

Report to the Community and Town Promotions Committee on late night Christmas shopping and Christmas lights

Background

Friday Christmas late night shopping is an important social, charity fund-raising and commercial diary date in Malmesbury.

The event has been organised by the local Chamber of Commerce who enrol local retailers to remain open, and take and organise bookings from stall holders in the High Street and Market Cross.

The Town Council have applied to Wiltshire Council for the closure of the High Street on the designated evening.

Current Situation

The Town Team have been told that the Chamber of Commerce is unlikely to be in a position to organise this year's event.

The lack of a Friday Evening Christmas event would be a blow to the town.

Proposed Way forward

The Town Team and Town Council work together to ensure that this event takes place.

The Town Council would be responsible for:

1. Securing the closure of the High Street
2. Have the TIC area open until 9pm on the designated evening of late night Christmas shopping.
- 3 Taking bookings from stall holders for the High Street/Market Cross (NEW RESPONSIBILITY)

The Town Team would be responsible for:

1. Enrolling retailers in participating in staying open until 9pm on the given Friday evening and enter into the "spirit" of the event

Christmas lights and late night shopping

There are some significant logistical challenges in attempting to co-ordinate the "switching on" of the Christmas lights.

However it would be desirable to integrate the "switch on" of the Christmas lights in Malmesbury with late night shopping.

To achieve this will require a number of obstacles to be overcome.

The Town Council

The Town Council own and pay for installing the 8 led coloured light strings used to decorate the High Street and Triangle areas.

The strings of lights are individually powered from eight premises by way of timer switches that are "plugged in" to the domestic/commercial electricity supplies. The sockets used are domestic sockets and require the premise occupants to ensure that power is switched on at the socket.

The Chamber of Commerce

Many premises and domestic residences also display externally at first floor level small, lit Christmas Trees. These trees are bought and installed by the Chamber of Commerce.

It is understood that a local nursery provide and install these trees paid for by the Chamber of Commerce.

It is also understood that the chamber also pays for the installation of a larger tree at the Market Cross in the area between the Whole Hog public house and the Raj restaurant

Given the Chamber's apparent withdrawal from late night Christmas shopping, the status of their involvement with the Christmas lights is unclear at present and needs clarifying.

Proposals

1. That the Town Council work with the Town Team to ensure that late night Christmas shopping takes place in Malmesbury on an agreed Friday in December.

2. That the Town Council discharge the responsibilities
 - Securing the closure of the High Street
 - Have the TIC area open until 9pm on the designated evening of late night Christmas shopping.
 - Take bookings from stall holders for the High Street/Market Cross

3. Explores the possibilities of a co-ordinated "switch on" of the Christmas lights to coincide with late night Christmas shopping

4. If such a switch-on is possible then invites the Mayor and Citizen of the Year to "switch on" the lights.

5. Seeks clarification from the Chamber of Commerce on their ability to continue to provide the additional trees and lights displayed by domestic/commercial residences

6. Seeks to work with the Town Team to deliver a successful late night Christmas shopping event.

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