



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- ME22/067

Committee:-	Markets and Events Committee
Date:-	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Christmas 2023 - Santa's Grotto and Christmas Tree
Wards Affected:-	William Knibb

### 1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for

- a) the provision of a Santa's grotto within the Newlands centre in 2023.
- b) The procurement of a Christmas Tree for the Market Place for 2023

### 2. Recommendations

That

- a) a Santa's grotto be provided within the Newlands centre in December 2023, alongside an elf station, at a total cost to the Town Council of £7000 , to be provided by Bonka's
- b) that the tender by company B for the supply and installation of a Christmas tree be accepted

### 3. Santas Grotto 2023

- 3.1. As discussed at the last meeting, the Santa's grotto provided on the market place had been time consuming to manage and had cost over £12000 once all the security, pavilion and other ancillary marketing costs had been paid for. It also took up a significant amount of space in the Market Place, but was not open all of the time. Members agreed to explore other options, particularly an indoor option.
- 3.2. NNC have decided not to try and provide a grotto in the Cornerstone building in 2023.
- 3.3. In 2022, the Newlands Centre provided an Elf Station which provided an attraction for the same audience as might be interested in a Santa's grotto. Officers met with the Newlands centre in March and it was agreed that it was feasible to provide a combined elf station and Santa's grotto in the same unit that Newlands used in 2022, using the same provider who can deliver both aspects. The total cost could be equally divided between the Town Council and Newlands.

3.4. The provider used by Newlands is Bonka's and they can provide a professional Santa experience on 9 dates in December. Some material about their offer is included here :-

[THE ELF STATION \(bebonkas.com\)](http://bebonkas.com)

3.5. School term finishes very late in December in 2023, so the dates proposed are

- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December
- 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December
- 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December
- 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> December

3.6. Entry would be free to users who could make use of the activities included as part of the elf station alongside a more traditional visit to see Santa. There would be no presents available to attendees however.

3.7. This would mean a total cost for the Council of £7000. A request to secure the option with a deposit of £1050 has now been submitted.

#### 4. Christmas Tree 2023

Tenders were sought for the supply and installation of a Christmas Tree in the Market Place, using the specification previously applied by KBC and NNC. The tree specification is for a 30 foot tall Nordman Fir or Norway Spruce.

Three companies quoted

Item	Company A	Company B	Company C
Tree	900	995	1766.63
Delivery and install	650	775	3576.10
Removal	450	350	2138.07
Total	2000	2120	7481.07

Previously, the installation had been carried out by KBC/NNC using their own labour, and as this option is not available a key component of the quote was how comfortable the companies were with this element of the work.

Officers' view is that company B were more prepared and enthusiastic to carry out this work than company A. Company B is also more local. Therefore, although not the lowest quote, it is felt that Company B offer the better arrangement.

#### 5. Consultation and Engagement

The proposals follow feedback from 2022 as well as discussions with potential partners.

## **6. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications**

6.1. The cost of £7000 for the grotto can be accommodated within the total £60,000 available for Christmas events and activities in 2023; although the budget is still under pressure because of the agreed costs of Christmas lights, it does mean there is a little more room in the budget compared to re-providing the 2022 grotto.

6.2. A provisional figure of £2000 had been included for the cost of the tree.

## **7. Climate change and Policy Implications**

A free, local attraction can support the economic vitality of the town centre and offer something which does not ask people to travel distances to access it.

It is a moot point whether it is more sustainable to use a fresh, specially grown, tree each year or to buy a replica tree which can be re-used. If a replica tree was acquired, it would need to be stored and maintained annually and installation costs would still apply.

### Background Papers

Notes of discussion with the Newlands centre.

Bonka's promotional material.

Tenders for Christmas tree provision and associated emails.

