

Christmas Party 9th December 2022: Report from “Wash-Up” Meeting of 4th January

(approved by the Committee 11th January 2023)

This follows on from the report (15th December meeting, Agenda Item 10) on the party which was written by the Communications Coordinator very shortly after the event and based largely on her own participation and observation, taking account of comments passed to her from a couple of other Committee members. Given the short time gap there was no opportunity to incorporate any feedback from those organising the party (the Planning Group).

REPORT ON CHRISTMAS PARTY WASH-UP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4TH JANUARY 2023 AT HOLY TRINITY, TILGATE

Present: Jean Elmer (Chair), Isabel Baker, Sue Mearns, Wendy Adams, Carol Allen,
Maggie Berrill, Jean Manuel, Sue Parker (report writer)

After the Christmas party held on 9th December, it was agreed that the Planning Group would hold a meeting after Christmas to discuss what went well and what could be done to make this year's party even better.

Registration – beforehand and on the day

- The decision to ring members without email to notify them of the party and offer them the chance to register first worked well. Once these members had been rung then a notice was sent out via Beacon to members on email giving them the chance to register. It was agreed that the process should be repeated this year, albeit with more notice. On the morning of the party the waiting list was down to zero
- Once a person has registered for the party they will be expected to pay £1 on arrival at the Friary. A discussion ensued on whether, once people had paid, to give them a raffle ticket. However, this led to some confusion in December 2022 when people arrived. It was agreed that posting out tickets was not a viable option. It was also felt that having three lists of names to be ticked off did not work well as the lists did not tally
- The same principle will apply for the 2023 party i.e. that if a member does not register beforehand and is not on the list held at the door, then they will be politely turned away. If someone registers then subsequently cannot attend the party, they will be asked to let us know so if there is anyone on the waiting list they can be added to the list of attendees
- **Actions for 2023**
 - when advertising this year's party stress that members do not need a ticket to attend, they simply need to have registered their name beforehand. A few people did not turn up on the day because they had not received a ticket even though none of the mailings about the party mentioned tickets being posted
 - it was agreed that for this year's party no raffle tickets would be issued on entry. When people arrive they will be presented with two tables – one labelled A-M and the other N-Z (surnames). Members will pay £1 at one of the tables then, on entering the hall, there will be another table inside the door where they can buy raffle tickets. It was hoped that this would encourage the sale of more tickets
 - the price of the raffle tickets must be decided prior to this year's party, strips of five tickets for £2 was suggested
 - Only one list to be held on the door (to be split between the two tables)
 - a decision will be needed on whether we should send people in through the side door rather than the main door
 - planned numbers for 2023 should be 100 members, approximately eight RUGs and eight Committee members, which comes to 116 (four under the maximum 120 permitted in the Friary Hall)
 - remember to ask the Treasurer well in advance of the party for a £20 float of £1 coins

Catering

- Although we catered for 100 people and, according to records, 94 people attended, we ran out of sausage rolls, although we had enough Christmas cake and mince pies
- We also under-estimated the amount of milk we needed to buy

- Some people asked for tea before the party had started, others wanted a second cup of tea. However, they need to be invited to come for refills as you can only get so much water out of the urn in one go and once it has been refilled it takes about 10 minutes to reheat
- **Actions for 2023**
 - buy more milk, four pints was not enough
 - as well as sausage rolls, mince pies and Christmas cake, it was agreed that we would also buy shortbread, chocolate fingers and some nibbles
 - cater for 120+ rather than 100 people
 - check with Steven whether we can bring kettles in so that we can use them to make coffees, alleviating some of the pressure on the urn

Quiz

- This went down very well, thanks to Jan Morris, and is a good way to get people talking to each other
- **Actions for 2023**
 - Do not hand out the quiz until everyone is seated
 - More than one copy of the quiz per table

Music

- A few people lamented the absence of music but it was not possible to organise anything in the short amount of time we had available. We were also told that the Friary wi-fi was poor
- **Actions for 2023**
 - The Friary have a Bluetooth speaker which we could use so we need to organise Christmas music to play on the day

Raffle

- **Actions for 2023**
 - Keep a cap on the number of prizes, three or four at the most. Too many prizes makes for a long, drawn-out raffle
 - Consider the Chair's suggestion of reversing the order in which the prizes are handed out so that the last prize issued is the first prize, this will add a bit of tension to the process

MC

- I only discovered on the day that our MC, Gill Cooban, is normally given a running order so that she knows what to say and when to say it
- Calling out the table numbers for people to go up for tea worked well and avoided having a queue snaking around the hall
- **Actions for 2023**
 - Produce an aide-memoire for the MC so that she has a running order and knows when to start calling out the table numbers, remind people to buy raffle tickets, etc.

Costs for the 2022 party and finance for the 2023 party

- The three hampers for the raffle came to a total of £133
- The raffle raised £113.95
- The prizes for the quiz cost £47.84
- Food cost £100
- There are some tablecloths, plates, napkins and crackers left over from last year's party

Action for 2023

A budget of £400 (subject to the Treasurer's agreement) should cover the cost of the 2023 party, bearing in mind rising costs and that we should recoup over £200 on the entrance fees and the sales of raffle tickets

Other actions for 2023

- Consider asking the Chair to make a brief opening speech before the party begins

Conclusion

Notwithstanding some of the minor problems mentioned above, all easily solvable, those present rightly felt that the party went well and that those present enjoyed themselves.

However, several people present lamented the absence of an Events Coordinator. If we had had one last year then organising the party would have begun sooner and there would not have been the mix-up over entertainment with the double booking of the choir and folk dancers, which took valuable time to unpick.

Sue Parker, Communications Coordinator, 7th Jan