

MVCA Relaunch minutes - 14th July 2022

Relaunch Meeting – Save Monton’s Christmas Lights

Attendees: 27 residents, 11 committee members, 3 local councillors, local MP.



Chair's introduction- Lisa

Hello! Great to see so many of you here today. Welcome to what is the MVCA Relaunch.

My Name is Lisa. I'm a resident. I'm a volunteer. And I've recently been elected Chair of MVCA.

My background is in the corporate world, I spent 20 years in the Advertising Industry. After the birth of my second child, I took a career break - was a stay-at-home Mum for three and a half years.

I started regularly volunteering just over a year ago, alongside exploring retraining options. I instantly loved it. I loved the way it made me feel. It was on my terms. It worked around my children. And I was basically doing things to make other people smile. It felt incredibly rewarding.

Today, I want to do a few things.

Firstly, pay homage to the incredible work the MVCA Volunteers have done over the last 25 years. It's quite moving that this group of people have got our Christmas lights up for over 25 years. They've kept the green looking beautiful and litter free. Got the info boards installed. They got the veteran shelter refurbished. Alleyways gated off. Hanging baskets on the high street. The noticeboard. All the stuff we take for granted was/is here because of the efforts of these people. I know we have a couple of the veteran MVCA'ers here today. Please reveal yourselves. I want to say thank you. You're a big part of the reason why we live in such a beautiful village. And you deserve a round of applause. *applause*

Today, is also about moving forward. I want to understand what you want from MVCA going forward.

And most important of all – this.

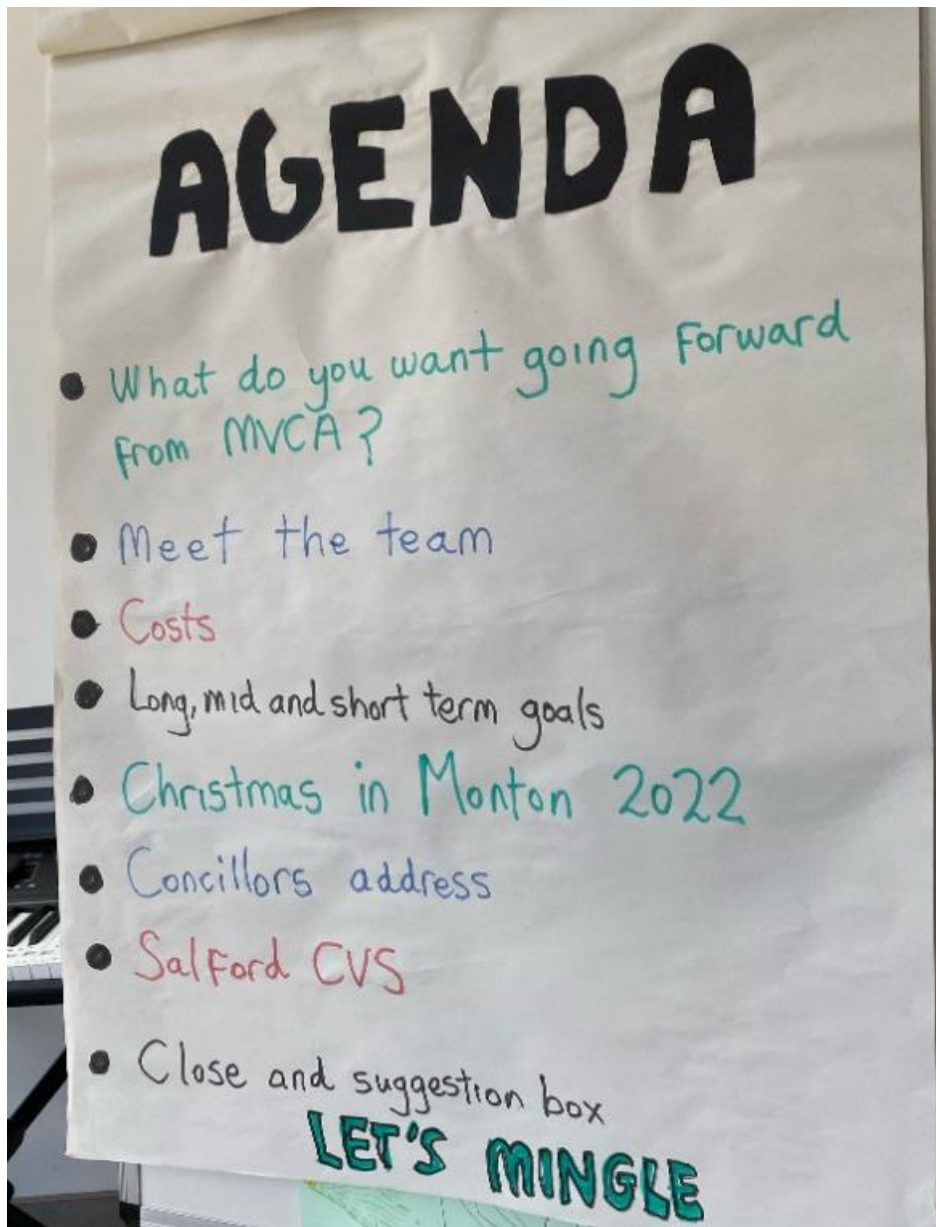


Being from a commercial background, I know commercial needs and non-commercial needs can often feel like they are at loggerheads. I want to remind this community, that we are all striving towards the same goal. We all want Monton to succeed. We all want Monton to be the best it can be. And none of us want to miss out on opportunities.

In every environment I've been in, where there were issues or conflict, open honest dialogue was always the solution. Dialogue that moves us forward collectively as unit. Where each side is clear about their needs. We are very lucky here in Monton – we have lots of independent retailers so it's easy to have open dialogue with them. They are just people like us who want to earn a living, pay their mortgages, put food on their tables. Pay their energy bills. But by the same token, the retailers are lucky. They have residents who really care about the village they operate in. And go out of their way to improve it for everyone. Giving Monton an incredible draw. They'll need to be compromise on both sides. There always is.

But at this moment, we are missing opportunities. We're missing opportunities as a community, and we're missing opportunities as a local economy. That needn't be the case.

What are we going to cover?



- We are going to have an interactive brainstorm session. To find out what you want going forward from MVCA.
- We'll meet the brand-new team.
- Mel is going to take us through association costs.
- I'll look at long, mid- and short-term goals
- Talk about what Christmas is likely to look like in Monton this year & what we hope it will look like in future.
- Then we'll hear from our local representatives. Unfortunately, Anne Marie from CVS tested positive for COVID. But I'll be meeting here soon and can report back.
- I'll close the relaunch.

This meeting will be different in format to usual association meetings, as it is our relaunch. You will still get to raise all your concerns. There's an ideas box. And you can post anything you wish in there at the end of the session, and it will be addressed in the next meeting.

Then we hope you'll stay for a drink and to get to know us a little better.

Housekeeping – Lisa



I encourage you all to speak up, I want to hear from you, but I want everyone to be shown the respect to be heard too. Please raise your hand. I will try not to keep your hand in the air too long. Nothing personal if it is, it's just my first village meeting. Go easy please.

What do you want to see from MVCA going forward? - All

Brainstorm Session



Attendees' expectations from association:

1. Better Christmas lights (lights on the lamp posts)
2. Monton festival
3. Shopkeepers to clean the litters outside their shops
4. Good relations with community
5. Movie nights in Monton
6. Car Park issues (too small, no space sometimes)
7. Repaving high streets -> councillor said most of the pavement is owned by retailers
8. No priority to put police on it -> lost many police over the past few years, shortage.
9. Lost many policies over the past couple of years
10. MVCA promotion and awareness
11. Involving other communities and clubs
12. Makers markets in Monton
13. Volunteer pooling i.e. Sunday dig.
14. Decent Park in Monton -> councillor said Huge Park is coming soon
15. Graffiti issues in parks
16. Salford rangers -> need balance between green areas and residential areas
17. Notice board refurbishment
18. Welcome to Monton signs (four Folly Lane, Green Lane, Parrin Lane, Monton Road)
19. More trees on the high street, break up the concrete, contribute to the leafy vibe.

Meet the team – Committee



From left to right

- Lisa, Chair.
- Alison resident for 15 years, loves Monton and is Co-Chair and Funding Manager
- Mel numbers background, Treasurer
- Saleem Online background Secretary and Online Lead
- Nick Membership Officer. Although the Christmas lights are our priority and we're not immediately going to offer membership, this is something we will look to get up and running in the future and we hope it will work in a similar way to before. Membership has been the main source of income in the past, so it's important to keep the association running. We hope to have business and personal membership, and to be able to offer incentives that are beneficial to all parties. I'll be looking after the admin and promotion of membership, so please get in touch with any ideas and suggestions for what you'd like to get from being an MVCA member.
- Leah, education background, School Liaisons Officer held that role in association previously.

- Eliza, local government, not for profit background, Community Liaisons Officer
- Fran events background - Events Officer
- Andy Retail Liaisons Officer – making some great inroads into moving things forward.
- Georgie Events Officer, background in TV production and recently bought the coffee van you see on Dukes Drive.
- Heather – brand new recruit who got in contact yesterday. Background in NHS strategy has just been appointed as Community Health Strategy Officer.

Costs – Mel

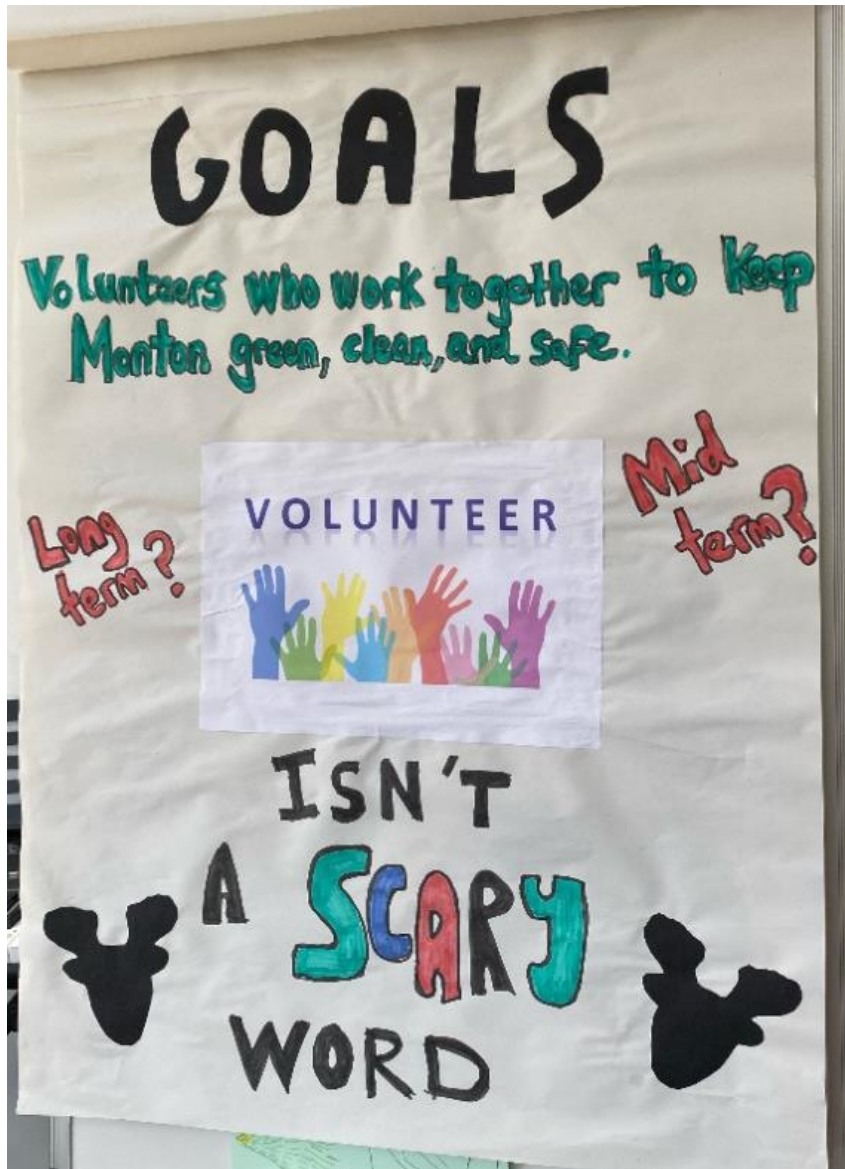


1. 1500 per year to just keep the association running
2. Christmas lights have averaged £3500 per year and rising
3. Need money

Goals – Lisa

Long term – more volunteers, drive greater community accountability.

On SM pages there is a mission 'Volunteers who work together to keep Monton green clean and safe'



Volunteer isn't a SCARY word! What does that mean? People literally cower when you mention the word volunteer. 'I'm too busy – I don't want to let you down, etc.'

We are all natural volunteers. We volunteer ourselves every day. Your child's best friend can't make football practice. 'It's OK I'll pick him up!' You're poorly – 'I'll drop you some shopping round.' Volunteering is just using your TIME, TALENT or SKILLS for the good of your community. Just because you know the person you're helping; doesn't mean it's not volunteering.

If you volunteer with MVCA 1 hour every 3 months, you're still a MVCA volunteer. If every single person in Monton volunteered for 1 hour every 3 months, imagine what those extra man hours

could achieve in our village. We have every skill we need in this village to achieve anything we want. Long term I want our entire community to feel that keeping Monton Green Clean and Safe is their responsibility. Not just a handful of residents. I want us to be **A community who work together to keep Monton, Clean, Green, Safe, and be best it can be.**

I've created a village volunteer WhatsApp. The group is in its infancy stages. But in time I'm hoping we can create little task forces. We can get people helping on projects that they are passionate about. Or driving forward projects they are passionate about, with likeminded people.

Midterm - Charity status, rebrand, membership push.

Midterm we want to apply for Charity Status. I did think last Thursday that we could have charitable status by this Thursday. Thanks Mel, for managing my expectations. It's a 4–6-month process. But would give us all kinds of financial benefits which would mean we can invest more money back into the community.

We'd also like to look at a rebrand. Just to freshen everything up. And create a synergy with the Monton we see today.

Membership push as Nick mentioned earlier.

Short term – Christmas lights? Number of issues with existing Christmas Light provision meaning short term goals are logistically impossible. Crowd fund. – Lisa



Because of covid there has been no MVCA events, therefore no fundraising for 2 years. The money has come out of the account to put the lights up, but nothing has gone back in.

So, with all this in mind, when I started thinking about saving Monton's Christmas Lights – I thought how can we raise the money to get the lights on?

Membership? But we have no retailers onboard – so what's the benefit to residents? We have no residents onboard so what's the benefit to retailers? I toyed with the idea of doing a good faith membership push but it didn't feel right, thought about running a crowd fund but thought about the cost-of-living crisis. I was unsure which direction to go.

Then something incredible happened. Katie and Andrew Booth got in contact and said they'd like to make a generous donation to ensure the lights went up. And that gave me the confidence to think, we don't just have to get Monton's Christmas lights on. We're Monton, we used to have the Christmas lights every other village aspired to. If we pull together as a community. We can create a new Monton Christmas Light legacy. A future proof one. A community legacy. That we are all part of however small or large your contribution is.

So, I got super excited – thought we'll raise the money, get the lights up, make them look better than they've ever looked, everyone will be happy. We'll all be patting each other on the back. Then we'll all move onto the next project. Then, yesterday I got an email from Maxine which brought me crashing back down to earth. Maxine, can you take us through the email you sent please.

Monton Christmas Lights Report 2022 – Maxine

- Need quote from industrial technician
- Tree issues
- The existing strings needs to come down
- Going to cost more this year

Circumstances have changed rapidly over the last three years, and this has had a big effect on the Christmas lights provision in Monton. All the alternatives will cost and lighting, electricity for the lights is not cheap.

The full lighting experience has not happened in Monton for a variety of reasons.

The following is the current situation with the Christmas lights as far as I am aware. I have not been involved in the lights process for over 4 years although I did step in 2021 to get some lights up and running.

Lights on the Green

- Power for these is from Boden Lodge. Given the fact that Boden Lodge may be closed soon, this leaves no power supply to run the lights.
- The string at the top of the far green facing the Bluebell had to be removed due to a tree being felled.

- The Arbocultralist from the Council has informed me that several other trees are diseased, will have to come down causing big gaps with regard to stringing the lights up.
- He has asked us to remove the lights from all the trees after this Christmas as the conti wires which the lights are held up by is cutting into the tree branches and causing problems to the trees.
- As there is no guarantee anyway, that Boden Lodge will be available for power in the future, these need to be removed.
- They are heavy duty LED lights along the green which should last for up to 10 years so have some life left in them have some life left in them, but the question is where to put them up!

Merry Christmas from Monton light

- This is usually strung across the front of the Green facing the shelter.
- The Merry Christmas from Monton needs no repairs (as far as I am aware). It was put up with no problems last Christmas 2021.
- Again, it takes its power from Boden Lodge so the Council would have to be asked to connect it to the nearest lamp post for power.

Lights along Monton Road

- These lights are erected above the shops so many per block.
- We only have about 19 functioning shooting stars - not enough for all blocks.
- All the wiring and boxes on the host business would need to be checked as they have not used for 3 years.
- We are short of about 3 hosts for the light along the street if most of the others are willing to continue to host.
- In the past, a business from each block has kindly agreed to host the lights on their block for free membership.
- Finding new hosts may be difficult and would involve cost as the wiring and boxes would have to be moved to the new host premises.
- The candle on Akmee Barbers is no longer working and looks bad shape so will have to be removed.
- The Christmas tree on the bank has not been lit for years so not sure if it works. It also looks in bad shape.
- The Christmas light on the Park was working Christmas but It may need some repair.
- All the above needs an industrial electrician to put up the lights for H & S reasons which is not cheap.

Possible alternatives for lighting

- Lights on the lampposts. Council consulted in 2019 however only 10 columns are suitable for lights
- 3 more are but they are not near the shops
- The columns near the roundabout are concrete and not suitable
- Our shooting lights are smaller than those on the lampposts along Parrin Lane. Would they be very visible?
- Each column used would need RCD unit, time clock and connection socket approx. about £250 cost more can be cheaper
- Heath Horton from the Council has been really helpful. He suggests that if we want to go down this route, we should trial one light and see how it looks cost of £250.
- If we decided to go down this route, A quote for the installation and removal by the Council for this service would be needed.

We forget the lights on the buildings.

- If we did this, we would have to remove all the wiring, sockets etc at a cost. The Naz, Bodega and several other businesses already have lights around their premises.
- We could approach others to do the same with lights on their premises explaining the problem that we are having with the current lights.
- Places such as The Bling Pig who purchased their own lights to help us out, could be given back for them to put up themselves.
- Some of the cost of these lights used to be offset by the membership money that we received from the businesses. However, the businesses have not been approached for several years due to a lack of volunteer to take it on and Covid.

Look at lights in the trees (as you see in Salford Quays)

- Good quality, heavy duty ones that we can leave up possibly solar
- We could use electric from the lampposts if the Council would let us but again there would be a cost.

The Council Arbocultralist has advised against this.

- Concentrate on the big roundabout
- Make it something special with new lights for the Christmas tree and stronger lights for the bushes.
- Along with the lights on the corner from the Printer Stone Apartment and the Merry Christmas from Monton on the corner of the Green, this would look good without too much cost.

Put lighting around the street light posts. (Similar to the one now up in some areas)

- These would have to be purchased and are not cheap.
- They are not very bright and soon become tatty.
- There would be a further cost incurred as the council would have to put these up.

However, whatever we choose, will ultimately cost us money as we will have to buy heavy duty commercial lights whether solar or otherwise, the cost of installation by an industrial electrician, etc.

If we decide that we want lights of some kind, we need a plan for the lights which is much simpler and easy to fund and maintain.

In conclusion

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Crowdfunder – match fund initiative with Paul Dennet – Lisa

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/salford>

- Must accept that we may not have any Christmas lights in 2022.
- Scaled down lights perhaps
- Speaking with lighting contractor, asking for estimates and visuals
- Need to really think through crowdfund strategy



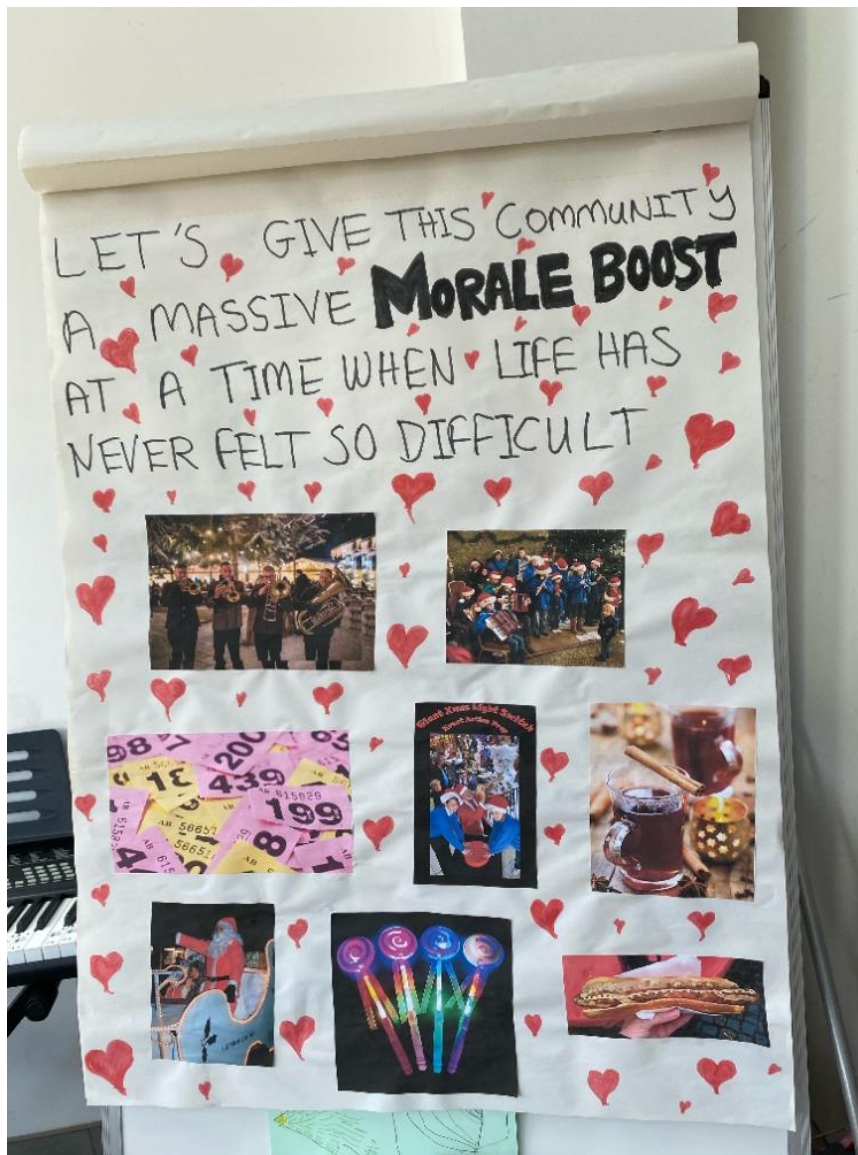
When I got Maxines email my heart sank as I knew because of the logistical issues we wouldn't be able to pull off Monton's new Christmas light legacy this year. We are just entering the summer

holidays, so we'll lose people over that period. With all the installation/access issues, we need our plans secured by September. It's a bitter pill to swallow but we must accept that this year we either don't have lights, or have scaled down lights just focusing on roundabout.

We are talking to a Christmas lights contractor – for estimates and visuals. I want them to produce a visual for a traditional and slightly quirkier scheme so we can ask the community what type of scheme they'd like.

I'd love to see something special happen to that centre tree on the roundabout, would love to do something with the vet's shelter (not quite as bling as the picture), love the garlands, though we could create a similar effect with draped warm white lighting.

Free Inclusive switch on event to give this community a massive morale boost at a very difficult time – unlikely for 2022 – Lisa



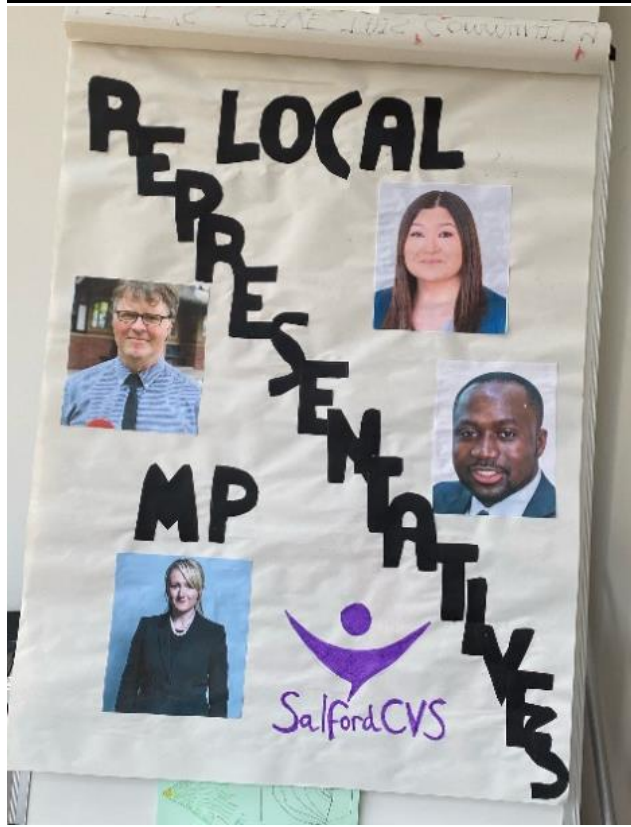
I'll leave you with a story. I live on a small cul-de-sac in Monton. We have several elderly residents and a few residents who live on their own. During lockdown we had several socially distanced street parties.

One of these was in Christmas 2020. We had Christmas music, disco lights, doorstep carolling, one of the neighbours dressed up as Father Christmas and left gifts in the centre of the road for the kids. We all had mulled wine, made pies, hot roast pork and stuffing rolls. It was truly magical. It gave a street who were having to face a Christmas which looked very different to their usual Christmas' a massive morale boost. Do you know what my street remembers most about lockdown? Those street parties. A time where the street worked together to weather a storm. We want to be able to give our community the same morale boost with a free inclusive switch on event that celebrates community. Including –

- School choirs and church choirs – signing in unison
- Brass band
- Community carolling of popular songs
- Ruffling off switch on of the lights so little Jimmy or someone in the community gets to start the new Monton Christmas light legacy with a giant button
- Mulled wine
- Father Christmas

It's tough out there at the moment, everyone is working all the hours god sends, we are all still dealing with the aftermath of COVID, in the throws of cost-of-living crisis. I'd love this to happen this Christmas but there is a lot to do in a very short space of time.

Councillor Address – Nathaniel, Sharmina, Mike, Rebecca



Nathaniel Tettee

- Pushing things for association requests
- Can look into issues reported.

Shamina August

- Crowdfunding manager
- Can offer advice on crowd fund
- Advised how to engage on issues going forward

Mike McCusker

Can help investigate the concerns from the association.

Becky (Rebecca Long Bailey)

- Local MP
- Thanked previous association members for the service.
- She told us to ask whatever is needed. If we don't ask, we don't get.

Summary and thanks – Lisa



Thank you for listening! Thank you for coming. And most of all thank you to my incredible team. I could not have done this without you. And I'm genuinely excited about the journey we've begun. Please do stay for a drink – we would love to get to know you better.

