

Notes of Christmas Lights Working Party held on Thursday 11th June 2009

Present:

Cllr N Chard (Chairman), Cllr P Chambers, Cllr B Woodifield, Mr P Harmsworth

In Attendance:

Mr T Simpson

Apologies:

Ms Leigh Neville, Mr J Grant

1. Notes of Last Meeting

AGREED that the notes of the meeting held on 16th March 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

2. Financial Statement

It was noted that after taking account of committed expenditure, the balance in the 2009/10 budget would be approximately £5,000.

3. Feedback from Chamber

Phillip Harmsworth reported that the Chamber had met earlier in the week and had spent a considerable amount of time discussing ways in which they could assist with and support Christmas light displays in the town. In the current economic climate, funding would be difficult, but nonetheless, Chamber had agreed that every effort should be made by traders to provide financial support to Christmas light displays. There was, however, a view in Chamber that it would not be practical to work on the basis that individual shops and commercial premises should contribute directly for trees installed on their own premises. Chamber believed that a better route would be for it to hold fund raising events and utilise monies received to support Christmas lighting generally.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council had provided funds for a continuation of the existing level of provision. However, Council was looking for some support from commercial premises within the town and such support would best be directed at enhancements to the current level of provision, particularly since this would show traders where their efforts had led to an improvement. The direct contribution for trees on premises had been a continuation of former practices by the Chamber and, if it is now thought that those should change, that would be a decision of the Chamber. The Town Council, for its part, would welcome any financial support, irrespective of the means by which Chamber chose to raise those funds.

Several suggestions about fund raising arrangements were discussed, ranging from small events through to a gala ball, perhaps in a marquee, on the Bickerley. In relation to the gala ball, Chamber was reminded that the Town Festival was held in the town every July and the Chamber might want to consider whether its event could be held in conjunction with the Festival and thus make the greatest use of any marquee.

Following detailed discussion of the various options available, it was AGREED :

- i) that Greyfriars be approached to ascertain whether it would be prepared to allow

two artificial trees to be erected each year on the front of its premises, subject to Greyfriars or the Chamber facilitating an electricity supply from within the building;

ii) that Chamber investigate the possibility of placing ten artificial trees on shops and premises in and around Friday's Cross, subject to agreement of the owners of the premises and to it being possible to provide an electricity supply thereto and report back to the next meeting;

iii) that for future years, consideration be given to providing a display on the buildings adjacent to the roundabout linking Mansfield Road, Southampton Road and Stallards Lane;

iv) that Chamber would endeavour to raise £1,000 towards the costs of the work to be carried out this year, subject to the Town Council underwriting the full costs of the provision.

4. Cross-street Displays

AGREED that consideration of replacing some or all of the bulbs in the cross-street displays be deferred to the next meeting.

5. Date of Next Meeting

AGREED that the next meeting be held at 'Greenways' at 1.15pm on Monday 22nd June.

12.06.09