

Notes from a meeting of the Events Liaison Group held on 16.1.25 at 17.00 in Wem Library to review the 2024 Christmas Festival.

Present

Kate Williams, Anita Thompson – Sweets and Treats, Jenny Hegglin, Tom Bateson - Wem Scouts, Matt Hudson, Cathy Rutherford - Wem Jubilee Band, Claire Glover - The Fruitful Deli, Nathan Burley - Wem Baptist Church, Paul Thornhill - Wem Rotary, Pam King – Wem Town Hall

Wem Town Council Councillors, Edward Towers, Bob Barker, Peter Broomhall (Chairman) Mark Hoffmann.

1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rosemary Dodd and Connie Granger, Cerion Williams, Helen Arrowsmith, Gill Orchard.

2 **Notes from 7.11.24** – to approve

It was agreed to approve the notes of the meeting on 7.11.24.

3. **2024 Festival review**

Stage and Stage Entertainment

The following comments were made

- All present reported that the stage company were excellent to work with and location was perfect. The snow machine needs mounting higher up.
- A steward is needed all day behind stage to manage pedestrian access onto High Street from Noble Street.
- There is a need for a light at back of the stage area.
- Entertainment was much better than previous year, switch overs between acts were better as previous concerns were dealt with. The variety of acts was well received.
- More carol sheets would be helpful along with volunteers to distribute them.
- A suggestion was made to purchase some bells to distribute to the crowd during some of the songs for a more interactive experience.

Other Entertainment

All present felt that the character costumes were a great addition as the crowd loved them. However it was reported that due to visibility problems for people in the costumes each character costume would need a volunteer to guide them.

- **Snow globe** - If it is to be hired again the positioning of the globe needs to come forward as it was set too far back. A discussion took place on having an official photographer to take photo of families inside the snow globe.
- **Wrights Fair** – The fair was not very popular and may not be worth doing next year.
- **Santa's Grotto** - this was very popular and in a really good location. A discussion took place on whether it would be possible to make more of the arrival of Santa, maybe have him on stage to announce his arrival - it was agreed to consider this at a later meeting.
- **Fire Engine** - Location was good but may be better next to the Jubilee Square.
- **Library** – Staff reported that footfall was excellent and they are very keen to be involved in the next event.

Market

It was reported that both markets were well attended

- **Parking** - There were problems with traders for the indoor market parking on Noble Street and blocking the road. The Town Hall was asked if there was a way of policing this better possibly by putting a Town Hall volunteer on Noble Street whilst traders stalls are set up and taken down so any parking issues could be dealt with.
- **Outside Stall Locations** - It was commented that there is a need to better define the location of the outside market stalls. There was a problem at the Nat West Bank layby due to a car being parked in the layby all day. It was agreed that more stewards were needed to help with the set up and positioning of stalls.
- **Food Stalls** - A discussion took place on the need for more food stalls and it was agreed that this would be discussed at a future meeting.

Other Matters

Logo Competition - This worked well and it was commented that this could be opened up for all primary school age children in the town.

Road Closure - It was reported that this was challenging especially in the beginning in the area around Drawwell Lane / Chapel Street. All agreed that more robust signage is needed along with banners on barriers explaining reason for closure e.g. Road Closed for Town Event. A discussion took place as to whether a more physical roadblock by the Catholic Church should be put in place and it was agreed that this would be looked at.

Claire Glover left the meeting at 17.55.

Security - It was reported that more radios are needed. The tractor was an excellent roadblock but needed to be turned so it blocked the entire road

Pam King left the meeting at 18.05.

4 Budget – to receive report

The Clerk presented the finances to date and explained that there were a couple of invoices outstanding. However it was anticipated that around £2000 would be earmarked in reserves for the 2025 festival. Thanks were recorded for the generous donations provided by Wem Rotary.

5 2025 Festival - to consider date and format for 2025 festival

It was agreed that a provisional date for the 2025 Festival would be 29.11.25 with a similar format.

It was reported that Wem Millenium Green were planning to create a winter wonderland with lighting in the trees to raise funds for the green.

The Clerk raised a suggestion of developing a Midsummer Street Market on 21.6.25, all present felt that this would be a good idea and were keen try and create something. However this would be subject to the road closure application being approved and enough volunteers being found to manage the road closure.

Recommendation - that The Town Council considers organising a Midsummer Market on 21.6.25 located either on the High Street or on Jubilee Square.

6 Next meeting – to agree

It was agreed this would take place in early March and that The Clerk would send out a doodle poll to find the best date.