

Market to provide some festival magic



A NEW Christmas market is set to take place in Emsworth with organisers promising a special atmosphere.

The first Emsworth Festival Market will take place in the town on December 14 with a festive theme. The event has been organised as an alternative to the town's food festival which was cancelled earlier this year.

It is hoped the festival market will re-create some of the magic which made the food festival so special.

Chairman of Emsworth Business Association Brendan Gibb-Gray is helping to organise the event.

He said:

"We will be trying to introduce some of the fun of the food festival. It is the first time we have tried a Christmas market. It works in other places, so there is no reason why it would not work here. We have got general community support for it. We are doing it on a Sunday so it will minimise the disruption to Emsworth residents and businesses, but at the same time maximising the number of people who can come."

The plan is to have more than 40 stalls in the South Street car park, 30 of which will be provided by market company Prod-Grow and will be from around the area. The remaining 15 will be businesses from within the town. Musical entertainment will come from a gospel choir from London. It was decided to use the car park so all the visitors will be contained within One area, which would save the kind of disruption which drew complaints about the food festival.

All the plans are in place but it is still subject to the organisers getting the necessary health and safety certificate from Havant Borough Council, which they were working towards this week.

Mr Gibb-Gray added: "We are looking forward and hoping we are taking people with us. There are one or two people who contacted me and were anti the idea, and now they want to give it a go. We are working together to try to make the most of it.

"The people who wanted to save the food festival have had their say. We listened as far as we could. Emsworth is a community which has always managed to work together. If it is successful, it will run in 2009. We will keep the whole thing under constant review. It is an opportunity for us to have a new challenge, and who is to say in a few years' time people might be saying don't stop the one-day festivals?"

The market will take place from loam until 4pm and entry is free.

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