

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL
FESTIVE LIGHTS SWITCH-ON EVENT 2026

Date: 22 October 2026

Executive Summary

Members will recall that, as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process, Full Council approved a budget allocation of £3,000 for festive lighting together with a separate budget allocation of £500 for food and refreshments associated with the annual Festive Lights Switch-On Event.

The event has become an established feature of the Parish calendar and provides an opportunity for residents, local businesses, community groups and elected Members to come together and celebrate the festive season. The event has become an established feature of the Parish calendar since 2021 and provides an opportunity for residents, local businesses, community groups and elected Members to come together and celebrate the festive season.

Following a review of the Council's responsibilities as an event organiser, officers have undertaken detailed planning to ensure that the event can be delivered safely and effectively. This has included the preparation of an Event Management Plan, risk assessments, safeguarding arrangements, emergency procedures, staffing considerations and liaison with relevant stakeholders.

As part of this process, officers have identified several measures necessary to support the safe management of the event. These include the use of temporary lighting, already owned by the Council, to improve visibility around Station Green where attendees will gather prior to the switch-on.

Officers also recommend the purchase of a dedicated first aid response rucksack. Whilst the event is relatively small in scale, the Council has a duty to consider the welfare of attendees and ensure suitable equipment is available to respond promptly to minor incidents or medical emergencies. The equipment will remain Council property and be available for future Council events and community activities.

In addition, officers propose the purchase of a portable battery-powered public address system. The open nature of Station Green and the anticipated attendance levels mean that attendees may otherwise struggle to hear important announcements, safety information and speeches. A PA system will assist with communication during the event and provide a reusable asset for future Council meetings, consultations, community engagement events and activities held at Victory Hall.

The purpose of this report is not to seek approval for holding the event, as Members have already approved both the budget provision and continuation of the annual Festive Lights Switch-On Event. Rather, the report updates Members on the proposed arrangements,

seeks approval of the Event Management Plan and associated documentation and invites Councillors to support officers in the delivery of the event.

The Event Management Plan and supporting documentation were circulated to Members on 13 October 2026 to allow sufficient opportunity for review prior to consideration by Full Council.

Background

The Festive Lights Switch-On Event has become a popular and well-attended annual community event within the Parish. It provides an opportunity for residents, businesses, community organisations and visitors to come together, celebrate the festive season and engage positively with their local council.

The event supports the Council's wider objectives of promoting community cohesion, encouraging civic participation and fostering engagement between residents and elected Members.

The event is proposed to take place on Saturday 5 December 2026 and will comprise:

- A community gathering at Station Green.
- Welcome address by the Council.
- Festive lights switch-on.
- Refreshments and community activities at Victory Hall.
- Opportunities for residents to meet and engage with Councillors.

The event continues the Council's commitment to supporting community life and creating opportunities for residents to come together in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Event Management and Safety Arrangements

Recognising the Council's responsibilities as organiser, officers have prepared a comprehensive Event Management Plan which sets out the operational arrangements required to deliver the event safely and effectively.

The plan has been developed using recognised event management principles and good practice guidance, including the principles contained within *The Purple Guide*.

The Event Management Plan includes:

- Event governance and responsibilities.
- Site management arrangements.
- Crowd management considerations.
- Safeguarding procedures.
- First aid provision.
- Fire safety arrangements.
- Emergency response procedures.
- Communication protocols.

- Adverse weather contingencies.
- Welfare arrangements.
- Incident reporting procedures.

Officers are satisfied that the arrangements proposed are proportionate to the size and nature of the event and provide a reasonable and practical approach to managing foreseeable risks associated with the event.

The documentation has also been structured to provide a framework that can be adapted and reused for future Council-led events, supporting consistency and reducing duplication of work.

Safety Advisory Group Engagement

The Event Management Plan and associated documentation have been shared with members of the relevant Safety Advisory Group and other appropriate stakeholders for information and comment.

Whilst overall responsibility for the event remains with Chigwell Parish Council as organiser, engagement with partner agencies provides an opportunity to obtain professional observations and ensure the proposed arrangements remain proportionate and appropriate.

At the time of writing this report, no significant concerns have been raised. Any recommendations received prior to the event will be reviewed and incorporated where appropriate.

Staffing Implications

Delivery of the event will require officer attendance outside normal working hours, together with operational support before, during and after the event.

Officers have reviewed resource requirements and are satisfied that the event can be delivered safely and effectively through existing staffing arrangements, supplemented where appropriate by Councillor volunteers.

The estimated staffing cost associated with event delivery is £886.38, which will be met from the Council's approved staffing budget and is therefore separate from the event expenditure detailed below.

Financial Implications

Full Council previously approved a budget allocation of £3,000 for festive lighting together with a separate allocation of £500 for food and refreshments.

Estimated Event Expenditure

- Food and refreshments: £500.00

- Festive lighting contractor: £1,590.00
- First aid response rucksack: £150.00
- Portable battery-powered PA system and microphone: £100.00

Total Estimated Event Expenditure: £2,340.00

The estimated expenditure remains within the budget approved by Full Council, leaving an available contingency of approximately £1,160 to accommodate any unforeseen expenditure associated with the event.

The proposed purchase of the first aid response rucksack and portable PA system represents a longer-term investment in Council equipment. Both items will remain Council assets and will be available for future community events, public consultations, meetings, civic activities and functions held at Victory Hall.

Any material variation in expenditure will be reported to Members as necessary.

Councillor Participation

The success of community events is greatly enhanced by the active participation and visibility of elected Members.

Councillors are therefore invited to assist officers with the delivery of the event. Potential roles may include:

- Welcoming residents and visitors.
- Supporting community engagement activities.
- Assisting with refreshments.
- Supporting event set-up and close-down arrangements.
- Providing a visible Council presence throughout the event.

Early identification of volunteers will assist officers in finalising operational arrangements and ensuring the event is appropriately resourced.

Officer Assessment

Officers are satisfied that appropriate planning has been undertaken and that proportionate arrangements are in place to address operational, health and safety, safeguarding, welfare and contingency requirements.

Detailed planning has now been completed and officers are satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place to support the safe and effective delivery of the event.

The Event Management Plan provides a robust framework for the safe management of the event.

The proposed acquisition of a portable public address system and first aid response kit will support communication, welfare and operational resilience during the event, whilst providing assets that can be utilised for future Council activities.

The Festive Lights Switch-On Event remains a valued community occasion that promotes civic pride, community cohesion and positive engagement between residents and their Parish Council.

Officers therefore consider the arrangements outlined within this report to be proportionate, achievable and representative of good event management practice and recommend that Members approve the Event Management Plan and associated documentation.

Recommendations

Members are RECOMMENDED to:

1. **NOTE** the contents of this report.
2. **NOTE** that Full Council previously approved a budget allocation of £3,000 for festive lighting and £500 for food and refreshments within the 2026/27 budget.
3. **NOTE** that the Event Management Plan and supporting documentation were circulated to Members on 13 October 2026.
4. **APPROVE** the Event Management Plan and associated risk assessments.
5. **APPROVE** the operational arrangements proposed for delivery of the Festive Lights Switch-On Event 2026.
6. **APPROVE** the purchase of a first aid response rucksack and portable battery-powered public address system as detailed within this report.
7. **NOTE** that staffing costs of £886.38 will be funded from the approved staffing budget.
8. **ENDORSE** the use of the Event Management Plan as a framework for future Council-managed events.
9. **INVITE** Councillors to volunteer to assist officers with delivery of the event.

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