



HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY

**HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS CONTRACTOR WORKING PARTY**

**ON THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2020 AT 2.00PM
THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY**

Present: Councillor Nigel Turnbull (Chair), Councillor Mary Maynard

In Attendance: Philip Wright, Community Services Manager

Apologies: Councillor Paul de Kort

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul de Kort.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference were considered and **AGREED**.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS

No items.

5 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TENDER PROCESS

The timetable for the tender process was **AGREED**.

6 OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT LIGHTS SCHEME

Members of the Working Party had read the report relating to this and made reference to it during discussions at Item 7 below. Councillor Maynard provided additional background information.

7 **NEW CHRISTMAS LIGHTS CONTRACT - OUTLINE SPECIFICATION**

A productive discussion took place and the following points were made:

- Christmas lights are something that residents care very much about.
- Light schemes are generally expensive and their lifespan is relatively short; this means that sometimes a balance needs to be calculated between the cost of taking them down and the risk of leaving them up and becoming defunct.
- Designing and putting up any light scheme is a detailed undertaking that requires careful checking.
- A rental agreement should be avoided, previous experience of this was unsatisfactory.
- It needed to be carefully considered as to whether a contractor's desire to provide 'flashy' and expensive lights was necessary or whether basic fairy lights in trees or directed lights could provide a similar effect for less cost.
- It was recognised that any scheme was predominantly something for children but there was a need to balance residents' desire for a more low-key 'tasteful' display with providing the 'Disney' sparkle of lots of lights for children to enjoy – a mix would be required.
- Ensuring a 'wow factor' was important.
- Any scheme would need to work from differing angles along the High Street.
- Any scheme would need to balance ensuring there were plentiful lights with maintaining a reduced cost of monitoring them, installing them and taking them down.
- Regarding the Town Centre, there are four key entry points:
 - From the Station into the Town;
 - Station Road into the Town;
 - From St Albans on the A1081. This entry point would require a 'blaze of light' as you first glimpse the Town and look up the High Street'
 - Approaching from the North along the A1081 – again, entry at this point should light up as you reach Sun Lane to show you have reached the Town Centre.
- New lights needed to be purchased and any scheme purchased should cover installation, removal and maintenance.
- Should agree that the cost of lights should be spread over the three year period and not purchased up front.
- It should be established as to whether any price quoted would be fixed for the duration of the contract or subject to an index link.
- Any design specification should set an overall theme and colour theme. Some colour themes may date, but warm and cool whites do not.
- The design must be one that would please most people.

ACTION : Phil to share the existing agreement with Working Party Members

ACTION: Phil to arrange a September meeting with site visits

The meeting closed at 3.10pm.

Chairman

Date

This page is intentionally left blank