

Notes from a meeting of the Events Liaison Group held on 19.9.24 at 16.00 in Wem Library to discuss 2024 Christmas Festival and Lights Switch.

Present

Kate Williams– Sweets and Treats, Helen – Seasons Florist, Dave - Dancing Bean Café, Tom Bateson and Jenny Hegglin - Wem Scouts , Matt Hudson – Northwood Nurseries, Cathy Rutherford - Wem Jubilee Band, Cerion Williams – Wem Carnival, Nathan Burley - Wem Baptists, Pamela King – Wem Town Hall.

Councillors Bob Barker, Edward Towers, Rosemary Dodd (Chairman), Connie Granger – Wem Town Council

Penny O’Hagan – Town Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Broomhall, Cllr Soul, Claire Glover, Paul Thornhill - Wem Rotary, Rev Jukes,

2. Notes from 18.7.24 – to approve.

It was Resolved to approve the notes from the meeting held on 18.7.24.

3. Actions to date – to consider report.

The actions to date report was noted.

4. Stage Entertainment – to receive a report from the stage entertainment working party.

Cathy Rutherford reported on the meeting of the stage entertainment working party. She explained the remit of this working party was extended to include the location of the stage and potential locations for the stalls on High Street as the two items needed to be considered together.

Cathy presented a plan of the Town Centre which showed the location of the stage at the end of Nobel Street, she was explained that this was a good central location for the stage as it would enable attendees to see the lights all the way up to the Church. She also explained that as the stage was modular it could be built to cover the width of Nobel Street up to the junction. A discussion took place on this proposed location and all were in favour, subject to barriers being positioned on the pavement by The Fruitful Deli to ensure people can still walk along the pavement to access both ends of the High Street.

It was explained that stewards will be needed to monitor the crowd from both sides to ensure the area in front of the stage does not become overcrowded and the risk assessment would need to include how the event will monitor potential crush situations.

A suggestion was made that a snow machine could be obtained to complement the light switch on and it was agreed to investigate this

Resolved to recommend that, subject to a meeting with the stage hire company, the preferred location of the stage would be at the end of Nobel Street facing Wem High Street.

5. Other entertainment - to discuss options

The Clerk reported that 4 character costumes had been booked and the following entertainment away from the stage was also being developed

- Creation of Christmas themed seaside style photo board with cut outs which could be positioned on Wem High Street.
- Installation of Santas grotto in Wem Library or the barber shop.
- Card making course in Wem library and possible visit by caricaturist.
- Glitter tattoos and face painting in shops.
- Fairground rides for younger children – Jubilee Square.
- MeMo – Methodist activities trailer – Jubilee Square.

The Clerk explained that she had also been investigating the cost of hiring a giant snow globe to be located on Jubilee Square. She explained that these were a popular attraction and that a charge could be made to enter the snow globe which would recoup part of the cost of hire. All present were in favour of this idea as it would bring another attraction to the event. A discussion took place on whether to invite an official photographer to take photos for people wishing to buy a special photo of this.

Resolved to recommend that a giant snow globe be hired for the afternoon and that a charge of £3 per person or 4 for £10 be charged to access it with income going to Wem Rotary.

6. Market - to receive a report on market bookings and discuss the Street Trading Licence .

The Clerk reported that she was still trying to receive a clear answer as to whether the market could operate under the towns market charter or whether a street trading licence for an event would be required. It was still unclear, but she was hopeful an agreement could be reached with Shropshire Council Licensing. All present felt that stalls on Wem High Street would better link the indoor and outdoor markets.

It was explained that there was space for around 13 stalls to be predominantly located on Wem High Street and due to available space they may not be able to have a car next to the pitch but they may be able to access the High Street in order to load and unload. Tom stated that Scouts would be keen to be located along Leek Street with the Christmas Trees.

Pam King from Wem Town Hall reported that the indoor market was nearly full.

7. Event Promotion - to discuss.

It was reported that the event would be promoted under the name **Wem Christmas Festival**.

The leaflet produced by Wem Scouts and delivered to all houses would require information about the festival by the 2nd week in October. The Clerk agreed to produce this.

It was suggested that the event is promoted using a specific facebook page along with the Wem events website. Shops were encouraged to let the Clerk know if they were planning any special activities for customers on the day so that these can be promoted in advance.

Promotional banners would also be placed at key points in the town and The Clerk stated that she intended to ask Wem Co-Op if she could use their windows on Wem High Street as a way of advertising the event in advance and providing the timetable for acts appearing on the stage.

It was considered that good signage on the day would be crucial especially for shops and activities away from Wem High Street. Individual shops were encouraged to provide signage. A suggestion was made to make an archway to encourage people to walk to shops the other side of Mill Street.

8. Event Layout – to nominate a representative to work with the Town Council to create an events map and decide locations of entertainment and stalls.

An event map with draft layout produced by the working party was discussed under item 4.

Matt from Northwood Nurseries offered to provide Christmas Trees in pots that could be decorated and used to block off the High Street at the Warbling Tit, which all considered to be a good idea.

The other end by Wem Library could be blocked by Santas sleigh

Other stall locations would be allocated once we know how many stalls are booked.

It was agreed that Jubilee Square would be a family / children's zone where the Giant Snow Globe, children's rides, Methodist activities trailer and fire engine would be located.

9. Budget – for update

The Clerk explained that the overall budget was £4500 which included £1500 donated by Wem Rotary. With the decision to hire the snow globe, the budget was allocated but a small contingency would be in place for unforeseen items.

10. Any other suggestions relating to the festival

Event insurance for wet weather - this was suggested and The Clerk agreed to investigate it.

Transport – The Clerk reported that she had asked for the price from Bennetts Bus to hire the town bus for 2 hours to take people home after the switch on but this price was not known. It was suggested that NS Wheelers council be asked

It was agreed that the event would run from 1pm to 7pm with the entertainment starting at 2.30 and ending at 6pm

Road closure would be lifted once the stage was removed and all stalls clear of Wem High Street which would be approx. 9pm.

11. Next meeting – to agree

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 7.11.24 at 5pm

Meeting ended 5.15