



# **BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

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## **MINUTES OF THE CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS**

### **SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2011**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. P. Dillon (Vice Chairman), Cllrs: J. Brooks, Mrs. S. Daniells and D. Eldridge (to Min. 57)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. S. Holmes (Events Officer)  
One Councillor (part of the meeting)  
Mr. James Tyson (Merlin Lighting (Installations) Ltd.)

*The Meeting opened at 7.05pm*

#### **47. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Vice-Chairman welcomed those present. Apologies were received from Cllr. Mrs. J. Warr.

**48.** The Sub-Committee AGREED that Cllr. Scutt could address the meeting.

**48.1** Cllr. Scutt requested that the Sub-Committee consider having some of the Christmas illuminations at a lower level in future years so that they could be enjoyed more by children rather than all as cross street motifs, which in his opinion were too high. Comment was made that due to the displays needing to be at a certain height for Health and Safety reasons and the changes that would be required to the current infrastructure, this would not be practical. Members agreed that safety was an important consideration and due to the current economic climate and the budget constraints being faced by the Sub-Committee, major changes to the lighting scheme and the infrastructure would not be possible.

Cllr. Scutt queried whether the Sub-Committee could try to obtain financial contributions from local businesses towards the lights as he felt the illuminations must bring financial benefit to the local businesses by increasing the footfall. The Vice-Chairman confirmed that local retailers are approached for sponsorship contributions every year without much success. Only a few actually support the lights with financial contributions.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr. Scutt for his input.

#### **49. 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.

**50. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2010**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the presiding Chairman.

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

**51.1 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 - Min. 41.2 Update on PFI Scheme**

Members noted that a Letter of Agreement had been signed with the PFI service provider and an Application of Consent made in respect of the erection of future displays at Aldwick Road. The Events Officer advised that confirmation had been received that the Town Council's festive controllers would be transferred into the new columns when these are installed in this area at no cost to the Council.

**51.2 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 - Min. 42 Use of Christmas tree lights in Railway Station trees**

The Clerk confirmed that the tree lights that were not used this Christmas were placed in some of the trees outside the Railway Station. These still remained in the trees at present and the Sub-Committee would need to consider whether these should stay in the trees for use next year or be removed.

**51.3 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 - Min. 44.5 Baubles**

It was noted that unfortunately this project had not gone ahead as a suitable display area had not been identified.

**52. REPORT FROM ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR INCLUDING:**

**52.1 Christmas Illuminations 2010 and update on way forward for 2011 and new displays**

Mr. Tyson reported on the problems that had been encountered with the manufacturer of the new lighting scheme that should have been installed in Christmas 2010. Delivery had been promised in time for installation but this had been pushed back to week 48 or 49 and the Electrical Contractor was concerned this would be too close to the Switch-on to get the lights installed and tested in time. An emergency meeting had been held with the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, the Clerk, Events Officer and Mr. Tyson to discuss the way forward. As a result of this meeting Mr. Tyson had put together an emergency scheme to ensure that the town had lights for Christmas. The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr. Tyson on behalf of the Sub-Committee for all his efforts in implementing an alternative plan.

The Clerk advised that the Chairman of the Sub-Committee had asked that she enquire in her absence whether there would be any compensation from the manufacturer regarding their failure to deliver the lights on time. Mr. Tyson confirmed that he would be happy to ask the question. In answer to a query, Mr. Tyson advised that he felt it was unlikely that the full hire cost of the alternative scheme would be met by the manufacturer. However, he did feel that as the displays were bespoke it is likely that there could be some room for negotiation. Members noted that the new displays have been manufactured but they are not currently in the country. Mr. Tyson reported that he was not happy to make a commitment to take delivery of the new lights until the Sub-Committee had considered whether they still wished to proceed with this scheme. Following further discussion, it was AGREED that Mr. Tyson should negotiate with the manufacturer and seek some form of financial incentive that may encourage the Sub-Committee to commit to the new scheme and then report back to Members so a decision on the way forward can be taken at the next meeting. Mr. Tyson stressed that the Sub-Committee should not feel obliged to proceed with this scheme as alternative options could be considered. If a decision to proceed is taken then Mr. Tyson would insist that the manufacturer should implement delivery of the goods as soon as possible so that they are at his warehouse in ample time for Christmas 2011. This would ensure that no reoccurrence of the problems that arose last year could take place. This would be the start of a new three year agreement and the displays would be stored on an annual basis at Mr. Tyson's warehouse when not in use, where he would undertake any necessary repairs prior to installation the following year.

Members noted that there had been a few teething problems with the new remote switching system resulting in some of the displays being turned off by the timers when they should be lit. However, this was soon rectified. Overall the scheme had worked well this year and there had not been the problems of the electricity tripping as a result of water ingress into the displays.

Looking to the future, Mr. Tyson recommended that the Sub-Committee considered looking at replacing the festoon lighting with LED bulbs, which were much more reliable. He also suggested that the coloured zig zag festoon lighting needed replacement since one of the strings had already been removed this year as it was beyond economical repair. These recommendations would be considered at a future meeting subject to the required budget being available. A Councillor spoke of the benefits of warm white rather than bright white bulbs.

Members discussed whether the lights in the trees at the Railway Station should be removed. Comment was made that the future of the trees in this location had been the subject of some discussion in the past. The Events Officer confirmed that the Station Manager had advised that he was unaware of any works such as removal or pruning being undertaken. Mr. Tyson advised that the lights currently in the trees would not need to be removed if standard pruning took place. It was suggested that a letter could be sent to the Station Manager requesting that if any works were to be undertaken to the trees, that the Town Council be advised. The Electrical Contractor confirmed that he could remove the lights should this be the case. Following further discussion, it was AGREED that the lights should remain in the trees at this time. Should the Sub-Committee wish to consider additional lights in the Station trees in the future, Mr. Tyson confirmed that he had some warm white lights that could be used. He suggested that the harness design in his opinion looks awkward and he would recommend branch wrapping all the way up the tree to give a silhouette effect. The Clerk advised that due to budget constraints it would be necessary to try and find some sponsorship funding before progression with this scheme could be considered.

The Electrical Contractor enquired whether the Sub-Committee wished to reserve the Snowman again for next Christmas for the Town Hall balcony. This was **RESOLVED**.

Mr. Tyson confirmed that he would supply the electricity breakdown to the Clerk as soon as possible.

**53. REVIEW OF SWITCH-ON ENTERTAINMENT 2010 - INCLUDING REPORT FROM EVENTS OFFICER**

**53.1** A written report was circulated to those present, which was detailed by the Events Officer.

**53.2 Electrical supply by Arcade**

In answer to a query Mr. Tyson confirmed that there was a spare electrical supply by the Kentucky premises and this could be checked to ensure that it is suitable for use at future Switch-on events. The Events Officer was asked to contact Spirit FM to establish their exact requirements.

**53.3 Santa's Grotto**

The Clerk advised that during the budget discussions, the Policy and Resources Committee had suggested that the Sub-Committee consider increasing the entry charge into Santa's Grotto to generate additional income. This would be considered further at a future meeting.

Members noted an alternative location for the Grotto may need to be considered if plans for the Visitor Information Centre proceed as the room that has been used in the past may not be available. The Vice-Chairman queried whether the Sub-Committee should be considering a back-up and suggested the possibility of utilizing the Studio at the theatre as an alternative. Following further discussion, it was suggested that this be considered further when more information is available.

**53.4 Market**

It was AGREED that this could be looked at again when the economic climate picks up.

**53.5 Reindeer**

Although the reindeer were very popular, they were an expensive addition to the event. Comment was made that if Chichester has a Switch-on event on the same day as Bognor Regis then the level of people attending is considerably lower. Members agreed that there was time to consider whether they should be used again for 2011 and alternative options available should be investigated.

**53.6** The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations from the Events Officer as detailed in her report (**Appendix 1**).

**53.7 Switching on of the Lights**

A Councillor suggested that the Sub-Committee consider seeking businesses to bid to switch on the lights as an alternative to a celebrity for Christmas 2011. Their sponsorship could then be identified in all publicity for the event. A Councillor warned that there may be problems with obtaining free advertising of the event if a commercial sponsor is involved. The possibility of offering the opportunity to the general public to turn on the lights was suggested and it was agreed this should be investigated further.

**53.8 Plunger for Switch-on Event**

Cllr. Brooks advised that he had the original plunger that had been used previously at the Switch-on events should this be required in the future.

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

Copies of Risk Assessments for Christmas Decorations, Christmas trees and Banners and Clown Masks had been circulated previously with the agenda for consideration. Following a brief discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the documents should be approved. It was noted that the next date for review would be October 2011.

**55.** The Vice-Chairman asked that a vote of thanks be recorded to the Events Officer for all her hard work towards the Switch-on event last Christmas and to the Electrical Contractor for all his efforts with the Christmas lights.

**56. REVIEW OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO DATE**

A draft financial report on the estimated expenditure and income for the Illuminations Sub-Committee for 2010-2011 had been previously circulated to Members. This was noted. The Clerk reported that the only expenditure outstanding to her knowledge was the electricity bill. Should any budget remain unspent at the end of the financial year once the electricity had been paid, it was **AGREED** that this should be added to the Earmarked Reserve to assist with improvements to the festoon lighting discussed earlier in the meeting

**57. CORRESPONDENCE**

**57.1** W.S.C.C. - email from Street Lighting Monitoring Team attaching a letter from the PFI Monitoring Manager detailing the new arrangements for attaching apparatus such as signs, banners, flower baskets and festive lighting to street lights in West Sussex.

**57.2** Email from local resident with concerns regarding some of the displays not being lit (this was due to teething problems with the remote switching) and querying why there was no Station Christmas tree this year. This was acknowledged and a response was sent.

**57.3** Gala Lights - details of discounts available on orders placed before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

**57.4** City Illuminations Ltd. - email of introduction

**57.5** Lamps and Tubes Illuminations Ltd. - copy of festive collection 2011 sale brochure

**57.6** Aylesford Electrical - details of electrical maintenance services that they provide

**57.7** Blachere Illumination - details of refurbished motifs available on their 2 for 1 offer plus details of other services available

**57.8** Email on SLCC National Forum advising that Chichester City Council have their old Christmas displays available for anyone who may wish to acquire them either wholly or in lots

**57.9** Email on SLCC National Forum advising that Chichester City Council plan to hire new lights in 2011 pending a decision later this year as to whether the City becomes a Business Improvement District (BID)

**57.10** Hampshire Flag Company - details of Christmas bunting, customised Christmas banners and Christmas flags available

**57.11** The Events Officer reported on a telephone complaint that she had received in connection with children being turned away from Santa's Grotto. The complainant had been encouraged to send her complaint in writing but this had not been received.

**58.** *Cllr. Eldridge gave his apologies and left the meeting at 7.56pm*

**59.** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **AGREED** to meet again on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber (subject to availability).

*The Meeting closed at 8.00pm*