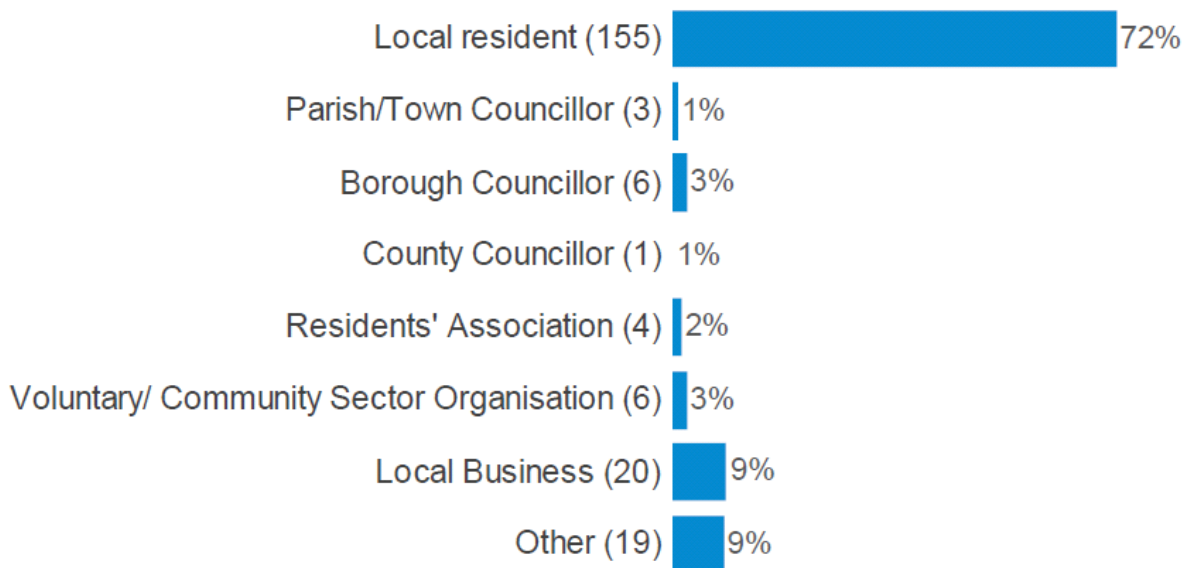


## Christmas review – online survey

As part of the Christmas Fayre review, the Council produced an online survey to request feedback from the public, community representatives, local businesses and other stakeholders. The results of this survey were used to understand the impact of the Christmas Fayre on the town.

This report summarises the responses to the survey

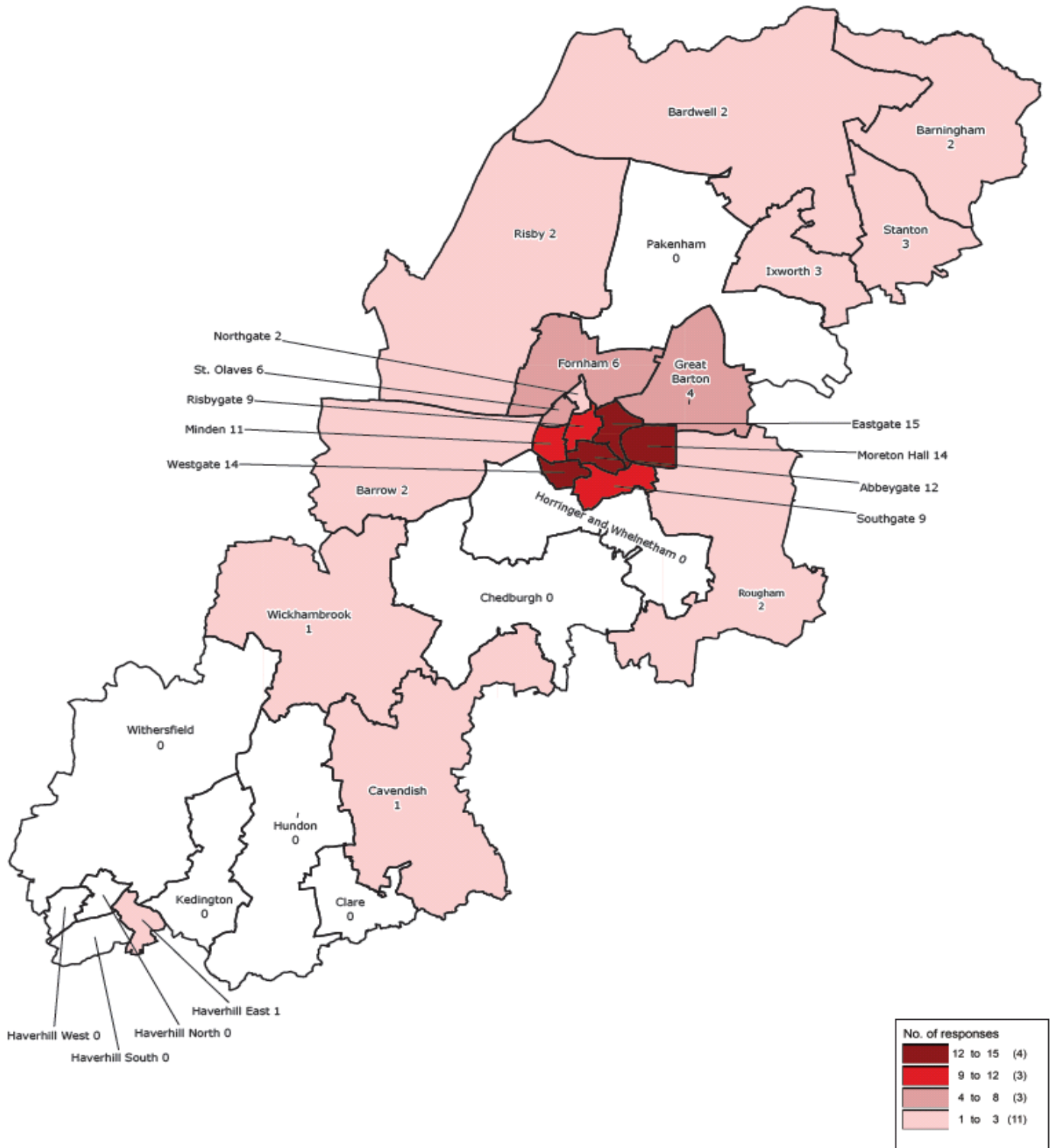
### What best describes your interest /response? Are you a (please tick one):



19 people defined their interest in the Christmas Fayre as 'other'. These responses were from emergency services, visitor to the town, former town resident, employed in the town or a support service to the planning and/or management of the Fayre.

The level of response to the Christmas Fayre survey was very encouraging and the Task and Finish Group asked for a breakdown of the resident responses to ensure it was not a disproportionate representation of the town. The map on the following page shows the spread of responses across Bury St Edmunds and the St Edmundsbury borough.

# Local resident responses by Borough Ward

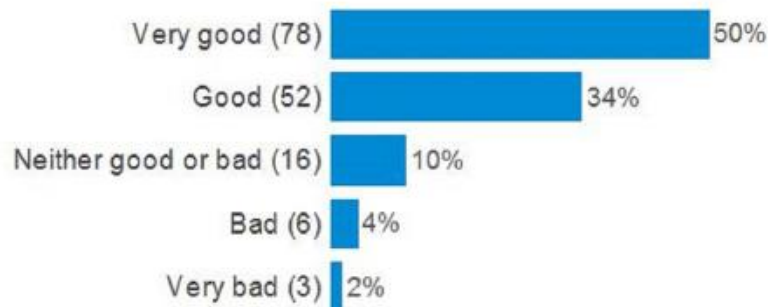


## Appendix C

People that responded to the survey were asked for the first word that came to mind when they thought of the Christmas Fayre. The words were defined as either positive or negative and plotted on a word map.



It was recognised by the Task and Finish Group that the Christmas Fayre has both a positive and negative impact on Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. Respondents to the survey were asked to assess whether on the whole they thought the Christmas Fayre is good or bad for Bury St Edmunds.



The survey then highlighted some of the more apparent negative and positive impacts on the town and asked people to measure the effect of this aspect.

### Negative effect on the local area:

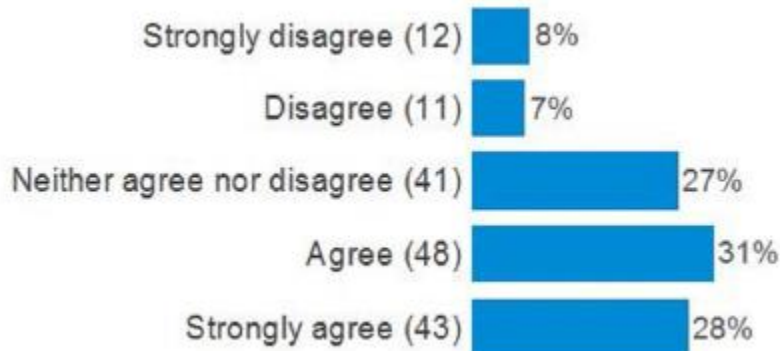
- 67% thought that car parking had a negative effect on the local area
- 69% thought that traffic congestion had a negative effect on the local area
- 51% thought that pedestrian congestion had a negative effect on the local area
- The following percentages of respondents thought that the following had a negative effect on the local area:
  - Litter (17%)
  - Noise (9%)
  - ASB (7%)
  - Waste of public money (9%)
  - Negative impact on Bury St Edmunds image (6%)
  - Over-commercialised event in a historic town (17%)

### Positive effect on the local area:

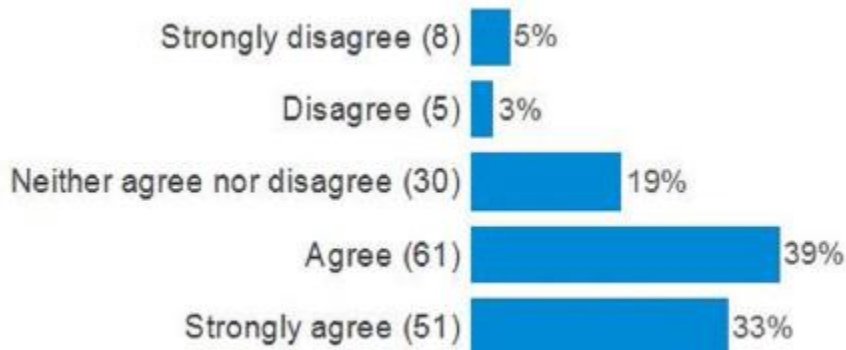
- 80% thought that it enhanced the image of Bury St Edmunds as a visitor destination
- 74% thought that it boosted the local economy, creating higher footfall throughout the town centre
- 64% thought it provided trading opportunities for local traders and casual employment opportunities for local people
- 66% thought it was a great event for the communities in and around Bury St Edmunds
- 63% thought that it offered suitable entertainment for all ages

The survey asked people whether they thought that the Christmas Fayre made Bury St Edmunds an exciting place to visit, live and work.

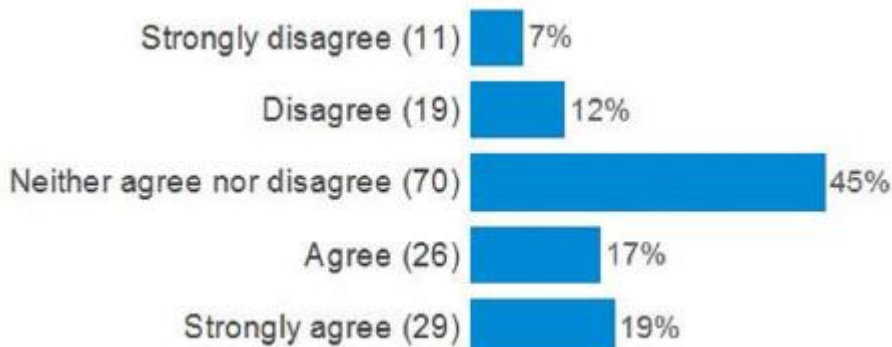
**Does the Fayre give you pride in Bury St Edmunds and make it an exciting place to live?**



**Does the Fayre give you pride in Bury St Edmunds and make it an exciting place to visit?**



**Does the Fayre give you pride in Bury St Edmunds and make it an exciting place to work?**



### **Christmas Fayre survey – FAQ's**

The Christmas Fayre impact survey provided the opportunity for people to provide free-text comments regarding the Christmas Fayre. The comments have been collated and summarised into this FAQ document with the following headings:

- [Access](#)
- [Animals](#)
- [Banks](#)
- [Business impact](#)
- [Communication](#)
- [Congestion](#)
- [Crowds](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Location](#)
- [Public transport](#)
- [Security](#)
- [Stalls](#)
- [Timing](#)

#### **Access**

*Is the Christmas Fayre accessible for people with limited mobility?*

All venues used by the Christmas Fayre offer disabled access and the event organisers plan the layout carefully to ensure there is space available for people with limited mobility to move around the event. However, it should be noted that the Fayre experiences a high footfall and those with limited mobility are advised to avoid peak times.

#### **Animals**

*There is concern for the live animals that appear at the Christmas Fayre due to the vast crowds and noise. How are they sourced and how does the Council ensure they are kept in a safe environment?*

All animals (farm animals and reindeer) on show at the Fayre are sourced from specialist companies. In advance of the Fayre the Council completes a routine background check on the company and requests the appropriate risk assessments and other paperwork in advance of the event. The paperwork is assessed by the Health and Safety Manager and approved if appropriate.

#### **Banks**

*How will the Council build a relationship with the banks to ensure they do not run out of cash at the Christmas Fayre?*

The banks in the Bury St Edmunds town centre receive advance warning from OurBuryStEdmunds of the date for the Christmas Fayre. The banks should plan appropriately for an event of this size.

**Business impact**

*How does the Christmas Fayre impact on the local trade sectors? How can this impact be measured in the future?*

The Council uses footfall counters in the arc and on Abbeygate Street to measure the number of visitors to the Christmas Fayre. Over recent years the Council has engaged with local businesses through OurBuryStEdmunds and will continue to do so over the coming years.

*How can the Council integrate the Christmas Fayre with the rest of the town centre, for example the Traverse and St Johns Street?*

The Council works with businesses across the Bury St Edmunds town centre and is open to suggestions for how this event can be better integrated with other areas of the town.

*Why does the Council offer the stalls to businesses that are not from the local area? They don't pay business rates here and their profits aren't distributed in the local area.*

60% of stalls provided by the Council at the 2015 Christmas Fayre were from East Anglia. The Council offers preference to local traders where appropriate. Previous visitor surveys have shown that visitors to the Fayre also spend money in the town centre shops, restaurants and on local accommodation.

*Does the Council offer stalls at a discounted rate to local traders and start up businesses?*

No, the Council doesn't offer discounted stalls. However, the Council does offer local businesses priority bookings in new areas of the Christmas Fayre, for example this year the Angel Hotel was offered a stall.

*Why do the shops and the weekly market close before the Fayre finishes in the evening?*

Several businesses in the town centre stay open for the duration of the Christmas Fayre and the Council encourages other businesses to also extend their opening hours. In response to feedback, the weekly market will stay open for the duration of the Fayre this year and will not be able to move until pedestrian congestion has reduced.

### **Communication**

#### *How does the Council communicate with residents and businesses in the lead up to the Christmas Fayre?*

The Council uses lots of communication channels to communicate with residents, businesses and visitors to the Christmas Fayre. Examples of the communication channels used by the Council are listed below:

- Christmas Fayre website and programme
- Christmas Fayre facebook page:
- Council twitter feed
- Christmas Fayre email newsletter distribution
- OurBuryStEdmunds newsletter to town centre businesses
- Bury Free Press newspaper and website
- Various press releases
- Various radio advertising

The Council is currently exploring ways of proactively communicating with affected residents concerning, for example, road closures.

#### *How does the Council advertise the locals only evening to residents and businesses?*

The Council promotes the Thursday evening part of the Fayre, aimed at locals, on Facebook and through the Bury Free Press. The website and programme also includes a section on the opening evening.

### **Congestion**

#### *What is the Council doing to reduce congestion in the Bury St Edmunds town centre over the Christmas Fayre weekend?*

The Council works every year to increase the availability of car parking outside of the town centre which reduces the levels of congestion in the town. A 1,000 space Park and Ride service is operated from Claas UK, and Greene King, Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club and West Suffolk College make their car parks available for visitors. The Council also makes their staff and visitor car parks at Olding Road and Western Way available for visitors to park and walk.

A large team of stewards, both volunteer and paid, are also recruited to signpost visitors to the best area for car parking.

Visitors to the 2015 fayre were encouraged to leave the car at home and cycle or walk into the Bury St Edmunds town centre. Thanks to Maglia Rosso cycle shop in Hawstead, the Council is offering free cycle storage at the Cornhill Walk shopping centre as well as a free bicycle MOT.



The availability and management of car parking at the Christmas Fayre is improving year-on-year and the Council appreciates the support of local businesses and schools for providing their services and car parks to reduce traffic congestion across the town.

*How does the Council encourage people from outside of Bury St Edmunds to use the park and ride service instead of parking in the town centre car parks which causes gridlock and inconvenience for residents and businesses?*

The Council works closely with a Traffic Management company to direct customers from the A14 to the park and ride and park and walk car parks. This service is also promoted on the website, social media and in press releases prior to the event.

*What does the Council do to support the residents and businesses that are affected by the road closures?*

The Council recognises the impact that the road closure has on local businesses and residents and offers local businesses free advertising on the Christmas Fayre website and offers residents use of the Ram Meadow car park for the Christmas Fayre weekend.

*How do the event organisers work with the emergency services to ensure that the congestion does not affect the ambulance, fire and police services?*

The Council's Health and Safety Manager produces a comprehensive event safety plan and submits this to the Safety Advisory Group in advance of the event. The emergency services are engaged with in advance of the event to ensure they are happy with the safety arrangements for the event.

*Is the Council planning to provide a Park and Ride site on the East of Bury St Edmunds?*

The Council is not currently considering this option due to the impact of additional footfall from the park and ride service. Visitors to the Fayre from east of Bury St Edmunds are encouraged to use public transport or the park and walk car parks.

### **Crowds**

*What is the Council doing to ensure there are sufficient public toilets available for the Christmas Fayre?*

The Council has listened to feedback from the 2014 Fayre and organised for additional public toilets to be placed across the town centre. There will also be better signage available to ensure that visitors know where the nearest public toilet facilities are.

*It's not possible to see the stalls in the Athenaeum, the Arc and on Angel Hill because of the huge crowds of people. Is the Council doing anything to moderate the crowds across all venues?*

The Council recognises that additional footfall should not be attracted to the Christmas Fayre as this could affect the safety and enjoyment of the event. The Council uses CCTV and Zone Leaders (stewards on the ground) to constantly monitor the crowd dynamics.

The Council has also looked at alternative methods of reducing pedestrian congestion, for example by considering introducing a one way system. A one way system cannot be achieved for pedestrian flow but alternative 'quieter' routes are signposted by stewards at peak times. The weekly provisions market in the Buttermarket is in place for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday and this has improved the flow of pedestrians from Angel Hill to the arc and other areas of the town centre.

The managers of the venues used by the Christmas Fayre monitor the number of visitors to the building to ensure that the maximum occupancy is not exceeded. All crowd dynamics and the venue footfall totals are analysed and evaluated by the Health and Safety Manager after the event.

*The stalls on Angel Hill and in the Athenaeum are too close together. How does the Council ensure that there is suitable space available for people to comfortably walk around the Fayre?*

The layout of the Christmas Fayre is planned carefully by event organisers to ensure that there is space available for people to walk around the Christmas Fayre and to allow access for emergency service vehicles. The space available is deemed as sufficient but the Council recognises that it can be congested at peak times and this is kept under review by event organisers, CCTV and the zone leaders.

*Could the Council reduce pedestrian congestion by utilising other community space in the town centre, for example town centre churches or the art gallery?*

Several churches and other community facilities offer stalls and other events over the Christmas Fayre weekend and the Council encourages others to make similar arrangements.

### **Entertainment**

*How does the Council advertise the variety of entertainment that takes place across the town centre?*

The entertainment programme is advertised on the Christmas Fayre website in advance of the event and signage is available at the stage on Angel Hill and the stage at Charter Square to inform visitors of the entertainment programme for the

day. Event organisers have arranged for larger signage for the entertainers at the 2015 Christmas Fayre.

*There needs to be more variety to the Christmas Fayre entertainment. How does the Council programme the entertainment for the event?*

Every year the Council reviews and improves the entertainment programme for the Christmas Fayre. Interested schools, choirs and other groups are encouraged to contact the event organisers.

*Why does the Council put fireworks on the Christmas Fayre opening night?*

The fireworks are provided for the first evening as an incentive for local residents to visit the Christmas Fayre on the Thursday night. The opening night is primarily aimed at local residents and isn't marketed for coach companies to visit.

### **Location**

*Why doesn't the Council hold the Fayre in a field outside of Bury St Edmunds? Surely this would remove the negative impact on local residents and businesses.*

Holding the Christmas Fayre outside of Bury St Edmunds town centre would reduce the impact on the town centre economy and also wouldn't showcase the many Bury St Edmunds attractions that encourage visitors to return to the town.

*Why does the Council have to close Angel Hill for the Christmas Fayre? Surely the road could remain open if the stalls, entertainment and funfair was located in the Abbey Gardens instead.*

The Council Health and Safety Manager advised the closure of Angel Hill due to high volume of pedestrians. There were several near misses involving members of the public and vehicles at the Christmas Fayre in 2004 and a subsequent decision was taken for Angel Hill to be closed for all future Christmas Fayres.

*Is the Council going to refresh the Christmas Fayre by reviewing the location of stalls across the town centre? It would be better if some stalls were clustered by type.*

The Council wants visitors to the Christmas Fayre to experience the whole range of stalls across the town. Also, having a variety of stalls across the town centre supports the management of pedestrian congestion across all venues.

*Is the Council going to make the most of the Cornhill site now that only one shop is in the building?*

Event organisers are working with the owners of the Cornhill Walk shopping centre and this year the building is being used for charity craft stalls and a cycle park, with free bicycle MOT service, for visitors that cycle to the Fayre.

*Locating the stalls on Angel Hill horizontally rather than vertically (similar to the town centre) would improve pedestrian congestion. Has the Council considered this?*

Event organisers have tried a variety of layouts for Angel Hill and the current format is considered from a crowd control and crowd dynamics point of view to be the most appropriate at this time.

### **Public transport**

*Is the Council working with local bus companies to provide additional services for residents over the Christmas Fayre weekend? Less people would drive if the bus companies provided a later services to the outlying estates and villages.*

The Council is working with bus and rail providers to encourage visitors to use public transport to visit the Fayre. The Council has explored additional bus services from the surrounding villages in the past but the uptake has not been sufficient enough to support this initiative being repeated.

### **Security**

*Is there a sufficient number of stewards and police present to guide people around the town and to ensure the safety and security of people?*

The Council has received positive feedback from the emergency services and visitors regarding the helpfulness of the stewards. The Council is employing more NVQ qualified stewards for the 2015 Fayre to manage the flow of pedestrians around the town and to ensure visitors are safe and that they enjoy their visit.

### **Stalls**

*The stalls at the Christmas Fayre are very repetitive and the majority offer low quality products. What does the Council do to ensure there is a variety of high quality stalls at the Fayre?*

The event organisers monitor the levels of each type of stall across the town centre and tests this through customer feedback. There are also areas of the town with higher quality products, for example the Athenaeum.

*What identity is the Council trying to create for the Christmas Fayre? Has the Council considered replicating the image of the German Christmas? It's currently a very mixed style and quality across the town.*

The Christmas Fayre is promoted as a Fayre with a variety of stalls on offer to suit a range of tastes and incomes.

*Does the Council offer priority for stalls to local businesses that source products that are produced locally?*

Local businesses are taken into consideration when selecting a new stallholder for a vacant pitch.

### **Timing**

*Has the Council considered putting the Fayre on for a longer period to reduce the congestion issues? Alternatively, has the Council considered reducing the number of days to mitigate the negative impact on the town?*

The Council is not currently considering offering the Christmas Fayre for a longer period. However, the Council is looking to use the Fayre to promote other events that are happening in the area over the festive period.

*The final weekend of November is 'Black Friday' which would already bring a high footfall to Bury St Edmunds. Shouldn't the Council hold it a week earlier to support both events?*

The Council has agreed to fix the date of the Christmas Fayre as the final weekend in November as this avoids a clash with the Christmas lights switch-on and also avoids a clash with the Lincoln Christmas Market. However, this will be revisited if Black Friday becomes a more important tradition in the local area and there is clear support from businesses to change the date to avoid the impact on a busy weekend for trading.