

## **Progress Report – Recent Event Highlights**

### **Active Travel Event**

The Active Travel event was a notable success, with community engagement and positive feedback. Local families, cyclists, and walkers attended showing continued support for healthier, low-impact travel solutions in Faversham. I have since acquired more contacts to build on future Active Travel events.

### **Faversham in the Forties**

This event once again proved a major attraction, with impressive turnout and enthusiastic participation from residents and visitors. The atmosphere was vibrant, and the event showcased excellent collaboration between local traders, volunteers, and re-enactment groups. KMTV attended and carried out some live interviews and Radio Faversham collected so footage to use for future advertising of the event.

### **Upcoming Events**

Midsummer Night's Feast – This Saturday

Preparations are well underway for the Midsummer Night's Feast, promising an evening of live music, food stalls, and entertainment. The event will highlight Faversham's hospitality and community spirit.

### **Faversham Pirate Festival**

We are pleased to confirm sponsorship support from:

Shepherd Neame

Harley's Place

The Bear

Market Inn

Cafe Guild

### **Event Safety and Conference Insights**

Outdoor Events Conference – March Attendance

In March, I attended the Outdoor Events Conference, which focused heavily on the increasing importance of safety, resilience, and risk management in public events. A major point of discussion was the upcoming implementation of Martyn's Law, which will place a legal duty on organisers to proactively protect the public from the threat of terrorism and improve crowd safety through clear planning and training measures.

The conference highlighted several key priorities for event planning going forward:

- Enhanced crowd control strategies
- Implementation of hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) measures
- Clear zoning of event areas for better movement and emergency access
- Greater emphasis on incident response planning and public safeguarding

These changes are not just about individual events—they will have wider implications for how we use public space indoors and outdoors in Faversham.

### **Christmas Light Switch-On: Concerns, Logistics and Recommendations**

While last year's Christmas light switch-on was well attended and supported by a strong marshal team, I have ongoing concerns about crowd density and safety now of the lights being turned on. Feedback from our medical support team echoed my unease regarding the size and containment of the crowd in a limited space.

### **Collaboration and Logistical Challenges**

Efforts have been made to work collaboratively with the community Christmas lights group and Faversham Market, but a number of logistical issues continue to impact the safe and effective delivery of the event:

The transition from the daytime market to the evening switch-on has proven difficult to manage.

Stage entertainment scheduling has clashed with market traders taking extended time to pack away, creating delays in evening setup.

This crossover has led to significant health and safety concerns, particularly due to the movement of vehicles in pedestrian areas while large crowds are already gathering.

These conditions undermine effective crowd control and significantly raise the risk of incidents during the key moments of the event.

### **Safety Concerns**

- Overcrowding and prolonged containment of large groups
- Vehicle movements during public access times
- Inability to secure clear event space ahead of key evening programming
- Incompatibility between market wind-down and stage event setup

## **Proposal for 2025 Christmas Event**

To address the issues above and ensure public safety while delivering a successful event, I propose the following:

### **Separate Operational Responsibility**

Return operational responsibility for the Christmas Light Switch-On to the community group and away from Faversham Town Council, allowing the event to be managed independently with a clear focus on:

- Risk assessments
- Insurance coverage
- Compliance with Swale Borough Council event safety requirements
- Restructure Timing and Layout
- Develop a more defined handover plan between market close and event start, ensuring:
- All vehicle movements are completed well before the public gather
- Stage areas are secured and accessible to production crews on time

### **Market trading and entertainment don't compete logistically Safety Concerns:**

Excessive crowd numbers in a static location

Limited space for dispersal in case of emergency

Increased risk under Martyn's Law considerations

I propose the following changes for the Christmas Light Switch-On event this year:

### **Extend the Event Footprint:**

Increase the operational area into Preston Street in line with our Premises Licence and continue the Night Market theme to better distribute attendees and reduce pressure on the central switch-on area. This would need to be discussed with the Market Manager to be able to use the Best of Faversham Gazebos 5m x2.5m to ensure the road can still provide access for emergency vehicles.

### **Separate Responsibility from Faversham Town Council:**

For clarity and safety, I recommend that the Christmas Light Switch-On event be organised independently by The Community Christmas Lights away from Faversham Town Council. This allows for:

- Clear ownership of safety planning and insurance
- Streamlined communication with Swale Borough Council
- Dedicated focus on implementing required safety and crowd control measures

- To Swale Borough Councils Safety Advisory group, ensuring full compliance with event safety legislation and best practices.

### **Planning Timeline Consideration**

Depending on whether this proposal is accepted, detailed planning for the event will need to begin promptly. To secure a road closure for Preston Street, all relevant documentation must be submitted at least 14 weeks prior to the event. As we are currently 24 weeks prior, we have a workable window to finalise plans and prepare a submission to Swale Borough Council. Early confirmation will ensure that I have adequate time for a safe, compliant, and effective event delivery.

Faversham's event calendar remains vibrant and well-attended. As we grow, it's vital that public safety evolves in line with our ambitions. I am confident that with the proposed changes, we can continue to deliver successful events that are not only enjoyable but secure and responsibly managed.

Claire Elliott

Events Officer