

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title:	Christmas in Thame
Date:	26 October 2021
Contact Officer:	Becky Reid, Market Town Coordinator Julian Blake, Community Project Support Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on plans to celebrate Christmas in Thame for 2021.

Background

2. Each year Thame normally welcomes in the festive season with one main 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. Due to the circumstances brought on by Covid-19 last year we had to deliver a very different Christmas than usual. Despite this, we were able to deliver a hugely popular and successful Christmas programme that received a lot of positive feedback. When we started planning Christmas this year, we decided that this was the perfect opportunity to have a re-think and try things differently.

Proposal

4. We propose is an event that is a hybrid of the one-night, large events we have run pre-Covid, and the smaller events of last year, that ran through the month of December. This approach will draw people to the Town Centre (and therefore the Town Centre businesses) more regularly, support our local economy in the run up to Christmas. It will also allow more residents of Thame to participate in varying ways, with events being available at different points during the weekend.
5. A light switch on will go ahead on Friday 3rd December as planned, but this will be a shorter event. This will include music performances, walk around Children's characters, Mulled Wine from the OX9ers, Children nominated by local primary schools switching on the lights, a visit from Santa, late night shopping, and more.
6. As in previous years we will be working closely with various groups in the community to put on our event. The rest of the activities will be as follows:

Date	Event/Activity
Saturday 4th	Sally Evans Gift Fair – delivered by Sally Evans
Sunday 5th	Santa's Grotto – in partnership with Thame Round Table
Friday 10th	Street Food Market 3pm – 9pm – delivered by AyStreatMeet
Saturday 11th	Mynt Image Gift Fair – delivered by Mynt Image
Sunday 12th	Children's Rides – hired in for the afternoon, plus charity chocolate tombola
Friday 17th	'Schools out for Christmas' Crafternoon – run in partnership with Churches
Saturday 18th	The last-minute gift fair – run in house by us, featuring local makers
Sunday 19th	Live Music in Montesson Sq – performed by various local groups and hosted by Thame Radio

7. Run alongside the events will be competitions and activities such as the Tree of Hope (hosted by the Library and supported by Windles); Shop window display competitions; 'Santa Hat Search' competition to engage people in coming into town; Window Wanderland (partnership with Schools); Selfie-station, and more.

Promotion

8. 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 promoted through the 'Christmas in Thame' Facebook page. This will also be used to give people updates should Covid-19 guidance change.

Risk Assessment

9. Each activity/event will have clear risk assessments in place and be carefully managed. Risk assessments attached are listed as Appendix A – Corporate and Appendix B – Event.

Resource Appraisal

10. Expenditure will be confined within the Christmas event budget with sponsorship and donation opportunities offered to businesses to offset any additional costs.
11. Many of the events and activities are being sponsored by local businesses.

Action:

- i) To **note** the report.
- ii) To **provide** ideas and feedback to improve the event offer.