

MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

Court Garden, Pound Lane, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 2AG

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Town Mayor Cllr D Brown – Chairman

Councillors: R Cadman, C Heap, C Hoyle, C Stapley, J Towns

A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD ON **TUESDAY 21st May 2024** at THE CLOSE OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING PRECEDEING IT AT 7.00PM, IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE, COURT GARDEN, POUND LANE, MARLOW, AND YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND.

A G E N D A

Hilary Martin

Mrs H Martin | Town Clerk | 16.05.2024

C.01.24	Apologies for absence	
C.02.24	Declarations of interest	
C.03.24	Safety Measures for Christmas Lights Switch On	DECISION
C.04.24	Christmas Lights 2025 onwards	DECISION
C.05.24	Presence of Marlow on “Visit Thames” Website	DECISION
C.06.24	Best Kept Village Competition update	INFORMATION
C.07.24	Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 th July 2024	INFORMATION

The Buckinghamshire Council Safety Advisory Group has informed the Council that, as event organiser, we must implement crowd safety measures this year.

Post event feedback from Thames Valley Police, Security Staff, Volunteers and officers working the 2023 event recorded crowd density not seen for many years. Whilst there were no incidents reported, it was agreed that had there been an incident requiring emergency assistance, the density of the crowd would have greatly impeded any rescue. There were also reports that the public were not able to move freely to exit the event when they felt they wanted to.

The Chairman of the Safety Advisory Group was asked to review the CCTV footage of the 2023 event and comment on whether the event was safe to go ahead in its current format. Whilst it was acknowledged that the crowd was dense for a very short period of time, it has been recommended that measures are put in place to ease crowd density and provide a safe exit points along the High Street where the crowd is at its most dense. These are the recommendations in summary:-

Recommended Safety Measures

1. Provide a longer length of pedestrian barrier opposite the bus such that the whole of the pavement can be used by those not attending the event but who want to circulate up and down the High Street. This will need to be stewarded to ensure it is not abused and people are able to use it freely at all times.
2. Consider providing some attractions, activities or stalls in the High Street away from the bus so as to "stretch" those attending and avoid them congregating for long periods of time in front of the bus.
3. Consider restricting the time the snow machine is on for and the length of the switch-on ceremony so as to encourage the dispersal of the crowd once this has happened.

Proposals to address the points raised above

1. Purchase approved crowd control barriers and erect a pedestrian corridor 50m either side of the bus (100m total). This would be stewarded by accredited crowd marshals. Signage would alert the public that they can use the corridor to exits the event. There would be "no waiting" along the length of the corridor allowing pedestrians to bypass / exit the event / access shops and restaurants. Place the bus at the junction of Institute Road/High Street front end facing The Ivy.

Costs:

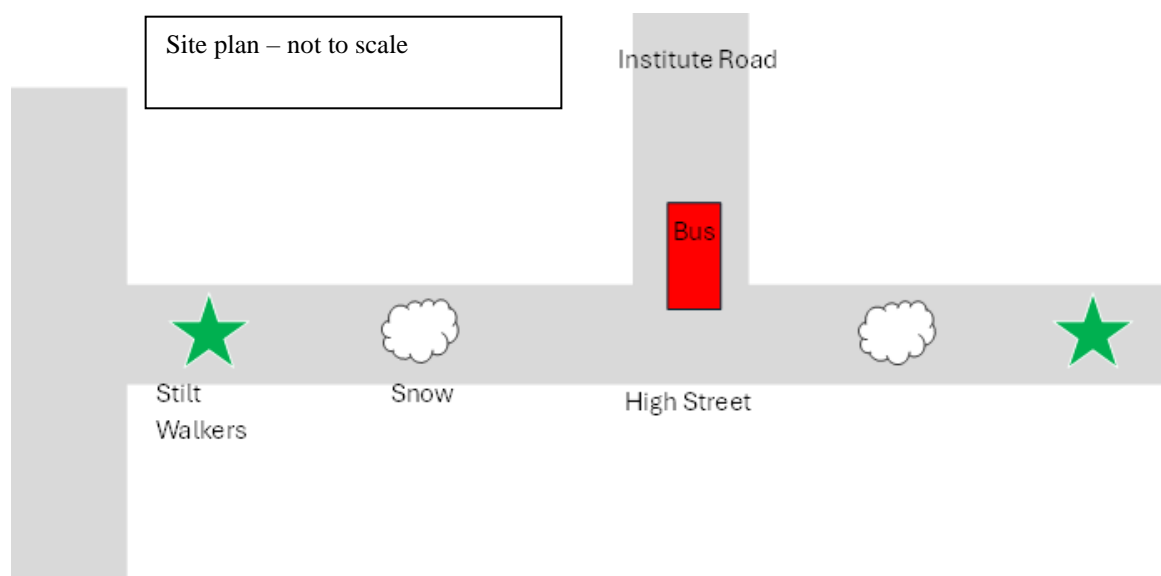
Trained and accredited crowd marshals	£ 1,100
Labour	£ 1,200
Barriers	£ 1,500*
Pedestrian gates	£ 500
Signage	£ 1,100*
Contingency	£ 1,000

Total **£ 6,400**

Meetings have been held with Thames Valley Police and Adams Park Security and costs are based on their advice and recommendations. Hiring the barriers was researched but it is more cost effective to purchase them and have them in stock for other events.

*The barriers and signage have a life expectancy of 10 years. All other costs would fall year on year. The cost for labour may fall if we can use existing resources, but it is prudent to budget for this item as this will be implemented for the first time this year and the infrastructure is installed within such a very short timescale. Having manpower available to erect and dismantle the corridor swiftly mitigates the need to lengthen the road closure more than is necessary. However, it is likely that the closure will need to be extended both before and after the event.

2. Re-position the snow machines further away from the siting of the bus to encourage families to enjoy the “snow” and ease crowd density opposite The Ivy / Keeps. Have the street entertainers further away from the bus, to engage the crowd to spread out. Offer up an additional attraction to keep crowds spread out e.g. light show / lasers.
3. Partly addressed in point 2 above. To have the snow fall prior to the event and not afterwards to encourage swift dispersal of the crowd. Have a hard stop of all attractions as soon as the lights have been switched on.



The Town Council is reliant on getting Safety Advisory Group approval for the event to go ahead. The creation of the crowd corridor is non-negotiable if the event is to take place this year.

Presuming that The Chequers is prepared to accommodate the VIP reception, we should be able to create an outside viewing section for our invited guests.

The additional costs for this year can be funded from Christmas Events /Lights Earmarked Reserve which has a balance of £129,895.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT MEMBERS APPROVE THE MEASURES OUTLINED ABOVE AND
THAT THEY RECOMMEND FULL COUNCIL APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE AS OUTLINED ABOVE

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2025 ONWARDS

Members will be aware that this season(2024-25) is the last year of our lighting contract. We anticipate going out to tender later this year so we can appoint a new supplier in spring 2025. This timeframe will ensure that if any additional infrastructure is required, this can be planned for the summer months, which is the preferred time for lighting contractors.

In order to draw up the specification to go out to tender, a lighting scheme needs to be agreed. In addition thought should be given to the duration of the hire period and any other criteria that members wish to feature as part of the tendering process.

It is recommended that a working group be set up comprising members and officers to work on a Christmas lighting proposal which would then be reviewed and agreed by Committee before being ratified by full Council. Ideally working group members would have availability during the day to attend meetings.

As a guide, if we were to commission a like for like scheme on a 5 year hire contract, the price pa would be iro £30k.

We could go out to tender with a less detailed specification, allowing suppliers to have creative input into the scheme. This would offer up alternatives and wider creativity, which could add value to the contract.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT MEMBERS APPOINT A WORKING GROUP TO AGREE A SCHEME AND SPECIFICATION TO RECOMMEND FOR APPROVAL

PRESENCE OF MARLOW ON “VISIT THAMES” WEBSITE

Visit Thames

The [Visit Thames](#) website is run “not for profit” and managed by a steering group whose current membership includes British Marine; Hobbs of Henley and Thames Path.

Historically it was set up and funded by the EA in 2006. Two local hotels were contributors when the EA withdrew their funding.

Buckinghamshire Council(BC), as part of their tourism programme, had been funding Marlow as a destination entry until 2023, and providing the content. BC are not continuing to provide any funding. Marlow will still feature on the website, but with no specific content / event information.

Marlow is the top destination on the Visit Thames website with over 90,000 views, far more than any other destination including Windsor.

This is most likely attributable to Marlow Town Council(MTC) not having a bespoke Visit Marlow website and the MTC “Visiting Marlow” webpage being fairly lean, focusing on services rather than tourism.

The website is due for upgrade in August 2024. Due to start being rebuilt at the end of May. MTC has until the end of May to decide whether to participate.

Henley Town Council, RBWM, Richmond and Reading Borough Council’s are some of the Riverside authorities that are a stakeholder in the scheme.

Should MTC participate in the scheme, they would become a member of the Steering Group and be invited to attend twice yearly meetings and one networking event.

Membership**Positives:**

- A better more reflective online presence on a website that attracts 90,000 visits
- Full editorial control over all the Marlow based content
- Event advertising for up to 6 events each year
- Website updated every week
- Member of the Steering Group

Negatives:

- £375 per annum
- Should MTC not participate – it is possible that another organisation or company take up the offer and steer content according to their own directives. MTC would have no involvement if this was the case
- Should no one fund Marlow as a destination on the site, info would be minimal.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT MEMBERS DETERMINE WHETHER THEY JOIN THE SCHEME AT A COST OF £375 PA

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPEITION

C.06.24

A verbal update will be given at your meeting.