

PROJECT CLOSING REPORT - Buxton in Bloomin' Winter

1. OVERVIEW

The plan was to decorate the town for the winter season, using greenery and home-made decorations, incorporating a Christmas Carnival Parade on Saturday 3rd December.

2. DETAIL OF WHAT TOOK PLACE

We drew up a list of locations around town that could be decorated - prominent railings, town entrances, lamp-posts and trees - and posted it on the website. The link was shared with businesses and community organisations and other groups, so they could 'adopt a spot'. Businesses were encouraged to decorate their premises or something close by, and a number did so. We also understand that Trevor Zoppi fixed up more Christmas trees than in previous years, as a result of our encouragement.

To provide some sense of continuity through the town, we produced a set of 'how to' sheets for making snowbirds, red ribbons, poinsettias, crackers and the like. Again, these were posted on the website. We tested the designs at the October Ideas & Action meeting, we also ran several workshops where people could join in making materials. We arranged with the council to add red bows to their Christmas trees when they were put up on 16th November. Most of the rest of the decorating was done by the various groups involved on the morning of Saturday 3rd December and the preceding week.

A Christmas Carnival Parade took place from 4pm on Saturday 3rd December, going through Spring Gardens, the Slopes, the Market Place and the Pavilion Gardens. There was a Peter Pan theme and lots of people dressed up. The procession incorporated the Buxton Sparkles willow lanterns, as and we were joined by the Kaleidoscope Choir and some of the Rotary Club Singing Santas. The parade stopped at key points along the way for people to sing a seasonal song. In the Gardens, the Peak Paddlers were illuminated on the lake and Buxton Sparkles had installed illuminated sculptures. The Pavilion Gardens did not in the event organise any hot food and drink stalls, instead people were directed back to the Christmas market on the Market Place.

Almost all the decorations were taken down as per instructions by Saturday 7th January.

Plans for more costly items such as the Welcome to Buxton in Winter banners did not go ahead as no funding was offered for them.

3. ASSESSMENT AGAINST AIMS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

The aim of the project was to:

- to brighten up the town for the winter
- to involve a range of community groups in a project throughout the town
- to encourage a sense of pride, ownership and responsibility for the town
- to raise the profile of Buxton Town Team and recruit new members

and to engage a wide sector of the community in taking responsibility for doing this.

We believe that all these aims were met.

The measurable success criteria of the project were as follows:

1. The project is delivered on time and within budget

Achieved - the vast majority of the decorations were put up by noon on 3rd December, and taken down by 7th January, as requested. The project costs were covered by a grant from Derbyshire County Council.

2. Key areas of the town (Spring Gardens, Quadrant, Crescent, Market Place, Slopes) are decorated

Achieved - of the suggested locations, 39 were adopted and decorated. All the key areas of the town were decorated, in addition there were decorations on Fairfield Rd, the A515 Dukes Drive junction and Burbage. Where railings in the town were not decorated by other groups, Buxton Town Team fixed bunting made by Buxton WI.

3. Additional decorations are added to the HPBC Christmas trees

Achieved - all six HPBC trees were covered with red bows. Those that had barriers round also had bunting fixed.

4. At least 50% of the summer flowerpot people come out for the winter

Probably not achieved - some were set out, outside business premises, but not as many as 50% of the summer numbers; on the other hand additional flowerpot Santas featured in several of the decorated areas.

5. The carnival parade takes place and is well attended

Achieved - around 450 people attended the parade, and it all ran very smoothly.

6. A wide range of other community groups take part in the project

Achieved - including Buxton Town Team, 30 groups adopted spots, with in addition a number of businesses decorating their own premises. The parade was organised in conjunction with Buxton Sparkles; Buxton Lions provided the marshals; Peak Paddlers provided a spectacle on the lake; the Kaleidoscope Choir and some of the Rotary Club Singing Santas supported the singing; the Kaleidoscope Choir also performed on the Market Place after the parade. A full list of participating groups is given in Appendix 1.

7. We get good, positive media coverage

Achieved - we were featured in Pure Buxton twice; we had several articles in the Buxton Advertiser; High Peak Radio covered the story throughout, including reminders after New Year for people to take the decorations down. All press coverage was very positive.

8. Feedback from participants and the general public is positive, with calls for it to be an annual event

Largely achieved - feedback to the project team was almost all positive, comments received by email or via Facebook are listed in Appendix 2. The Facebook posts were shared and liked numerous times. Many groups reported that when they were out fixing decorations, or taking them down, they had passers by commenting favourably and thanking them for doing it. A number of other people however, report that comments made to them about the decorations have been much less complementary, so opinions are divided.

4. ANY FURTHER BENEFITS

For safety reasons for the parade, we requested that HPBC ensure the lamps on the Slopes were working, which they have not been for several years. HPBC did eventually locate and repair the fault and the lights are now working; as a bonus the light on top of the Turner memorial has also been repaired. The decorative lights down Spring Gardens were also all working properly this year (the last few years some were unlit).

People in the town, whether they liked the decorations or not, are now thinking about how they want the town to look at Christmas and (hopefully) what they could do about it themselves.

A couple of new organisations contacted us wanting to be involved, they have been added to our data base.

5. COSTS

Project expenditure was as follows:

Xmas card leaflet for local businesses	£50.79
Song sheets for carnival parade	£85.79
Craft materials (for bunting, bows etc)	£215.73
TOTAL	£352.31

The costs were covered by a donations of £500 from the Derbyshire County Council Community Fund, leaving £147.69 in hand for any additional or similar costs that arise.

Separately, Buxton Sparkles incurred some costs that they covered from their own funds.

6. LEARNING POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

The use of the website for the list of adoptable spots and the 'how to' sheets worked well - the page was accessed nearly 1,000 times, the pdf instructions over 500 times.

Most decorations stayed attached in spite of windy weather, others though were blown away; emails had to be sent out reminding groups to keep an eye on their decorations and make repairs if necessary.

Consider a standardised laminated notice at each spot to emphasis the community element and make is clear which spots had been decorated for instance by primary school children.

Lost children and vulnerable adults procedures to be reviewed for another time.

A roving mike would have been useful for announcements during the parade.

Liaison with the Pavilion Gardens could have been better; they were appraised of the plans in January 2016, and assured us they would arrange for hot food and drink stalls on the Promenade for the end of the parade; they failed to do so and only let us know very late on when it was too late to make alternative arrangements. This and the parade route to be reviewed for next year.

Liaison with Buxton Opera House so the parade theme coincides with the pantomime would also be useful.

Name: Janet Miller

Date: 16Jan17

APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Adopting spots:

Bet Fred	Buxton Well Dressing Festival	High Peak Labour Group
Burbage Primary School	Buxton WI	Hydro Cafe
Burbage WI	Fairfield WI	Morrisons
Buxton Advertiser	Friends of Buxton Station	No6 Tea Rooms
Buxton and Leek College	Geoff Mycock and Sons	Palace Hotel
Buxton Church in the Peak	Gina, Wendy and Lucy	Playdays at St Anne's
Buxton Markets CIC	Green Lane Nursery	Rotary Club of Buxton
Buxton Nursery	Green Man Gallery	St Thomas More Skills for Life Group
Buxton Soroptimists	Harpur Hill WI	Transition Buxton
Buxton Town Team	High Peak Buses	Trinity Church

Involved in some other way:

Buxton Lions	Buxton Sparkles	Kaleidoscope Choir
Buxton Opera House	High Peak Borough Council	Peak Paddlers

APPENDIX 2 - RECORD OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Emails received:

Avril Hedley: Just wanted to say how much we appreciate your efforts in cheering up the town for Christmas. Your decorations are so jolly & bright. Well done. Thank you so much!

Lissa Cook: Various people at yoga were saying how lovely the parade was on Saturday.

Ann Clark: Hello and a big thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to make Buxton look so good. It all looks fantastic

Martin Gilson: Just a quick note to say that everyone's efforts were appreciated by our friends and family visiting over the Christmas and New Year period - thank you J

Dave Knowles: I have to commend you on the idea of trying to brighten up the town at Christmas, but what a shame it looks like it hasn't been thought through properly. Surely it would have been better to have had a general theme running so it doesn't look like primary school children have brought in what they could find at home. The greenery already looks dead and most things are beyond tatty. It only takes a short drive to somewhere like Castleton to see what works, or slightly further to the children's hospital in Sheffield to see how local business sponsorship works. As I said, I commend you for actually doing something, but I do feel that if anything you have potentially made the town a bit of a laughing stock, however well meaning. I must also comment on what a good job you are making on regenerating the market and it is a pleasure to spend money there (even if I don't really need it) to support traders.

Netta Christie: Well done I understand that the parade was really beautiful and as you say magical. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances the tram was not out and about but we hope to be lit up and about this weekend and next for a couple of hours. Hope that we will be able to bring a bit of sparkle too.

Bruce Thompson: Comments I've heard concerning the low-cost, no-cost Xmas decorations have ranged from 'naff' to 'nice' to put it euphemistically. I hope the TT will carry out a survey as to local views concerning them to provide legitimacy to any connected strategies. There are a number of free online survey tools that should enable a simple survey to be carried out e.g. <https://www.surveymonkey.com>. UoD students might do one on your behalf?

Facebook comments (the ones we know about):

Christine Banks - Thank you for making my town Christmassy. All your hard work I very much appreciate, saw you this morning decorating that eyesore on Fairfield Road. Used to be such a lovely green.

Shanna Griffin - The whole town looks amazing! Great job!

Chloe Andrew - Ann Andrew you should do this next time 😊

Linzi Gregory - Well done to everyone involved, Buxton looks very festive

Gillian Miller: Buxton looks very christmasy especially the bus stops and hedges. Fantastic work well done. 😊😊😊

Lynne Gibbs - Well done the decorations look lovely and are making me feel Christmassy 🌲🌲🌲

Andy Rolland - Well done, shame the same can't be said for the shops on Spring Gardens - just 4 lit trees (and 2 of those are on the 1 cafe !). How different to the many, many trees on shops on the market place !

Michael Mckone - buxton town team are doing a wonderful job, it's a pity that mindless idiots have already vandalised the display on the lamp post outside the hydro cafe

Susan Sewell - Well done Buxton Nursery, really festive 🎅🌲🌲🌲🎅🌲

Pavla Videnková (*Translated from Czech*) - Spontaneous and beautiful

Buxton Neighbourhood Watch - Excellent job, well done Rotarians!

Robert Harrison - all bows now on the roundabout, buxtons looking lovely and festive, well done you lot for getting so many of us involved.

Pat Yates - Jolly well done everybody THANKYOU it looks lovely

Joanie Crook - Well done everyone, great job!

Susan Cross - Saw it today. Looks lovely. Thank you.