

ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON EVENT REPORT

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To consider feedback form the event held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and consider plans for an event for 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 saw the first in-person switch on event for the Christmas Lights since 2019.

2.2 Road Closures applied for in September 2022 to extend the pedestrianisation from 4pm to 6pm to allow time for the lights to be switched on after sunset.

2.3 Decision to have a town-wide event across 4 locations with live entertainment at each point in order to attempt spreading out the public and prevent any high density crowds.

2.4 Round Table offered their Santa Sleigh as transport for the Mayor and Father Christmas around the 4 locations.

2.5 SparkX who provided the lights allocated two engineers to enable the switch on of the lights at the different locations between 4pm – 6pm.

2.6 Stewards were required to enable the safe passage of the Santa Sleigh, the road closures, the set up of entertainment at each location, and crowd management, were enlisted form across several organisations to enable the event to run – these consisted of:

3 x Town Councillors (1 prior/2 during/1 after) event (not including the Mayor who is part of the Parade)

2 x Rotary

4 x Round Table

2 x ATC staff

1 x volunteer (friend drafted in by ATC staff)

Due to the high numbers in attendance, this proved insufficient both prior and during the event. If an incident had occurred (first aid emergency) there would have been difficulty in managing this safely. One lost child was dealt with thanks to swift action by local traders and 2 volunteers, plus assistance from CSOs from Gwent Police who were in attendance.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 MCC Market Team have requested a provisional date for this year's switch on event. It is suggested if the event is to remain on a Saturday, to consider either 18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

3.2 The Town Clerk would like ATC to consider asking the three Councillors who made up the sub committee for planning the event if they would like to remain in place to plan this year's event. These were Cllrs Jones, Nicholson and Eldridge. It is requested

they make an immediate start on the tender for the Christmas Light Provision as the current three year contract is about to come up for renewal.

- 3.3 It is estimated around 2000 people attended the 2022 event. Our ESAG submission had 500 listed in total, not for each location. Should ATC decide to hold a similar event for 2023 then earlier planning is required to enable sufficient stewards and marshalling to be recruited and put in place with a pre-meeting to confirm emergency action plan if there is an incident.
- 3.4 DJ Matt Lane provided entertainment outside the Town Hall for a cost of £250 plus the costs of the liquid for the two snow machines. Once a date has been decided upon, it is recommended to approach him for an estimate on providing a similar service for 2023.
- 3.5 Local Choirs (Rock Choir, Choirs for Good and the Ukrainian Singers) provided entertainment at three locations for free. If a similar event is proposed for 2023, early recruitment for the services of local choirs would enable more areas to be covered throughout the day and during the event.
- 3.6 St Johns Ambulance will need to be hired for the event to make sure sufficient emergency first aid is provided in case of any emergencies.
- 3.7 A Christmas Selfie Trail was meant to be encouraged via Facebook and the newly established ATC Instagram Account, but lack of time and staff sickness meant this was not possible for 2022. The Town Clerk would like to suggest early planning in conjunction with The Chronicle, MCC Comms and the Y Fenni Business Community to establish this for 2023.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To set up a meeting of the sub committee and Town Clerk to revise the current provision from SparkX and consider requirements for the re-tendering process for the next three years.
- 4.2 To arrange a meeting with the ESAG officers to examine what provisions are needed for the 2023 event in view of the numbers in attendance at the 2022 event.
- 4.3 To consider setting a date for the 2023 event.