



# **BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

TOWN CLERK: Kate Gill, The Town Hall, Clarence Road  
Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1LD

Telephone: 01243 867744 Fax: 01243 865744

E-mail - [bognortc@bognorregis.gov.uk](mailto:bognortc@bognorregis.gov.uk)

## **CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. R. Gillibrand (Chairman), Cllrs: Mrs. E Anderson,  
Mrs. J. Walker, Mrs. J. Warr and P. Wells (from Min. 52 to Min.  
53.8)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs. G. Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mr. P. Beckerson (Projects and IT Officer)  
Mrs. S. Holmes (Events Officer)  
One Councillor in the Public Gallery

*The Meeting opened at 7.03pm*

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

The Chairman had no announcements to make. Apologies had been received from Mr. Alan Holmes and Mr. Peter Wells.

### **50. 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.

*Mrs. Holmes declared a Prejudicial Interest as her son is employed by Leaderboard Sports (UK) Ltd., the Town Council's Electrical Contractors*

Mrs. Holmes advised that there were issues in relation to the lights that she needed to speak about and she would be unable to report unless she remained in the meeting. She confirmed that she would however be guided by the Sub-Committee and withdraw if requested should they wish to discuss points directly related to the Contractor. Mrs. Holmes also commented that she hoped that there could be an open and honest discussion regarding the issues of concern so that these may be addressed. Members AGREED that Mrs. Holmes should remain in the meeting and could withdraw should this be necessary.

The Sub-Committee noted that there was one Declaration of Interest made at this point in the Meeting.

**51. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2007**

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to agree and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the presiding Chairman signed them.

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

**52.1 31<sup>st</sup> October - Min. 41 New Projects**

Members noted that owing to the breakdown of the Town Council's Cherry Picker (clutch failure), a replacement had been hired for the weekend to enable the Electrical Contractor to complete as much of the installation of the lights as possible prior to the Switch-on event. The cost of hire was £513.70 and although this had been funded from an alternative expenditure code, this was an additional cost related to the Christmas lights for this year and would need to be taken into account when looking at the overall expenditure.

**52.2 31<sup>st</sup> October - Min. 41.1 High Street final designs**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that The Festive Lighting Company had apologised for their error in failing to place the Council's order correctly with their manufacturer and not specifying that the new displays for the High Street should be "all white". They would of course make arrangements for these to be changed when the displays are returned to them in the New Year.

Members spoke of their disappointment that the lights had not been supplied correctly and felt that this should be rectified upon their return. Problems had also been encountered with the lights last year and it was stressed that with the level of expenditure involved, the Council should be receiving better service. The Chairman detailed the reasons for using The Festive Lighting Company again this year, which had appeared to be the better deal. Following further debate, it was AGREED that a letter expressing the Council's dissatisfaction should be sent confirming that the necessary changes should be made and seeking some level of compensation for the disappointment caused, given that this was the second year that problems had occurred.

A Councillor commented on the importance of considering the requirement for new displays much earlier in the year so that orders could be placed sooner allowing more time for any problems to be rectified.

It was noted that owing to cuts in the Council's budget for next year, fund raising would need to be undertaken to cover the provision of any new displays.

A Councillor queried whether the white of the High Street displays could be matched to the white of the pea lights in the High Street trees. It was noted that this would not be possible as the pea lights were not LED's.

**52.3 31<sup>st</sup> October - Min. 41.3 Aldwick Road Shopping Area**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that despite assurances of sponsorship funding from the Aldwick Business Association towards the displays this year, no funding had yet been forthcoming. Comment was made that with the cuts in the Council's budget for 2008/2009 there may not be sufficient funds to ensure that the lights are installed again next year without some support from the traders.

The Chairman advised that Mr. Holland had indicated to him that the traders would like the lights to remain in situ all year round and had requested a meeting with him to discuss this.

A Councillor reported on the petition that had been set up as the traders were already of the opinion that they would not be getting the lights again next year. Members expressed their disappointment at this and agreed that a letter should be sent to the Chairman of the Aldwick Business Association indicating that the Council was not pleased to hear that a petition had been started prior to any negotiation taking place. A lot of time and effort had been put into this project this year and without the support of the Bognor Regis Seafront Lights and the Town Council, the Aldwick Road businesses would not have had lights. It should also be pointed out that with budgets being tightened the trader's financial support was important and would help the Sub-Committee when considering its priorities for next year. The Chairman would also be advised that the lights would only remain up until the end of the festive period when they will be removed, as they had been donated by the Bognor Regis Seafront Lights under the pretext that they would only be up for Christmas. Members hoped that negotiations could be entered into to work with the traders at Aldwick Road to enhance this area in future years and suggested that the Chairman of the Aldwick Business Association be invited along to the next meeting to discuss this further.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Starburst displays had now been included on the Town Council's insurance along with all the other new lights however the value of cover would need to be increased to account for their present value.

**52.4 31<sup>st</sup> October - Min. 42 Display at Station Road**

W.S.C.C. had advised that work to the outside of the retail premises had still not been completed and confirmation of the measurements of the new blinds to be erected were still awaited. Until these were received, installation of the new street light could not proceed and the Council's catenary wires could not be re-installed. It was noted that one of the electrical supply boxes had also been removed however W.S.C.C. had confirmed that they had not undertaken this work.

**52.5 31<sup>st</sup> October - Min. 45.1 Risk Assessment**

Following concerns raised by a Councillor at the last E&L meeting in connection with the Sub-Committee's Risk Assessment, the Events Officer had confirmed that there were some issues that could be reviewed and others that had resulted in the required action being taken prior to the Switch-on event. Following testing of the electrical supplies, this had highlighted areas that needed further works to be carried out. Arrangements had therefore been put in place for this work to be undertaken. As the Events Officer had only just returned from annual leave she had been unable to look at the points raised in any great detail but would endeavour to do this in time for

the next meeting. The Deputy Town Clerk did point out that in any event the Town Council's Insurance Company had confirmed that they were happy with the Risk Assessment and had indicated that the existing document is sufficient.

**52.6 5<sup>th</sup> September - Min. 28.2 Banners and Illuminations S178 Agreement**

It was noted that the Banners and Illuminations S178 Agreement had finally been received from W.S.C.C. for signing. This would be passed to the Town Clerk to be checked and signed before returning to the County Council for signature. Clarification was being sought from W.S.C.C. as to whether the addition of the lights at Aldwick Road and the Queensway would also need to be included in the agreement.

**53. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2007/SWITCH-ON**

**53.1** Various points were raised by Councillors present these included:

- The need for a button/lever for the Switch-on event - Events Officer to investigate for next year.
- The need for the stage to be ready earlier and the domino effect this had caused - The Events Officer advised that despite a lot of forward planning this year this needs to be reviewed for future events particularly as the allocation of Town Force hours to events had been cut for next year. Other points raised included the stage not being high enough and the public being too close making it difficult for the performers to exit.
- The need for additional staffing for various elements of the Switch-on - The Events Officer pointed out that there is only one Events Officer and future events must be manageable. Other members of office staff had given up their time to assist on the day through goodwill.
- Lighting and size of the stage - It was noted that the scaffold towers had kindly been lent to the Council as part of a sponsorship package from Brandon Hire. Sponsorship funding had been promised from another local firm however this had not been received until just prior to the event. A large part of the budget had already been allocated to the snow machines and Christmas Farm. If the Sub-Committee wishes to hire a larger stage for next year then these additional items will not be available within the current budget allocation for the event without additional funding being found. It was suggested that the stage might only be used for the Switch-on and any entertainment be done in other cordoned off areas.
- Lack of decorations for the Grotto - Last year these had been borrowed from the theatre and prior to this the Grotto had been run by the Chamber of Commerce. This was the first year that the Grotto had been run by the Town Council and owing to the tight budget it had not been possible to purchase decorations until just prior to the event and sponsorship funding had been received. In answer to a query, the Events Officer advised that it would not be possible to paint the inside of the Grotto rather than using curtains as the size of the Grotto varied from year to year dependant upon where it was to be located.
- Risk Assessment - The Events Officer advised that she had spent at least half a day investigating some of the issues raised and there were issues that did need to be taken on board.
- Snow Machine failure - It was noted that a full credit had now been received for the faulty machine from the supplier.

**53.2** A Councillor extended a vote of thanks to everyone involved in the Switch-on event particularly the Events Officer. Thanks were also extended to those Councillors who

helped out on the day. The need for the Sub-Committee to review the whole event for next year was stressed. Members spoke for and against downsizing the Switch-on and it was suggested that the stage should be moved back to the entrance to the Arcade. This should be used just for the switching on of the lights and the winners of the children's competition only with entertainment going on elsewhere in the town. It was noted that the singing by Art of Dance outside Woolworths prior to the Switch-on had drawn a large crowd and seemed very popular. The Events Officer advised that she had done some research and some towns had adopted a more traditional approach with singing around a Christmas tree, then the Switch-on followed by hot mince pies for everyone. Members **AGREED** that the Events Officer should investigate this further and report back to the next meeting.

- 53.3** Comment was made that clearly the Sub-Committee needed to be planning both the Switch-on and the installation of the lights much earlier so that the pressure could be reduced for the staff and the Contractor. It was suggested that the Contractor might undertake the testing of the wires during the summer months, however, it was pointed out that this was usually carried out later to ensure that the wires were in a satisfactory condition prior to hanging the displays. Liaison would be undertaken with the Contractor to see if this could take place any earlier.
- 53.4** The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (contracts) it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw. (SO.29.1)
- 53.5** Various concerns were raised including that the lights in London Road and Station Road had not been ready in time for the Switch-on event. Members were advised of the difficulties that had occurred and it was agreed that the Contractors had done a fantastic job. However, the need for the lights to be ordered and installed earlier was stressed. It was noted that the lights had not been received until about ten days before the Switch-on which had caused some difficulties. Following further discussion it was **AGREED** that liaison should be undertaken with the Electrical Contractor to endeavour to achieve installation of all the lights next year by the end of October.
- 53.6** The Projects Officer advised that the catenary wires for the Station Public House needed to be installed as soon as the weather permits.
- 53.7** The Events Officer gave a detailed report on the wire that had failed at York Road and how this matter had been dealt with. She stressed the need for a structure to be put in place for a responsible officer to take control in situations such as these to act on the Town Council's behalf. The wires are the responsibility of the Council who has a duty to ensure that the public are not put at any risk. Following further debate, it was **RESOLVED** that this should be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.
- 53.8** *Cllr. Wells gave his apologies and left the meeting at 8.19pm*
- 53.9** The Events Officer referred to the Institute of Lighting Engineers - Seasonal Decorations Code of Practice that she felt would be a useful reference book at a cost of £45.00. The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that this should be purchased.
- 53.10** It was noted that a thank you letter from the parents of the Children's competition winners had been received expressing a wish to take over the displays following the Christmas period. The parents had confirmed that they would be willing to make a donation to help towards the cost of production. It was noted that clarification would

need to be sought from Mr. Hay and the Electrical Contractor to check that they were in agreement with this as the displays had been manufactured by Frank R. Hay and Son and had been wired by Leaderboard as part of their sponsorship towards the Christmas lights. Confirmation as to the cost of the Lumalite used to wire the displays would also need to be established so that this could be covered in the level of donation made. Subject to these issues being confirmed, then the Sub-Committee agreed that they had no objection to the displays being passed on providing a donation to cover any costs was received.

**54. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Sub-Committee AGREED to meet again in the middle of February 2008 subject to the availability of the Chamber. Date to be advised in due course.

*The Meeting closed at 8.25pm*