

Happy Christmas in a pleasant place to live and work

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HAPPY Christmas, Horsham! We were warned that Horsham District Council would have to make cutbacks and, lo, it came to pass that there was very little money for the Christmas lights.

Mind you they said that last year and we still had a good show. Now things are different with a much-reduced display, even with East Street, the Carfax and

Wakefields' tree in West Street.

We are told that these new displays also save electricity but, in the same breath, the old displays are stored safely for the future. Does that mean we will not have to save electricity in the future?

The Horsham Society, like most Horsham people, wants to see the town prosper and there is little doubt that Christmas lights are a draw.

I can understand the arguments that the main beneficiaries are the traders so, it is suggested, the traders should pay.

They do make a contribution but it is also in the council's long-term interests that the town

succeeds. No-one wants a town with empty shops.

Controversially, the Government has been helping the banks this year but it can be argued that a nation's wealth lies in what it makes, ie manufacturing, rather than the profit it makes by playing the moneymarkets.

We still have manufacturers in Horsham and they need to be nurtured. It is best for the local economy that their employees live in the area and spend their hard-earned cash here, too.

We might depend on being in the greater-Gatwick area but being a dormitory is not ideal with the inefficiencies

that it implies. To make the best of local business we need to support our local traders not go galavanting off to spend our money somewhere else.

The evening economy is something which not all of us can understand.

However if it supports the town it might be worth it although we must avoid the the mistake made in Bournemouth.

There they wanted to change the image of it being an old-people's resort so they deliberately encouraged young people to the town.

So far, so good, but they also encouraged the wrong sort of people and the wrong activities. It now has a

drink, drugs and unsocial behaviour problem.

Hopefully that will not happen to Horsham and we will have a more measured approach.

With the leasing out of Horsham Town Hall and the news that the King's Head will have two 'eateries' it will bring the number of such places in the town to well over 50.

It is not so long ago that it was difficult to find anywhere to buy a meal in Horsham.

The Horsham Society is not just concerned about buildings. Every other aspect of life in the town affects us all. Even outside the town, there are places

Horsham folk visit and enjoy. Fortunately there are other amenity societies and residents' groups for many places in the wider district. But we still have an interest, albeit indirect.

Let us continue to make Horsham a pleasant place to live and work, so we can say with all sincerity 'Happy Christmas!'

The Horsham Society is concerned about the town's past, present and future and seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.

For more information on how to join visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 261905.