

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Date:	25 October 2016
Title:	Christmas Event Update
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the plans for the annual Christmas Lights Switch-On.

Action

2. To note the report.

Background

3. This year's Christmas event will be held on Friday 2 December 2016. As previously agreed, the event will take on no specific theme and instead will be a general celebration of Christmas. Following last year's success, it is proposed that the format remains similar.
4. The main issue last year was that access to the Upper Chamber was a particular pinch point, given the number of separate performances scheduled. The number of performances in the Upper Chamber will be reduced this year, and the Masonic Hall will be used as an additional indoor venue.
5. There will be numerous informal performance areas within the road closure, including the Masonic Hall, where acts can perform throughout the evening. This is to reduce crowd build-ups and the need for a stage, which has raised operational issues in the past.
6. It is proposed that the Upper Chamber is made available as one of the performance areas for those who require music. To encourage visitors to venture into the Upper Chamber, the schedule will be well advertised. The layout of the stalls will surround the Town Hall, making the building the focal point of the event.
7. The Lions Club have again been invited to sell hot and cold drinks from the kitchen in the Town Hall in addition to their stall outside. The addition of some tables and chairs will transform the Upper Chamber into a welcoming café/auditorium where visitors can catch some of the entertainment before returning outside to visit the stalls.
8. Once again the Town Council will be organising a lantern parade in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, the local primary schools and Thame & District Day Centre. To broaden engagement with the project the Red Kite Children's Centre have also been invited to participate in a workshop, guided by a professional artist, and take part in the lantern parade. The Town Council will provide the materials and donations will be sought from local businesses. Funding for the artist support is to be confirmed.
9. Attractions this year will include Go-Karts, Santa's grotto and two live donkeys offering rides to children. It is expected that some expenditure will be recouped through ticket sales for these attractions. Operating hours for the Go-Karts, grotto and donkeys are expected to be between 4pm and 6.30pm to coincide with children finishing school. Thame Lions have kindly agreed to donate a new outfit for the very special Christmas visitor, as a thank you for all the Town Council does for them.
10. Currently, 16 stalls have booked to attend the event. Applications are expected from a further 9 stalls who have registered an interest and have been sent the relevant paperwork. Trading hours for the

food and craft stalls is expected to be between 3.30pm and 7pm. As in previous years, businesses that are not located within the road closure area will be given the opportunity to have a free stall within the main event area.

11. Selected shops will be invited to take part in another town trail in the same format as last year and donations for prizes will be sought from local retailers. Following last year's success, the winner of the competition will have the opportunity to help switch on the lights.
12. Staffing at the event is an ongoing issue; Council Officers are required to handle ticket sales at the various attractions (except Go-Karts) and the maintenance team are responsible for numerous operational tasks throughout the evening. Additional help is sought via the cadets, however, their assistance is limited due to their age and availability. To alleviate the demand on staff and to allow both officers and members to enjoy the event, Councillors are invited to assist in staffing the attractions and operating the road closure.
13. Road Closure requirements are always difficult to staff and after an emergency incident occurred during a town centre event earlier this year, it has been proposed that professional barrier control staff are hired between noon and 9.30pm on the day of event at a cost of £600.

Risk Assessment

A full risk assessment (Appendix 1) and Safety Event Management Plan (Appendix 2) is attached to this report.

Resource Appraisal

Expenditure	Estimate
Tree	£850.00
Lantern Parade Materials	£450.00
Artist Support	£900.00
Grotto	£500.00
Donkey Hire	£300.00
Printing/Publicity	£350.00
Go-Karts	£350.00
Road Closure Security	£600.00
TOTAL	£4,300.00

Income	Estimate
Event Budget	£2,500.00
Tree Budget	£1,000.00
Sponsorship	£1,150.00
Stalls (as of 14.10.16)	£405.00
SODC Arts Funding	tbc
Attraction Income (estimated)	£400.00
TOTAL	£5,455.00

Legal Powers: The Local Government Act 1972 s145 and s144

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked:

- i) To note the report.***