

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL**REPORT TO:** Events Sub-Committee**DATE:** 20th May 2026**REPORT AUTHOR:** Natalie Hicks, Events Co-ordinator**AGENDA ITEM No.:** 9**REPORT TITLE:** Victorian Evening**1. PURPOSE**

This report provides an opportunity for the Events Sub-Committee to consider changes to the Victorian Evening including its branding, entertainment provision, and future direction.

At the January 2026 meeting of the Events Sub-Committee, and further to Minute 26/01(E17), Members resolved to:

1. Explore the appointment of a *professional sound contractor;
2. Review and update the name** of the Victorian Evening event, and
3. Provide additional entertainment as part of the event programme

**A professional contractor has been secured for the event for this year, following a recommendation from our current sound supplier for the remembrance parade.*

***The Communications Advisor offered to compile a list of alternative suggestions for consideration.*

2. BACKGROUND

The Victorian Evening in Newton Abbot date backs to the late 1990s in the town and has been running for approximately 28 years. The event has always been on the first late night Wednesday in December and been located in the Market Square area of the town centre.

Traditionally it was made up of charity stalls selling their hand-crafted wares dressed in Victorian attire. The event includes themed stilt walkers, a penny farthing and traditional kids' entertainment.

In recent years the event has seen a decline in the fancy dress 'Victorian' element and a steer to a more general charity Christmas market. Therefore, it was felt calling the event a 'Victorian Evening' gave the wrong impression and meant that people may attend and be disappointed with the lack of Victorian theme.

It is thought that the themed element of the event has run its course and the way forward for it would be more focused on Christmas charity stalls.

The Christmas events follow this format each year:

- Saturday 21st November - Christmas Lights Switch-on
- Wednesday 2nd December - Victorian Evening
- Saturday 5th December - Doggie Carol Service
- Wednesday 9th December - Lantern Parade
- Wednesday 16th December - Mayor's Carol Service

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Communications Advisor has suggested that a revised branding approach could modernise the event whilst retaining its strong charitable and community focus.

The Communications Advisor suggested the following:

- Charitable activities should remain at the heart of any new initiative.
- A new name could open up opportunities and perhaps attract more groups, plus a bigger audience.
- A market fits the bill but consider replacing the Victorian theme with a different one each year - offer prizes for the Mayor's favorite interpretation.

Eg: Seasonal fancy dress, Christmas songs/poems/films, I'm dreaming of a green Christmas (eco theme), Christmas 2126 - the hopes for Christmas future and Christmas 1926 - the roaring 20s.

New name suggestions:

1. Community Christmas Market - Charity Begins at Home
2. Charity Christmas Market
3. Charities Together Christmas Market
4. The Real Spirit of Christmas Charity Market
5. Mayor's Charity Market

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Events Co-ordinator, having considered the suggestions of the Communications Advisor and undertaken local research, recommends that the Events Sub-Committee approve changing the name of the event to "**Charity Christmas Market**".

This title more accurately reflects the current format and focus of the event, whilst retaining its emphasis on charitable and community participation. The event would continue to operate alongside the planned food, drink, and craft stalls in Courtenay Street.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Legal	None
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Financial	Any changes to branding, entertainment provision, or event infrastructure would need to be delivered within existing approved budgets unless further approval is sought
Policy	The proposals support the Council's objectives in relation to community engagement, town centre activity, and support for local charities
Property	None
Personnel	None