

Altarnun Christmas Lights 2024 and Beyond

Background

Altarnun's Christmas lights display has been organised by John Barker, supported by a team of volunteers for about 15 years. Over that time, the display at the river has become ever more ambitious and spectacular culminating in the display featuring on the Radio Cornwall website in 2023.

The lights have been installed by a team of volunteers who have also raised the funds needed to both extend the display and pay for the inevitable damage to lights from winter weather.

Funding has been ad hoc with donations from community members, support from Tre Pol Pen magazine and the generosity of the volunteers.

The popularity of the 2023 'switch on event' suggests that having a big display by the river is something that the Altarnun community not only enjoys but is also proud of and wishes to continue.

The longstanding team feel it is time for the Christmas Lights to be put on a more sustainable basis both financially and organisationally.

The Challenges

Volunteers: Following an appeal for help in 2023 and support following the successful 'Switch On', the volunteer team for 2024 will be led by John Barker with Peter Allen, Dez Sibborn, Paul Burden, Parish Councillor Jack Pannell, Bill Marchant, Paul Clements and Adrian, Dan and Ryan Cockayne. With that team in place, installation should not be an issue in 2024. Assuming that a new team leader comes forward for 2025 to plan the display and coordinate the installation and break down and that new volunteers step forward as the 'old timers' retire, the installation of the annual display will continue to be undertaken by a voluntary team from the community.

The Display: The infrastructure for the display (mains cables and waterproof boxes) requires replacement in 2025 as much of the existing equipment is starting to fail after many years of service. The two blackouts experienced in December 2023 were due to infrastructure failures. The strong winter winds and heavy rain take a toll on the display lights and every year some light strings have to be replaced when they are too badly damaged for reliable repairs to be made.

Funding: The replacement cost (including VAT) of infrastructure (cabling and boxes) is estimated at £250 with an anticipated life of 7-10 years. Replacing damaged lighting strings is estimated at £150 per annum and there is nominal annual expenditure of £25 on cable ties, fixings, and other consumables. Whilst the ad hoc funding model has, in the past, just about coped with replacements it cannot cover the replacement of infrastructure.

Organisation of the 'Switch On' event: Going forward setting and agreeing dates with all those involved is critical if it is to be well attended and successful community event. For 2024, a date has been pencilled in (December 7th) and Andie from the Coffee Cup at Altarnun will bring along the 'Coffee van', the Village Hall will provide a PA system and Tre Pol Pen will publicise the event. It is hoped that in the future the Christmas Lights Team Leader could coordinate the event with the support of the Clerk and the parish council.

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The Proposal

The Christmas Lights Team would be grateful if Altarnun Parish Council would consider funding both the replacement of the infrastructure for 2024 at £250 and providing on going annual funding of up to £200 per annum for replacement lights and consumables.

It is suggested that the ownership of the lights would then pass to APC. The Village Hall Committee would continue to provide storage for the lights at the Village Hall and the volunteer team would take responsibility for the care and maintenance of the lights as well as their installation and dismantling each year..

The Village Lights Team Leader would undertake to provide invoices/receipts along with any other documentation that might be required to allow village lights expenditure to be reimbursed by the Clerk.

The dates proposed for 2024 are:

Installation of Lights	Saturday 30 th November – Sunday 1 st December
Switch On Event	Saturday 7 th December 7:00pm
Last Display Night	Sunday 5 th January 2025
Dismantle Display	Sunday January 12 th

The following support has been offered without charge for the 2024 display:

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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Electricity supply | Doreen Sparey-Delcassa |
| 2. Cherry Picker | Adrian Cockayne |
| 3. 3.5m Henchman Ladder | Altarnun Village Hall |
| 4. Poster Printing | Tre Pol Pen |
| 5. Event PA system | Altarnun Village Hall |

In addition the Coffee Cup at Altarnun have agreed to have their coffee van at the bridge for the switch on.

The Parish Council are also asked to consider the opportunities for making the ‘switch on’ a more significant community event by perhaps:-

1. Having a collection at the event to support a local charity or perhaps help fund the display.
2. Arranging for Santa Claus to visit.
3. Allowing, say FOASA to have a sweets and treats stall for the children?
4. Asking the community to suggest ideas?

A representative of the Christmas Lights team will be happy to attend the Parish Council meeting at which this proposal will be considered in order to answer any questions that councillors may have.