieved. The new supply boxes had been installed and the cross street displays including the feature in Southampton Road installed.

The Christmas tree in the Market Place was lit as planned but it had not been possible to retain the lights for the adjoining deciduous tree.

There had been difficulties about obtaining consents for some of the supply boxes but in the High Street and Southampton Road, these were installed in time. Two boxes, which were a late addition to the original plans, could not in the end be installed in the Market Place. These two boxes are held in store and a report on their use for this year would be made later in the meeting.

The lights had been turned on as planned by the Mayor. During the lighting period, the only real difficulty arose with respect to the lights for the Christmas tree and the fencing installed by the Chamber around that tree. This fencing was moved by the Market traders to enable them to put up their stalls and the future arrangements for a Christmas tree would have to be considered very carefully. The flashing lights for the cross street displays had been misdelivered by the supplier. These too were not installed and are now held in store for future use.

The Working Party was pleased with the display achieved which was a significant improvement on previous years. That success should be built on in the future.

Agreed

That the report be noted.

2. Budget for 2006

- (a) It was noted that the Town Council had made a budget provision of approximately £10,000 for lights for the next financial year. In addition any underspend from the current year was being carried forward which would mean that a total of £14,000- £15,000 would be available for the 2006 lights. However, the Working Party had previously agreed a 3-year contract for the erection, dismantling and storage of the lights in the sum of approximately £4,500 per annum and these costs would need to be met from that budget.

- (b) The Chamber of Trade indicated that it would do it's best to contribute £2,500 as in the previous two years. However, it could not guarantee the contribution at this stage.
- (c) The Working Party debated whether it might be possible to obtain funding, for example sponsorship, for any of the lights in the town from other sources. Whilst accepting that this might be a possibility it was agreed that Members should consider the implications to enable the matter to be discussed at a future meeting.

3. Options for 2006

- (a) **Agreed** that multi coloured bulbs be used for the cross street festoons.
- (b) That the flashing lights held in stock be incorporated in the festoons.
- (c) The Working Party noted that it would be possible to change the bulbs on road crossing festoons from an ordinary type to LED. These bulbs would have a significantly longer life and would reduce electricity costs by about two-thirds. However, these would cost in the order of about 92p each, i.e. three times the cost of ordinary bulbs.

Agreed that ordinary bulbs be used for the existing cross street display festoons, but that LED bulbs be used on an experimental basis in any additional festoons purchased.

- (d) The Town Clerk reported that the location of the new electricity supply boxes would enable an extension of the festoons from Southampton Road into Christchurch Road at least as far as Lunns Newsagents. Any further extension would require an additional electricity supply box and would be providing lights through a residential part of the town. Whilst acknowledging the extra costs and the provision of lights through a residential part of the town the Working Party believed that as Christchurch Road formed the main entrance to the Town Centre, further consideration should be given to extending the lighting festoons to Darryl's Fish Bar and it was **Agreed**
 - (i) That the owners of properties from Fridays Cross through to Darryl's Fish Bar be asked whether they would be prepared to contribute to the installation of new electricity supply boxes;
 - (ii) Jon Grant would meet with the owners and agents of the Peveralls development to ascertain whether they would be prepared to support the provision of festoons along that part of the road.

- (e) **Agreed** that to enable the provision of better displays in the Market Place, enquiries be made about the possibility of installing the electricity supply boxes held in store in the vicinity of number 25 Market Place and on the former cinema which would enable some additional provision both in the Market Square and in part of West Street and part of Meeting House Lane.
 - (f) **Agreed** that no Christmas tree be provided in the Market Square in 2006.
 - (g) **Agreed**
 - (i) that investigations be undertaken into the installation of lights in the deciduous trees along the north side of the Market Place and that one adjoining the place where the Christmas tree has previously been located; and
 - (ii) that investigations be undertaken into the possibility of affixing a lighted decoration on the Jubilee Lamp.
 - (h) **Agreed** that no Christmas tree be provided on any of the footpaths in Southampton Road.
 - (i) It was noted that the County Council had been asked whether it would approve the installation a Christmas tree on the roundabout at the junction of Stallards Lane, Southampton Road and Mansfield Road and also whether the electricity supply to the directional signs on that roundabout would be sufficient to provide power for the lights on the tree.

Agreed that the action taken be approved and subject to there being an adequate power supply and the approval of the proposals from Hampshire County Council, a tree be provided.
 - (j) It was reported that the electricity supply boxes installed in 2005 would enable the installation of further cabling along the front of buildings in the High Street and Southampton Road so that trees could be affixed to each premises. However, since this would constitute an unmetered supply, all lights would need to be sourced centrally, for calculation of electricity usage purposes, and there would need to be some consistency with the provision of trees. In addition current electrical installation regulations relating to the provision of cabling on the exterior of buildings would also need to be taken into account.

Agreed that further investigations be undertaken into the provision of the cabling on buildings to facilitate the provision of trees with lights on buildings throughout the town.
4. It was noted that whilst the lights had been successfully turned on, more members of the public might have turned out if there had been some additional attractions on that evening. Barbara Kenna suggested

that the Chamber of Trade would be considering a reduction in the number of late night openings for 2006 from four to two. Cllr Danny Cracknell suggested that elsewhere the Chambers of Trade and traders sometimes ran markets on the evening of the Christmas lights turn on and this was perhaps something that could be considered for Ringwood. Belinda Charlton advised that she was currently trying to organise a market for the evening that the lights are turned on and it was also noted that the Chamber of Trade's Christmas Working Party in March would be looking at the issue.

Agreed that a decision on further attractions and in particular a street market on the evening of the turning on of the Christmas lights be deferred pending deliberations on the matter by the Chamber of Trade.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Agreed that the next meeting be held at Greenways at 4.30pm on Monday, 13 March.

TRS
6 February 2006