

Committee: Open Spaces

Date: 1 August 2023

Title: Christmas Tree

Purpose of Report

For Members to consider the reinstating of an annual Christmas tree adjacent to the Market House.

Recommendation:

Members resolve to agree to allow the Ilminster Christmas Lights Committee to erect of a Christmas Tree next to the Market House.

Report:

1. Officers have been approached by the Ilminster Christmas Lights Committee to enquire whether Members will support the reintroduction of a Christmas tree next to the Market House during the period that the Christmas Lights are up.
2. There is in fact a hole by the Market House which is covered over that allows for the Christmas Tree to be located by the first parking bay therefore it is expected that there will be an impact on parking temporarily whilst the tree is up.
3. The following questions have already been asked and the responses are with each question:

- a. When and for how long the tree will be up for

From 10th November until 12th January

- b. Approximately how tall

10 to 12 feet

- c. Who will be taking out the insurance

I assume it will be covered along with the other lights = Town Council

- d. Whether or not you already have a risk assessment for this

Do not have at present but can be arranged.

- e. Will you require an electricity feed, if so from where

Power would be 24v via transformer from the Market House (the same as currents lights on trees outside the Co-op)

- f. This will then need to go to a council meeting and the next one that it can go to will be in September. (This question was asked before we added it to this Committees agenda)

Trees are ordered in October so that would still give us time to make arrangements.

- g. Is it your intention to put a small fence of any type around the base of the tree? I know that this is done in some places.

This can be arranged. I would envisage 1m high interlocking fence (not the ugly red stuff).

- h. Do you already have sufficient lights and decorations to go on the tree and who/what do you have in mind to sit on the top of it?

We probably have sufficient lights in stock, if not have the finance to cover any additional requirements. Not thought much about the top but could find a star in our collection. No comment on the who!

- i. Is it your intention for the tree to overlap into the first parking bay? If so there may be questions from Highways that we may have to deal with.

With a 12 ft tree the diameter would be approx 6 to 8 ft and the hole is to the edge of the cobbled area so it would encroach the first parking space.

4. Officers have been in touch with the insurance company and there should be no issues with insurance cover provided the guidance that they have provided is below.

I. In regards the Christmas Tree installation we don't have any specific requirements other than you should choose a suitable site, perform a risks assessment, follow all relevant HSE guidelines and have all permissions to erect the tree.

II. I have attached our LCAS (Local Community Advisory Service) Guide to risk management link that whilst doesn't specifically mention outside Christmas trees it has other sections such as temporary structures and working at heights that would apply. This Guide to Risk Management also cover many other topics/situations that town and parish councils encounter.

III. [Local Community Advisory Service \(LCAS\)| Zurich Municipal](#)

IV. You will also see on the guide there are contact details for the LCAS team for further advice.

- V. *Your Public Liability cover within your policy would include this Christmas tree provided that you have completed a risk assessment for the tree (including the installing and taking down) and have all the relevant permissions. If there is any training that us given then this should be documented and kept.*
 - VI. *Many councils will use a contractor to install and take down their tree as they are more experienced in this, especially if it is your first time. If using a 3rd party contractor to install and take down the tree you would need to check they have their own insurance that covers their activity and legal responsibilities.*
- 5. There will also be a requirement for the organisers to check with Somerset Council over the issuing of a Section 171 Licence which apparently covers the erection of Christmas trees. There may also be a need to apply to Highways for the closure of the very first parking bay.
 - 6. Members to agree to support the erection of a Christmas Tree next to the Market House.

**Mark Tredwin
Town Clerk
July 2023**