

MEETING REPORT

Meeting: Council – 30th October 2023
Agenda item: 23-075
Report subject: Christmas Day 2023 – Meal and/or hampers
Report author: K Elliott-Turner, Town Clerk

Christmas Day – meal/buffet

In past years, council has provided a meal on Christmas Day for those who might not otherwise have a Christmas lunch, and would be on their own. Last year, we hosted a Christmas Day buffet at the Watermark in place of a sit-down meal.

This year, providing a meal or buffet will be challenging because we no longer have someone available to cook the food who has an appropriate food hygiene certificate and is familiar with the Watermark equipment. A finger buffet will still require cooking, and any food prep would necessitate a food hygiene certificate.

The Watermark Manager tries to source food from local suppliers, but this is getting harder each year as some of those suppliers no longer operate.

If we are able to find someone with appropriate food hygiene levels, we would need to find someone (usually a councillor) to take responsibility for the Watermark, to ensure security of the building, to open and close for the day, and to ensure that the room and kitchen are left clean and tidy ready for re-opening in the new year.

Options being explored include using an alternative venue with appropriate kitchens and cooks with appropriate hygiene certificates available to cook on Christmas Day, or asking those people to cook at the Watermark so that we can still host there. Councillor Hladkij is investigating whether the Methodist Church might be able to take on either option.

The Salvation Army are happy to hold a service with music prior to the event as in previous years.

In past years, we have assisted those unable to get to the Watermark by working with Ring and Ride. They have indicated that they should be able to assist but would prefer a shorter day, as last year, rather than the longer format where the drivers do not finish until early evening.

Hampers

In the last couple of years, council has also provided hampers to those in need, or on their own, with the Town Clerk sourcing items. Recipients are identified and volunteers distribute the hampers on Christmas Day morning, co-ordinated by Councillor Weeks and So-Social. In the past, we have received donations to fund the hampers from our District Councillors and Erme Lodge.

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Resource implications

Financial

- We have a budget of £200 for 2023 'Christmas Day Event', and Festival/Community Events EMR available if required
- Hampers and Christmas Day meal have been funded mainly through donations, such District Councillors, Erme Lodge and an individual donation, so would need to source support funding again for this year

Staffing

- Christmas Day meal/buffet - Town Hall staff to liaise with care agencies, Ivybridge Caring, Dove and public to ensure message gets to those in need, maintain list of attendees, confirmation letters
- Christmas Day meal / buffet - Town Hall staff to liaise with and coordinate volunteers
- Christmas Day meal / buffet - Watermark & Town Hall staff to source food
- Christmas Day meal/buffet - councillor to be responsible for Watermark – security, cleaning
- Christmas Day meal/buffet - cook with appropriate food hygiene certificate to provide meal/buffet and knowledge of Watermark facilities
- Christmas Day meal/buffet - Councillor to take responsibility for Watermark building
- Christmas Day meal/buffet - volunteers to set up and clear away, being present throughout the event
- Christmas Day meal/buffet - Ring & Ride, or other, to provide transport for those requiring assistance in attending the event
- Hampers – Town Hall staff to liaise with care agencies, Ivybridge Caring, Dove and public to ensure message gets to those in need, maintain list of recipients
- Hampers - Town Hall staff to source contents and make up the hampers
- Hampers - volunteers to distribute hampers

PROPOSAL: To consider providing meal/buffet and/or hampers for Christmas Day 2023, and to identify councillor support