

REPORT TO EVENTS COMMITTEE

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS APRIL 2026

Report Reference E-25-10
Meeting Date 13TH April 2026
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Events Manager / Civic Events Officer



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the previous committee meeting (October 2025) the following events have taken place:

- Knutsford Pumpkin Path
- Knutsford Christmas Lights Switch On
- Knutsford Christmas Market
- Knutsford Crib Service
- Knutsford Bunny Hop

The next events in the programme are:

- Knutsford Music Festival
- Movies on the Moor
- Picnic in the Park

Outline plans for the upcoming events will be provided in the report below to brief committee members.

2.0 REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS

2.1 KNUTSFORD PUMPKIN PATH

Pumpkin Path took place on Friday 31st October, this year's event was particularly busy with it being a Friday and in half term week. The business involvement was great as usual and 11 businesses hosted a pumpkin along King Street and Minshull Street with many more getting involved on the night. The event was successful and well received.

Road closures were in place on King Street and Minshull Street. Whilst there were no changes to the traffic management from previous years, there were issues with traffic flow on Moorside and safety issues at road closure points. For 2026, the traffic management plan will be reviewed and additional measures implemented, including:

- Clearer advance signage
- Enhanced security bollards/barriers
- Removal of parked cars from Moorside
- Additional marshals throughout the event and along diversions outside the road closure area to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

The latter point will aim to prevent cars seeking to access the car park when it is at capacity.

2.2 KNUTSFORD CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

For 2025, the Christmas Lights Switch-On was delivered as a standalone event, separate from the Christmas Market.

Overall, this approach worked well and feedback from local residents was largely positive. Many noted that the event felt more enjoyable and less overcrowded. However, some feedback suggested that attendees preferred the event when it was more closely connected with the Christmas Market.

It is also recognised that additional time would be beneficial for set-up, along with some adjustments to the running order, to ensure sufficient time for all planned entertainment.

The Santa Parade did not perform as effectively in its new format. It lacked impact, and it was noted that a number of spectators joined the parade after Santa had already passed.

The 2026 event has been set for 21st November. As previously discussed, it has been agreed to reintroduce the Lantern Parade and incorporate it into the event. This will help address the issue identified, with the Lantern Parade forming the conclusion of the procession and clearly defining where the parade ends and where spectators can safely join.

The Events Team also intend to increase the number of marshals. Their role will be to create a clear and visible barrier between participants and spectators. In addition, two marshals will be positioned at the front of the parade carrying a full-length sign requesting that spectators do not join until the end of the procession. This will be clearly lit to ensure maximum visibility.

The parade will begin at King Street car park, where participants will be asked to assemble. It will then proceed up Church Hill and onto Princess Street. This extended route will lengthen the parade and provide spectators with additional viewing locations.

There is also the option to reintroduce a funfair element as part of the Christmas Lights Switch-On event, as feedback from attendees suggests this was missed in 2025. This will be considered further as part of the planning process.

2.3 KNUTSFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET

The two-day Christmas Market took place across Princess Street, Silk Mill Street & the mid-section of King Street. This is an annual event which sees a lot of footfall in the town and a *Park and Ride* service from Booths Hall was in place to ease parking in the town centre

This was the first time that the market has been spread across both Princess St and King St with Silk Mill used as a food court. Preliminary feedback from the public is very much in favour of having the market across all areas noting it made for a much more pleasurable shopping experience and lots more space to stop and browse at stalls. Feedback from town centre businesses was mixed. The Saturday started off very wet but improved throughout the day, the Sunday was a much drier day and more successful trading day for both market traders and local businesses

Please see the separate report for more information including decisions for 2026.

2.4 KNUTSFORD CRIB SERVICE

The final festive event of the programme was the community crib service. Feedback was generally positive, with some minor improvements identified for 2026, including additional microphones for the school choir.

Additionally, some minor changes are suggested to the current format. Whilst the event is advertised for 60 minutes, it has previously been significantly shorter than this (2025 was 30 minutes long). As there would be no additional cost to extend the event, it is suggested it be extended with a second half as a community carol service and singalong with Christmas classics played by the brass band.

The overall event format (and costs) wouldn't change: the crib would be blessed by the Knutsford clergy, the Town Mayor would give a Christmas message and there would continue to be a school choir performing. The second part of the event would be a laid-back singalong led by the brass band.

2.5 KNUTSFORD BUNNY HOP

Knutsford Bunny hop was a well-attended event this year with 14 businesses hosting a bunny for the easter trail. There were 126 entries into the trail competition, and town was busy with participants.

The trail took place across the town including businesses on Minshull Street, King Street and Princess Street. This year's theme was Peter Rabbit, many different businesses got involved by dressing up and painting their store front windows. Mascots dressed as Peter Rabbit and Flopsy were around to have photographs taken with members of the public.

The Town Mayor and Julia Chard hosted and judges an easter bonnet competition at The Olde Sweet Shop.

3.0 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3.1 KNUTSFORD MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Music Festival line-up has been announced, and tickets are now on sale. Venues this year include Knutsford Little Theatre, St John's Church, and The Market Hall, with Music on the Moor once again taking place on the Moor.

This year, KTC is working in collaboration with Mark Radcliffe to host three folk nights on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. Saturday will offer a different experience, with the introduction of a Country Night at St John's Church. The event will feature the UK's leading male country artist as the headline act, supported by Outpost Drive, a transatlantic country group.

An immersive Latino Night has also been included in this year's programme, with Cheshire Salsa Club leading an evening of dance alongside a Cuban duo.

Tickets went on sale on 9th March, with an early bird discount of 10% available on 20% of seats at each venue. The early bird offer was available for a period of two weeks and are now on sale at full price.

Ticket sales (as of 01/04/2026)

04/06	The Rip Roaring Success	KLT	30% Tickets sold
05/06	Ranagri	St John's	22.5% Tickets sold
06/06	The Country Collective	St John's	13.5% Tickets sold
07/07	Latino sounds	The Market Hall	38% Tickets sold
07/07	True Foxes	KLT	27% Tickets sold

Ticket sales are progressing steadily across the programme, with some events showing stronger early demand than others. There is a clear opportunity to further promote the lower-selling events in the coming weeks to help increase uptake.

Overall, additional marketing and increased visibility will help support sales and maximise attendance across the full programme. The Events Team is working closely with the Marketing Team to develop strategies to increase ticket sales, including boosting social media activity, utilising roadside banners, and distributing marketing materials to town centre businesses.

Two emails have been sent to local businesses requesting engagement in relation to fringe events. However, at present there has been any confirmed sessions. Confirmed fringe activity includes performances from Knutsford Beats, Arthur's Class Act, and students from Knutsford Academy. The Market Hall will also host a range of performers. In addition, the Makers Market will take place on the Sunday, offering a variety of performances and further enhancing the overall weekend experience.

3.2 MOVIES ON THE MOOR

Scheduled for Saturday 11th July, Movies on the Moor will run alongside Family Fest, a business-led initiative. This year, the event will feature three films, running from 1pm to 10pm.

Alongside the large cinema screen, there will be a food vendor trailer hosted by April's Kitchen, a council-run popcorn and sweets stand and bar. The middle film will be a *People's Choice* screening, selected via a vote by the council's Facebook followers.

Businesses have been offered paid advertising space on the large screen across the day and have been also encouraged to take part and engage with the Family Fest element of the event across both Saturday and Sunday.

Due to a lack of uptake, alfresco dining will not form part of this year's event.

3.3 PICNIC IN THE PARK

Taking place at Longridge on 26th July, Picnic in the Park has been brought forward this year in the hope of improved weather conditions. The Events Team has begun confirming entertainment for the event.

This year's programme will include a new stage production from Wrongsemble, a Leeds-based touring theatre company, who will present two performances over the course of the afternoon. The Events Team is also in discussions with a provider regarding the potential inclusion of a community dog show.

Community groups, including the Scouts and local bake groups, alongside local businesses, have been invited to take part by hosting stalls, helping to create a varied and engaging community event.

3.4 PAINT KUTSFORD

Taking place on 16th August alongside Alfresco Dining, Paint Knutsford will follow a similar format to last year with the aim of increasing participation. Attendees will have the option to enter the competition element or take part on a more informal basis. Artwork will then be exhibited in The Heritage Centre for two weeks following the event.

Additional community-focused activities will run alongside, including live art demonstrations and collaborative artwork sessions open to all.

The events team will be seeking an increased level of sponsorship this year, with the intention of enhancing the event and introducing further community activities.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

No decisions are required.

The committee is invited to provide feedback on the winter events programme, including the Christmas events and the Bunny Hop, and plans for the summer programme.