

Community Services Committee

Title:	Christmas Event 2025
Date:	11 November 2025
Contact Officer:	Bex Surridge, Community Events Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To update on the Christmas events and activities planned throughout November/December 2025

Background

2. Christmas in Thame is a key event in the town with beautiful street & tree lights, festive cheer, and a variety of events. This report outlines our suggested programme for November/December 2025, taking into consideration:
 - Christmas Lights Switch-On event.
 - The staging/promotion of additional events throughout December in partnership with other organisations.
 - Engagement and support from councillors.
 - Creation of Christmas booklet to generate revenue (through advertising).
 - Combining Santa's Grotto with the Charity Fair.
 - Recreating a successful Street Food Market to generate revenue and increase foot fall.

Action Plan

3. In early November, before the start of the Christmas events, we will be creating and posting social media posts about the Reverse Advent calendar, which raises donations for food banks. This will help raise awareness about giving to people in less fortunate conditions, which we will mention at the Lights Switch-on, promoting care and good will.
4. Staging of the main Christmas Lights Switch-On event on Friday 28 November 2025. This event will mark the start of a month-long Christmas campaign of community events and activities aimed at attracting residents from Thame and surrounding villages, and visitors, to the Town Centre (and into local businesses). The events should also provide Christmas cheer and lift community spirits, while offering a mixture of attractions, activities, and affordable options for gifts and entertainment.
5. This year we are planning a **Christmas Elf** theme, which will be used across all promotional materials and activities throughout the month.

Date	Event/Activity
Friday 28 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Food Market surrounding the Town Hall, delivered by Ay StrEat Meet consisting of 7 food stalls and a bar. Additional local sellers such as Emily’s Coffee and Crayfish Capers delivering food/drink options. • Stage perpendicular to Town Hall, with entertainment to include fun activities presented by comperes, music from Thame Concert Band, and an invitation (awaiting confirmation) to Thame Players to perform a song from their upcoming panto (<i>Camelot</i>) • Amongst the activities of the evening, we will have a Go Kart track set up, sponsored by Thame Cars, for free rides. • Our selfie station will be set up outside the Town Hall at this event so people can start posing and enter the selfie competition. • Late night shopping: Events Officer will encourage businesses to stay open until 7pm for late night shopping. • Santa and his new sleigh will be visiting and available for families to meet throughout the evening. • Stalls will be set up through the event, providing Christmas artwork, handmade goodies, stocking fillers and unique gifts. There will be a mixture of local sellers, small businesses, and community stalls alongside the food market. • Tree lights switched on by children chosen by primary schools to celebrate personal and community achievement. The Mayor will greet the children, gift them a certificate and introduce them to the crowd before the lights are turned on. • After the tree lighting, music will fill the remaining time and the compares will encourage a sing a long of family friendly songs –<i>Jingle Bell Rock, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, Let it Snow</i> etc. • Visitors will be encouraged to stay on after light switch-on to soak up the atmosphere, take a selfie, enjoy the eateries or a spot of late-night shopping.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charities Fair to be held in the Upper Chamber of the Town Hall • The Town Hall will host up to 16 charities between 10am and 2pm for free to allow them to promote their cause, raise money, spread

Saturday 29 November	<p>awareness and recruit support. The only requirement from Thame Town Council is a Christmas theme to keep the event festive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry to the fair will be free and hot drinks will be provided, with a few seats to relax in. • A grotto will be held in the downstairs meeting room of the Town Hall, alongside the Charities Fair (10am-2pm) to allow for ease of running both events and staffing. • The grotto will be free entry and aim to have all children seen by Santa. A gift will be given to each child that visits the grotto. The grotto is free so everyone can join in the fun. Donations will be welcome to support our community and future events. • The Elves trail begins and encourages footfall into local shops and small businesses.
-------------------------	--

6. Following the events in late November, events and activities throughout December continue to encourage people to visit Thame and shop local. These include, but are not exclusive to:

- Sally Evans craft fairs (dates throughout Nov and Dec) – located in the Town Hall Upper Chamber, these craft fairs encourage people to shop small and visit Thame during the Christmas period instead of needing to travel.
- Senior Citizens tea party (Wednesday 10 December) – this event is catered to the elderly population in Thame, offering a friendly environment to have a festive tea party. With support from, Councillors, Officers and Maintenance Team.
- A Christmas trail to encourage footfall within the Town (Saturday 29 November – Wednesday 17 December). Families will be encouraged to visit small, local businesses to find 12 hidden elves and spell out a Christmas phrase. There will be a prize draw to enter, and small gifts handed out once entries are handed in at Specsavers Thame – the sponsor of the trail.
- Colouring-in gets creative with the ‘Elf yourself’ colour in sheets. Blank copies will be available from the Town Hall, Library and other participating venues such as cafes in the town centre. Participants will be encouraged to complete the sheet and then deliver to the library for it to be displayed over the Christmas period.
- Letters to Santa will return this year and is again hosted by Specsavers Thame. A letterbox borrowed from Red Kite Centre will be used to collect letters and then personalised responses sent around Thame and the local area.
- An Elf-based selfie-station located outside the Town Hall will encourage footfall into the town centre due to a selfie competition with prizes, sponsored by RCP Service Centre. Support from the maintenance team to assist with

moving/securing the nutcrackers in place.

- Christmas carols in front of the Town Hall on Christmas Eve (24 December) with community group stalls providing mulled wine, hot chocolate, and mince pies. Thame Town Council to provide, promotion of the event, power connection and support the event by the maintenance team providing the road closure equipment.

Promotion

7. A 20-page booklet containing all the details of our Christmas events, as well as other upcoming community events. Distributed to homes in Thame in early November.
8. The events will be promoted through our social media and Christmas website pages, working closely with our Communications team.
9. We will have banners and signage around the town in the lead up to the Christmas Lights event to promote it, the grotto and the charities fair.

Risk Assessment

10. Each activity/event will have clear risk assessments in place and be carefully managed.

Resource Appraisal

11. Expenditure will be confined within the Christmas event budget with sponsorship and donation opportunities offered to businesses to offset any additional costs.
12. We have tried to get local businesses to sponsor events and activities where possible and hope to continue this model in future.
13. We have recruited help from local organisations, such as the Rotary Club and Thame Round Table, to help staff events.
14. Officer and Maintenance Team time to help with planning, event operational requirements and working at the switch on event and supporting the community events organised through the festive season.

Action:

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