

JOINT STATEMENT

14th October 2026

Axminster Town Council & Light Up Axminster (LUA) announce unified future for town's festive lights.

AXMINSTER CHRISTMAS LIGHTS — Axminster Town Council and the Light Up Axminster volunteer team are pleased to issue a joint announcement outlining the proposals to secure the future of Axminster's Christmas lighting display and associated festive events. Following a positive transition meeting between the Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (on behalf of the Town Council) and Light Up Axminster volunteers, it is hereby announced that Axminster Town Council will officially take over the management, installation, storage, and funding of the town's festive lighting display from 2026.

Securing the Future of a Cherished Community Tradition

To ensure that the Christmas lighting display remains sustainable and resilient for years to come, Light Up Axminster is formally gifting all of its physical lighting assets to Axminster Town Council at nil cost. This collaborative agreement will transition the display from being carried and delivered by a small group of individual volunteers to a permanent Town-Council-backed infrastructure project.

Honouring Ten Years of Extraordinary Volunteer Leadership

The Town Council and the entire Axminster community owe an immense debt of gratitude to the volunteers who have kept Axminster shining for the past decade.

- **Kara & Paul Burrough:** Particular recognition goes to Kara, who stepped down earlier this year after leading and chairing Light Up Axminster for ten years, alongside her husband Paul, for their tireless work behind the scenes and year-round asset management.
 - **Past & present champions, including Cindy and Lee Furse, Axminster Christmas Lights Association and the Chamber of Commerce.** Our heartfelt thanks are extended to the public for supporting Light Up Axminster for over a decade and to all past champions, as well as every single volunteer who has spent countless evenings and weekends erecting displays in all weathers, fundraising and organising & marshalling events.
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What Local Businesses & Residents Can Expect This Christmas

The Town Council will, from this point onwards, fully manage the logistics, safety compliance, and physical setup for the 2026 festive display:

- **Shopfront trees at NIL charge:** This Year, the Town Council will provide approximately 60 Christmas trees fitted with uniform battery-powered lights to all existing shopfront brackets around the town at no cost to local businesses. Donations would be welcomed but are entirely voluntary.
- **Minster Green & Guildhall Displays:** A central feature tree will be installed on Minster Green, and volunteers will assist in dressing the festive trees inside the Guildhall.

- **Safety & Technical Infrastructure:** The Town Council will assume responsibility for Portable Appliance testing of lighting equipment, arrange and fund secure year-round storage, provide electrical box maintenance and repairs, and facilitate heavy equipment access (including cherry pickers for overhead street spans).
 - **Ongoing Volunteer Involvement:** Current Light Up Axminster volunteers will work directly alongside the Council, lending their invaluable experience and hands-on help during the tree dressing and installations period.
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Festive Season & Switch-On Celebrations

Residents can rest assured that **the lights will go up and shine brightly throughout Axminster this Christmas.**

- While there will be no formal, large-scale 'big switch-on' event requiring road closures this year, community spirit remains at the heart of the celebration.
 - Concurrent plans are underway to host a festive community gathering on Minster Green featuring traditional carol singing, festive gazebos, and seasonal refreshments for all the community to enjoy.
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Future festive lighting displays.

For 2026, the Town Council is committed to working with existing volunteers to provide the maximum amount of illumination in the town centre area, and will be working with organisations to provide a festive event of some kind, even if the switching-on of the lights cannot be coordinated for the same evening.

For 2027 onwards, the Town Council has been considering its budget proposals in recent weeks and the intention is to step up into shoes of Light Up Axminster and take on the complete responsibility for Christmas Lighting in the town, which will inevitably require funding, resourcing and organisation. But, the Town Council recognises the importance of Christmas Lights to residents and will ensure that the right investment is provided to build upon what Light Up Axminster provided since 2016 and take us forward for the next decade to come.

There are challenges in the town; we don't have a linear high street like neighbouring towns and there are constraints in terms of mounting illuminations relating to listed buildings, heritage structures and installation factors. But, the Town Council intends to rise to these challenges with a spirit of positivity to ensure that we can carry the community along with us on the journey.

Transition & Future Enquiries

Following this joint announcement, the Light Up Axminster Facebook page will be retired. All future enquiries, volunteer offers, and communications regarding the town's Christmas lights should now be directed to Axminster Town Council. This is a fantastic, positive step forward for Axminster. By bringing the lights under the Town Council's care while retaining the passion of our local volunteers, we will ensure that our town centre remains bright, festive, and welcoming for every resident, every business and all our visitors every Christmas.