

Agenda item 8

For decision – To keep the Christmas Festoon Lights on Year Round
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Summary

For the last 10 years and more the Christmas lights (and tree) have been erected and switched on in mid-November and switched off and removed in early January. The lights consist of:

- Strings of bulb lights, known as Festoon lights, that zig zag across the road in 4 locations: Stony street, Catherine Hill, Palmer Street and Cheap Street
- Braided arches on arches, 2 each on Stony St and Cheap St
- Series of Cross Streets festive themed lights across Bath St in 5 locations
- Strings of lights and a star on the Christmas tree itself

This proposal only concerns the festoon lights across the 4 roads. The proposal is for the lights to be left on year round

What is the detail of the proposal

Below is a map of the Christmas lights in Frome. The festoon strings of bulb lights are marked in yellow. The proposal is for the lights to be on in the evening until an agreed time, possibly 11pm. The time they switch on can be altered to have two different seasonal rhythms. For confirmation, but this could possibly be 4pm in winter (October to March), 7pm in summer (April to September).

Map showing location of festive lights

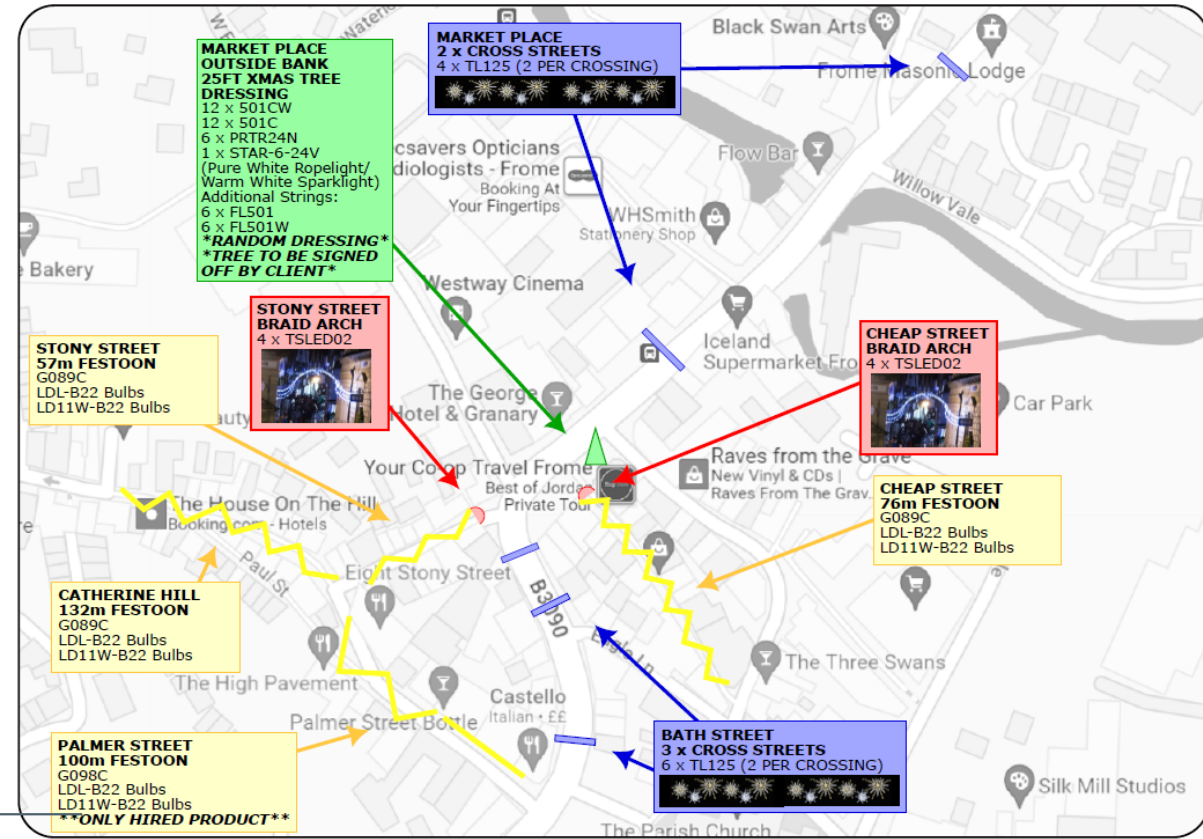


Photo showing festoon lights on Cheap Street (Note – proposal does NOT include the braided arch lights)



What is needed to have the lights up years round

Item	Status
Lights erected early by Blachare	We have quote (see below) and confirmation this can be done
Permission from the Electrical Distribution Network Operator (DNO – Scottish and Southern)) for an Unmetered connection	Permission granted and with unmetered certificate for the festoon lights
Confirmation of an electrical supply for the lights identified in the DNO certificate	Costs have been sought from 3 electrical suppliers but to date none have responded
The time limited permission for lights to extend across a highway from Somerset Highways to be extended to being year round	Permission has been sought from SC in September 23 and chased February 24. <i>If no information is heard after chasing the assumption in this report is that <u>permission can be assumed</u></i>
The time limited permission to access Somerset County’s infrastructure to access the physical electrical supply points extended to being year round	Ditto as above
The i-bolt fixings for the catenary wires across the road used for attaching the lights will each need to be tested for stability	Blachare can do this – see costs below
A watching brief from our electrical contractor to maintain the lights and change any non-working bulbs	Agreement reached with contractor – see approximate estimated price below

Project Costs

2024 Costs		
4x Festoon Lights erected	+£4,197	
SAVING – no erection cost at Christmas time	-£4,197	
SAVING – no take down costs	-£1,259	Lights will be left up so the annual removal costs of £1.26k would not be spent
Electrical Costs	£500	Approximation. Have asked for 3 quotes but have received no replies to date
Permissions	£0	
I-both testing	£2.5k	Needed every 3 years even for Xmas lights
Maintenance	£1k	<i>This is an estimate</i> provided by our contractor – actual figure TBC when lights are live
Total costs for 2024 season	£2,741	
Ongoing Costs/Savings		
Ongoing annual costs for lights being up	£1.5k	Electricity and maintenance. Not including cost of replacement
Annual saving as no erection costs	-£4,197	
Annual savings as no take down costs	-£1,259	
Total ongoing annual SAVING	£3,956	

Pros

- Lights are an attractive evening feature that would bring character to the town centre in the evening
- Some streets, notably Cheap Street, have had issues of not being bright enough and these lights would help with visibility
- Very positive anecdotal feedback from businesses for the idea
- Very substantial saving of £4k per year (approximate)

Cons

- An initial outlay for installing and I-bolt testing but the costs for both of these are not additional as they would have to be incurred later in the year
- There is the possibility that not all residents will be in favour of the change although initial feedback from discussions is universally popular

Timescale

If approved by council the lights could be live by the end of spring.

Recommendation

Approve the 4 sets of festoon lights to be switched on year round and to cover the approximate initial set-up costs of £2,741 and approximate ongoing savings of £3,956 to the Christmas light budget.