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Document / Report #1026

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Title	Winter Festival update 2026
Date	1st October 2026

OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Members consider the entertainment options set out in the report and agree on additional entertainment for the 2026 Winter Festival within the approved budget.**
- 2. That the Events and Markets Manager be authorised to confirm availability and make the necessary bookings following the Committee's selection, subject to the total expenditure remaining within the approved budget.**
- 3. Corn Exchange Kitchen - to allow Friends of Welshpool High School the use of the Corn Exchange kitchen during the event.**
- 4. To launch the Christmas window competition, with a possible theme.**
- 5. To consider the ideas for this year's Winter Festival from Councillor Kelly Meredith:-**
 1. Tree contest
 2. Baked goods contest
 3. Think of how to redesign the meet Santa area
 4. For the light switch on, villain steals the lever. Kids have to find the lever in a window display. Finder gets to turn on light
 5. Rides need to be winter-themed
 6. House Display Contest (previously agreed in June 2026)
 7. Wreath competition
 8. Gingerbread house contest
 9. Can we have the livestock Xmas market on the same day as the switch on?
 10. Make it also the day St Mary's opens its doors for the tree display?
 11. Have a game room for kids - include snowball toss (kids throw balls at a snowman stack), reindeer ring toss (toss onto deer antlers)

1. Purpose

1. To consider the entertainment options available for the 2026 Winter Festival and agree on additional acts/entertainment within the approved budget.

2. Background

1. The Council organises an annual Winter Festival in Welshpool town centre, incorporating entertainment and activities, Santa's Grotto with a gift for every child, market stalls and the Christmas lights switch-on.

3. Advice

1. The following entertainment options have been identified for consideration by Members:
 1. **Aries Entertainment Ltd - LED Ballerinas** - Their fee is £295.00 + VAT per ballerina (recommend at least 2 or more), and their travel is £50.00 + VAT per car, normally holding up to 4 performers.
 2. **Little Princess Parties** - Trained theatre performers, so we can offer stage shows! Some examples of these sets would be:
 - Frozen Set
 - Christmas Carols
 - Upbeat Christmas hits

We only charge for entertainers' time (per character, per hour), so during that time we can put together a running order to suit event requirements.

An example of what this could include would be: 2x stage shows of your choosing (2x 45 minute sets) & an hour of meet & greets.

I've attached some photos of our Christmas showcase, as well as our Elsa & Anna characters.

Please see costing options below.

2x Characters for 3hr duration:

£100.00 +VAT per character, per hour.

Total for characters - £600.00 +VAT

Travel sup for characters - £40.00 +VAT

Mileage fee - £60.00 +VAT

Total - £700.00 +VAT

1. **Walkabout Character**

Walkabout entertainment could provide a strong visual attraction throughout the town centre and provide opportunities for photographs, visitor engagement and social media content.

1. **Animatronic Unicorn and Character – £1,220**

The animatronic unicorn provides a large-scale visual attraction accompanied by a character who guides the animal around the event. The quotation provides for three 20-minute sets over four hours.

2. Other considerations

1. Corn Exchange Kitchen - to allow Friends of Welshpool High School the use of the Corn Exchange kitchen during the event.

2. To launch the Christmas window competition, with a possible theme.
3. Other ideas
 1. To consider the ideas for this year's Winter Festival from Councillor Kelly Meredith:-
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3. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. EV4 - Expand Winter Festival with competitions, music, family activities and more following 2025 event

4. Resource & Legal Implications

1. The approved budget for Winter Festival entertainment is £2,200, with a separate budget of £300 for gifts from Santa. Christmas lights, staffing, equipment and road closure costs are provided for through separate Council budgets. The committed expenditure to date is £950
2. A combination of entertainment can therefore be selected by Members provided that the final programme remains within the approved £2,200 entertainment budget. Several quotations are expressed as starting prices and final costs will need to be confirmed before bookings are made.
3. All entertainers and contractors will be required to provide appropriate public liability insurance, risk assessments and any licences, certification or other documentation relevant to their activities.
4. Particular consideration will be required for activities involving animals, aerial or circus performances, mobile stages and large walkabout attractions. These will need to be incorporated within the Council's overall event management and risk assessment arrangements.

5. Specific Implications

1. Risk Management - Principal risks include adverse weather, contractor cancellation, crowd management, safeguarding, animal welfare and the operation of performance equipment within a public event. These risks will be managed through the Council's event risk assessment, contractor documentation and appropriate contingency arrangements.

6. Recommendation

1. That Members consider the entertainment options set out within the report and agree a preferred programme of entertainment for the 2026 Winter Festival within the approved budget.
2. That the Events and Markets Manager be authorised to confirm availability and make the necessary bookings following the Committee's selection, subject to the total expenditure remaining within the approved budget.
3. Corn Exchange Kitchen - to allow Friends of Welshpool High School the use of the Corn Exchange kitchen during the event.
4. To launch the Christmas window competition, with a possible theme.

1. Decision

1. To resolve to adopt the recommendations as above.