

## **Report on Croxley New Years Eve Firework Display**

by David Montague

### **Summary**

This report captures some observations from the 2018 Croxley Green Parish Council New Years Eve Firework display which can be used to plan the event for 2019.

### **Crowd and overall Event**

This year the weather was very favourable and dry so this helped attendance figures. People had even started to turn up at the site before the Parish Council team had assembled for the 11.30pm safety briefing. Although I was positioned at the north end of the Green I understand the crowd numbered many thousand and took a considerable time to clear the Southern end of the Green after the display finished.

The display site was on the west side of the green at the northern end of the area normally used for Revels and the crowd watched predominantly from the southern side of the Green but a large number also watched from the road connecting Baldwins Lane to the Green. A large number of cars also parked on the grass in front of Croxley House and then the passengers walked down the Green to watch the display.

The 10 minute display which was fired, with background music played by DJC Sound systems, was very well received by the public with many positive comments on Facebook after the event and thanks were expressed to CGPC for putting on such a good event and display. The firework finale was particularly well received and in my opinion was much better than in previous years.

Several observations noted may require further planning for next year: -

- There was no crowd control barrier to the northern end of the Green and members of the public had to be prevented from walking down the road and the Green into the area where the fireworks were being fired from after the road closures had been put in place.
- Some debris from the fireworks reached beyond the trees along the road from Baldwins Lane down to the Green. This road was used by the public for parking and many people watched from here and the falling debris caused the crowd to move back.
- The number of marshals required for the size of crowds we are now getting should be reviewed and it is apparent that many people come from outside the village of Croxley to see the event.

### **Firework display**

The display consisted of primarily large cakes or barrages which were hand fired by the team from Whizzz Bang. There were also a few shells which were used to open the show and also in the finale and these were electrically fired and a car arrived after we had closed the road with the batteries required for this part of the display. The company had about 6 operatives in attendance and 2 - 3 vehicles on the site. Several observations may require improvements for next year: -

- Although their display checklist states that the area around the fireworks will be fenced off there was no evidence of this. This meant there was no physical barrier between the public and the fireworks at the Northern end of the Green.
- Their display Risk Assessment states that all fireworks will be secured to the ground so they cannot fall or change orientation. There was no evidence of this on the site although the shell racks were rafted together.
- The display used a large number of fan cakes which project effects to either side of their frontage. Due to the nature of the site, where we had public watching to the Whitegates Close side of the Green, these fireworks were ejecting effects very close to the crowd (see above). These fireworks either need to be not used, reoriented or the public viewing areas and safety distances need to be reviewed.
- The health and safety documentation provided by the display company seem to be at the very low end of what would be expected for an event of this scale. I have provided an example of the H&S documentation from another company I work with to do displays for Yorke Mead School in Croxley Green.
- Whizz bang state in their documentation that they are members of the British Pyrotechnics Association (BPA) however I can find no record of their membership as a company on the BPA website which lists 52 firework companies registered in the UK. On the BPA website I can find no record of any members of Whizz Bang, or the Company Director, as having obtained the relevant training and qualifications for running a public display. BPA have a database which can be searched to show if a firer has passed the relevant qualification to allow a client to check the legitimacy of any display operative. Whilst it is not mandatory for a client to only use BPA trained Firework Display Companies and operators many local authorities and companies require this as it assure certain agreed standards will be met.

The output of this brief report should be used to review the planning for the 2019 event and I suggest a working party is set up to lead this and I am happy to chair this working party. For reference I have over 20 years experience in helping run professional displays with local Company Fantastic Fireworks and I am also a qualified Firer on the BPA Register.

Cllr David Montague  
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