

MINUTES OF THE HOLT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE
Meeting date Monday 15th April 2013 at 6.00 p.m. at
Byfords

Attending: Esme (Chair) EBO, Jen Barker (JBa), Julie Brown (JBr), Di Dann (DD), Joshua Dyball (JD), Chris Lambert (CL), Maggie Prior (MP), Simon Gresham (SG)

1. Apologies:

All members were present.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 15th March 2013

Approved and signed.

3. The Way Forward

JD provided a summary of the points raised at the Chamber meeting on 3rd April 2013. The views of those who attended the meeting (approximately 15/16 people) do not necessarily represent the membership (approximate membership 80). JD reminded everyone he was no longer a Holt Chamber Committee member.

EBO recalled her understanding of the relationship between the Chamber and HCL – we are a sub-committee and the Chamber acts as a safety net – this arrangement is historical and predates EBO's involvement with HCL. EBO and DD wrote the 'ground rules' for HCL in 2008 when they both joined the group in order to assist anyone taking over in the future. Some members of HCL committee understood us to be a separate group – in terms of the work carried out we effectively have been.

The Chamber has suggested there should be more financial involvement from the Town Council. This would prove very difficult given their limited financial position. DD explained the set up for Christmas Lights events in other towns varies according to the size of the town and the groups within each town.

SG suggested a meeting to include a representative from HCL, the Chamber and the biggest contributors to HCL in order to discuss the way forward.

JD said one option would be to concentrate on a fabulous lights display without a switch on event. There followed a discussion regarding the purpose of the switch on event which is aimed to be self-financing. It is understood the Chamber believes the event to be about increased footfall for the traders. EBO believes it is a community event and DD added the event launches the Christmas Lights and is a publicity opportunity for the town. JBa said the situation needs to be defused and we need to advise the Chamber of our understanding of the purpose of the Christmas Lights.

MP reminded everyone the health and safety issues are still a major concern.

JBr commented that some events had sufficient funds to employ a company to handle health and safety. DD confirmed that the Holt Festival was employing such a company to handle road closures, stewards etc although the cost was

believed to be around £12,000 and therefore way beyond the HCL budget. Our insurance requires us to do our best to minimise the risks.

JBa suggested we might offer a small financial reward to recruit stewards such as £15 per person. EBO felt this might be a big responsibility for people as it would not be possible to rehearse the event. DD believes we would need approximately 24 people based on one person per 100. JBa suggested the Chamber should discuss this issue and put it to the vote.

JD said one member of the Chamber had suggested an online survey to gauge opinion of the Lights event – it was generally felt that most surveys attract a low response. DD said it was important for the Chamber to recognise the switch on night attracts a lot of publicity for Holt.

JBa suggested a joint meeting with both groups to decide the way forward. It was generally felt this was an excellent idea although it was unlikely the two groups would agree on the outcomes. DD felt we should approach the Chamber to clarify the position as the HCL committee needs to be able to rely on them for support. DD suggested we update our brief and send it to them.

There appears to be some confusion as to how the money raised for the lights is spent. It was suggested a leaflet might be an appropriate method for clarifying this.

CL suggested inviting Ian Furniss, Chairman of the Chamber, to our next meeting to discuss the current issues, in particular the health and safety concerns. Ian needs to be our spokesperson to the businesses. The group discussed whether we should also meet with the main financial contributors but EBO felt they would not be able to help with our specific issues.

Some members repeated their concerns about being a sub-committee of the Chamber.

JD said the comments made at the recent Chamber meeting in response to our issues were a gut reaction and the Chamber had had no advance notice of the issues to be raised. DD suggested the Chamber probably do not understand what we do and what is involved to stage the lights and the switch on event. SG apologised for not being able to attend the Chamber meeting and said he was happy to share our financial position in the future as required.

To summarise, it was agreed the following points need to be raised with Ian Furniss as Chairman of the Chamber. Ian will be invited to join our meeting in June.

- Health and Safety with particular emphasis on security and stewarding
- Funding – clarification of monies raised and how used
- Switch on event – clarification of purpose (for community) and the importance of publicity, both for the event and the following weeks.
- Clarify relationship between HCL and Chamber.

Scott from Cozens told SG they are involved with lights around the country and he has discovered everyone knows where Holt is – we are on the map!

4. Charity Boxes

The charity boxes in various outlets are for a different, albeit worthy, cause. This seems to create confusion and may not help with fundraising for the lights. EBO said the boxes can sometimes be difficult to oversee. It was agreed we could re-label the boxes (using the badge logo) and use them for the lights, possibly incorporating the sale of badges.

5. Dates of next meetings

Friday 3rd May 8.45am at The Barn

It was agreed the lights must be the main agenda point for SG due to time constraints.

Friday 7th June 8.45am at The Barn

Ian Furniss will be invited to all/part of this meeting.

Friday 2nd August 8.45am at The Barn

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m. and was followed by supper which was very kindly paid for by Byfords. The committee gave their grateful thanks.

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Chairman

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Date