

Subject: Christmas Festival

Report to: Management Team 5th February 2018
Economic Committee 19th February 2018
Policy and Resources 20th March 2018

Report by: Head of Property and Asset Management

SUBJECT MATTER:

This report outlines opportunities to introduce a Christmas Festival in Great Yarmouth Town Centre for the 2018 Christmas period operating from 30th November through to 24th December 2018.

Recommendations:

1. To approve the development of a Christmas Festival for Great Yarmouth commencing on Friday 30th October and concluding on Sunday 23rd December 2018.
2. To identify funding to a maximum of £148k (excluding income) for the delivery of an agreed multi programme of events across the four weekends of the Festival as illustrated as part of this report.

1. Background

- 1.1 As has been reported previously the Council is committed to revitalizing its Town Centre with enhanced investment being undertaken in Town Centre events since 2014 to achieve recognised benefits including significant investment in the delivery of and Ice Rink in 2015 and 2017.
- 1.2 In recent years the Christmas Fayre has been the focus for the commencement of any events programme and has fallen between the third and four weekend of November, which has coincided with the Bury St. Edmunds Christmas Fayre.
- 1.3 Increasing numbers of towns now offer the opportunity for visitors to experience the traditional Christmas Fayres this report therefore considers how Great Yarmouth could enhance this type of event and offer the opportunity to build new over a longer Festival period.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 This report focuses on opportunities for the 2018 Christmas period particularly in respect of identifying new opportunities for the Council over an extended period.
- 2.2 It is suggested that for the 2018 year the commencement of the Great Yarmouth Christmas Festival be slightly later, with lights switch on being timetabled for 30th November 2018. This will enable a clear four weekends before the Christmas holidays.
- 2.3 The programme below is an example of how it is proposed that new events over the life of the Festival could encourage repeat visitors for different events across a number of weekends increase footfall over the period:

| Weekend Date - 2018 | Event |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 30 th November | Commencement of Christmas Festival with the Light Switch on, arrival of Father Christmas and the commencement of the Christmas Fayre (to include the Craft stalls in the Minster and Pagoda's on the Market Place). Opening of the Christmas Grotto experience |
| 8 th December | Pagodas continuing to operate with the opportunity for new traders each weekend plus Grotto and Street performers and the full light Projection story. |
| 15 th December | Pagodas and Grotto continue and to include the introduction of an Ice Sculpture exhibition. |
| 22 nd December | Pagodas continuing plus Grotto and Street performers the closing ceremony for the Grotto and Santa leaving again utilising the light projection offer to complete the story. |

- 2.4 The above is meant only as an illustration of the types of event which could be booked and sourced for the Festival. The programme will be designed to maximise footfall to the Town Centre and offer visitors the opportunity to experience something different on each weekend.
- 2.5 The suggestion of the Pagodas (or similar) rather than a marquee relates to the ability to provide something different, encourage new traders each weekend, or longer if they wish, and provide the ability for the traders to have an area totally dedicated and divided to feel much more like an individual shop unit, see picture below:



- 2.6 The light projection would initially incorporate Santa's arrival with an instalment to the story during the second weekend and a closing ceremony which could include Santa leaving to commence deliveries. This event would be on a similar level to other offers around the country but with the added incentive of a story line which will hopefully encourage visitors to return. Ideally a building centrally located within the Town Centre would be used for the light projection and negotiations with Retainers would be undertaken to identify options should approval be granted.

- 2.7 The main event will be centred on the Grotto with the ability to visit Santa Claus. The Grotto could be located in the Market Square area of the Town Centre and built within a themed marquee, costings for this have been included within the financials below and the following picture represent the standards anticipated



- 2.8 In order to make this a wider event it is suggested that consideration is given to the relocation of the large Christmas Tree to the green outside the Minster on Temple Road this would act as a focal point on arrival into the Town and the addition of a second smaller tree is then suggested which would be located centrally in the Market area to enhance the overall atmosphere.
- 2.9 Marketing is a key factor to the success of the Festival and one of the reasons for bringing this option before Committee at the earliest opportunity. In order to increase trader attendance and secure the necessary artists to undertake the events programme will mean confirming booking as soon as possible.

3. Financial Considerations

3.1 The Festival offers a range of options and below are two examples of the types of event and cost which could be incorporated into the event. Each option offers a four week programme of events the option 1 also providing the anchor event as the Grotto.

3.2 **Option 1 Expenditure** - The information below outlines the estimated costs of the proposed programme of events and identifies a 5% contingency in relation to the provision of the Grotto. The table represents to anticipated overall costs of the various individual events across the Festival and provision of the Grotto for the full four weeks of operation:

| INDIVIDUAL EVENTS / ATTRACTIONS | Estimated Costs net of VAT |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Light Projection - including rendering and design, sounds, installation and derig | £15,000.00 |
| Christmas Fayre Pagoda's or similar -for 20 stalls for 4 weeks | £20,000.00 |
| Ice Sculpture Exhibition | £10,000.00 |
| Fire Demonstration | £20,000.00 |
| Street Performers including demonstrations and workshops | £5,000.00 |
| Overall Marketing Budget | £10,000.00 |
| | |
| <u>Christmas Grotto</u> | |
| <u>Item</u> | |
| <u>Build/ Infrastructure</u> | |
| 30m x 15m Marquee fully equipped i.e. lights, weights, flooring etc | £5,000.00 |
| GYBS Site works (Ground prep, heras fencing for build) | £1,500.00 |
| Theming/ Design of Santa Grotto | £20,000.00 |
| Fire Extinguishers | £200.00 |
| Electrical install | £1,250.00 |
| | |
| <u>Operational</u> | |
| Night Security/ Build & De-rig | £2,000.00 |
| Security during operational period | £11,000.00 |
| <u>Figures based on 6 hour shifts 11:00 - 17:00</u> | |
| Grotto staff/ Supervisor @ £12.00 per hour x 150 Hours | £1,800.00 |
| Grotto staff x 2 @ £9.00 per hour x 150 Hours | £2,700.00 |
| Santa x 2 | £4,000.00 |
| Gifts (Based on 48 Visits p/h maximum of 4 Children per family) 48 x 150 hours of operation | £14,400.00 |
| | |
| Total | £143,850.00 |
| | |
| Contingency for Grotto 5% | £4,272.50 |
| | |
| Overall with Contingency | £148,122.50 |

3.3 **Option 1 Income** – The following is the estimated income for the Festival.

| | |
|---|------------|
| Income | |
| | |
| Childrens Tickets @ £5.00 per visit | £36,000.00 |
| Sponsorship | £10,000.00 |
| Go Trade funding | £2,000.00 |
| Trader income from Pagoda's | £10,800.00 |
| Town Centre Partnership support | TBC |
| Arts Council -application | TBC |
| | |
| Total | £58,800.00 |
| | |
| Estimated costs after revenue income | £89,322.50 |

3.4 Option 2 Expenditure – Excluding the anchor event of the Grotto:

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Christmas Festival 2018 Option 2 | |
| | |
| | Estimated Costs |
| INDIVIDUAL EVENTS / ATTRACTIONS | net of VAT |
| Light Projection - including rendering and design, sounds, installation and derig | £15,000.00 |
| Christmas Fayre Pagoda's or similar -for 20 stalls for 4 weeks | £20,000.00 |
| Ice Sculpture Exhibition | £10,000.00 |
| Fire Demonstration | £20,000.00 |
| Street Performers including demonstrations and workshops | £5,000.00 |
| Overall Marketing Budget | £10,000.00 |
| | |
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| | |
| | |
| Total estimated expenditure | £80,000.00 |

3.5 Option 2 Income

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Income | |
| | |
| | |
| Sponsorship | £5,000.00 |
| Go Trade funding | £2,000.00 |
| Trader income from Pagoda's | £10,800.00 |
| Town Centre Partnership support | TBC |
| Arts Council - application | TBC |
| | |
| Total | £17,800.00 |
| | |
| Estimated Costs after revenue | £62,200.00 |

3.6 The anticipated shortfall for the programme if option 1 were chosen would be

in the range of £85 - £90k for 2018, this could reduce further as additional income streams are investigated.

- 3.7 The anticipated shortfall for the programme if option 2 were chosen would be in the range of ££60 - £65k for 2018 again this could reduce further as additional income streams are investigated.
- 3.8 As this would be the first year of operation for this type of multi event festival income has been maintained at previous levels (Christmas Fayre 2017) however if successful the long term objective would be to move the Festival to a cost neutral position.
- 3.9 It may be possible depending on type of facility to purchase the trader units for year on year use this would therefore reduce costs in future years.

4. Marketing

- 4.1 As mentioned above, marketing of the event is key to success and a separate budget of £10,000 is suggested in addition to the existing budgeted allocations.
- 4.2 An indication of how this might be spent is set out below. It is assumed all design work will be carried out in-house.

| | | Cost |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| Press | The Mercury / Lowestoft Journal / Beccles & Bungay | £1,500 |
| Radio | Beach / Norwich / NN - Changing tags on air 23 Nov to 21 Dec | £1,500 |
| Leaflet print | Print of 80,000 DL flyers | £785 |
| Distribution | Leaflet distribution | £2,250 |
| Bus advertising | Rears /sides on X1 route | £3,500 |
| PIPS | Up from w/c 13 November | £380 |
| | | |
| | | £9,915 |

5. Risk Implications

5.1 As with any new proposal there remain a number of risks:

- Delivery within budget - Commencing the management of the project early enables prices to be secured and the overall programme adjusted if necessary to take into account any unanticipated costs.
- Achieving anticipated income
 - The income estimates have been based on 2017 levels of £135 per three day for the occupation of the Pagoda's. Consideration could be given to increasing fees in line with the Fees and Charges Policy for the 2018 year or setting fees with an additional daily operation charge for traders/exhibitors who may want to operate for more than the three day period.
 - Consideration could be given to a Grotto only charge to encourage repeat visitors or for those not wishing visit Santa.
 - Sponsorship and entrance fees have also been set at a prudent and affordable level based on information provided by the Town Centre Partnership in relation to the operation of Santa's Grotto in Market Gates during 2017.
- Weather – Although outside of our control the marquee will offer the Grotto protection from the weather and the proposal for the Pagoda's includes covered walkways limiting the impact of wet weather.
- Delay in marketing of the Christmas Festival could reduce the range of traders and performers able to be secured, this is mitigated by early consideration at Committee.

6. Conclusions

6.1 In considering the introduction of a Christmas Festival the overall objectives of staging events in the Town Centre have been considered including to:

- increase footfall
- increase the opportunity for sales in Town Centre shops and Marketplace

- contribute to the overall strategic objective to sustain and build upon the retail offer in the Town Centre
- establish the Town Centre as a key element of the Great Yarmouth offer

6. Recommendations

6.1 Committee is asked to recommend to Policy and Resources the introduction of a Christmas Festival in Great Yarmouth including:

1. Approval of the development of a Christmas Festival for Great Yarmouth commencing on Friday 30th October and concluding on Sunday 23rd December 2018.
2. To provide funding to a maximum of £148k (excluding income) from the Town Centre Initiative for the delivery of an agreed multi programme of events across the four weekends of the Festival period as illustrated within this report.

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| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: |
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| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: |
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| Area for consideration | Comment |
|--|---------|
| Monitoring Officer Consultation: | |
| Section 151 Officer Consultation: | |
| Existing Council Policies: | Yes |
| Financial Implications: | Yes |
| Legal Implications (including human rights): | No |
| Risk Implications: | Yes |
| Equality Issues/EQIA assessment: | No |
| Crime & Disorder: | No |
| Every Child Matters: | Yes |