

## **PRESS RELEASE - ISSUED 18 AUGUST 2020**

### **Events Programme 2020**

The Borough Council has announced a number of major changes to its events programme for the rest of 2020 in order to manage the risk to public safety during the Coronavirus pandemic.

With public safety still the top priority, the council has reluctantly decided to cancel some of the usual annual events that typically draw large crowds for this year and instead arrange events that enable visitors to participate safely.

All events take months of planning and the council says it needs to make decisions now to focus efforts on alternative celebrations and to avoid incurring costs which cannot be recovered.

The Remembrance Sunday service which is usually attended by several thousand people in the Garden of Remembrance will this year be a smaller, virtual service to be broadcast on social media to enable members of the public to be able to properly and safely honour those who gave their lives to protect our country from the safety of their own home. A parade will not take place this year. A service planned to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain in September will also be replaced with a small virtual service to be broadcast on social media.

The Christmas Lights switch on event and Tin Hat Fair will not be held in its usual format this year. Christmas lights will still be installed and switched on in Hinckley and there will be a large Christmas tree in Market Place as usual but there will be no large scale public event, tin hat fair or fireworks this year.

Simon Jones, Cultural Services Manager at the Borough Council explained: "We are all incredibly disappointed as a lot of hard work goes into the planning of these events, and we appreciate the value of the Christmas lights switch on event to the town and to the community, but public safety and preventing the spread of Covid-19 has to come first.

"We are determined to celebrate Christmas in the town in a way that will support our local economy, so we will be looking to arrange some smaller events and other activities such as Christmas street entertainment to celebrate Christmas and enable visitors to enjoy festive shopping safely in a Covid-secure way this year."

The Council had previously hoped to offer an adapted, covid-secure version of Proms in the Park in September, but after considering all of the possible options and in particular the very limited audience size that could be accommodated safely in Hollycroft Park amphitheatre, it has now reluctantly decided to cancel the event for this year.

However, a number of events and live music performances will still take place in Hinckley this year, with activities adapted to comply with the latest guidance on social distancing and public safety.

This includes some additional Music in the Mead live open air music performances in Argents Mead bandstand every Saturday in September. Heritage Weekends will also go ahead in September and a specially adapted version of Spooktacular Saturday will take place in October offering entertainment and activities for families to enjoy around the town centre. Steve Wegerif,

Director of Hinckley BID also has some good news as the BID is working on creating some fun in Hinckley town centre during the October half term.

There will be lots of covid-secure entertainment and activities on offer in the town in the run up to Christmas including weekly street entertainment, a tour of the lights for older residents and Santa's Grotto courtesy of Hinckley BID for younger residents.

Executive Member of Culture and Town Centres at the Borough Council, Councillor Keith Nichols added: "This pandemic has affected lives and livelihoods worldwide this year as towns and cities everywhere have been forced to postpone events but public safety is an absolute priority; the faster the virus is beaten, the sooner we can all get back to doing the things we enjoy doing with others safely. We're all disappointed about this year but we are really optimistic about the future - our popular town centre events will be back bigger and better than ever just as soon we can and in the meantime the team is working hard to organise events, activities and entertainment that people can enjoy safely this year."

For more information about any changes to council services or upcoming events look out for information in local media, follow the council on social media or sign up for free email updates at <https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/emailupdates>