

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Date:	9 February 2016
Title:	Christmas Event Feedback 2015
Contact Officer:	Lizzie Spokes, Community Project Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide feedback on the Christmas event for 2015.

Background

2. Last year's Christmas Event which took place on Friday 4 December 2015 was attended by approximately 4000 residents and visitors.
3. There were 38 stalls in attendance, achieving a stall income of £1,065 (an increase of £445 on the previous year's income). The altered layout was successful in improving the atmosphere of the event and ensuring the stallholders benefitted from the crowds.
4. The introduction of the Upper Chamber Cabaret was successful in allowing the children to be heard and seen better by their families and the Lions benefitted from increased trade. At points the area became extremely crowded so should this format be repeated this year, the Council would require additional manpower to effectively marshal people in and out of the space. The timings would also need to be extended to allow sufficient time for the audience to disperse. A third performance area for next year will be investigated with the Masonic Lodge already suggested as a possibility.
5. Opting for an informal outdoor performance area instead of the traditional scaffolding stage meant the space was more versatile and relieved the Maintenance Team of the demands associated with the erection and dismantling of the structure. However, some complaints were received that the performance area and replacement dias was too low for crowds to see the acts. This year, the possibility of raising the dias or reintroducing the stage will be investigated.
6. Last year's attractions were well received by the public, with the donkeys and grotto being the most popular and also providing the best return on investment. The quality and service we received from the skating rink contractor was below standard and we are currently investigating how this can be rectified by the supplier. The combined income of all three attractions was £689.
7. The lantern parade workshops at the three local primary schools and Thame and District Day Centre were well attended. Unfortunately, the SAFARI workshop was undersubscribed and therefore not able to go ahead. It is the Council's intention to repeat the workshops next year and with a longer notice period it is hoped that both SAFARI and Lord Williams's art students will also get involved. The support from Windles in the form of paper lantern templates was extremely helpful in getting those who are not associated with the primary schools involved in the event.
8. Last year's town-wide donkey trail competition involved 24 local businesses and we received numerous entries. The Council's recently launched twitter account assisted us in promoting the trail and also identifying where members of the public were having difficulty finding the donkeys.

9. Staffing levels are a recurring issue for the Christmas event so the additional assistance from Councillors and members of the community was greatly appreciated. Whilst the cadets are extremely supportive in helping to clear rubbish, they lack the age or experience to manage the crowds. This year we will investigate how we can recruit additional operational support to assist with manning the road closures and controlling crowd levels.

Income and Expenditure

Below are the figures for the Income and Expenditure for the Christmas Event 2015.

Expenditure	
Lantern Parade	£443
Publicity	£246
Attractions	£3,224
Sundries	£241
TOTAL	£4,154

Income	
Event Budget	£2,000
Stalls	£1,065
Sponsorship	£1,200
Attractions	£689
TOTAL	£4,954

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked:

- i) To note the report.***