



Minutes of the meeting of Whitland Town Council Christmas Committee held on 26th September 2019.

Present: Cllrs Barry Chapman (Chair); Cllr Sue Allen; Cllr Gabriela Poore; Cllr Ffion Scourfield; Cllr Mathew McDowall; Cllr Richard Davies; Miss Ceris Thomas from Menter Gorllewin Sir Gar.

Cllr Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Miss Ceris Thomas.

Apologies for absence: There were no apologies.

Disclose personal and prejudicial interests in the items to be discussed. None were disclosed.

Review and agree the minutes of the last meeting. These had been previously circulated. It was agreed that the Choir location was slightly wrong – the location would be where the burger van used to be located. It was also agreed that the date of this meeting had changed. With those minor points, the minutes were accepted as correct, and therefore duly signed by the Chairman.

Review progress on the planned Christmas activities.

The Clerk stated that the lights contractor would be in Whitland the following week to review locations and pick up the lights for testing – this would be arranged, with a summary audit of the lights carried out before they were to be taken away.

The location of the Grotto was considered, with concerns raised about cold and draughts if the weather was bad. After discussion, it was agreed that if it were housed within a gazebo with walls then that would reduce the problems. Other locations were also considered, but they were agreed as too far from the main event (e.g. in the Town Hall) or with accessibility issues (Dentist's car park – gravel). It was also stated that it was important to standardize the location for future years and consistency. The possibility was later raised of a container trailer, if that could be borrowed for the event – Cllrs Scourfield and Allen would investigate and report back. If this was feasible then one large gazebo could be the waiting area and the other potentially house the 'pod' VR from Yr Egin, if that was available.

The planned location was also reviewed, in the light of comments received. There would be a cost to the Council to shut King Edward Street for the event, even with a concession from CCC. The main street was considered not possible because if traffic continued to use it there was a serious safety issue to consider which could not be

Signed by Chair

Date

minimised, and closing it would cause issues for all traffic including the emergency services. It was also highly unlikely to be allowed free of charge by CCC – from information received from them, it could be over £1000 in total. It was acknowledged that the car park location was not directly adjacent to all the businesses, but was pointed out that no location would be ideal for them all. It was agreed that all the businesses should be encouraged to provide special attractions/offers to boost their individual visitor numbers.

To encourage event visitors to explore the available shops, Ceris Thomas suggested a treasure hunt idea that had proved successful in other towns' Christmas events, and it was agreed that MenterGSG would take on the organising of that with the various businesses. This would involve visitors finding specific words or letters either in premises' windows, or within a display, and a winner would be drawn from the correct entries for a prize, supplied by MenterGSG. It was agreed that the best-dressed business window competition would also be run as last year, with the award of a shield to the one voted best on the night. The best dressed house competition would also run again, with voting going on throughout December via Facebook or directly to the Clerk.

MenterGSG would provide and pay for both Santa and the elves/attendants for the Grotto, and decorate it, for which those present expressed their thanks. They would also provide and fund the gifts that Santa would give out.

In their work with Yr Egin and Canolfan S4C, MenterGSG had the opportunity to provide a mystery celebrity that could attend on the night. This offer was discussed and agreed, with preference being for someone with a local connection. It was agreed that the mystery celebrity would actually switch on the lights. It was also agreed that the MenterGSG logo could be placed on the various advertising and information leaflets, in the light of their collaboration with the Council on this event.

A guideline timetable was outlined, with Santa available from 4.00pm; the tractor run starting soon afterwards, to arrive in the centre of town and park up by 5.15pm; the Choir sing from 5.30 until the light ceremony at 6.00pm, and then afterwards. The event would close between 7.00pm and 7.30pm. It was accepted that this would be subject to change by events leading up to or on the evening.

Ceris Thomas then left the meeting.

The meeting was told that 16 stallholders had been confirmed, including YFC and the playgroup. Items that would be available included jewellery, candles, soap, wood carved items, Christmas decorations, children's books, pottery and horseshoe crafts.

It was agreed that the Council cannot themselves provide food or drink, but they would encourage local businesses to do special promotions if they wished to add to the event.

Cllr Davies left the meeting.

It was reported that the main tree lights needed to be hard-wired in – the Clerk would arrange for the electrician to deal with this.

Permission had been granted for the tractors to park in Llewelyn Davies' car park – the Clerk would discuss the details of the tractor run with the organiser, including all the parking options. It might be possible to have a few alongside the station, so long

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as access to Station House was not impeded and a clear safe route for pedestrians was maintained.

It was agreed to recommend that Council purchase at least as many flyers as last year, in order to promote the event. It was also agreed to recommend that a shield be purchased for the best dressed house competition.

The next meeting would be towards the end of October, but updates would be provided to all by email.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed by Chair

Date
