

ASPRA RR MEETING 29.06.15 – PROJECTS

Dave, Gill & myself recently had a meeting with Vernon Peake of the Festive Lighting Company – recommended by John Algar – the PFI Lighting Manager for Croydon & Lewisham.

(This Company already supplies Selsdon & Addington with their Xmas Lights, & has just won the contract for Croydon Central.)

He gave us approximate costings & choices for hired light fittings suitable for our situation, & that would provide the best decorative effect for the budget.

He later provided computer simulations of the 4 short-listed choices “in situ”, which can be seen on Dave’s laptop.

It is confirmed that SKANSKA’s PFI Contract with Croydon Council lasts until July 2036, so that during the term of our Contract ASPRA would only be liable for the cost of hiring the lights, all other costs such as installation, maintenance & dismantling, would be borne by SKANSKA.

ASPRA will meantime obtain Public Liability Insurance, which we should anyway for Meetings etc., & this is also necessary for any Grant Applications that we might make.

Dave had already completed a survey of the lamp-posts in Addiscombe, & found that 5 columns were missing the necessary “Commando” sockets. This was pointed out to SKANSKA, who have already installed this equipment at ASPRA’s request.

My approaches to our neighbouring RAs have resulted in support in principle for the project, but, for a variety of reasons, mostly no offers of financial help.

Only SPRA (Spring Lane RA) & Blackhorse RA have offered financial contributions. SPRA have been supplying lights for the trees around Shirley Library, & Blackhorse are liaising with Gill over Blackhorse Corner.

Fred has drawn up an excellent spreadsheet projection of possible costs, but this necessarily works on a number of assumptions.

We can opt for a 3-year or a 5-year Contract with Festive Lighting, & the latter is preferred by the Committee as it represents better value for money. However it also means that Committee Members, as “officers” of the Association, will have to sign to take responsibility for these costs.

At the Canning & Clyde Road RA AGM, which I attended recently as a guest speaker, Patricia, who is the new Mayor of Croydon & also one of their Councillors, mentioned again the discretionary grants to which all Councillors will have access after July, & which Stephen Mann spoke of at the ASPRA AGM.

These grants are for £2,000 per Councillor, but, as I understand it, are entirely in the

"gift" of the individuals concerned. However, it was suggested to us that the Addiscombe Lights might possibly be a good candidate for assistance.

The Small Grants Fund has now changed to the Active Communities Fund, with more money available (£180,000 PA), & now offers also "Micro Grants" of up to £1,000 each, as well as the larger grants of up to £5,000 each.

As the applications for this round of the larger grants must be submitted by 6th July, & require considerable preparation, it is thought that it may be too late to try for this in such a rush.

However, ASPRA may apply for a Micro Grant of £1,000, which is a simpler process & for which there is no time limit.

There is no bar to us applying for a further £5,000 later, even if we are successful in this.

In fact, such applications seem to be encouraged, with the idea that a project may be "trialled" until a greater degree of confidence provides a subsequent application for the larger amount.

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Angela Vanegas, the Voluntary Sector Officer, has also let us know about a Crowd Funding website which we can apply to, & where other people have obtained sufficient money for similar projects in the past.

Bob & Dave will also canvas support from the local Addiscombe Traders, who will all benefit from the lights, as they will run the full length of the "[Village]" shopping area, from the Doctor's Surgery at the Croydon end to the Dental Surgery at the Shirley end.

As things stand, ASPRA should be able to fund the Lights ourselves, by subscription, for the 5-year period, but this would preclude us from funding any other projects or activities.

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The last news that was heard about our Local Heritage Area application said that decisions would not be made until after this July.

Other projects, such as the Addiscombe Planting Scheme & the Public Notice Board, have been put on the "back-burner" for now in order to concentrate on obtaining the Xmas Lights for this year, as was voted for by our Members at the last AGM.

Gill & Dave have heard from one neighbour that they have obtained some decorative plantings free-of-charge from Croydon Council, so we hope to liaise with them for information.

Although I have written to Selsdon & Addington asking for any help & advice that they might be able to offer over their experiences with Xmas Lights, I had received no replies.