

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community & Environment		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	11th November 2021 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Martha Hayes, Town Centre and Events Officer		
AGENDA ITEM	15		
REPORT TITLE	Christmas in Congleton 2021		
BACKGROUND	<p>Congleton Town Council takes responsibility for the Christmas Lights and takes a lead on the Christmas Lights Switch-On event with the support of Congleton Community Projects.</p> <p>This paper is to update Councillors on the plans for Christmas in Congleton for 2021.</p>		
UPDATES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christmas Lights: We are in year 1 of a 3 year contract with PME to store, check, repair, install and remove the Town's Christmas lights. This was agreed at full Council on 22nd April 2021. In 2020 the Town Council purchased a number of new lights for the pedestrian area and Victoria Street, changed the lamp post Christmas motifs in Market Street and extended Christmas lights further along West Street. This year we were informed at the end of October by the contractors that five of the lamp post lights on the High Street had failed and were beyond economic repair. Five other lamppost Christmas decorations have been sourced from the same supplier as last year at a cost of £1950. This was achievable within the Christmas Lights budget. The previous lights were purchased in 2013. 2. Christmas Lights Switch-On: The Community & Environment Committee approved the temporary move from an all-day Saturday event to a Friday evening, with less booked activities and all events outside in the fresh air. This was agreed by the Community and Environment committee on 3rd June 2021. This change was to enable to make the event as safe as possible in a time when COVID-19 is still likely to be impacting on events. The event will be from 4-7pm. Santa and his Elves will be in their sleigh from 4-6pm in the pedestrian area, there will also be a 'Unicorn' in the High Street. Silk FM will bring a stage and play Christmas music and welcome some familiar faces to the stage. A traditional lantern parade, organised by Congleton Community Projects will lead Santa to the tree for the switch-on at 6.30pm. Lantern making workshops are being held on Saturday's 13th & 20th November at the Electric Picture House, 11am-4pm. There will also be a small number of charity stalls in the pedestrian area and local hospitality businesses are being encouraged to join in with stalls outside their premises. 		

	<p>3. Small Christmas Trees above Shops: For the second year running businesses with a bracket that usually have a Christmas Tree above their town centre property, will be offered one free tree and the chance to purchase an additional tree. The trees will be installed from the 16th November. This has been funded by the Town Council COVID support grant and Congleton Partnership.</p> <p>4. Light Display on the Town Hall: Approval was given to use funds from the Tourism Ear Marked reserve to pay for projection onto the Town Hall for the second year running. The Town Hall will be lit up from the Lights Switch-On date; 26th November until the New Year.</p> <p>5. Rotary Tree of Light: The Town Council is supporting the Rotary Tree of Light campaign again this year. The Rotary club is selling stars for £5 which people can write to remember a loved one who is not with them at Christmas. The Tree of Light Switch on will take place on Saturday 4th December in the Community Garden, from 4.30pm with a 5pm switch-on.</p> <p>6. Christmas Makers Market: There will be a Makers Markets in Town on Saturday 27th November and Saturday 18th December.</p> <p>7. Free Parking in Congleton: On Saturday's 4th, 11th & 18th December, there will be free parking after 10am on Princess Street, Back Park Street and the Fairground Car Park. Time restrictions on the short stay car parks still apply. This is using 3 out of the 4 free days granted by Cheshire East to all of their towns.</p>
Financial considerations	All within the Christmas budgets, also seeking sponsorship for the main town centre tree.
Equality Considerations	All event planning will be mindful of accessibility issues for all residents and visitors and try to reduce all barriers to involvement.
Proposal	To note the report.