

## WINTERVAL WINDFALL FOR CITY



Santa Claus pictured with a happy Sean Power after the man in red arrived in Waterford last Friday to open the 2014 Winterval Festival which runs until December 23rd. See News 27-29 for more Winterval snaps!| Photo: Patrick Browne

Christmas Festival set to create €14 million boost

Winterval 2014 is on track to yield a multi million-Euro windfall to the city, elected officials have been told.

At a meeting of Waterford's Metropolitan District last week, Festival Chairperson Barry Monaghan the ticket sales and also the boost in seasonal employment which the Festival provides will yield an additional €14 million for the local economy.

This year's Festival is directly employing just over 550 seasonal workers and is supported by 250 volunteers, he added. Mr Monaghan described the event as having "almost 300 volunteers and a cast of thousands".

Local businesses have invested over €500,000 in Winterval since its inception three years ago, through various means of sponsorship.

Mr Monaghan said that last year's Festival had generated the advertising value equivalency of €1.4 million for Waterford and a national partnership deal had been negotiated with Today FM for this year's event.

He noted the additional income generated from the concession cabins dotted along the Winterval trail as a result of tendering: for example, last year's circular cabins selling sausages had brought in €7,000 but this year would raise €18,000.

Mr Monaghan said costs were being reduced for key events by using local companies, a case in point being the 'Winterval Illuminates' 3D light show, which is projected onto the front of the old Deanery building at Cathedral Square each evening during Winterval.

Mr Monaghan said the show represents the festival's most expensive event and is being sponsored by six members Waterford businesses, namely Mulligan's Pharmacy, QPark - The Clock Tower Car Park, Kneisel Jewellers, Fitzgerald Menswear, The Granville Hotel and George's Court Shopping Centre.

It's hoped that this year's Festival will attract 400,000 visitors to Waterford between now and December 23rd.

Cllr Cha O'Neill (Ind) requested that the Winterval team examine the possibility of advertising on irishtv.com, whilst Cllr Mary Roche (Ind) asked that the craft fair at Garter Lane and the annual Christmas pantomime be included on the programme.

Cllr Adam Wyse (FF) queried the possibility of securing a two-storey carousel for next year's event, adding that such a feature would be sure to attract great crowds.

Cllr Joe Conway (Ind) praised the programme as quite commercial, which was "exactly what the city needed at the moment". However, he said, a dimension of spirituality would enrich the event.

Mr Monaghan said the crib at the Cathedral was very much on the Winterval map but added that Christmas is "different things to different people".

In response to a question from Cllr Davy Daniels (Ind), Mr Monaghan said the North Quays will be open for parking, as will Newtown and De La Salle schools and the WIT College Street campus.