

Countdown To Christmas

Junior Script

by

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CAST LIST

N.B. In the following list, the bracketed number shows the number of spoken lines each role has.

An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

Main Characters

Vicar (80)
Wife (40)

Buyers & Sellers

Alf (7)
Marge (7)
Bert (7)
Floss (4)
Little Boy (1)

Weight Watchers

Vanessa (4)
Cybil (9)
Tania (6)
Vivien (12)
Carmen (8)

Councillors Surgery

Councillor Clott (27)
* Mr Shufflebottom (43)
* Mrs Shufflebottom (11)
John (1)
Daisy (1)
Paul (4)
Jimmy (3)
Sophie (1)
Amy (0)
Karen (0)
Robert (0)
Eric (0)
Carly (0)

In The Audience

Plant (Cast member) (3)

Rock Band

Gazza (26)
Bazza (22)
Buster (13)
Cedric (4)

Theatre Group

Roger (33)
Robin (29)
Annabel (16)
Simon (15)
Cecelia (12)
Dolly the Cow (0)

Silver Surfers

Mr Wainwright (12)
Mrs Wainwright (10)
Mr Grimes (16)
Miss Jones (16)
Beattie (9)
Florrie (10)

Cleaners

Elsie (23)
Hilda (10)
Annie (13)
Jack (9)
Ted (5)
Len (15)

Dolly the Cow is Annabel & Simon in costume.

In addition to the characters listed above, a Chorus of Rock Band Followers will be required.

SPEAKING ROLES BY NUMBER OF LINES

N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many spoken lines each role has. An asterisk (*) before the character’s name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

Vicar.....	80
* Mr Shufflebottom.....	43
Wife.....	40
Roger.....	33
Robin.....	29
Councillor Clott.....	27
Gazza.....	26
Elsie.....	23
Bazza.....	22
Annabel.....	16
Miss Jones.....	16
Mr Grimes.....	16
Len.....	15
Simon.....	15
Annie.....	13
Buster.....	13
Cecelia.....	12
Mr Wainwright.....	12
Vivien.....	12
* Mrs Shufflebottom.....	11
Florrie.....	10
Hilda.....	10
Mrs Wainright.....	10
Beattie.....	9
Cybil.....	9
Jack.....	9
Carmen.....	8
Alf.....	7
Bert.....	7
Marge.....	7
Tania.....	6
Ted.....	5
Cedric.....	4

Floss	4
Paul.....	4
Vanessa.....	4
Jimmy.....	3
Plant.....	3
Daisy	1
John	1
Little Boy	1
Sophie.....	1

CAST LIST IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER (WITH LINE COUNT)

N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many spoken lines each role has. An asterisk (*) before the character’s name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

Alf.....	7
Annabel.....	16
Annie.....	13
Bazza.....	22
Beattie.....	9
Bert.....	7
Buster.....	13
Carmen.....	8
Cecelia.....	12
Cedric.....	4
Councillor Clott.....	27
Cybil.....	9
Daisy.....	1
Elsie.....	23
Florrie.....	10
Floss.....	4
Gazza.....	26
Hilda.....	10
Jack.....	9
Jimmy.....	3
John.....	1
Len.....	15
Little Boy.....	1
Marge.....	7
Miss Jones.....	16
Mr Grimes.....	16
* Mr Shufflebottom.....	43
Mr Wainwright.....	12
* Mrs Shufflebottom.....	11
Mrs Wainright.....	10
Paul.....	4
Plant.....	3

Robin	29
Roger	33
Simon.....	15
Sophie.....	1
Tania.....	6
Ted.....	5
Vanessa.....	4
Vicar.....	80
Vivien.....	12
Wife.....	40

Non-speaking roles: Amy, Carly, Eric, Karen, Robert, and a Chorus of Rock Band Followers. Dolly the Cow is a pantomime cow played by Annabel & Simon.

CHARACTERS IN EACH SCENE

Scene One

Entire Cast for opening
song
Vicar
Wife

Scene Two

Alf
Bert
Floss
Little Boy
Marge
Vicar
Wife

Scene Three

Carmen
Cybil
Tania
Vanessa
Vicar
Vivien
Wife

Scene Four

Councillor Clott
Mr Shufflebottom
Mrs Shufflebottom
Shufflebottom Children
Vicar
Wife

Scene Five

Bazza
Buster
Cedric
Chorus of Followers
Gazza
Vicar
Wife

Scene Six

Annabel
Cecelia
Dolly The Cow (Annabel
& Simon In Costume)
Robin
Roger
Simon
Vicar
Wife

Scene Seven

Beattie
Florrie
Miss Jones
Mr Grimes
Mr Wainwright
Mrs Wainwright
Vicar
Wife

Scene Eight

Annie
Elsie
Hilda
Jack
Len
Ted

Scene Nine

Annie
Elsie
Hilda
Jack
Len
Plant
Ted
Vicar
Wife
Entire Cast for Finale

LIST OF PROPERTIES**Scene One**

No Properties Required

Scene Two

Bric a Brac on trestle tables Buyers & Sellers

Scene Three

Portable Stereo Scene Prop

Scene Four

No Properties Required

Scene Five

Guitar (Optional) Bazza

Drum Sticks (Optional)..... Buster

Triangle and beater..... Cedric

Scene Six

Cow Costume Annabel & Simon

Scene Seven

Zimmer Frame Mr Wainwright

Walking Sticks..... Silver Surfers

Scene Eight

Bucket Len

Bottle of Floor Cleaner Len

Mops and Brooms..... Cleaners

Scene Nine

No Properties Required

PRODUCTION NOTES

Staging

The whole of the action takes place in the village hall. With just a little modification and artistic licence, this could quite easily be a school hall. No special scenery is required; just the usual items that can be found in almost any village or school hall. Consequently, the acting area for Countdown to Christmas could be any part of the school or village hall. It could even be performed 'in the round' (where the actors are in the middle of the hall and the audience are seated all around them). Each of the 'scenes' is simply a different group of people entering the acting area and performing their individual cameo scene. Simple props such as trestle tables for the 'bring and buy', possibly a portable stereo for the Weight-Watchers class, a few boxes etc. for the pantomime company and so on and so forth. This makes it a very simple show to stage.

Choreography

Track 1 – Countdown to Christmas is a light, bouncy number that sets the feeling for the show. It has a couple of short interludes of the traditional carol 'In The Bleak Midwinter' performed in an up-tempo way. The song opens the show and should be full of vigour and fun.

Track 2 – Roll Up! is a lively up-tempo number, which is sung by the Stallholders to the public to encourage them to spend their money. The actions in the song should reflect this and will link into the lyrics, emphasising the meaning of the number.

Track 3 – Counting Calories For Christmas has a country and western feel to it and relates to the ladies in the Keep Fit class trimming down in time for Christmas. It could easily be performed in the style of a line dance if so wished or sung by a group with simple actions.

Track 4 – Fix Our Drains is a complaint by Mr and Mrs Shufflebottom about the bureaucratic council. It is a lively number with a rock feel. In addition to the Shufflebottoms and their children, the chorus could be utilised in this song making it a big chorus number if so desired. As an alternative, it could be sung by the family alone, sharing out the lines of lyrics and keeping the movement/dance limited.

Track 5 – Let's Party follows. This is a very up-tempo rock and roll number and could involve the whole cast either singing the chorus parts and/or dancing to the number whilst the Rock Band sing the tune. This number could probably be repeated at the end; after all the 'thank you's have been completed.

The comic interlude is provided by...

Track 6 – Dolly the Cow. Annabel and Simon should be dressed in a cow costume for this forties-style number. There is a break in the singing which provides an opportunity for Dolly to perform a simple, comic dance routine. With four legs to choreograph, comedy is probably guaranteed!

The Silver Surfers take the stage next for their rendering of...

Track 7 – If We Were Younger. Until the start of the song they are all doddering and tottering about but as the intro to the song starts, they throw away their sticks, frames and aids and assume much younger roles, dancing and singing to this upbeat number, guaranteeing a few smiles in the room! They revert to their former roles on Miss Jones's line "I don't remember the last time I enjoyed class so much."

Track 8 – Cleaners' Calypso, the penultimate number, has a lovely feel to it and can be shared by as many chorus members as you wish. If they are dressed as cleaners they can either share verses, or indeed individual verse lines could be cast, accommodating at least 24 individual or groups of cleaners if so wished. Equally it could be distributed to one small group who would then sing the whole number.

Track 9 – Merry Christmas, is the final number. The whole cast should be involved in this song either singing the whole number or, at least, joining in the chorus sections whilst soloists could then sing specific verses.

Costume

Costuming this show is relatively simple as it is performed in modern times.

The Vicar should, of course, wear a 'dog-collar' to identify him/her and could wear a cassock and surplice if so wished.

His Wife is very prim and proper and probably dresses in a tweed, calf-length skirt and matching jacket. Her hair is probably in a bun with a large hair-pin through it.

Alf, Marge, Bert, Floss and the **Little Boy** wear everyday clothes as befits their acted age-group. They are all, except the Boy, perceived to be adults selling their wares at the Christmas Fair.

The Weight Watchers (Vanessa, Cybil, Tania, Vivien & Carmen) should all wear leotards or similar as would be found in a typical slimming class.

Councillor Clott, being full of self-importance, should be dressed in a suit (preferably pinstriped) and wearing highly polished boots on his feet.

Mr & Mrs Shufflebottom and their children **John, Daisy, Paul, Jimmy, Sophie, Amy, Karen, Robert, Eric,** and **Carly** all wear normal, everyday clothes.

The Rock Band, with the exception of **Cedric,** should be dressed in 'heavy-rock' style costume, whilst **Cedric** should be dressed in a 'nerdish' style complete with NHS spectacles and probably trousers that are just a little short for him!

The Amateur Theatricals all wear normal, everyday clothing with the exception of **Annabel** and **Simon** who wear a pantomime cow costume.

Silver Surfers are, of course, pensioners. They need to be dressed in suitable attire and have walking sticks, frames, and wheelchairs (if possible), to complete the infirm, geriatric, stereotypical characters portrayed.

The Cleaners (Elsie, Hilda, Annie, Jack, Ted & Len) should all wear suitable overalls or aprons and the women perhaps have their heads covered in head-scarves, whilst **Len** could have a flat cap. They carry mops, brooms, buckets, etc.

Lighting and Sound

Lighting

As the action takes place, principally, in the Village Hall or School Hall, the lighting can be kept very simple and straightforward. However, if resources are available there is scope for creating some simple effects if so desired. The use of spot-lighting, either fixed or follow spot, for solo artists or small groups, will draw attention to the character singing. This is not essential but does provide contrast throughout the show if you have the facilities. Finally, the use of sequencing to produce 'disco lights' would be appropriate in **Track 8 – Cleaners' Calypso**.

Sound Effects (SFX)

There are no specific sound effects in this show.

Scene One:**The Village Hall**

(The show opens in the Village Hall, and the whole cast sings.)

TRACK 1:**COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS**

ALL: WE'RE COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS TO CHRISTMAS,
LONGING FOR THE NEW NOEL,
ONCE A YEAR WE GET THIS FEELING,
CHRISTMAS CASTS ITS SPELL.

EVERYWHERE THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS,
FILLS THE AIR, AND PEACEFULLY,
ALL THE WORLD IS SWEETLY SMILING,
LAUGHING HAPPILY.

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER,
FROSTY WINDS MADE MOAN.
EARTH STOOD HARD AS IRON,
WATER LIKE A STONE.

WE'RE COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS,
EVERYONE IS BUSILY,
WRITING CARDS AND WRAPPING PRESENTS,
FOR ALL THE FAMILY.

CHILDREN SINGING CHRISTMAS CAROLS,
HANGING BAUBLES ON THE TREE,
SENDING NOTES TO DEAR OLD SANTA
WAITING EAGERLY.

WHAT CAN I GIVE HIM
POOR AS I AM?
IF I WAS A SHEPHERD,
I WOULD GIVE A LAMB.

WE'RE COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS TO CHRISTMAS,
HOPING WE GET LOADS OF SNOW.
WELCOME TO THE START OF CHRISTMAS,
PLEASE ENJOY THE SHOW!

(They exit, leaving the Vicar and his Wife.)

VICAR: Aah my dear, isn't it wonderful to hear the sounds of Christmas again,
and hasn't this year just flown by?

WIFE: It surely has Harold. Why it seems like only yesterday since my mother
over there was watching me in last year's show! **(Waving)** Hello Mum.

VICAR: *(Not seeing the wave, turns and says)* Pardon?

WIFE: Nothing.

VICAR: Yesss. *(Rubbing his hands with glee)* Voices raised in praise and joyful celebration of the nativity, the expectation on the faces of the children, the wonder and excitement of Christmas. Yes, the season of goodwill is truly upon us again.

WIFE: Except for the Cleaners, dear.

VICAR: *(Looking around, to see who's there, almost frightened)* Well, yes, except for the Cleaners, *(no-one's there, so now with authority)* but they must realise that the Village Hall is the focal point of this community, all our user groups are getting ready for the festivities and it's our job to help them; that's why we're so busy. Everyone's looking forward to Christmas

WIFE: Except for the Cleaners!

VICAR: Except for the Cleaners!

Scene Two:**The Bring And Buy Sale**

(Much commotion as a group of Buyers and Sellers enter and set up the Christmas bring and buy sale.)

ALF: Morning Vicar, here we go again, no peace for the wicked, so to speak.

VICAR: A very good morning to you Alf, and I wish you and all your friends the best of luck with your bring and buy sale and let's hope it proves to be as successful as last year.

MARGE: It won't be for the want of trying, your eminence.

(Vicar and Wife exit.)

ALF: How many times do I have to tell you he's a Vicar, not an evidence?!

MARGE: Well he seems pretty important to me.

BERT: He is, he's the Vicar and he's the most important person around here.

ALF: Except for the Cleaners.

MARGE: Don't mention the Cleaners to me, after all the grief they gave us last year.

BERT: Too right, and all because of the incident with Fred.

FLOSS: Yeah, poor old Fred and he really did try to hold on, you know.

MARGE: He's never been the same.

BERT: Yes it's a shame really; he's a good old stick is Fred.

FLOSS: One of the best.

ALF: And he didn't do it on purpose, you know.

MARGE: Well you wouldn't, would you?

BERT: Well I certainly wouldn't.

LITTLE BOY: ***(To Floss, tugging her arm)*** Excuse me, but what did Fred do?

FLOSS: Ooh... I can't say too much.

ALF: No, you'll have to ask the Cleaners!

(All assembled characters sing.)

TRACK 2:

ROLL UP

**BUYERS &
SELLERS:**

ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

WE HAVE GOT GOOD NEWS FOR YOU,
 WE CAN MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE,
 SPEND IT ALL, IT'S NOT A CRIME,
 ROLL UP, COME ON, IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME.

COME ON TRY ONE, JUST FOR SIZE,
 GIVE SOMEONE A NICE SURPRISE,
 SPEND IT ALL; WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE,
 ROLL UP, COME ON, IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME.

ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.

LET'S SEE THE COLOUR OF YOUR MONEY,
 LET'S HEAR THE JINGLE OF YOUR CASH,
 FEEL THE RHYTHM, TILLS A'RINGIN'.
 LET'S GET EXCITED TONIGHT.

LET'S HAVE A WHIFF OF YOUR WAD,
 LET'S HAVE A TASTE OF YOUR DOSH,
 KEEP IT FLOWIN', KEEP IT GROWIN'.
 IT'S CHRISTMAS, COME ON.

ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
 ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

WE HAVE GOT GOOD NEWS FOR YOU,
 WE CAN MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE,
 SPEND IT ALL, IT'S NOT A CRIME,
 ROLL UP, COME ON, IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME.

COME ON TRY ONE, JUST FOR SIZE,
GIVE SOMEONE A NICE SURPRISE,
SPEND IT ALL; WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE,
ROLL UP, COME ON, IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME.

ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.

LET'S SEE THE COLOUR OF YOUR MONEY,
LET'S HEAR THE JINGLE OF YOUR CASH,
FEEL THE RHYTHM, TILLS A'RINGIN'.
LET'S GET EXCITED TONIGHT.

LET'S HAVE A WHIFF OF YOUR WAD,
LET'S HAVE A TASTE OF YOUR DOSH,
KEEP IT FLOWIN', KEEP IT GROWIN'.
IT'S CHRISTMAS, COME ON.

ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND TRY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND BUY ONE.
ROLL UP, COME ON AND SPEND, SPEND, SPEND.

BERT: That seemed to go well enough.
FLOSS: Yes, and we've certainly raised more money than last year.
MARGE: His eminence the Vicar will be pleased.
BERT: Not just the Vicar, everybody will be pleased.
ALF: Except the Cleaners.
ALL: Except the Cleaners.

(All exit.)

Scene Three:

Counting The Calories

(The Weight Watchers enter.)

VANESSA: OK Ladies, let's get to it. Not much longer to lose those last few inches before the big day.

CYBIL: Inches she says, inches, *(pinching her waist)* this is more like a foot.

TANIA: Oh Cybil, don't be so hard on yourself dear, you've done really well.

CYBIL: Thank you Tania, *(posing)* but I'm hardly model material am I?

VIVIEN: *(Sarcastically)* It depends what you want to model.

CYBIL: *(To Vivien sarcastically)* Thanks a lot!

TANIA: Vivien! You can be so cruel.

VIVIEN: Well... I'm exactly the same, coming here week after week, puffing and blowing and gasping. What's it for eh? We never get any thinner.

CARMEN: She's right, you know.

TANIA: Don't encourage her, Carmen.

CARMEN: But she is right.

VIVIEN: And any grams we may lose will all get put back on again!

TANIA: That's not the attitude dear, you must be more positive.

CARMEN: She's right, you know.

CYBIL: *(Still pinching herself)* If only I could see a little movement.

VIVIEN: You will Cybil, after Christmas. *(Mimics being overweight)* Outwards!

CARMEN: She's right, you know.

CYBIL: Anyway, does it really matter if we don't lose anything at all? Just think of all the fun times we'll have next year trying to get it off again!

TANIA: Yesss... That's the spirit: never give up trying!

VIVIEN: Say what you like, but it's a lot more fun putting it all on.

CARMEN: She's...

ALL: *(Shouted)* Oh do be quiet Carmen, we all know.

CARMEN: What?

ALL: She's right, you know.

VANESSA: Come now ladies, less chatter and more action. Into line.

(Vanessa organises the ladies into lines)

VIVIEN: Here we go again, and really, what's it all for?

ALL: Looking good for Santa!

VIVIEN: Is it worth it? I only ever get bath salts anyway!

CARMEN: She's right, you know!

TRACK 3: COUNTING CALORIES FOR CHRISTMAS**WEIGHT
WATCHERS:**

WE'RE COUNTING CALORIES BUT NOTHING WORKS
AND HOWEVER HARD WE TRY WE STAY THE SAME,
BUT DO WE GET DESPONDENT?
YOU BET YOUR LIFE WE DO.
FIGHTING FLAB IS JUST A NEVER ENDING GAME.

IT ISN'T EASY BUT WE'RE DOING OUR BEST,
WE'RE RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO INDULGE,
BUT PEOPLE JUST DON'T REALISE
THE PAIN WE'RE GOING THROUGH,
EVERY DAY'S ANOTHER BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

BUT WE'RE TRYING HARD, THIS TIME
WE'RE TRYING HARD,
AND WE'RE COUNTING THE CALORIES FOR CHRISTMAS,
WE'RE TRYING HARD, THIS TIME
WE'RE TRYING HARD,
NO MATTER IF IT TAKES FOREVER
WE'LL KEEP WORKING OUT TOGETHER.

WITH ALL THIS EXERCISE WE'LL SOON BE TRIM
WITH OUR SUPER DUPER DIET WE CAN'T FAIL.
SO WISH US MERRY CHRISTMAS,
GOOD LUCK AND A SLIM NEW YEAR,
AS WE'RE COUNTING DOWN THE DIGITS ON THE SCALES.

WE'RE TRYING HARD, THIS TIME
WE'RE TRYING HARD.
AND WE'RE COUNTING THE CALORIES FOR CHRISTMAS,
WE'RE TRYING HARD, THIS TIME
WE'RE TRYING HARD,
NO MATTER IF IT TAKES FOREVER
WE'LL KEEP WORKING OUT TOGETHER.
COUNTING THE CALORIES FOR CHRISTMAS!

(The Vicar and his Wife enter.)

VICAR: Hello Vanessa, I can see you and your ladies have been trying very hard. *(Asks innocently)* Do you think it's working?

WIFE: Harold!

VIVIEN: See, even the Vicar's noticed!

VANESSA: Yes Vicar, all my ladies have done extremely well.

VICAR: So it's congratulations to you all then, but just before you leave, could I ask you to have a quick tidy round; we don't want to upset the Cleaners do we?

VIVIEN: *(Sarcastically)* Oh no we mustn't upset the Cleaners must we.
CYBIL: Of course not – remember what happened to old Fred.
TANIA: Yes I do, how is the dear old chap?
WIFE: Well it hasn't got any bigger thank goodness.
VICAR: Yes, yes, it's probably better if we don't upset the Cleaners.
CARMEN: He's right, you know!

(They exit leaving the Vicar and his Wife.)

Scene Four: **Councillor Clott**

(Enter Councillor Clott.)

VICAR: Ah, good morning Councillor Clott.
COUNCILLOR: Good morning Vicar, *(addressing his wife)* Ma'am.
VICAR: I must say that I'm very impressed with the Christmas decorations in the Civic Centre this year, councillor.
WIFE: Yes it's a wonderful sight, Mr Clott.
COUNCILLOR: Thank you very much indeed ma'am... *(Goes into speech)* We at the Town Hall are constantly striving to project all that is good about this fine community of ours, and I'm sure that the whole town appreciates the lengths, and no little expense, we have gone to in achieving this aim.
VICAR: I'm sure you're right, Councillor Clott, *(Innocently and sincerely)* and I also understand that it was your son Colin who was awarded the contract to carry out these works; he too must be congratulated for his efforts.

(Coughs of embarrassment from Councillor Clott.)

WIFE: Being so near to Christmas, are you expecting many constituents at your surgery today, Mr Clott?
COUNCILLOR: I have been finding over the months that as a direct consequence of all our efforts the number of people requiring my help has diminished and the level of complaints received by the council has significantly reduced.

(Enter Mr & Mrs Shufflebottom and their ten children.)

MR S: Ah there you are Councillor! What about my drains?
COUNCILLOR: I beg your pardon.
MR S: Don't start with your excuses.

MRS S: No, we've had enough of them.

VICAR: Ah! It's Mr & Mrs Shufflebottom and the children, how are you today?

MR S: Morning Vicar, *(addressing his wife)* Mrs... It's a life innit. What with all this lot, me bad back, and now the council, I'm washed out... Will you kids get from under my feet! And Pauly, stop picking your nose!

MRS S: Did he mention his back? Like glass it is, the poor man. I don't know how he copes, you know. *(Addresses the children)* Will you lot behave yourselves in front of the holy man!

COUNCILLOR: And what can I do for you, Mr Shufflebottom?

MR S: I'll attend to you in a minute – can't you see I'm talking to the Vicar?

VICAR: *(Looking at the children)* Ah! Now let me see, that's John and Robert, Daisy, Sophie and Eric. You're Amy so you must be Karen and you're Paul: that's little Jimmy and baby Carly; how about that then?

MR S: My, Vicar, you've got a better memory than me. I get 'em mixed up all the time.

VICAR: I remember all my little ones. *(Addresses the kids)* Are you all looking forward to Christmas?

KIDS: *(Much jubilation)* Yeah, yeah, Santa's coming, Santa's coming.

WIFE: And what have you asked Santa for, Johnny?

JOHN: I want a big red bike, with ten gears, some tracking tyres and a headlamp.

DAISY: I want a sound system and CDs.

PAUL: Santa's bringing me some cars and a garage to keep them in, and a big wagon with a crane on the back. If I'm really good Mum said I might get a new battery torch for when I go to bed, and Eric is getting a football game and I can play with it – Dad said so!

WIFE: How about you, Sophie?

SOPHIE: Me and Robert have asked for some books and Amy and Karen are getting dolls and stuff.

VICAR: And little Jimmy, what about you?

JIMMY: *(Very shy)* I don't know.

VICAR: Don't you want something special?

JIMMY: I don't know.

WIFE: It seems like you're going to be very busy, Mrs Shufflebottom.

MRS S: Well it is Christmas, isn't it?

MR S: Now you must excuse me Vicar, but I've come to have a word with Councillor Clott, on a matter of great urgency.

VICAR: Then we shall detain you no longer. Goodbye all.

(Vicar and Wife exit.)

COUNCILLOR: Now... you were saying something about your... drains?

- MR S:** Yes, my drains! We're having terrible trouble... the cistern's broken, the overflow is overflowing, the gully's blocked, there's a big hole in my man hole and we've mess all over the garden... and it can't go on!
- COUNCILLOR:** Well I'm sorry to hear about this, but have you contacted the works division?
- MR S:** I certainly have sir, and they said they'd be out on Friday.
- COUNCILLOR:** Good.
- MR S:** Hang on there... Well, Friday came and Friday went and that was the only thing that did come on Friday. And my drains? They're still blocked! So I rang them on Monday 'cause I couldn't on Saturday, and I couldn't on Sunday and they said they'd be out on Tuesday; what a laugh, guess what?
- COUNCILLOR:** What?
- MR S:** Tuesday came and Tuesday went and that was all that did come on Tuesday. **(Aside to the audience)** Now I'm getting really angry, so I ring them on Wednesday, now remember this is nearly a week, 'cause when I rang them last Thursday they said they'd be out on Friday, and what did I get, what did I get?
- COUNCILLOR:** What?
- MR S:** Nothing! That's what I got, nothing! Just a young girl telling me that nobody could come out...
- COUNCILLOR:** **(Reassuring him)** Well that's certainly not good enough, and you have every right to complain. **(With real authority)** If our departments make people promises then nothing should get in the way of them being delivered.
- MR S:** Hang on a minute, this is the really good bit... ask me why they couldn't come out then... go on ask me!
- COUNCILLOR:** Why?
- MR S:** 'Cause everyone was busy, putting up Christmas decorations in the Civic Centre, that's why! DECORATIONS IN THE CIVIC CENTRE!... WHAT ABOUT MY DRAINS?!
- MRS S:** This isn't fair, you know. He can't do anything about them; he would if he could, but he can't. Has he told you about his back?! It's like glass it is, the poor man!
- COUNCILLOR:** I do sympathise; and I'll certainly take up your complaint with the council and let's hope that it is resolved as quickly as possible.
- MR S:** Well I'll be counting down the days. It's nearly Christmas you know, and I need my drains!
- KIDS:** It's nearly Christmas and we need our drains!

TRACK 4:**FIX OUR DRAINS**

(Verses/lines can be allocated to Mr and Mrs Shufflebottom and their kids, as you wish.)

MR & MRS S: VOTE FOR THE RED, VOTE FOR THE BLUE
VOTE FOR THE YELLOW OR GREEN ONES TOO.
WHO NEEDS COLOUR, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT RAINS?
WE'RE VOTING FOR THE PARTY WHO'LL FIX OUR DRAINS.

ALL S/BOTTOMS: FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM! FIX THEM!

MR S: ACCORDING TO THE COUNCIL;
COMPLAINTS ARE GETTING FEWER
BUT SURELY THEY'RE FORGETTING,
WHAT'S BLOCKING UP THE SEWER?
DON'T BOTHER US WITH RHETORIC, ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS.
WE'RE VOTING FOR THE PARTY WHO'LL FIX OUR DRAINS!

ALL S/BOTTOMS: FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM! FIX THEM!

MRS S: LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE, LISTEN TO OUR CRIES,
NO MORE PROPAGANDA, PROMISES OR LIES.
BUREAUCRATIC NONSENSE FUDDLING WITH OUR BRAINS,
WE'RE VOTING FOR THE PARTY WHO'LL FIX OUR DRAINS.

ALL S/BOTTOMS: FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM! FIX THEM!

MR & MRS S: IF WE ASK YOU NICELY, WE ONLY GET IGNORED,
PERHAPS BY PEOPLE SHOUTING,
WE'LL GET OUR DRAINS RESTORED.
WHEN ALL THE FUSS IS OVER, JUST ONE THING REMAINS,
WE'RE VOTING FOR THE PARTY WHO'LL FIX OUR DRAINS!

ALL S/BOTTOMS: FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM, FIX THEM, FIX OUR DRAINS,
FIX THEM! FIX THEM!
FIX THEM! FIX THEM!

(The Vicar and his Wife enter.)

COUNCILLOR: Well I think it's fair to say that you've made your point, Mr Shufflebottom. I will attend to this straight away. **(He exits in a hurry)** Goodbye Vicar.

VICAR: Councillor Clott appears to be in quite a hurry.

MR S: Vicar, these people need to be told it's no good pussy footing around, they're elected to serve us, and you can't have the tail wagging the dog.

WIFE: And I'm sure you told him so as well.

MRS S: He certainly did... a lovely turn of phrase my husband... Now come on kids; we must be going as well.

VICAR: I'm sorry to ask this, but Councillor Clott usually has a clean up when he's finished. Do you think that you could have a quick tidy up before you go?

MR S: A tidy up, a tidy up, what about the Cleaners?

VICAR: Well, **(almost whispering)** after the incident with old Fred last year, we...

MR S: Say no more, say no more. Come on kids; give us a hand here.

MRS S: Yes surely we will, how is dear old Fred? The poor man.

WIFE: Well let's just say, it would be a lot worse if the weather hadn't changed.

MR S: **(Nodding)** Right... OK... Got ya.

JIMMY: What's the matter with Fred, Dad?

MR S: You cheeky monkey, don't you know that little children should be seen and not heard? Get out of it!

(They all exit.)