

Croston Village Festivities Group Chair's Report 2011

The Croston Village Festivities Group was formed in 2008 to take responsibility for organising and running the annual Village Christmas Fair. The event is planned and organised entirely by volunteers from the Croston area with support from local businesses and organisations and the Parish Council. Since 2010 it has been affiliated to The Croston Old School and enjoys charitable status.

The 2011 Christmas Fair was held on Sunday 11th December and, despite a damp start to the day, it soon dried out with visitor numbers widely considered to be in excess of last year. This year saw the return of some tried and tested attractions as well as a number of new entertainers that helped to vary the event's format from previous years. In total there were over 40 stalls at four main venues.

Father Christmas and his faithful elf signalled the start of the event arriving on a horse drawn carriage before taking his seat in the grotto. The land train, fairground rides and raffle made their traditional appearances accompanied by musical entertainment provided by Galloways Choir, Tarleton and Charnock Richard Brass Bands, and Alan Gagan our ever popular Piper. Lee Michaels provided a close up magic show with Chris Cotton performing a children's magic show to crowds at Trinity & St Michaels Primary School. The Blackpool Circus School entertained visitors across the village and newcomers for 2011, Stone the Crows Morris Dancers, drew large crowds wherever they danced. Meanwhile at the primary school there was a display of owls and therapy dogs, all of which were enjoyed by visitors to the fair. Food and drink sold from the village green was never in short supply with popcorn, Moroccan and Indian food, burgers, mulled wine and a hog roast all available to keep the hunger and cold at bay.

The art and craft stalls were spread across three venues: The Old School, Croston Community Centre and Trinity & St Michaels School and the popularity of the raffle led to us selling out of tickets! The evening saw the traditional torch-lit parade and church service which led us to the end of the day. All in all, the event was a great success with some very positive feedback from residents and visitors.

This year the group decided to raise additional funds to cover the forecast expenditure of the event by holding two fund raising events rather than complete a door-to-door collection. The first was the return of the Elvis night at The Sports and Social Club and the second a car boot sale held at

Bishop Rawstone School. As in previous years the Elvis night was popular and our newest venture, the car boot sale, saw around 20 stalls on the school playground and a large number of people shopping for a bargain.

In January 2012 the Group's Chair, Kevin Evans, stood down from his post. The Group wish to thank Kevin for all of his hard work throughout 2011 in making the event such a success and wish him well for the future.

The continuing success and popularity of the event is only possible thanks to the year round support and commitment of the Group's committee members and I wish thank them all for their support again this year. The Christmas Fair costs in excess of £4,500 to run and funding is completely reliant on donations from local businesses, visitors to the event and the income from stall holders as well as the generosity of the committee who donate some of the raffle prizes. Our thanks go once again to those businesses and groups in the area that continue to support us.

Planning for the 2012 event has already started and we are looking at a number of new attractions and exciting ideas. Volunteer support is essential to our success, either helping out on the day or during the year as we plan, and we always welcome additional help and assistance. If you are interested in finding out more about getting involved please contact the committee secretary.

Mike Astle - Vice Chair
Croston Village Festivities Group
March 2012