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Briefing Note - Christmas Lights

For Council Meeting 22 October 2026

Introduction

Urgent works are required to be undertaken by the Parish Council's new festive lighting contractor, in order that Christmas lights can be displayed this year and in time for the Santa Saturday event on the High Street and Village Garden on 28th November 2026. Annex A sets out the items on the Asset Register.

Background

In April 2026 Light Angels took over the Parish Council's Festive Lighting contract.

The normal costs to be taken from the £4,300 Christmas Lighting budget code 209-5680 will be £2,899 per annum plus £894 every two years for the structural testing of the Sayers Common street lights which is a WSCC requirement. However, in 2026/27 there are serious issues that need addressing urgently.

A new contractor was appointed due to the continuing poor performance of the previous contractor Merlin Lighting when the company moved to Salisbury. The issues with Merlin Lighting continued when it came to trying to collect the Parish Council's festive lights from Merlin, to hand over to the new contractor. It was organised for them to be collected by Light Angels from Salisbury in June 2026. This attempt failed as Merlin were not on site for the pre-arranged collection day. It was then in September 2026 when Light Angels were eventually able to collect them from the Merlin depot in Salisbury but Merlin had merely left them outside the warehouse unattended. The items left were collected and are now stored with Light Angels. Payments made to Merlin in previous years are set out in Annex B.

The motifs and lights were checked by Light Angels, and it was made clear that items were not kept in a good state and that some of the Parish Council's festive lighting item were missing including:

- The High Street wall motifs and across road motifs had broken frames and old worn-out lights, with no reports or indications that these lights needed any repairs.
- The Village Garden tree was missing brackets to hold it to the flagpole and the lights. Again, the previous contractor stated that they broke years ago and they had been using their own, although with the delays last year, the lights were left on the Village Garden in a bucket, during the wet weather and had to be retrieved by the Estates and Facilities Manager to safeguard them. They have been asked to find the missing brackets and return them to use asap, but since the collection of the items there has not been any further contact attempted by them.
- The High Street zig zag fairy lights – according to the previous contractor, they broke years ago and they had been using their own. However, the lights could not go up last year due to scaffolding and no reports were received from them to tell us they were broken.
- The Sayers Common lights have broken frames and worn-out lighting on 3 of the 7 motifs.
- All lights appear faded and old despite their young age.

In addition to the festive lighting repairs, Light Angels inspected the festive lighting fixings with the Estates and Facilities Manager, and they highlighted the poor conditions of the anchor points, brackets and cables in Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common and have since returned to carry out a safety inspection of the brackets. They highlighted the following:

- Cable ties being used to hold motifs to brackets.
- Cables being held together with insulation tape.

- Anchor points are too low to allow buses and lorries to pass safely, with regard to the zig zag lights. Cables hanging from across road cables, hitting buses and lorries as they pass.
- Missing brackets on walls.
- Missing weather guards on sockets.
- Brackets not secured properly and hanging in situ.

High Street Flagpole Christmas Tree

Sayers Common Street Lights x9

Works Required

The Sayers Common sockets have now been repaired but the below items are still outstanding and are required to ensure the festive lights can be displayed this year. Light Angels have confirmed that all the work can be completed and displayed ready for the 28 November, and that they intend to install the lights approx. one week before.

1. **<u>Repairing Existing Motifs</u>** (when repairing the broken frames and lights, all motifs require the lights to be changed so they are the same brightness and match).

   Option A – keeping previous colour scheme of bright white as prominent colour with warm white in background

   Sayers Common - **£2,997.80 plus VAT** for all 7 motifs.
   High Street - **£2,335.12 plus VAT** for all 4 across road motifs.
   High Street - **£354.74 plus VAT** for 2 wall motifs.

   Option A - Total repair cost of **£5,687.66 plus VAT.**

Option B – new colour scheme of warm white as prominent colour with bright white in background

Sayers Common **£2,889.96 plus VAT** for all 7 motifs.
High Street **£2,527.52 plus VAT** for all 4 across road motifs.
High Street **£372.15 plus VAT** for 2 wall motifs.

Option B – Total repair cost of **£5,789.63 plus VAT.**

2. **<u>High Street – Zig Zag Lights</u>**

Option A – keeping previous colour scheme of bright white and warm LED lights with 76 LEDs per 5 metres (static). **£1,688.00 plus VAT.**

Option B – Keeping the previous colour scheme of bright white and warm white LED lights with 450 LEDs per 5 metres (static and twinkle and width of 2.5 inches). **£3,180.00 plus VAT**

3. **<u>Village Garden – Christmas Tree</u>**

To supply 2 x 13'/14' fresh Christmas trees, attached back-to-back to the flagpole. The back of the trees are cut back and secured around the flagpole and clamped to make it safe. The trees will be dressed in low voltage hired lights in white or warm white LED lights including a low voltage white LED tree top star. **£2,145.00 plus VAT.** It is hoped that the missing brackets will be returned or that new brackets could be fabricated and new lights purchased.

4. **<u>Anchor Point Repairs</u>**

New anchor point for the zig zag lights on the High Street. Following the testing of all the anchor points on the High street. This identified that one of the points is too low and is dangerously close to buses passing it. The quote is to install and test one anchor at a higher level in the agreed location. All residents have been informed of this repair as it might cause late evening noise.

The wall motif mounts were also inspected, and this identified the mounts were old and broken, in most locations, cable ties were being used to hold the motifs up, which is unsafe.

The total cost to supply and fit the new anchor point, plus two wall brackets for a total cost of **£850 plus VAT.** This might be possible to achieve with other jobs and therefore reduce the cost, but this is to be confirmed. (Residents have been informed of the possible brief disturbance during these works.)

5. Expenditure Required

The following table sets out the costs that are proposed for this year (green is work already commissioned):

Works	Contractor	Where	Cost
Structural Testing	Intratest	Sayers Common	£750.00 (Paid)
Collection of lights from Salisbury	Light Angels	n/a	£268.50 (Paid)
Anchor point testing including Sayers Common infrastructure (normal cost £894 every two years)	Light Angels	Sayers Common	£1,525.00 (Invoice not yet received)
Commando socket repairs	Light Angels	Sayers Common	£1,207.15 (Invoice not yet received)
Repair lights sayers common	Light Angels	Sayers Common	£2,997.80
Repair across street motifs high st	Light Angels	High Street	£2,335.12
Repair wall motifs	Light Angels	High Street	£354.74
Replace zig zag lights	Light Angels	High Street	£1,688.00
Repair anchor point and 2 x wall brackets	Light Angels	High Street	£850.00
Install, take down and store lights	Light Angels	both	£2,899.00
			£14,875.31

Options

Members are asked to consider:

a. **Repairing existing motifs** - whether they would like to repair the motifs in Sayers Common and High Street with the existing colour scheme of bright white with warm white at a total cost of **£5,687.66 plus VAT (option A)** or to invert the colour scheme to warm white with bright white at a cost of **£5,789.63 plus VAT (option B).**

b. **Replacement of lights and feature** – whether to purchase new zig zag lights with 76 LEDs per 5 metres with static lights at a cost of **£1,688.00 plus VAT** (option A) or whether to purchase new zig zag lights with 450 LEDs per 5 metres with static or twinkling lights at a cost of **£3,180.00 plus VAT** (option B). To agree to have 2 x Christmas trees attached to the flagpole this year with lights and a star for a cost of **£2,145.00 plus VAT.**

c. To approve Lights Angels to install one new anchor point for the zig zag lights (to raise the height as required at one point) and carry out the two bracket repairs for the two wall mounted motifs on the High Street at a cost of **£850.00 plus VAT**.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council is asked to AGREE:

i. **To repair the motifs in the existing colour scheme at a cost of £5,687.66+VAT;**
ii. **To replace the zig zag lights at a cost of £1,688+VAT;**
iii. **To complete the anchors repairs on the High Street at a cost of £850+VAT;**
iv. **To provide two real Christmas Trees with lights and a star for the Village Garden at a cost of £2,145+VAT;**
v. **To note the annual charge of £2,899+VAT for installation, storage and removal;**
vi. **To note the £894+VAT bi-annual fee for structural testing of streetlights in Sayers Common;**
vii. **To note the expenditure already paid for 2026/7 of £1,019;**
viii. **The total cost of £13,857+VAT with the funding to come from the General Reserve, to preserve the Christmas Lights Earmarked Reserve (No. 395) holding £4,772, for future improvements.**

Annex A

Asset Register (Extract)

Christmas Lights		**Value**
Date Purchased		
12 November 2020	Extra String of Xmas Lights	£250
04 September 2017	Christmas Lights, High Street	£2980
01 May 2020	Flagpole Tree, Village Garden	£2445
14 October 2021	Christmas Motifs x9 Sayers Common Lamp Posts	£3285

Annex B

Previous Years Payments to Merlin Lighting

In 2022/23 **£2,410 plus VAT** was paid (the agreed cost).
In 2023/24 **£1,500 plus VAT** was paid (£910 discount).
In 2024/25 **£2,200 plus VAT** was paid (£210 discount).
In 2025/26 **£1,800 plus VAT** was paid (£610 discount).