



Christmas Carnival '24 –

Recommendations:

To note the post event audit for the Haydon Wick
Christmas Carnival '24



Background



The Haydon Wick Parish Council Christmas Carnival, initially conceived as a medium scale winter festival with multiple attractions, underwent minor adaptations due to adverse weather conditions. This report analyses the transition from the planned event to its actual execution, highlighting both challenges and successes.

Original Event Vision

The carnival was designed to be a comprehensive community celebration featuring:

- A community light parade
- Mini-Christmas market with local vendors
- Street performers and entertainment
- Mix of free and paid activities
- Local business participation and sponsorship
- School and community group involvement

Actual Event Execution

Despite challenging weather conditions, the event successfully adapted to deliver a modified but engaging community experience:

Key Features Maintained:

- Light parade along Blunsdon Road featuring 100 illuminated umbrellas
- Professional entertainment including stilt-walking angels and fire juggling
- Father Christmas appearance
- Britannia Majorettes performance
- Selection of food stalls and charity stands
- Funfair attractions
- Christmas donkey attraction

The event demonstrated remarkable community resilience, with strong attendance despite the rain and schedule modifications. The creative incorporation of umbrellas into the light parade turned a potential weather challenge into a unique feature of the celebration.

Budget Information

Budget awarded
£3,000

Income:

Sponsorship: £ 250.00

Stalls: £ 230.00

Total income £ 480.00

Budget awarded £3,000.00

Total Funds £3,480.00

Donated support:

Affleck Electrical: 2 x generators,
Metal steaks, Road Closure
signage and bollards.

Coles Scaffolding: Light display
scaffold.

Expenses TBC:

Entertainment: £2,195.00

Light Parade: £ 496.83

Infrastructure: £ 828.54

Safe & Secure: £ 438.40

Stall Refunds: £ 40.00

Total Expenses £3,998.77

Total Funds £3,480.00

Budget Over Spend: £518.77

Feedback Highlights: Christmas Carnival '24

11 Event feedback forms returned to date.

Location:

8 Excellent 3 Good

Organisation:

8 Excellent 3 Good

Variety of activities:

5 Excellent 5 Good 1 Fair

Activities/entertainment:

The light parade was a great hit. Stilt Walkers, Fire Juggling, Father Christmas, Donkey and the Fun fair organ were all mentioned as great entertainment

Common recommendations for next event:

- Better Parade signage with viewing areas and marshalling
- More stalls (although we had 5 cancel due to the weather)
- Back up generator
- More festoon lights
- Louder music and regular announcements (potential DJ?)
- Consider some inside space and access to closer toilets
- The earlier start time of 4/4.30pm worked well.

What could be improved and why?	Which activities did you take part in? And what did you enjoy most about the event?	Do you have any other comments on this event or suggestions for future events?
Iâ€™m sure the weather had a significant impact, but more stalls would have been welcomed. The stalls present need, lighting, because they were dim I didn’t want to walk into them in case they were of no interest. Overall I thought it was a great event and something that could really be built on.	In error we were in the umbrella parade, we didnâ€™t realise until too late that we joined in the end. Bought food (pizza and jacket potato), which were really good. Grandkids went on various rides. The parade and stilt walkers was very colourful and a visual treat.	HWPC is offering more and more to the community, the summer fetes are great and this Christmas one can grow to be something special. More stall holders and better lighting for them. Well done HWPC, keep up the great work
Really enjoyed it but think that the food stalls could have been a bit closer to the fairground. I thought they may have missed out a bit. It was shame about generator stopping the music, so I guess a back up might be an idea next time. Keep the broly parade, it was lovely.	N/A	Most of the feedback I have had was that it should be repeated next year. Maybe a brass band?
More festive lights but i understand this is very costly - unless we use them for the council offices afterwards.	The circus performers were a great idea as they engaged with lots of people and were perfect for families wanting photo opportunities.	A brilliant event, despite the weather. It was lovely to see so many people come together within the community.
Extended commentating on the PA system / it would be great to have an MC and louder festive music played throughout.	The funfair also added to the Carnival atmosphere and the donkeys seemed to be a great hit too.	It may be better doing it on a Saturday with events starting before the parade to entice people to stay for a longer period. Well done Liz to have brought your vision to life on limited resources :)
The event almost needed a finale (I think as previously considered - an outdoor cinema could work).	I know the weather was the issue - but a Christmas style market with more traders would be good - perhaps to liaise with the Orbital Market so that the parade could finish there?	
	Just watched. The guy with the fire was particularly good, Father Christmas was very patient and kind, lovely to see the majorettes.	Please do an Easter Event ðŸ™
More information on the website/ social media regarding location/ what to expect	The parade was excellent! Obviously the rain was not ideal but it was a great event. Everyone started following the parade which was perhaps a little bit confusing.	The vendors were great! Good selection on all.
The rain was the main issue. As with the summer event two years ago, there which was also wet. people started to drift away after the carnival as a long gap between the entertainment events. I think what we have learned at events it is essential to hold the crowd by providing constant entertainment	the parade was the best bit	May be for a winter event consider a ,location with some indoor space in case of poor weather The earlier start was a big success and the overall event a big success but some learnings too
I felt it was well managed event. It was always difficult once it got dark. Maybe a louder PA set could be used in order to let everyone know what was going on etc. however very minor consideration to the amount of people who attended & enjoyed the event even in the rain. The weather tried, but gladly failed! Well done everyone! Good event please do something next year! Donâ€™t worry about the weather!	The colour walk was great & enjoyable for all ages. I felt the stilt walkers were fantastic & gave the event a more Christmas feel. Also the food vans used were good. Especially the pizza van. Good value food for a good price!	Very little went wrong. You can see the amount of effort everyone put in & should be proud. What I did like was the effort by the Parish Council in going to local schools & groups to invite & help design their umbrellas. Great way to bring together the local community. However well done on arranging this event. Looking forward to next week at the Christmas Party at the Haydon Centre.
I believe some residents said there could have been better sign posting for the event from Morrisons Supermarket side of the village.	We met Santa, the angels and the animals.	A few more craft stalls would great.
The only improvement I can suggest is clearer instructions as to where the public must go who are watching and where the people taking part in the carnival march are starting as there was a lot of back and forward! If they are starting at the pub give the instruction for all who are taking part to gather there whilst onlookers go ahead up the road to stand on the side lines to watch!	I loved seeing the organ in the fair ground bit. Id never seen anything like it before and the history behind it is beautiful! We also loved the jacket potato van!	I have only put good above as I know due to the weather a lot of them didn’t turn up, this cannot be helped and is just unfortunate. It was a brilliant idea for the community and to have something local in north Swindon instead of having to traipse over the other side of town! We were really impressed at what organisers had did considering the poor weather situation and the fact it was their first time organising such an event! I’m really hoping there is future events like this. I’d also like to suggest next year having floats as part of the carnival! They do something similar in Pewsey and as a child I remember Wroughton having a really good procession as well! It would be nice to bring something to the Haydon wick community that is for our side of Swindon. Id like to personally thank organisers for such a fantastic idea and all the hard work and effort they put into this event. Despite the weather it was lovely!
I was sceptical about the venue but it proved to be ideal with only minimal road closures. There would be room for more stalls further down Blunsdon Road for future events	I thought the fire juggler and stilt walkers made a spectacular start to the parade of umbrellas.	I think the earlier start was a good move when so many events were cancelled and avoided the worst of the weather. It might be a good time to start future events involving younger children.
More stalls and more people leading the parade. Closer toilets as was too far to get to the pub for the loos	I had a stall so didn’t see much else	Great first year and a starting block to build on

Haydon Wick Commu...

Light parade

3.9k Views!



151

18 comments 3.9K views

Haydon Wick Community Page

6 Dec · 📷

Well done everyone!
The weather could have been kinder to you after all your hard work.
Better luck next year??!!!!
With all the support you had it shows that the community appreciated it.Thankyou HWPC.

1w Love Reply 3 🍷👍

Brilliant !! What a good turn out, great to see so many people on a gloomy day !!

1w Like Reply 1 👍

Well done HWPC and for local families supporting it!

1w Like Reply 2 👍

We must have missedd it. Went at 5.20ish and there was hardly anyone around 😞 looks great!

1w Like Reply

Brilliant shame the weather didn't help xx

1w Like Reply

Haydon Wick Community Page

6 Dec · 📷

Where did all the see through illuminated umbrellas come from?
Well done to everyone involved 🙌🙌

1w Like Reply

Well done, loving the light brollies.

1w Like Reply 2 👍

Such a good event that needs to become a yearly one

1w Like Reply 2 👍

👑 Top contributor
Terrific .. well done HWPC 🙌🙌🙌

1w Like Reply 1 👍

Didn't know it was on 🐶

1w Like Reply

WHAT WENT WELL...

CHECK OUT THE EVENT PICTURES HERE



The light parade and entertainment went down well:

- 100 umbrellas and light sets were purchased. These were distributed across schools and community groups.
- The Britania majorettes were a huge asset to the parade supplying the marching tunes and leading from the back (due to time change) driving everyone forward.
- The parade was led by the stilt walkers, Father Christmas and fire juggler this created a spectacular focal point.
- Father Christmas was an attraction on his own, he was able to fill the gaps and keep the children engaged.

Other attractions that worked well:

- The Christmas Donkey and Pony were well received and a lovely off parade attraction.
- The Funfair and Fairground Organ added another layer of activity and interest.
- Light Display Wall, was well received and added an opportunity for photos and added to the ambiance of the event.

Set up:

- Having the event on a Friday meant the POS team were able to help throughout the day. With three team members changing their hours to support the evening event and take down.
- Traders and Funfair were all ready to go at the new time of 4pm.

Road Closure:

- Most residents in the adjacent homes were fully supportive and excited by the event on their doorstep.
- They understood that they would have limited access to their property especially during the parade.

Marketing reach and increased social media engagement:

- View Marketing & Events February report for full details.

Partnering and Sponsorship:

- Successful sponsorship / supporter engagement and good return on their investment evidenced through print/digital and outdoor advertising/ brand placement.
- Some Income generation through pre booked stalls and food outlets.
- Haydonleigh Primary School held a family craft evening to which they invited the Events & Marketing Co-Ordinator to support. This was a great opportunity to explain expectations for the event and build stronger community partnerships.



What didn't go so well



Weather

– Forecast of storms later in the evening dictated that the event was either cancelled or timings changed. We discussed all options and with forecasts saying weather changes from 7pm onwards we decided to move the event from 5pm – 8pm to 4pm – 7pm. This allowed the best of the weather. Entertainers, Farm3ewe and Funfair were initially contacted and were able to arrive earlier.



Musical Performances

Due to the change of time, the choir and duo performers were unable to get their earlier. Maintaining their original agreed slot. Unfortunately, due to the weather most people had already parted.

Additional to this the generator failed and although a quick solution of switching the generator out for another would have worked. The failure in power resulted in the PA mixing desk fuse to blow. So, from 5.30pm we didn't have any PA system.



Lights – The festoon lights worked well. If we were to have the event in the same area again we would need to consider more lighting especially at the Craft Market areas.



Craft Market - Traders and craft stalls were contacted regarding the weather and given the option of attending. Four out of the Seven Craft Stalls pulled out and have been refunded. One Food trader cancelled due to other reasons.

This impacted on the Craft Market element of the event, with only three stalls' residents soon parted after the parade. Many of the comments in feedback reflect the need for more stalls.



Signage – More! Although maps were shared with all parade participants and staff. There was still confusion over the starting point.

We also need to consider signage/fencing for audience viewing areas as audience and parade were mixed.

Road Closure - We did have a few upset residents regarding limited access to their homes and waiting times. Willsecure managed this well.

PROPOSAL FOR CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL '25



Proposed Venue: TBC. Rose Walk worked well for the parade and limited road closure (safe space). Some inside space needs to be factored in. But residents liked the current venue; would it be wise to move? Could we incorporate the council office and land adjacent or GLL and Car Park?



Risk: I think this years Carnival highlighted most risks: weather/engagement/content/system failure. Even with all these factors Haydon Wick residents have an appetite for more and want to see this event again. We can only learn from this and develop the elements that went well and reconsider better practice for the elements that didn't.



Keep earlier start time. Consider staging and MC/DJ. Develop all weather programme. Working directly with community/family groups to develop more parade features.



Proposed Date: Friday 5th December 2025

RECOMMENDATION'S FOR FUTURE CHRISTMAS CARNIVALS



2025: Carnival to start at Rose Walk and end at the GLL Sports Hall/Car Park. Allowing for indoor/warm space. Familiar parade route will help identify the area as the HWPC Carnival route. Similarities for Year 2 Carnival will help embed this event into the Community Calendar as an annual event. Growing the appetite for more; to then develop further in year 3 or 4



2026/27: Look at possible collaborative events with Orbital Retail Park / Market to grow this event further. Possible use of bus lane as the carnival parade route to support any developments in carnival content. Risk to this plan is ownership, however, in year 3 or 4 of this event HWPC will be recognised as the host.