



Addiscombe & Shirley Park Residents' Association

Report for meeting on 29 November 2023

Nothing much to report for this meeting, except an exchange of views on a local Facebook page.

On her **I love Addiscombe** Facebook page, **Krystyna Pawelczyk** posted a photograph of our poppies and another of the Christmas lights. She wrote:

Addiscombe prepares for Christmas and Remembrance Sunday

Great walk in Addiscombe today ... looking very festive with the lights and the bright red poppies for Remembrance Sunday. Thank you to everyone who was involved in this.

Liz Brereton, one-time editor of the ASPRA magazine, replied:

Would be better for lights to go up after remembrance poppies are taken down. Doesn't make sense to have 2 festivals muddled up together.

Krystyna Pawelczyk responded:

Liz Brereton maybe you would like to help and suggest this to ASPRA?

At which point, yours truly joined in:

Colin Gamm

Thank you, Liz, for questioning the timing. It may surprise you to know that it's not accidental. ASPRA (see detail below) doesn't control when the Christmas lights go up, but we do control when they are turned on. Mindful of the Remembrance poppies, the committee discussed the timing and deliberately chose 15 November for the lights to be turned on. Just so that you know, specifying when the lights go up and when they are turned on costs an extra £3,000.

This year we spent (and the figures are deliberately detailed) £262.40 on new straps for the lampposts and £3,630.96 on the lights. The new straps are a one-off, but the costs of the lights will hold for another four years.

We buy the poppies for £3 each, along with a charitable donation, from the British Legion. They need renewing occasionally, and we buy new cable ties every year to hold them in place. Our intention was to put them up on 29 September, two weeks before Remembrance Sunday, but the persistent rain drowned our enthusiasm and we had to stop. The bulk went up last Saturday, with a dozen or so poppies this year on the two parades of shops on Shirley Road.

It really is worth making the point that the entire cost of the Christmas lights, the summer-long flowering baskets and the big red poppies is paid for by our residents' association, not the council or a traders' association as is often supposed. ASPRA members regularly chip in more than the cost of their subscription, and local traders, businesses and organisations are generous in their support.

In short, we spend quite a lot of money every year on making our little corner of the world a nicer place to live. We are lucky to have such a vibrant bunch of shops and cafes on our doorstep. You, Liz, edited our magazine once. You know how important these things are.

Colin Gamm, Vice Chair, Addiscombe and Shirley Park Residents' Association

Liz Brereton replied:

Colin Gamm thanks for the explanation, some of which I was already aware of as ASPRA resident & previous committee member. Good to know that these things are thought about seriously.

Meanwhile, the thread continued with Liz Brereton's reply to Krystyna's last question:

Liz Brereton

Krystyna Pawelczyk that's why I posted it here!

Krystyna Pawelczyk

Liz Brereton so glad you are happy to help next year's Christmas celebrations and Poppy Day events in Addiscombe and anything in between - please do stay in touch.

And that's it, with no further comment from me. The main reason for submitting this in so much detail is that in responding to Liz I have made public the cost of the lights. This may not previously have been known.

Colin Gamm
7 November 2023