

**Westhill and Elrick Community Council (WECC)**  
**XMAS EVENT - THANK YOU!**

Recently WECC celebrated the “switch-on” of our Xmas lights by no less than Santa himself. The switch-on was accompanied by traditional carols, hot drinks and snacks and, for our younger guests, story-telling by Santa himself in his special Grotto.

This year for the first time, WECC worked in collaboration with MAPP Town Centre Management and local Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to put together our most ambitious event ever. So far feedback on the event has been generally excellent, which is great to hear. Putting such an event on requires a lot of effort behind the scenes as well as on the day, so WECC wish to thank all those described below who contributed in any way, front and back stage.

All those members of the public who attended in greater numbers than ever before, especially the parents and grandparents who brought along their children to make it a great family and community orientated experience. It was truly delightful to see the thrill on the children’s faces as they met Santa and experience their joy and energy as they sang along to children’s favourites such as Jingle Bells and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.

We couldn’t have had such an expanded event without practical and financial support from MAPP’s Centre Manager Ben Horsburgh, who generously provided and installed not one but two trees for the town centre and the Holiday Inn roundabout, along with their respective power supplies. He also made available premises for Santa’s Grotto which on a cold and windy afternoon gave a welcome and warm shelter for Santa’s storytelling. Through MAPP Ben also provided the additional lights in the quad area and a snow machine for the top of the adjacent roof, which was operated by his staff who heroically braved the cold gusty wind and occasional rain shower to bring us a taste of a white Xmas. Beyond getting frozen stiff on the day, Ben’s staff also helped in a myriad of other ways leading up to the event.

Staff from Field Engineering Services (FES) also helped to decorate the large tree at the roundabout which was quite a task given it is about fifteen feet high.

PTA representatives from Elrick, Westhill and Crombie Primary Schools and their friends led by Summer Watt of Slumber In Style sprinkled some Xmas magic into Santa’s Grotto with a big red story-tellers couch, twinkling lights and colourful decorations. They also acted as helpers to Santa to ensure that some 180 primary children were enthralled with his story-telling and raised some £200 for each of the PTAs in the process.

Elsewhere, despite the bitter cold, the carol singing was led by Mika McKenzie who organised two choirs, the Albacopellas and the BeNaturals , who along with other singers from local churches, and members of the public sang a selection of traditional Christmas carols, with the highly excited, children gathered in an arc, taking a special lead from Santa himself.

And Santa was no doubt the star of the whole afternoon, with his magical story telling; helping provide the build up to the “switch on” and encouraging the children to sing along, while keeping time by loudly ringing his golden hand bell.

Round Table members provided Santa’s motorized sleigh, and a medley of Xmas music throughout the event via their PA system. They also took a cash collection for good causes and pass on their thanks to all those who donated so generously.

While all this was going on WECC Members and helpers were busy providing much needed “antifreeze” in the welcome guise of hot drinking chocolate (kindly provided by the Holiday Inn) to wash down savoury mince pies and sundry other goodies, generously provided by other local businesses – namely:

Tesco’s, Marks and Spencer’s, Spec Savers, Duncan and Todd, Barbers pole, Storie, Cruden and Simpson, Aberdeen Considine, Best Wishes, Daisy Chain, JK Fine Foods, Low and Co Hair, and the Co op.

In addition, a number of our shops took part in our competition for the best Christmas window display, and their welcome efforts added greatly to the Christmas feel and appearance of the town centre; and I’m very pleased to report that this year the award for the best window went to Low and Co Hair Design.

So there you have it – a huge thank you again to all concerned for helping make this first collaboration such a success, with thanks and apologies to anyone I may have missed. It’s been great fun along the way and we’ve picked up some tips and ideas to make it even better next year.

Have a great Christmas and best wishes for 2022.

Mervyn Barr  
Chair WECC