

## Christmas Event Working Group

### Notes of 'Wash Up' – Christmas 2020 Event Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 @ 7:00pm

Present: Councillors: James Buczkowski, Matthew Dale (Chair), Janet Johns  
 Joy Norris – Town Clerk  
 Ashley Hellier, Russ Murch, Nick Savage, Elizabeth Sessions, Graham Sessions,  
 Meeting Administrator: Maria Weston- Deputy Town Clerk

Item No	Notes (topics discussed)	Outcome/Action required	Action by
1.	<b>Apologies</b>	Sarah Jones & Sue Robinson	N/A
2.	<b>Notes</b>	Notes of previous meeting held on 16th December 2020 were approved as a correct record.	DTC - Website
3.	<b>Review</b>	<p><b><u>Website</u></b> <a href="http://www.cullomptonatchristmas.co.uk">www.cullomptonatchristmas.co.uk</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website worked really well and is a 'work in progress' with various 'tweaks' to be made as and when issues or suggestions for improvements are identified.</li> <li>• Administrator thanked Function28 for all of their hard work in designing and building the website and for being accommodating when additions and changes were required.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group will look at the website's hosting arrangements and its content at the next meeting i.e. pages:  <i>Home/Calendar/Bulgarian invitation/ Events/Christmas Competitions/Best Shop Window Competition/Best Lit House Or Street Competition/Christmas Card Competition – Cullompton Community College/Christmas Card Competition – St Andrew's Primary School/Christmas Card Competition – Willowbank Primary School/Gallery/Christmas Memories/Mayors Christmas Message/Thank You</i></li> <li>2. The website could be extended and name changed to 'Cullompton at X' - with X being the name of any event etc. This way the pages can be used for a multitude of events.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Countdown to Christmas Virtual Calendar</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors to the calendar and Grotto pages were in the region of 1K. As this was the first year of this project there was no benchmark for comparison. This number could be improved with a bit more time to bring everything together – it was recognised that everything was left rather 'late in the day' due to the uncertainty about the event because of the pandemic.</li> <li>• The publicity period for the Website/calendar needs to be increased.</li> <li>• From a technical viewpoint there was one issue with the pages - given more time their design &amp; formatting could have been improved.</li> </ul>	WGrp

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- The surprise element of the calendar worked really well, the video content was good and the fact that the footage was of locally recognisable individuals was also a great idea. The calendar needs to be structured and publicity given to what was coming up and when. It was agreed that linking footage to what was actually happening in the town at the time (e.g. Farmers' Market footage when the Market was running) would be a good idea.

#### **Grotto & Booking**

- It was agreed that the booking system worked very well and was useful for determining numbers, gender and ages of children expected – beneficial when sourcing the gifts. 50% of the available slots were filled in the first hour of advertising.
- The QR codes that were generated e.g. for the Grotto queuing poster did not work but this may possibly have been as they were on 'shiny' paper. Investigation needed.
- Great selection of gifts for the children.
- Helpers and elves were brilliant and the young people's involvement was welcomed. Grateful thanks were extended to these individuals by the Mayor (Cllr. Buczkowski).
- There are some selection boxes left over which will be donated to the People Matter Foodbank.
- Remaining gifts will be kept for next year – not wrapping the gifts has turned out to be advantageous (as you can clearly see what these are!)
- Investigate hiring of a wooden structure – which could potentially be used as a Santa's Grotto in the top of the Walronds garden and would not be affected by the weather/wind.
- It was agreed that having the Grotto closer to Christmas was better than having this earlier, in November when the lights are normally switched on.

#### **Weather/Gazebos**

- Such a shame that the Grotto gazebos blew down in the high winds. Everyone rallied together to sort a temporary replacement which gave time to sort a new Grotto.
- The Walronds are looking to increase their stock of gazebos but were thankful for the loan of the Council's ones this year. The Council is happy to loan gazebos should these be required in the future.

*NOTE: Councillor Buczkowski declared a \*personal interest in the following item – Insurance and was placed, upon request, into the waiting room whilst this topic was discussed further, being re-admitted once this discussion had ceased. (\*He is affiliated with the local Scouts Group who had loaned the Council its gazebos for the Grotto and its Treasurer who had contacted the Council about this matter)*

TC

TC/DTC

DTC

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	<p><b><u>Insurance - Gazebos:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An e-mail has been received from the Scout's Treasurer giving an indication of how much it will cost to replace the ruined gazebos and asking if the Council is willing to replace these;</li><li>• Investigation needed into the insurance claim for the damaged gazebos. It was noted that perhaps the insurance company may deem this to be a case of 'Force majeure' which may mean possible rejection of the claim. Town Clerk to report back to members.</li></ul>	TC
	<p><b><u>Social Media</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A formalised calendar would be useful which highlights what is going on in the town, where and when.</li><li>• Whilst the Council/Function28 had made a number of posts, there was only one additional volunteer (Nick) – more help and planning is required in both the run up and throughout the events.</li></ul>	
	<p><b><u>Advertising</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are now a number of 'out-of-date' posters in and around the town e.g. noticeboards. These will be removed and replaced with 'Thank you for your support' posters which will be forwarded (by Ashley) to the DTC to check before they are disseminated.</li><li>• Both the Walronds and Farmers' Market will look to advertise the Christmas event and their individual involvement and plans for future events (Both unfortunately had technical issues this year. The Walronds now have a new website)</li></ul>	AH/DTC
	<p><b><u>Press Coverage</u></b></p> <p>The event was covered by the Gazette and also the new Cullompton Nub News which was really helpful in promoting the festivities. More coverage for future events would be useful particularly in the build-up to the day/s, including local radio (e.g. Radio Exe, BBC Radio Devon)</p>	
	<p><b><u>Competitions –</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Best dressed Christmas Window (Shop/Business)</b> 9 no. entries: <i>Fudges Wool &amp; Haberdashery, Norton's Opticians, Moments, Silhouette Clothing, Salon 31, Culm Valley Carpets, The Henna Peacock, Design @ No.9, Hannah's Cards &amp; Sweets.</i></li></ul> <p>Winner: Silhouette Clothing - The Chair extended grateful thanks to the Mayor for presenting the winner's trophy.</p> <p>Two new competitions were introduced this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Best Lit House</b> 3 entries – Hopefully more entries will be received for 2021</li><li>• <b>Best Lit Street</b> 3 entries – “ “</li></ul>	

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	<p>NOTE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It was agreed that winner's trophies should be purchased for these new competitions;</li><li>2. Reindeer Trail - The shops taking part in the competition had displayed the small reindeer pictures with names in their windows. There were no prizes this year – it was just a bit of fun to encourage people to look in the shop windows and to hopefully go inside the businesses.</li></ol> <p><b><u>Farmers' Market Update</u></b></p> <p><i>"Well done to all those who participated in the organisation of the festival in such tricky times. We felt the footfall was perfect for the market with a steady flow throughout the day. The finishing time was ideal at 2pm, allowing food to go traders to benefit from lunch trade. We didn't find time to visit the Walronds until almost finished but it looked a great success. Promotion is always good to have and anyone visiting would not have been disappointed. We really appreciated the presence of a marshal [X] to ensure crowds didn't become a problem – something we will be adopting for our forthcoming markets. I hope the wash up comes to the same conclusion as us, that the festivals are an important part of the town community coming together and we should target at least 4 every year, one in each season. With the current situation the Spring fest is still likely to suffer and we are pleased that the decision has been made to move this to May rather than cancel. Meanwhile we will continue with the Farmers' market on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month with Covid controls in place, plus an extra one this Saturday [being a fifth Saturday] to trial a one way system."</i></p> <p><b><u>Walronds Update:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Santa's Grotto booking system was ideal as kept people flowing through.</li><li>• Chimney/fireplace idea was a brilliant idea and well received, as were the selection boxes!</li><li>• Happy with the way that everything was organised and being in the garden was preferable. Everyone could see what was going on and where and could move around freely.</li><li>• Traders were happy and their positioning was great.</li><li>• Willow Workshop stars were lovely and facilitator (Vic Westaway) is happy to host further workshops.</li><li>• Grateful for all of the help given to erect/dismantle the gazebos and to 'clear up'. No issues with the grass which was expected.</li><li>• One issue with a trader blocking the car park with their vehicle.</li></ul> <p>NOTE: Administrator thanked the Walronds for allowing the use of its venue. It was agreed that this location was ideal as was spacious and central.</p>	TC/DTC WGrp
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#### Feedback

**General:** Feedback received seemed to be all very positive.

**Individual:** *"I heard the carols, and enjoyed them, though 2nd half was far too loud. The market was excellent, but meant I couldn't explore the rest. Not sure how accessible/well viewed, the advent calendar was, but it was a great idea. Lights and trees in town were lovely too. How did the competitions go?"*

#### Health & Safety

- This is an area that needs improvement - this will of course depend on what Government guidelines are in place for 2021.
- Volunteer numbers should be increased.
- The issues with the weather and the necessary resulting action meant that a formal briefing of volunteers (stewards/marshals) as planned, was not carried out.
- Use of walkie-talkies was very useful. Thanks to Scouts for the loan of these.
- St. John's Ambulance volunteers were great and were supplied with a walkie-talkie for ease of communication.
- There were no issues with first-aid being needed nor any 'lost' children.
- Sanitisation/stations worked well as did signage.

#### Carol Singing

Worked very well where they were positioned. Thank you to the churches and participants.

#### Future Plans/Dates

- It was hoped that 2021 will see a return to 'normality' and if this were to be the case, the Lantern Parade, Samba band and stage would be ideal.
  - Discussion ensued with regard to the date of the 2021 event. It was agreed that there should be two separate days but that these should be linked, as part of the Christmas celebrations = whole town festival. Working up to a really big event when the Relief Rd is in place.
1. **27<sup>th</sup> November 2021** = Christmas Lights & Parade Event with Lantern Parade, Lights Switch On Event, craft stalls, Farmers' Market, Samba band, Food stalls;
  2. **18<sup>th</sup> December 2021** = Christmas Festival, Craft Stalls, Food stalls, Farmers' Market, Santa's Grotto, Carol singers, Tiverton Town Band

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		<p>Various ideas were mooted for future Christmas plans including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing St. Andrew's Car Park and having Farmers' Market &amp; Street Market stalls located here</li> <li>• Forge Way/Station Rd Car Park to be free – Need to check with MDDC</li> <li>• Craft Fayre in the Walronds</li> <li>• Food stalls in the town centre</li> <li>• Entertainment stalls</li> <li>• Night time – after stalls close could still have food stalls and entertainment such as a 'Battle of the Bands'</li> <li>• Lantern Parade (if Covid-19 restrictions allow) to start at bottom end of town near Aldi to progress up Exeter Hill and along the High St. Need to look at concept.</li> <li>• December Mini-Festivals for the markets and traders</li> <li>• Inside events such as Arts House exhibition – perhaps using the Walronds rooms.</li> <li>• Input from other organisations/venues in town is welcomed e.g. St. Andrews Church, Community Centre.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: <u>Action/Consideration</u>–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers – Perhaps organisations such as YMCA &amp; Police Cadets could be involved?</li> <li>• Donations – money buckets, crowdfunding etc.</li> <li>• Road closure/s. Pedestrian safety. Highways have a responsibility too. Needs to be part of the risk assessment.</li> <li>• Chase up Santa's outfit (loaned out)</li> <li>• 1 no. foamex board missing – may be inside the Walronds..?</li> <li>• Administrator to provisionally book the stage for 2021</li> <li>• Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has said that if required (e.g. due to a major incident on the M5) traffic would be diverted through the town. 15 mins notice (max.) is generally given.</li> </ul>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC/DTC</p> <p>GS/DTC</p> <p>ES DTC</p>
4.	Next Meeting	<p><b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February @ 7:00pm</b></p> <p><b>ZOOM LINK:</b> <a href="https://zoom.us/j/96638430577">https://zoom.us/j/96638430577</a></p>	