

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Date:	20 October 2020
Title:	Thame Christmas Event
Contact Officer:	Becky Reid, Market Town Coordinator

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on plans to celebrate Christmas in Thame for 2020.

Background

2. Each year Thame normally welcomes in the festive season with a big event that revolves around switching on of the Christmas Lights. The event seeks to be a celebration of family, friendship and community and is attended by locals and visitors alike in their thousands.
3. Covid-19 has made it impossible for an event like this to go ahead this year. This has already been communicated to Councillors and residents.
4. However we are not letting that stand in the way of bringing some festive cheer to our town to provide alternative ways for the residents of Thame to celebrate friends, family and community - in a way that meets all safety guidelines and is flexible enough to change if we move into a different Tier of restrictions.

Proposal

5. As in previous years we will be working closely with various groups in the Community to put on our event, but this year rather than one large event we are going to put on an 'Advent Calendar' of 24 smaller events. These will include activities for everyone, with a different smaller event or activity for people to take part in on each day of Advent.
6. Some events will have a fixed date. These include:
 - Live music
 - Pop up Christmas readings
 - Street Food Market
 - Gift Markets
7. Other events, although promoted on a specific day, will be available for people to engage with on any day of advent. These include:
 - 'Christmas Spirits Safari': Similar to previous years we will be running a town trail - with images hidden in 10 windows around the town for people to find. This year we are connecting with a national event that means the images are of characters that you can engage with through your phone - and a story that you can enjoy long afterwards.
 - 'Window Wonderland': Continuing in the spirit of the rainbows that have appeared in windows throughout lockdown, we will be running a 'Window Wonderland', transforming Thame's streets into magical outdoor gallery with households creating

silhouette based artwork that is visible at night for people to enjoy an evening walk around the town.

- Selfie Station: We will be creating a 'Selfie' Opportunity in town in addition to our normal lights and tree. We are currently working on the detail of this. It will either take the form of a backdrop or some large (3ft) lights that spell out the word 'Thame'.

8. We are currently confirming other events with different community & business partners and seeking sponsorship to allow us to do more. At the moment we are talking to Red Kite Family Centre, Thame Players, Thame Museum, Thame Youth Projects, Thame Town Music Festival, Thame Music Academy, Sally Evans Events, Mynt Image, all local churches (through Cornerstone) and more.

Promotion

9. A booklet containing all details of the events will be printed and distributed to each home in Thame prior to 1st December. The events will also be promote through the 'Christmas in Thame' Facebook page. This will also be used to give people updates should our current 'Tier' change.

Risk Assessment

10. Each activity/event will have clear risk assessments in place and be carefully managed in a way that prevents crowds from gathering. They will each have a contingency plan in place if we move up the Covid-19 'Tiers' announced by central government.
11. We are trying to prioritise events and activities that will be able to go ahead regardless of a change in restrictions in our area. However with activity/events that might be impacted we will clearly state this in the booklet created, as well as communicate all updates through our website and through the Christmas in Thame Facebook page as well as our own Facebook page.

Resource Appraisal

12. Expenditure will be confined within the Christmas event budget with sponsorship and donation opportunities offered to businesses to offset any additional costs.

Action:

To note the report and provide ideas and feedback to improve the event offer.