



COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REPORT

To: The Full Council

From: Town Clerk Cathy Kennedy

Date: Tuesday, 23rd January 2024 at 7pm

Reason for Report:

To address concerns regarding the failure of the installation of the new Christmas lights.

Background:

On the 22nd November 2023, the approved Christmas Light installers, WGS Power Ltd, arrived in the mid-morning to install new Christmas lights on the six cross-street wires.

At around 7pm, I received a phone call from a local businessperson, notifying me that the cross street wire attached to the Bear Hotel had failed, causing the lights to fall onto parked cars. I immediately informed WGP Power Ltd and returned to Cowbridge. On my arrival I was met with an out-of-hours contractor, summoned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council after being contacted by the police. I opened the Town Hall to facilitate the contractor in securing the lights safely off the highway. WGS Power Ltd arrived at around 10pm and conducted a second weight check on the remaining five cross street wires. After the check, they were satisfied with the safety of the wires and departed. The next morning, I learned that a second wire had failed, causing another set of lights to fall down on High Street at around 2am. Consequently, due to the failure of two cross street wires, a decision was made to remove the remaining four sets of lights.

On December 4, 2023, a meeting was held with Nigel Sheppard of WGS Power Ltd (installers), Rob Hollingsworth of The Festive Lighting Company Ltd (suppliers of the lights), the Mayor Cllr Wilson, the Deputy Mayor Cllr Heather Weddell, Cllr John Andrew, and Town Clerk Cathy Kennedy.

A discussion took place regarding the reasons behind the failure of the two sets of cross street wires. Nigel Sheppard reported that the two crossings failed for different reasons—one due to soft mortar in the wall, and the other due to a faulty coupling.

Nevertheless, the decision was made, in the interest of Health & Safety, to remove all remaining lights.

During the meeting, it was agreed to reinstate the previously owned Chamber of Trade icicle lights and to review the current infrastructure ready for Christmas 2024.

Rob Hollingsworth from The Festive Lighting Company agreed to transfer the three-year hire agreement for the lights to start in 2024. Following the replacement of the cross-street wire fixings, the original cross street wire lights were subsequently installed on the 14th December 2023.

With regards to damage caused by the failure of the lights, there are three claimants, all of whom have been directed to the Town Council's insurance company, Zurich.

Zurich has subsequently determined that the failure of the lights and the damage caused are not claimable under the Town Council's insurance policy and has redirected all claimants to WGS Power Ltd. The basis for this decision lies in the anchor bolt weight testing carried out by WGS Power Ltd on the 10th May 2023, resulting in the provision of a safety certificate (appendix one).

Additionally, on the 14th July 2023, WGS Power Ltd returned to the High Street to measure the height of the wires. They communicated the outcome, enabling me to present the Christmas Working Group and the Town Council with suitable lighting options compatible with the wire specifications. Both Nigel Sheppard and Rob Hollingsworth were well-informed about the testing, including the weight and height measurements, and offered guidance regarding the selection of lights for High Street.

Financial Implications:

An additional invoice amounting to £280, was authorised and paid on top of the initial installation expenses. This payment covered the fixing of new wire and wire rope grips. A full review and refurbishment of the infrastructure supporting all the wires is essential prior to Christmas 2024, and there is a possibility of incurring legal expenses due to the claims for damage to vehicles.