

Minutes of Debrief meeting for Todmas 2010
Held Monday 24th January 2011, at Todmorden High School

Present: Lynne Midwinter, Jean Hartley, Roger Pendlebury, Hazel Bregazzi, Nicki Hewson
Betts, Helen Plaice

Apologies: Vicky Ledwidge, Margareta Holmstead, Rosemary Holcroft, Rev Owen Page

It was noted that there was no Water Street representation.

All agreed that the planning process for the celebrations was a very friendly affair, and that everyone had the same objectives and worked well and happily with each other.

JH Positives

- Feedback from the market was wholly good – both inside and outside market traders. The whole thing around the market was very positive.
- On the late night opening, there were a few people who had booked stalls and who then didn't turn up. It was felt that this was probably because of the weather on that day.
- 8pm on the late night opening was late enough.
- The school choirs were very well supported and enjoyed by the traders.
- The pipers were a big hit with the traders who were present when they played.
- Father Christmas was excellent. They had almost 200 children visit him. They have already booked him for next year. The tenants paid for the treats for the children.
- JH has had people from Huddersfield come back to her, and revisit Todmorden on the back of the late night opening.
- The shoebox appeal worked really nicely and wasn't too difficult to sort. Probably was helped by the fact that some of the schools that have done it in the past didn't do it this year.

Negatives

- Sometimes things felt like they were spread too thinly.
- Next year, it might be worth seeing if the shops who want to open on the late night could get a stall on the market – or in the market if there are any spares.
- Half of the shops on Water Street were closed on the evening of the Goose Fair. There was no atmosphere there at all. Castle Hill and Cornholme School choirs were singing to themselves.

RP Positives

- Todmorden had a good buzz about it, especially on the Saturdays. The town had a nice vibe about it. It was nice to be in the middle of it.
- The Five Gold Rings event had a steady stream of people passing through (about 30 or so in total). It was a nice event and everyone who visited it seemed happy when they left. This could have been done more centrally though, and may have attracted more people if it is done centrally next year.

Negatives

- Late night opening was a wash-out for them and would probably not open again as had no customers.

HP Positives

- Lights switch on. HP had never done this before, but enjoyed it and has been asked to do it again next year. The PA was not loud enough to start off with, but when it had been turned up

everyone could hear.

- Pear Tree went well. 40-50 of the golden pears were used. HP can help with anything like this again using the kids during detention.
- HP would like the school to be more involved and wants to get the 6th formers involved as well. She will invite the 6th form senior leaders to the inaugural Christmas meeting next year. She needs as much notice as possible to get the children rallied into helping.

Negatives

- The Chicken event. Despite all the publicity it didn't seem to reach people. Feedback suggests that the school may not have been the right venue for it as it is too far from central Todmorden, and that the event may have had too long a duration. It may have worked better if the school had been more directly involved.

NHB Positives

- Craft Fair. The Masonic Hall was a really good venue as it wasn't too big and it is very central. It had a good selection of stalls as well. In future it will need more publicity – probably a banner on Bird Cage Walk.
- Have been contacted by someone from South Ribble council whose boss had driven through Todmorden and had seen the “wrapped” trees. They were very impressed and may employ the method next year.

Negatives

- Multi-site events don't work, and from an organisational point of view are a bit of a nightmare. We have tried to arrange them for two years, and they have only been a success in one location both years. Probably need to learn from this and have the lights switch on day as being a Water Street event, and the late night opening as a market event.
- Patmos have had two chances to be involved and haven't on either occasion. This year there was no point organising anything for Patmos as no-one (other than perhaps Louise) had made any effort whatsoever.

HB Positives

- The booklet was really well received and has already had some requests for advertising space in next year's brochure. It was ready and printed in plenty of time for it to be delivered before the first event. The last week of pulling the brochure together was hard though. The brochure paid for itself though in advertising revenue.
- Creative Graphics were amazing at turning around printing for posters etc. Will definitely use them next year.
- The Hippodrome films (which were not one of the days of Todmas) were really well received and they will definitely want to do it again. They would like to be more involved if they can tie the dates in. It would have been nice to tie the Hippodrome events into the Twelve Days though.
- The logo worked really well.

Negatives

- The distribution channels for the booklet didn't work as well as they might. There is possibly an argument for using the primary schools as an additional distribution channel.
- The early posters looked too similar to each other, so they were indistinguishable on first glance. Learnt this through the process and started changing them more significantly so that they looked different as the events went on.

Margareta's Stuff

- Swedish cooking food event was very good. Those who went to it were very happy.
- The gingerbread house competition. Only two entries.
- She was very happy with the Santa Lucia.
- Paul Stansfield sold quite a lot of partridges on the back of the Partridge event and Margareta's recipe sheet.
- She has told JH that she would like to be involved in next year's events.

Rev Owen's feedback (verbatim)

- Switch on and Dickensian Fair was excellent +++ - even the carol sing and procession was better – thanks to all who helped
- If we are to want a later date for the switch on for 2011 I think we need to consult with Town Council straight away. From St Mary's point of view 19, 26 Nov or even 3 Dec would be good as long as we know in loads of time
- The booklets were well received but I have to say that we were let down by some of the churches in not fulfilling their delivery – we would need to address this I think at Churches Together
- A general constructive criticism from a church point of view – I did have a small number of people say that they found the phrase “Todmas” a little distasteful and insensitive – perhaps we could please use Christmas?

Todmas 2011?

There is a larger question whether we run with the “Twelve Days” again, or was it too much? There were 40 events over the period. Some of those events run anyway without any input from Business Association (Kids Fest, Eid, Polish Day)

We have all the contacts (Pipers, Town Cryer, Ann T Litter, Father Christmas etc, Shoebox), and we have the banners. This should make it easier to arrange things, and if there is no financial input from Calderdale (which may happen, because of the councils cuts etc) it should be possible to run again on a smaller budget. The consensus was that we should run it again but avoid multi-site events. Shirley Fielden suggested putting solar lights in the trees in Bramsche Square. This would cost money that we may not have access to, but, if there is enough light to activate the solar panels, it could be very effective.

The lights on the main tree look like they have been dropped from a height. This is done by street lighting people on a cherry picker. LM said that she had heard of other councils who put the tree on a turntable to put the lights on so they can be wound around. LM will speak with Kevin Crab to see what can be done – it may be possible to put them on in a “Z” rather than an “M”.

TO DO

It was agreed that, from the dates Rev Owen suggested, Nov 26th would be the most suitable. NHB to email Rev Owen to that effect, and also Catherine Emberson to petition the Town Council for that date as well.

The date for the first planning meeting for Christmas 2011 was decided on as Monday 11th July. It was thought that the Town Hall would be a good venue for this – even though have to pay for it.. NHB to book committee room A for a meeting to start at 6pm.