

Stalbright Report ATM 2017/2018

"Our mission is to promote pride and community spirit amongst the residents of Stalbridge, by organising, promoting and supporting special events."

The past year has been somewhat of a mixed bag for Stalbright. In the spring of 2017 we supported St Mary's Parochial Church Council with help and advice and sponsored £250 for a bouncy castle and band at their fundraiser Springfest.

In preparation for Stalbright's summer fundraising event we commissioned a special flag to adorn the High street; these were interspersed with Dorset flags at a cost of £974.54. The A357 was awash with sunshine yellow, although this met with mixed reviews. Some people loved it, others most definitely did not. Our thanks go to Tony Wood for his beautiful artwork depicting the market cross on the Stalbridge Flag and John Fieldhouse for turning a concept into reality. We would also like to thank Fiona Payne for hearing our call to arms and volunteering her husband John to help the Stalbright team hoist the flags in the high street.

The Sunday Funday itself seemed to be plagued with difficulties this year. We struggled for helpers, with our 'go to' people either double booked for the event, away on holiday or out of the country. The glorious weather on the day meant we saw fewer participants for the dog show and the timing of the event meant there were several other local summer fairs the same weekend. Perhaps people had country fair fatigue as the funday was not as well-attended as previous years. This showed in the profits which were quite considerably less than previous years, £1,342.01

In September we turned our attention to our favourite part of the Stalbright calendar – Christmas! This year Chris Wiles worked his magic and lit up St Mary's Church Tower and we identified dark spots on the High Street and targeted residents that had not previously displayed a tree. We provided brackets where needed, a tree and loan of lights, resulting in 28 extra trees. Lighting up Stalbridge at a cost of £1,468. We are hopeful that people will now continue this tradition and we will be encouraging residents to commit to Christmas in September 2018.

We had a somewhat re-vamped Ring event in 2017. Canon William Ridding lead the lantern parade to The Ring and was joined by The Stalbridge Christmas Choir and some very brave Stalbridge residents for the retelling of The Christmas Story. With the Church providing mulled wine and mince pies and the Scouts a very welcome bbq, the evening was filled with true Stalbridge community spirit.

Stalbright promoted a weekend of events ranging from a Tea party at The Hall, Christmas Trees, arts and crafts and a concert at The Congregational Church, and our very own community café and fundraising fair at The Hub.

Unfortunately in January we lost several of our volunteers due to either a change in circumstances or other commitments. This has left us with a skeleton crew. In light of this the remaining volunteers have decided on a manageable plan for 2018.

Of course there is always Christmas and we will be looking for new ways to keep the lights twinkling, but with regards to raising funds we decided to take a break from a big summer

fundraiser and look at alternatives. Due to the success of the Community Café at Christmas it was decided to make this a quarterly event giving local deserving groups a much needed platform to raise awareness and funds and to date Stalbright has raised £66.82 through donations at the café. The next event is on Saturday 2nd June. Do please come and support it.

Our current ongoing project is Armistitch - a celebration of the end of The First World War. It's a chance to get creative and community spirited. We meet on Monday mornings at the Hub from 9.30 to 11.30 but anyone can join in so come and see us and find out what it is all about. Our AGM this year will be scheduled around volunteers availability and the date will be published in due course.