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**Agenda Item:** Christmas - Lights Contract & Sponsorship 2025

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 15 September 2025

**Contact Officer:** Project Officer

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The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the Christmas Lights Contract and potential sponsorship opportunities.

### **Background**

Traditionally Witney Town Council offer sponsorship of our 'Tree's' and 'Children's Display' to a small selection of businesses who have loyally sponsored these displays year on year.

However, through the procurement of the new 3-year Christmas Light contract in 2024, officers were able to carry out a detailed cost analysis and identified a significant cost gap between the cost of the trees and children's display vs. the sponsorship income.

Whilst engaging with existing sponsors in 2024 officers discussed the probable increase to secure sponsorship in 2025. Most sponsors were understanding of the increase and some suggested sharing the tree sponsorship with other companies.

### **Current Situation**

#### Sponsorship

Therefore, when compiling the 2025 sponsorship offering, officers have taken this on board and identified the addition of the Advent Fayre as an opportunity for businesses to get involved with lower cost entry point. Several local businesses have already expressed interest and officers are confident that this refreshed approach will result in strong uptake, increased community engagement and a more collaborative festive season for Witney.

As we approach Christmas 2025, officers are seeking Council approval to offer a refreshed and expanded sponsorship package that will strengthen our ties with local businesses and help fund the much-loved Christmas displays. Sponsorship communications are attached as **Appendix A**.

#### Christmas Lights Social Value Fund

Witney Town Council awarded a 3-year Christmas light contract in 2024. Included within this contract, the winning contractor LITE, agreed to donate £1,000 per year to local charities to help people in need have a better Christmas.

In 2024, the council gave 4x equal payments of £250 to the following charities:

- Witney Foodbank (enhance Xmas food parcels for community in need)
- Witney Food Revolution (Treats and presents for children in need at the larder)
- Witney Community Church (enhanced a Christmas party for refugee and asylum families)
- High Street Methodist Church (Christmas Meals for people in need)

The above beneficiaries were agreed by a working group of councillors. Do members want to agree a similar working group? In addition, do members want to consider the same charities for donation for 2025 or donate to different charities?

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – the social value fund could be used to support harder to reach in our community
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency– no direct impact.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The social value fund should be allocated fairly and as widely as possible to mitigate against reputational risk.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

As stated in the report above.

## **Financial Implications**

- Sponsorship will help raise funds towards the Christmas Lights contract, reducing use of precepted funds
- The value of the social fund for 2025 is £1,000.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider approving the Christmas sponsorship opportunities for 2025.
2. Consider options for the allocation of the Christmas Lights social value fund.