



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th JANUARY 2010

PRESENT:

Cllr. Mrs. J. Warr (Chairman), Cllrs. Mrs. S. Daniells and D. Eldridge (to Minute 67.2)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Ian Harding (Co-opted Member - Chamber of Commerce representative)
Mr. James Tyson (Merlin Lighting (Installations) Ltd.)
Mrs. Sue Holmes (Events Officer)
Mrs. Jeanne Hambleton (Minutes Clerk)

The Meeting opened at 6.40pm

60. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed those present. Apologies were received from Cllr. P. Dillon, Mr. A. Holmes and Mrs. G. Frost (Deputy Town Clerk). Belated apologies were received from Cllr. R. Gillibrand.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

Members and Officers should declare an interest by stating:-

- a) The item they have an interest in
- b) Whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- c) Whether it is also a prejudicial interest
- d) If it is a prejudicial interest, whether they will be exercising their right to speak under Question Time.

They then need to re-declare their interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

In accordance with good practice, individual forms were available to those Councillors present in order that they could personally record their interests - both Prejudicial and Personal. These forms to be returned to the Committee Clerk at the end of the meeting to enable all declarations of interest to be accurately recorded in the Minutes.

The Sub-Committee noted that there were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting.

62. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th NOVEMBER 2009

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to agree and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th November 2009 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the Chairman signed them.

63. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES WHICH ARE NOT SEPARATE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no matters arising.

64. CONSIDERATION OF LETTER FROM FESTIVE LIGHTING REGARDING EXPIRING 2007 HIRE AGREEMENT

A letter had been received from The Festive Lighting Company who provided hire arrangements for the current Christmas Illuminations. Under the terms of the Hire Agreement, due to expire shortly, the Town Council has the option to purchase the motifs included in the contract at 25% of the original Trade Price. This would total £3,341.25 for 11 displays.

After considering possible future problems with the motifs due to the age of the illuminations, combined with the penetration of rain into the fittings during very bad weather conditions that may have led to the failure at the switch-on, the Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to decline the offer.

65. The meeting was adjourned at 6.45pm to allow Mr. Tyson to address the Sub-Committee.

66. REPORT FROM ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR INCLUDING:

66.1 Christmas Illuminations 2009

Mr. Tyson provided a Christmas Illuminations Report for 2009/2010 (**Appendix.1**).

He spoke about the developments in illuminations. The entire illuminations or small areas of illuminations could now be switched on or off by a remote control that was the size of a key fob.

Mr. Tyson said a test had been carried out in September and all of the displays passed the test and were given certificates for another year. Further tests were carried out on both days prior to the switch-on and on the day. There was unfortunately a huge deluge of rain immediately before the switch-on and water penetrated the sockets. Mr. Tyson felt some of the sockets could be up to five years old and suggested that they be replaced with adapted sockets with rubber seals.

He said the decorations were now in his store awaiting collection from The Festive Lighting Company. Mr. Tyson apologised for providing the wrong shade of white lights for the Christmas trees at The William Hardwicke and the Town Hall and confirmed this would be rectified for next year. He said the tree at the station looked really good.

The Sub-Committee noted that following liaison with the Chairman of the Committee it had been decided that the fibreglass decorations should not be used, as it was felt they might detract from the overall appearance. This year only tree lights and sponsorship baubles were used. Sponsorship for the Christmas tree next year will be reviewed.

In the coming months Mr. Tyson would look at the power cable and the decorations and get the sockets changed. He suggested the use of the remote control system would ease the process of the switch-on.

66.2 Update on way forward for 2010 including proposals for new displays (if further information available)

(a) Illuminations

Mr. Tyson said he had looked at new displays before Christmas and suggested the Town Council consider different ideas. He spoke about string lights that provide a 'ceiling of light' with 3D globes suspended in the middle in addition to flat decorations. These provided an additional dimension to the illuminations. The new string lighting was described as adaptable and reasonably priced. Members saw pictures of string lighting in a trade magazine. Mr. Tyson reported that the globes would screw into an ordinary screw socket light holder and therefore could be used anywhere. He suggested globes could be used in London Road and advised that he had refurbished globes in stock.

After further discussions it was suggested that Mr. Tyson provide a quotation for string lighting including globes, baubles and individual illuminated parcels.

It was suggested that funding could be obtained by local shops and businesses sponsoring one of the parcels. This could be done over the three years of the contract. Mr. Tyson pointed out that it would not be possible to have the name of the business in lights but that a plastic label, with the name of the business, could be attached to the parcel.

Flat set pieces were also discussed and Mr. Tyson said he had some in stock including a snowman. He recommended that the Council should purchase the new lights early in the year when prices were most competitive and he would put the Town Council in touch with manufacturers.

Mr. Tyson also suggested a children's competition for a design of a bespoke flat piece.

(b) Locations

It was suggested that Reynolds be approached for permission to install a flat piece with a sleigh and Father Christmas on the canopy and asked to consider contributing the electricity costs.

It was also suggested that the Regis Theatre should be considered for pantomime characters from Aladdin.

Wetherspoons canopy was considered as a possible site for lights but it was felt this may be subject to keen winds and therefore not suitable.

Mr. Harding reported that some of the string lights were still on and Mr. Tyson agreed to look into this matter as soon as possible. He understood that all of the lights had been switched off and taken down, where appropriate.

(c) The meeting was reconvened at 7.30pm and Mr. Tyson was thanked for his presentation.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that Merlin Lighting Installations be requested to provide a quotation for the Christmas Illuminations 2010 during the 3rd week in March following Mr. Tyson's visit to his trade conference to:

- (i) Provide replacements for the existing waterproof sockets
- (ii) Provide a quotation for the installation of string lighting, globes, baubles, bespoke parcels for the pedestrian area
- (iii) Provide a quotation for traditional displays as previously discussed
- (iv) Provide remote switches on the illuminations and remote control units for the Lights switch-on

Mr. Tyson left the meeting

Mr. Harding offered to deliver letters to the local businesses in Station Road, Queensway, High Street and London Road regarding the proposed Christmas illuminations and the illuminated named 'business' parcels, if the Sub-Committee decides to proceed with this proposal.

67. REVIEW OF SWITCH-ON ENTERTAINMENT 2009 - INCLUDING REPORT FROM EVENTS OFFICER

A report was provided by the Events Officer (**Appendix 2**) and Members considered each item. It was noted the 2010 switch-on would be on Saturday 27th November.

The Event Officer's report made a number of recommendations including

- No road closure as this would take most of this event's budget
- The switch-on to be held in front of the William Hardwicke or The Arcade, with no entertainment. The Arcade was the favoured location
- Book the Italian market for the weekend. It was noted the market would pay BRTC to attend.
- Some sort of activity every Saturday leading up to switch-on day possibly using the Salvation Army Band and the Fairground organ or carols around the sun sculpture.
- Grotto to be open afternoon and early evening
- Fund raising stalls outside the theatre rather than inside, for better results
- Continue Odd One Out competition but find other ways to publicise

67.1 The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations from the Events Officer and to look into more detail at future meetings.

67.2 *Cllr. Eldridge left the meeting at 7.45pm*

67.3 It was noted that the meeting was no longer quorate.

There followed a discussion on increased publicity and it was noted Spirit FM had featured an interview relating to illuminations elsewhere. It was suggested that the Events Officer should consider liaising with Littlehampton Town Council, who had very good coverage of their event. It was also suggested that the College and the local Rotary clubs could also be approached.

There was a discussion about a parade, possibly with children, but the Events Officer reported that there would potentially be additional costs for this type of activity, due to the need for road closures, stewarding etc.

It was suggested a video or pictures should be taken during the test lighting of the illuminations and this could be used for publicity purposes, particularly to try and interest the television companies.

It was also suggested that, as a possible means of raising funds, personal messages could be hand written on Christmas tree baubles for a fee.

With regard to the switch-on it was suggested that perhaps the characters from the Aladdin pantomime at the Regis Theatre might be available. Some revenue could possibly be gained from arranging for photographs of children to be taken with the 'Aladdin' character, subject to agreement from the pantomime promoters.

The hire of a snow machine could be considered subject to cost.

It was **AGREED** full staging would not be necessary for the switch-on but a small podium or stage blocks might help plus a gazebo that could be decorated.

The Events Officer reported that it was difficult to budget the exact costs for the Grotto, as it depended on how many suitable gifts were donated.

68. REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, CHRISTMAS TREES AND BANNERS

The Events Officer presented copies of three different Risk Assessment reports. The Assessments for Erecting Town Christmas Decorations and Erecting Town Christmas Tree had previously been approved by the Sub-Committee. Members were asked to note the third report - Banners and Clown Masks on Catenary Wires.

Members present **AGREED** the Event Officer's recommendations for the Risk Assessment on Banners and Clown Masks should be considered at the next meeting, as the current meeting was not quorate.

69. REVIEW OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO DATE

A draft financial report on the estimated expenditure and income for the Illuminations Sub-Committee for 2009-2010 was circulated to Members. Prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk this showed an over spend of £1,634.27 during the 2009 event but income from the event showed a final balance in hand of £1,157.81. Any under spend will be added to the Earmarked Reserve at the end of the year to assist with expenditure for next Christmas.

70. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to consider.

71. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that this be arranged sometime after March 12th

The Meeting closed at 8.20pm

BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Events Officer's report to the Christmas Illuminations Committee 20 January 2010

Switch-on Entertainment

Santa's Grotto – Although we ran the Grotto at the same times as last year, the number of children going through dropped from 102 last year to 70. The morning was very quiet and we had more interest during the afternoon. The Grotto was widely advertised, not just through our own advertising but also on several websites (Santa's own, website for parents etc)

It may be that the Grotto would be better attended if we ran sessions in the afternoon and early evening rather than starting in the morning. The only issue with this would be that we generally have to take down the Grotto on the Saturday night, or Sunday morning, as the room is needed. If we finish later, it means that staff have to work later to clear the Grotto.

Entertainment at William Hardwicke

The William Hardwicke served well as a stage for our entertainment. It was unfortunate that the weather was unkind and rained heavily for the last 40 minutes or so. We were not able to use our gazebo or the pub umbrellas to provide shelter as it was too windy to make this a safe option.

A Running Order was prepared and all of the groups participating were advised of the timing of their performance. It was unfortunate that we had a hiccup with this but Ian (our MC) did a wonderful job in keeping the event on track. Ben Richards did an excellent job of the actual switch on.

The use of the Road Train worked well.

Salvation Army Band performed during the afternoon in London Road, outside Boots.

Fairground organ. This proved extremely popular and constantly drew a small crowd of people. It was very easy from an organisers view point, as the organ had its own generator so there was very little to do.

Odd One Out Window Spotting Competition

This was again well supported by local businesses with 23 taking part, 10 of which were in Aldwick Road. However, we once again had a problem with the Observer. Having agreed that the entry form would be printed in the Observer for 2 weeks, it only appeared once. I took this issue up with the Editor and he agreed to print it in the Journal & Guardian. However, this did not come out until the Wednesday before the Switch-on, which gave people little time to take part. Whether as a consequence of this, or not, the number of entries was disappointing – 11 in total (we had 25 last year)

Road closures / bus redirection

We had no problems with this, although some of the bus drivers weren't sure where they were supposed to go. This seemed to apply to the Brighton / Portsmouth buses,

where the information had obviously not filtered to the drivers on the day. However, this did not seem to cause any major problems.

2010 Switch on

Having evaluated the 2009 Switch-on event, and looking back at previous years, I would like to make the following points:

- 1) Despite the amount of planning for the Switch-on entertainment, we always seem to have a problem on the day, whether with the actual stage as in previous years, or with performers not being on time.
- 2) The Fairground Organ proved very popular and creates a festive atmosphere throughout the day. It also creates very little work for the Events team
- 3) The road closures and bus re-direction create quite a lot of work for the Town Force team, and have to be carefully managed to avoid problems in the town centre
- 4) If we concentrated our staff commitment to later in the day, we could run the Santa's Grotto later in the afternoon when we may get more children through
- 5) Although the entries for the Odd One Out Competition were disappointing, and it is quite a lot of staff time to set up, I would suggest that we continue with this. It gives the Aldwick Road shops an opportunity to be more involved in the event and they subsequently support our raffle and tombola requests

I would therefore suggest for 2010 that we consider the following:

- Not to have a road closure / bus redirection OR to have a short road closure for 10 minutes to allow for switch-on
- Have the switch-on in front of the William Hardwicke OR in front of the Arcade but just the actual switch-on, no entertainment
- Have Italian Market, or similar, for the weekend
- Possibly make the switch-on day the start of some sort of activity on every Saturday leading up to Christmas. For example, we could have the Salvation Army, the Fairground Organ, or a church group singing carols around the Sun Sculpture
- Run the Grotto during the afternoon / early evening
- Have our fund-raising stalls (raffle and tombola) outside rather than in the theatre, as we would probably get more response
- Continue to run the Odd One Out competition but find other ways to publicise, although we would continue to push for a two-week entry in the local paper