

Annual Parish Meeting

Report from the Chairman of the Events Committee

The Committee was effectively founded in 2012, the first event being held to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of HM the Queen. It was organised jointly by Dawlish Town Council and the Dawlish Branch of the Royal British Legion following a public meeting where members of the community were asked for their preferred type of event. It started out as a “street party” on the Lawn but developed into a weekend of family entertainment of all kinds. Great thanks are due to the members of the Legion and, particularly the Chairman, Alec Fewings, for the enormous amount of work and time they dedicated to the weekend and to the many members of the community who came forward to volunteer their services. I am personally grateful for the help and advice I was given by people who had more experience of mounting events than I had at that time. The weekend was a great success and there was a good deal of support for repeating something of a similar nature.

The Events Committee was then set up as a formal Committee of the Town Council with its own budget and a specific Officer dedicated to it. Over the last 6 years that word “dedicated” has taken on special meaning because the Officer supporting the Events Committee has been Alison Holmes. Everyone who has had dealings with Alison will be aware of what sort of power-house she is, working tirelessly to ensure that events happen exactly as close to the plan as possible – not easy, given the Devon weather and the multitude of other unforeseeable variables! She is a vital source of ideas and inventor of ways of doing the impossible and the Events Committee would not function without her.

While the pattern of events has varied over those years, the basic philosophy remains. The Events Committee is not designed to make money, although we make sure we stay within our budget! Its purpose is to bring fun into the town, not just to attract visitors but to do all we can to foster the wonderful community spirit which is endemic in Dawlish. I’ve never known such a small town with such a great capacity to generate activities and groups and helping to keep that going is what the Committee is all about.

The “workplace” of the Committee is its meetings which are probably the least formal council meetings anyone has ever seen! Right from the beginning, representatives of all the groups in the town have attended to contribute ideas and invent ways of cooperating to turn them into reality. Most of the original members are still there, many thanks to them, and new ones join all the time. It’s more of a forum, open to anyone who wishes to help Dawlish to become as good a town as it can be, and all members of the community are welcome to attend. There are occasions when it’s “standing room only”!

There was a full programme of events in 2017, from the Family Weekend in May right through to Christmas, and there will be a similar programme this year. The Switch-on of the Christmas Lights has become a huge event over the last few years and there are some new ideas for December 2018.

A full programme of events for the coming year has been published – please take one and support your town!

Cllr Terry Lowther, Chairman, Events Committee.