

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

GODALMING LIGHTS UP THE TOWN!

Godalming's Christmas Festival and Lights Switch-on took place on Saturday, 29 November on a clear and dry day. Thousands of people flocked into Godalming from early in the morning to enjoy the festive Christmas market, delicious street food and seasonal entertainment. There were sparkling performances from everyone who entertained at The Pepperpot and a large variety of Christmassy stalls selling tempting goods. New to the Festival this year were a stilt walking elf and a ground-based balloon modelling elf who kept the children entertained; these and the adorable Christmas Ponies who were giving free rides for children at the bottom of Church Street meant there was something for everyone. Reporting on the commercial impact of the event, John Taylor, President of Godalming's Chamber of Commerce said: "The early feedback from most retailers is that the Christmas Festival was a big success and many of them are reporting an increase of 20% in sales compared to an average Saturday. The weather helped tremendously but this year's festival was definitely full of variety and there was literally something for everyone. We are now looking forward to the Easter and Food Festivals to continue the success in Godalming that comes from partnership working and the great community support."

Ed Simpson from the Godalming Food Company, one of the delighted shop keepers, said the atmosphere was buzzing, customers were in festive spirits and we were really pleased to be able to fuel people's Christmas shopping with mulled wine and hot mince pies, it was an excellent day's trade and we were very happy to see lots of new and regular customers."

The Christmas Festival sponsors, Charterhouse Club and The Star public house, were thrilled too. Tim Ostle, Commercial Director at Charterhouse said: "The atmosphere in Godalming throughout the day was fantastic, culminating with literally thousands of people cramming the High Street to watch the lights being switched on by Snow White and Prince Charming from the Yvonne Arnaud Panto helped by Father Christmas. I am delighted that the Charterhouse Club, as the main sponsor, was able to be a part of such a great well-organised event to get the Christmas spirit going."

Ian Thomson, landlord of The Star in Church Street said: "Another fantastic Christmas Market and light-up day in Godalming with an improved variety of market stalls, plus some great entertainment helped along by our Christmas Elves and some great weather."

Godalming's Mayor, Councillor Andrew Wilson said, "It was a wonderful day, enhanced by the lovely weather. Some said it was the best ever festival and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The organisation by the Town Council staff and the many others was superb and so helped make the day what it was". Andrew officially opened proceedings in the morning and spent the day visiting the many stalls.

Santa's magical grotto was organised by the Godalming & District Chamber of Commerce and saw hundreds of children visiting Santa throughout the day, the Chamber also organised the large variety of activities at the Wilfrid Noyce Centre for the children to enjoy.

The festival organisers would like to thank everyone involved in helping on the day and behind the scenes. Thanks also to all the visitors that came from far and wide to enjoy their day in Godalming. Don't forget the sparkling lights will be lighting up Godalming until twelfth night.

Ends

In case of query please contact:

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