

Christmas Lights 2024 – Lantern Replacement/Alternatives

Background

Ware's Christmas lanterns have been a feature of the festive season in Ware for many years. In 2022, we commissioned a Resident's Survey inviting locals for their views on how Ware Town Council operates and future priorities for the town. The survey was delivered to the majority of Ware households and widely promoted online. We took the opportunity to include this question: "Ware Town Council manages the installation of lanterns at Christmas time in the town centre. Would you prefer to see lanterns retained or for new decorations to be used in future years?"

The results were as follows:

I would like to see the lanterns retained - 63.1%

I would like to see new decorations - 36.9%

At that point, we were already conscious that a time would come in the following 2-3 years that the lanterns would be beyond repair and we would need to look at a replacement or option that is suited to the town.

In December 2023, Ringway Infrastructure Services carried out a seasonal lighting survey and identified several issues with the lanterns*. As we expected, Christmas 2023 would be the last year we could use the lanterns. The Ringway survey highlighted potential non-compliance issues with the legacy infrastructure in how the lights are installed on buildings.

**Extract from report: The lights strung over the shops are not secured correctly and show signs of wear and tear with the age. This was observed for the whole installation. There are places in between buildings where the lights should be secured to catenary wire and the distance between fixing is too large. The lights are fixing to points that are not designed to take the load. Due to the age and visible wear of the lights a PAT test is required to prove that they are safe and more fixings.*

In February 2024, we met with a Senior Engineer from Ringway to clarify our position and confirm what conditions would need to be met for us to install a new lighting scheme involving lights strung from every shop along the high street and surrounding streets. From this meeting we estimated the requirements as follows:

Replacing the Lantern Lights

To replace the lanterns would require an estimated 1500 - 1700 metres of lights. To fully comply with regulations this would involve dedicated fixings for each small section of lights and the installation of approx. 600 – 700 new anchor bolts (chemical and mechanical) on buildings to support the lighting scheme. Year one cost of installing these anchor bolts, a number of catenary wires and RCD protected electricity supplies on the outside of buildings could be no less than £30,000. Each would require permission of the building owner before it is installed, and each would need to be tested annually and a certificate provided. For context, this testing alone would cost in the region of £30,000-£35,000 per year. The purchasing or hiring of a new 1500 metre lighting scheme would be from £20,000 - £25,000 depending on design style. The cost to commission a new lantern style lamp shade to be fitted over each bulb is hard to estimate. Annual cost for a competent HERS complaint contractor to put the lights up is £8,000-9,000. These costs are prohibitive to funding a town-wide display of lights on building frontages as per the lanterns.

Features to retain for 2024

An alternative is to keep the features that have been added to the scheme since 2020 and add more installations placed strategically throughout the town.

Existing features to retain:

Cross Road Decoration 1 (Travis Perkins to Ware Tandoori)

Cross Road Decoration 2 (Saffron Building Society to Keith Ian Estates)

Cross Road Decoration 3 (Post Office to Vape Jungle)

Festoon (East St)

Festoon (West St)

Ware Bear (outside Keith Ian)

Lamp post decorative displays (3 x Amwell End)

Features to add for 2024

Suggested features to add:

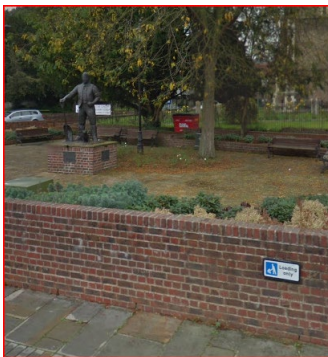
- Cross Road Decoration 2 and 3 (Both on the High Street) – add an **extra** 4-metre display to each of the catenary wires so 2 x 4 metre displays on each catenary wire making more impact
- Festoon (East St) – wrap the existing festoon lights with the additional sets of twinkly lamp lights in warm white to match the new West Street festoons
- New, brighter lights for the tree outside Museum and Tudor Square tree (safety fence required). Potential for lights in the tree behind the War Memorial too.

Suggested locations for set-pieces (large, illuminated, powered photo opportunity displays similar to Ware Bear and new Cross-Street Displays). We have included many suggested locations as some will not be suitable once they have been subject to a survey to assess access to power, catenary height, pavement clearance and footage required. Giving our preferred options will allow the contractors submitting a tender for the work the opportunity to narrow down locations based on those criteria.

- Set piece (examples below) by War Memorial, power from behind via overhead catenary on pole.



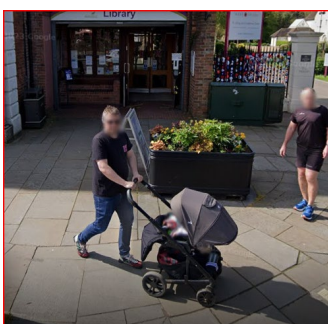
- Or, set piece by Maltmaker, power from lamp post behind.



- A new Cross Street display on Baldock St, either a Custom Made “Merry Christmas Ware” or “Merry Christmas”

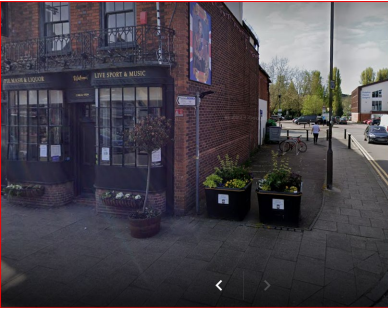


- Set- piece outside old Library (if building sale hasn't taken place and redevelopment started). May not be worth investing in infrastructure here if it's only for 1 year). Power from box on wall above canopy.



Features to add for 2024

- Set-piece on corner of Brewery Tap, East Herts land, power from street light on wall



- New Cross Street display to be installed from above Andrews Chemist to above Body Matters – 2 x 4 metre unit displays



- Set-piece on corner by Truly Scrumptious/Isabel Hospice. Power from RCD used by East Street festoons (market stall pitch location)



- Set-piece outside County Lettings, enough space on pavement. Power from street light lamp 814



- Set-piece outside Bridge Flooring, large pavement area, but overhead power may be an issue.



Features to add for 2024

- Set piece by the bus stop on the corner opposite spread eagle, but this would have to be a smaller set piece – power would be taken from the lamp column



- Set-piece outside Cost Cutter, power supply may be an issue, possibly from R.A Laver but may not be high enough



- Set-piece outside Amwell End Welcome Hut (if power can be taken from there(unlikely) or Fuocos, but an outside RCD would be needed



The above are all subject to a site survey. The budget for 2024 can be used for new infrastructure and the hire/purchase of new set-pieces and cross streets for a selected number of these locations throughout the town. The cost for the displays will depend on the space that is allowed and the size and style of the piece that will fit at each location. The following page is an example of some options, but this can be agreed following the tender process. There is a wide range of styles that can be sourced and a theme agreed if appropriate. Councillor's views are sought on the general principle of the alternative scheme now that the lanterns are to be decommissioned.

Examples of set-pieces

