

Mayor Tackles Facebook Funding Fears about Royal Wootton Bassett Christmas Lights Event

Looking forward to this year's Royal Wootton Bassett Christmas Lights, Royal Wootton Bassett Mayor Cllr Steve Watts, was concerned by Facebook fears about funding the event, so decided to engage with the Town Council and Town Councillors who had volunteered in the past.

Challenging the figures, the Mayor Cllr Steve Watts, was shocked to learn that that the event budget had not been increased over the last 5 years, despite being maintained in the face of rising costs for the essentials such as: entertainment; equipment hire; Christmas trees; Road Closure; and security.

Further, that c.7% of the budget was generated from the actual event itself, through stall hire and sponsorship, all of which had to be spent on the event itself. A staggering 60 people needed on the night for security, safety and litter picking, almost 70% were volunteers, who give up time with their families on the Christmas Lights evening.

Raising the thorny issue of Best Value for residents, a figure of cost per head was requested. The response - a mere £2, for which no charge is levied on the night to those attending - a cost the Mayor exclaimed would not purchase a 'Happy Meal!'

Mayor Cllr Steve Watts said:

"I have always been staggered that we can offer so much, at so little cost, to create an event so valued by our residents, and which is so important to our local high street businesses.

Again, we learn the true value of volunteers in our town and what they give us. I'd like to offer my sincere thanks to all the volunteers involved and to the Council Team who continue to make this possible each year."

-ENDS-

291 words

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

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