

Tavistock Christmas Lights

The BID (Business Improvement District) has responsibility for delivering Christmas lights throughout the town (with the exception of the lights on the Guildhall and Town Hall which are down to the Town Council). The lights are paid for out of the BID subscription. Most of the lights are leased from a company called Festive Lighting -

<https://www.festivelighting.co.uk/#ourservice>. BID then contracts Tavistock Town Council and an electrical contractor to oversee the setting up and taking down of the lights each year. The electrical supply is metered from the SSE (usually via the existing lighting columns). Tavistock Town Council has a Works Team of 11 members of staff – I would guess that 5-6 members of the team would be working on Christmas lights from end October until end January. Tavistock Town Council also has a cherry picker that is used almost exclusively for Christmas lights during this period. It is fairly specialist work and the staff working on this are trained in working at height, Chapter 8, operating MEWPS, etc. They also work throughout the night and this costs in terms of overtime and/or has a knock on impact to daytime operation of the Town Council. I have asked for a rough estimate of costs but from memory I think it's around £20,000-£25,000 pa plus quite a bit of 'in-kind' from the Town Council in terms of H&S advice, trouble-shooting, etc.

The lights are not stand-alone item to enhance the visual appeal, and link to events e.g. Dickensian evening, switch on event etc

Tavistock Lions and the Town Council coordinate the Trees of Light each year - <http://www.tavistocklions.org.uk/our-events/christmas-trees-of-light>. The Lions raise funds by asking local people to sponsor a light bulb in memory of someone. The Christmas Trees are donated each year by SW Lakes Trust. The Town Council hires a crane to lift the trees into place on the front of the Town Hall and then a team from the Works Department spend about a week decorating the trees with lights. The Town Council pays for the electricity.

Tavistock BID <https://www.tavistockbid.co.uk/>

Has an income of approx. £100,000 – about £80,000 comes from local businesses with subscriptions paid based on their rateable value, and £20,000 from other grants and subscriptions.

The BID is responsible for:

- Marketing and Promotion – includes official town website, social media, town app and town guide. Marketing campaigns, liaising with coach/travel companies etc
- Events – Dickensian evening (10,000 attendees), Christmas Light switch on, Goose Fair, Fiver Fest, annual events e.g. food festival (football counts taken at all)
- Enhancing the Town's Visual Appeal – Christmas lights, hanging baskets and floral displays, signage, vacant units, green travel
- Business Support and Communications – signposting advice, grants, training and mentoring, gift card scheme, customer service awards, shopwatch, free town wi-fi, purple flag status for the evening and night-time economy, better connectivity.