# ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL
# Community and Events Committee Meeting

## Christmas Lights Installation 2026: Update Report

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| **Committee** | Community and Events Committee |
| **Date of meeting** | 30 September 2026 |
| **Agenda item** | 11 |
| **Report author** | Tor Warburton, Town Clerk |
| **Purpose** | For information |

**Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members on arrangements for the installation of the 2026 Christmas lighting scheme, including the installation programme, delivery of the Christmas tree, the new electronic tree in the Pocket Park, and the new picket fencing to be used this year.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committee:

- notes the update on the 2026 Christmas lights installation;
- notes that all permissions for the 2026 lighting installation have been received, and that planning permission from Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) for the new electronic tree in the Pocket Park is currently outstanding; and
- notes the operational points set out in section 8, which officers are progressing with the lighting contractor.

**3. Background**

3.1 The Council delivers an annual Christmas lighting scheme in Andover town centre, installed and maintained by its appointed lighting contractor, Blachere Illuminations (contract C146/02/23). This report updates Members on preparations for the 2026 scheme ahead of installation in November 2026.

**4. Permissions and Consents**

4.1 All permissions required for the installation of the Christmas lights in 2026 have been received. Planning permission from TVBC for the electronic tree in the Pocket Park is currently pending (see section 6). Copies of all permissions are held on file and will be provided to the contractor so that installation crews can produce them on site if requested.

**5. Installation Programme**

5.1 Installation will take place from 8 to 10 November 2026, with night-time working on 8 and 9 November and daytime working on 10 November. The Christmas tree will be delivered on Friday 6 November 2026, after 7.00pm.

| Date | Time | Activity |
|---|---|---|
| Friday 6 November | After 7.00pm | Delivery of the Christmas tree |
| Sunday 8 November | From 5.00pm (overnight) | Installation: night 1 |
| Monday 9 November | From 5.00pm (overnight) | Installation: night 2 |
| Tuesday 10 November | From late morning | Installation: day 3, starting with the Christmas tree lights (tbc), continuing until installation is complete |
| Friday 20 November | 4.00pm / 6.30pm | Christmas Festival / Christmas lights switch-on |

5.2 Night-time working minimises disruption to traders, shoppers and traffic in the town centre. Residents will be notified of the installation dates through a Facebook post and a notice on the ATC website.

**6. New Electronic Tree: Pocket Park**

6.1 A new electronic Christmas tree is planned for the Pocket Park this year. The planning application was submitted to TVBC on 7 September 2026, the required site notices are displayed, and a decision is expected shortly after 1 October 2026. As a reusable feature, the tree is expected to be used in future years, subject to its condition and continued permission for its location.

**7. Picket Fencing**

7.1 New picket fencing will be used this year, supplied and fitted by the lighting company and secured by them to withstand adverse weather conditions. It provides a protective barrier around the Christmas tree, the electronic tree and their power sources, as required to protect the public from the electrical installation, and improves the appearance of the display compared with standard temporary barriers.

**8. Operational Points and Risks**

| Issue | Detail and action | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| Remembrance Sunday | 8 November 2026 is Remembrance Sunday and installation begins that night. Officers will confirm that road closures and parade arrangements have ended, that works near the war memorial are sequenced sensitively, and will ask the installers to remove the Poppy Trail while installing. | Amber |
| Planning permission: electronic tree | TVBC planning permission outstanding; decision due shortly after 1 October 2026. The tree will not be installed until permission is granted. | Red |
| Tree delivery out of hours | Delivery after 7.00pm on Friday 6 November. The Town Clerk and Committee Officer will attend site. | Green |
| Contractor documentation | Current risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) and evidence of public liability insurance have been obtained. | Green |
| Electrical safety | Electrical test certification for the lighting scheme and the electronic tree, including power supply arrangements, is held by the lighting company. | Green |
| Other permissions | All other permissions for the lighting installation received. | Green |

**9. Financial Implications**

9.1 The cost of the 2026 installation, including the supply and fitting of the new picket fencing, is met from the Christmas lights budget of £55,000 (budget line 4700/2).

**10. Legal Implications**

10.1 The Council may provide Christmas lighting under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011, s.1) / s.144 Local Government Act 1972.

10.2 The required permissions for the town centre lighting works have been obtained. Planning permission from TVBC for the electronic tree remains outstanding, and the tree will not be installed until it is granted. The Council retains duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in respect of works it commissions, which are met by checking the contractor's competence, RAMS and insurance as set out in section 8.

**11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

11.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s.149). The positioning of the picket fencing, the electronic tree and any cabling must maintain clear and accessible footways for wheelchair users, people with pushchairs and people with visual impairments. The contractor will be asked to confirm this as part of the installation.