

Christmas Lights Debrief Meeting

15th January 2026

Notes were made from some of the committee members on improvements and successes of previous Christmas Lights Events.

Attendees: -Suzanne Kayne, Andrew Rackham, Gabriel Pagan and Robert Ludkin.

1. Punch and Judy

Not to have Punch and Judy again in the URC Church but may be good at the Carnival.

2. Santas Grotto

Santas Grotto a big success with the children but could be held in the back room Lenton Room and not at the front in the Derry Room as previous years at the URC Church.

3. Santa

Matt from Park Radio was a great Santa but he did say that he will be away possibly at the end of November beginning of December so would need to check dates with him if wanted to use again this year as Santa.

4. Staging

There were issues with the new staging especially with sound quality and height of speakers and was mentioned that more lights on the performers on stage were needed so that they could be seen.

5. Performers

With several performers it was suggested that more setting up gaps were needed allowing performers to complete their session and not to have to cut them short.

6. Timing of Event

Last year's event was put on later but again it wasn't until about 4.30pm / 4.45pm it started to get busy which was sad for the earlier performers who were singing to themselves. Suggestion was to only have a about a 2-hour slot but costs for staging and getting stalls in for 2 hours would seem expensive for such a short event.

Suggestions were perhaps having singers at the top of the steps at No 8 performing with lights on them singing Christmas Songs etc with speaker's which would be set up higher because of the different height levels.

This would be a big cost saving and not such a health and safety issue especially with the weather and the staging setup.

7. Parade

All agreed that the children and parents loved the parade and seeing Santa arrive on the Fire Engine.

It was mentioned last year that the Fire Engine needs a lot of money spent on it so last year may be the last time it could be used.

Suggestions were to keep the parade and look for an alternative replacement for the Fire Engine or Rotary's sleigh.

It was mentioned that there was a tractor run last year where the tractors were decorated up with lights etc so perhaps a tractor could be used this year instead or something else to transport Santa. Normally The Mayor of Diss travels as well with Santa which he may not be able to do on a tractor.

8. Switch On

Switch on could be from the outside of No 8 as well.

9. Corn Hall Pantomime Cast.

It was mentioned that as part of their contract this year it was going to be written in that they attend the switch on and Parade. This would have to be sorted with Lee and the Ryan the director of the panto well before the event depending on this year's event arrangements.

10. Stalls

Over the years due to the weather and safety nearly all stalls that attended were trailer or vehicle stalls which seemed to stay more grounded in the winds than gazebos and that was why food stalls were asked and not gift stalls plus in the busiest time due to the area getting so full with people the stalls have to be limited within the Market place area to accommodate them all.

It was also mentioned that feed back from stall holders would be good to get their views on trading times and if they made a profit at the busiest times.

11. Security

Noted that security was good especially with more of them on site especially at the Parade.

Any major issues found on the day Police to be contacted as soon as possible.

12. Radios

The radios and earpieces were not that good, and suggestions were to perhaps buy our own.

13. South Norfolk Truck

The South Norfolk Truck was perfect for a base for lost children and green room and place to rest during the day with heaters etc if needed.

14. Photographer

The photographer was found to be very good, but more photos were needed in the URC and St Marys Church.

15. Meres Mouth

Larry Grays fair is normally at Meres Mouth, but every year seems to be a problem, and he hardly has anything turn up on the day and he leaves all his paperwork to the last minute.

Recommendations were to contact Eye Council who uses a different fairground family and see what they can offer if needed in the future.

16. Charity Stalls in St Marys Church

Due to new Bishops being appointed at the Church permission would be needed if wanted to carry on with stalls in the Church on the event day and if so recommended better signage on the day for the stall holders.

17. Road Closure

The road closure for this event is normally for 7.30am to stop cars parking within the area and on the sides of the road but by doing this someone has to attend all times to allow shop keepers to park and for emergency vehicles to get through.

So, if the event is later this needs to be addressed to save on labour times and the parking of vehicles on the day within the area.