

KLTC 12 April, 2023 Agenda item 8. Kirkby Lonsdale Christmas 2023

1. It was generally agreed that last years Christmas celebrations were the best yet and involved the whole community. The event clearly attracted a lot of visitors to the town, benefitting businesses and raising the profile of the town.
2. Whilst a variety of groups and organisations were involved in the event, it was led and organised by Phoebe Rodway of the Community Interest Company (CIC). However, over the last few years funding for the CIC has been reduced by the former South Lakeland District Council from around £12,000 to nothing this year. Whilst the CIC is requesting further funding from the new Westmorland and Furness Council, this has not yet been agreed.
3. The funding position of the CIC has meant that they have had to concentrate on the running of the toilets, the Charter Market and the tourist information shop. There is currently little or no funding to replace Phoebe and without a similar post in place there is little chance that the Christmas Fair could operate as successfully as last year.
4. The Community Share Group, which includes most organisations in the town including the CIC, are clear that there must be a single person who organises and co-ordinates the Christmas celebrations. The CIC has prepared a Job Brief for a post that will deal with the Christmas celebrations, working on a part time basis from June until early December. It is estimated that the cost would be circa £5,000. The CIC are likely to make a contribution to this and it has been made clear at the Community Share meetings that other organisations across the town will need to contribute to pay for this post.
5. The CIC was conceived by the Town Council and as such the Town Council has supported its operations financially. This year the Town Council has budgeted £11,500 to its overall running costs and a further £3,000 to the Christmas Market. Last year the Council increased its support to the Christmas Market to £5,000, given the difficult funding position of the CIC.
6. The Christmas Fair is the main event in the Town's calendar and the Town Council is funded by all Council taxpayers in Kirkby. On this basis I would suggest that the Town Council makes a significant contribution to ensuring that the Christmas Fair is as good if not better than last year.
7. I would recommend that the Town Council contributes 50% of the cost of the post outlined above (i.e. £2,500) with the CIC and other local groups and organisations contributing the remainder. Nearer the event the Town Council can consider its further contribution to the Christmas Fair, with £3,000 already committed.

Councillor Mike Burchnall