

Christmas has arrived in Guildford

Councillors Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council, and Julia McShane, Deputy Leader of the Council said: "Christmas has arrived in Guildford! On Wednesday we lit our beautiful Christmas lights to mark the start of the festive season for our residents, businesses and visitors to enjoy.

"We understand many of you are missing the traditional large scale light switch-on event. This year we're spreading celebrations throughout the season not because we are bah humbug but because the event had grown from a small gathering to a sizeable event held in a very tight space attended by 7,000 people. Our businesses said people didn't stay and shop afterwards so we're putting safety first and have lots of activities planned throughout December to encourage you all to visit our town centre."

"There's so much to look forward to, from vegan, craft and farmers markets to carol singing and a Christmas present trail for families. On Phoenix Court we will be putting a giant snow globe that people can go in for selfies and photos. And at Tunsgate there will be carol singers, at the Guildhall a pantomime and across town there will be music, decorations and much much more."

Amanda Masters, CEO of Experience Guildford our town centre Business Improvement District said: "As ever, Guildford retailers have absolutely everything you could need to help you get set for the festive season ahead, and if Christmas shopping gets too much, you can take a break at one of the fantastic food and drink outlets in the town centre, and eat, drink and be merry!

"Experience Guildford are rewarding residents for spending locally this Christmas through the Mi Rewards loyalty program. Sign up to Mi Rewards Guildford and you could go into a daily draw to win a £50 voucher when you spend at participating retail and leisure businesses from 1st - 24th December.

"Our EG elves will also be out on late night Thursdays, surprising lucky shoppers by paying for their festive purchases."

Keep an eye on Experience Guildford's website, where you'll be able to find details of Christmas activities and events.

We'll be using the Welcome Back Fund to support our High Street this Christmas. The government scheme is providing councils across England with a share of £56 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This is to support the safe return to high streets and help rebuild after the pandemic.

Light switch on video: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1248020495715704>