

To receive a report on the Christmas lights switch on event 2024 and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Christmas light switch on event

In recent years the town's Christmas lights have been switched on in Victoria Gardens by the Mayor of Saltash. This year's Christmas light switch on event was held on 15th November in Victoria Gardens. Historically approximately 100 people have attended each year.

In 2023 the light switch on was combined with the Saltash Christmas Festival and the lights were switched on by the Mayor during the event.

Christmas light switch on 2024

This year approximately 300 residents attended along with four school choirs. This was far greater than anticipated.

Due to the switch on being held during the Christmas Festival in 2023, many who attended commented they were disappointed that there were no food stalls, market traders or shops open. Only Nicky's Glow Beads were open for the evening and many people were expecting a larger event with entertainment,

The PA system currently used for events is not suitable for outdoor events and the crowd could not hear the Mayor speaking or the choirs singing.

The location of Victoria Gardens to hold the event poses many Health and Safety concerns. The gardens are very dark, access is via roads on both sides and the garden has many trip hazards for large audiences, uneven ground and no lighting on entrances or exits. It's deemed not suitable for holding large events such as the Christmas Light Switch unless health and safety work is undertaken.

Christmas light switch on 2025

The administration team are currently liaising with the Saltash Christmas Festival to switch on the Saltash Christmas lights as part of the Christmas festival.

This partnership seems to be the right way forward for several reasons:

Community Demand: At the recent light switch-on, there was noticeable confusion and disappointment among attendees that it did not coincide with a festival featuring stalls and activities. Combining the two would create a more seamless and enjoyable experience for the community.

Health and Safety: Aligning the events could streamline safety planning and resources, as both parties could coordinate to ensure all aspects are well-managed for a larger combined event.

Maximising Impact: A single, well-organised event would likely attract a larger audience and provide a more vibrant celebration in the town. This would support both the Town Council and the festival goals of delivering a memorable experience for residents and visitors alike whilst combining finances and resources too.

The date for the Christmas festival in 2025 has been confirmed as Saturday 6 December.

Next Steps:

Members are asked to consider the following three options:

1. Collaborative Christmas Light Switch-On

The Town Council partner with the Christmas Festival to host a joint 2025 Light Switch-On event inclusive of the River of Lights, scheduled to coincide with the festival on 6 December 2025. The date is quite late on and could be perceived as so, in terms of a Christmas light switch on event and supporting the traders.

2. Alternative Town Council Event in November

If Members wish to consider organising a separate Town Council event on an alternative Friday in November, several factors will need to be addressed as the Town Council are to issue a tender specification in January 2025 for lighting contractors. These factors include:

- Identifying a suitable location that meets health and safety regulations;
- Assessing associated costs and budget availability;
- Developing an appropriate event management plan.

Given the required health and safety concerns a standalone Town Council event held at Victoria Gardens is not recommended.

3. River of Lights activated separately to a light switch on event

The River of Lights display could be illuminated following Remembrance Day

Tuesday 11 November 2025, this would brighten Fore Street as the evenings grow darker.

A focused and well promoted campaign in partnership with the Christmas Festival could accompany the launch of the new Town Council lighting display following the approved investment for 2025.

The expanded display extending from Victoria Gardens to the Waterside could be officially turned on, in partnership with the Christmas Festival on 6 December 2025, ensuring a brighter, more impactful event.

End of report

Mayor's Secretary / Receptionist