

## Christmas Lights Report 2022/23

### History

The Lions Club of Felixstowe were formed in 1978 and in that year they took on the responsibility for erecting and maintaining the Town's Christmas Lights from The Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber had found it increasingly difficult to find the time or raise the finance to erect the lights and keep them in good working order. The lights are owned by Lions but if Lions voted to not continue providing this service ownership of the lights and the lease on the storage facility (below) would revert to the Council. This is a report on the 44<sup>th</sup> Lions season!

### Funding

Lions Clubs primary purposes include encouraging service-minded people to serve their community without personal financial reward. Felixstowe Lions Club raises funds for charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally. Funding for the Christmas Lights is a separate enterprise. From the outset, the Town Council has provided a grant (currently £6750) but this needs significant supplementation which comes from commercial sponsors, Felixstowe BID and from the production of a Christmas Light Up Day programme published in the October issue of The Spotlight magazine.

### Storage & Maintenance Facility

Storage and maintenance require significant space. Over the years Lions have sought, and been generously granted, redundant buildings, sheds and rooms by a variety of organisations including the Council, retailers and other businesses around the town. Currently we operate out of the sports hall at the old Deben school site. The Council has been a key player in finding a permanent home. Work is currently underway to move the operation to Garrison Lane car park next to the FACTS buildings. We have repurposed a portable classroom from the Deben site and have acquired containers to be housed on the site. This facility will be leased from East Suffolk Council for a peppercorn rent. Work on this should be complete by the summer. We plan to move in as we dismantle the lights in January 2024.

### Lighting Scheme

Over the years the scheme has been updated and modernised. All the displays are 100% LED, the total energy consumption for the whole scheme is around 5kW. Each year new features are added to improve the look and the reliability. This year the angels, commissioned by Felixstowe BID, were installed and lit, some using solar power. The displays are now wirelessly connected in a daisy chain allowing the whole scheme to be switched on remotely – the Mayor does actually switch the lights on with the big red button! For this year's scheme we are looking into improvements at the triangle and in the early stages of exploring the use of laser projection.