

<b>Report on</b>	Halloween and Christmas Events overview 2019
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	16 January 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Sharon Arbuthnot

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	✓

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide an update on the successful Halloween and Christmas events delivered throughout October to December across the District.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>During October and November 5 Halloween and 8 Christmas events were delivered across the district.</p> <p>These annual events contribute to increased footfall and visitor numbers to our town centres which stimulates the growth of tourism and other businesses in our town centres and villages.</p> <p>In addition, our events can also have both direct and indirect impacts on our local community. The social benefits are less visible, but they are just as important. Events raise community pride, teach people new experiences, strengthen relationships and bring communities together.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Mid Ulster Sports Arena Halloween</u></p> <p>A fantastic turnout for Halloween Fun, Food and Fireworks at Mid Ulster Sports Arena with over 5,000 people attending the first of Mid Ulster District Council's Halloween events on Saturday 26 October 2019.</p> <p>Mid Ulster Sports Arena played host again to the annual fun and fireworks event with lots of spooky shenanigans and freaky fun had by all little monsters. The evening was brought to a close with a spectacular fireworks display lighting up the night sky.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Dungannon Halloween</u></p> <p>Dungannon town centre played host to the family fun and fireworks event, at Market Square on Wednesday 30 October, where lots of fantastic fun was had with some familiar yet mysterious and spooky family members!</p>

	<p>Over 4,500 people turned out including lots of little witches and monsters who enjoyed the entertainment and activities on offer, followed by a spectacular fireworks display which lit up the sky and brought the evening's activities to a close.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Coalisland Halloween</u></p> <p>Over 2000 people attended Coalisland's spooktacular programme of fun and fireworks on Halloween night, Thursday 31 October 2019.</p> <p>The Halloween shenanigans kicked off at 6pm with an evening of entertainment and funfair rides at Gortgonis Park. The night was brought to a close with a spectacular fireworks display, which lit up the sky to everyone's delight.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Maghera Halloween Hooley</u></p> <p>Maghera Leisure Centre played host to spooky shenanigans on the afternoon of Thursday 31 October, with lots of fun had by little monsters. There were lots of free activities to enjoy including a Broomstick Jiggle Halloween dance party, magic shows, face painting and outdoor activities including a spooky trail that only the very brave entered, an assault course, funfair, Krazy Karts and bubble ball lots to keep the family entertained.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Maghera Fireworks Display</u></p> <p>Following the Hooley entertainment continued at St Patrick's College playing fields where crowds gathered to enjoy the finale of the evening; a magnificent fireworks display.</p> <p>Over 3,500 people attended this year's Maghera's Halloween Hooley and Fireworks Display courtesy of Mid Ulster District Council.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Cookstown Christmas Switch On</u></p> <p>Over 3,000 people braved the cold to watch Cookstown's magical mile light up in spectacular style on Friday 22 November 2019 kicking off the Christmas Lights Switch On celebrations in the Mid Ulster District Council area.</p> <p>There was plenty of free family entertainment on offer including a gaming bus, jumping clay and appearances from some special princesses and superheroes. Local band, Crafty Crows were on stage to liven up the festivities, and with their renditions of classic Christmas tunes, they had the crowd in the seasonal spirit of things very quickly. The musical entertainment continued with Tullylagan Pipe Band piping and drumming a number of tunes, with a highlight being a haunting rendition of 'Hallelujah'.</p> <p>Followed by a magical roaring street parade by Bardic Theatre's Showstoppers, which made its way through the town with a fabulous performance of musical hits from a family favourite movie.</p> <p>The highlight of the evening the arrival of Santa Claus himself, and the switch on of the renowned Christmas lights with the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Martin Kearney.</p>

3.7	<p><u>Magherafelt Christmas Market</u> A fantastic array of food and craft stalls selling local high quality products was the centrepiece of the 2019 market which took place on Saturday 23 and 24 November 2019 on Market Street, Magherafelt. Those who attended enjoyed browsing and sampling the locally produced food and drink, and took time to unwind in the lounge, where they could choose a craft beer, hot mulled wine or even just sit and relax.</p> <p>Local bands and choirs performed on stage over the weekend, with lots of family entertainment across the town.</p> <p>Children visited Santa, decorated Gingerbread men and wrote their Santa letters at the Enchanted Toy workshop in the Bridewell, as well as having a go at the Gingerbread Journey, solving puzzles and clues around the town centre to find the Gingerbread family.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Magherafelt Christmas Switch On</u> The lights switch on and spectacular fireworks display which was undoubtedly the highlight of the weekend took place on the evening of Saturday 23 November; where a record crowds gathered for the Magherafelt Christmas Street Party on Broad Street before Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Martin Kearney and Santa himself hit the button to switch on the lights with much applause. A dazzling firework display then followed.</p> <p>Record crowds of festive shoppers attended this year's Magherafelt Christmas Market, Christmas lights switch on and fireworks display.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Dungannon Christmas Switch On</u> On Friday 22 November, Market Square Dungannon was filled with festive cheer with free family entertainment taking place, including face painting, balloon modelling and festive walkabout characters, and seasonal music on stage. Santa arrived in style on a horse drawn carriage and the man himself joined Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Martin Kearney to press the plunger to illuminate the town and draw the evening to a close.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Dungannon Magical Christmas Kingdom</u> On Saturday 23 and Sunday 24, Ranfurly House, again formed the gateway to the Magical Kingdom. With an array of Christmas activities including all the favourites – arts and crafts, face painting, balloon modelling, jump jiggle and jive and much more, children were also able to visit 'Santa's Christmas Stables' before travelling through the magical realms on their journey to meet the man himself, Santa, in his cosy grotto.</p> <p>During the weekend over 10,000 people joined in the celebrations.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Maghera Christmas Switch On</u> Maghera was full of festive cheer on Saturday 30 November as Santa took up residence in Maghera Walled Garden for the afternoon, before turning on the Christmas lights in the town.</p>

	<p>The day began in the Lurach Centre, Maghera with Christmas decoration making, face painting and letter writing to Santa, before crowds moved to the Walled Garden. Mrs Claus was on hand to help post all the children's letters back to the North Pole, along with festive Elves that lit up the Garden with a spectacular LED display. Toasted marshmallows were just one of the tasty treats on offer.</p> <p>At 5pm Santa was back on his sleigh and travelled to Hall Street, to help the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Martin Kearney count down to the switch on of the Christmas lights</p>
3.12	<p><u>Coalisland Christmas Switch On</u></p> <p>Almost 2,000 people braved the temperatures and attended the Coalisland Switch On event at the Cornmill Centre on Sunday 1 December with which was organised by Mid Ulster District Council and the local community.</p> <p>The day had something for everyone with the Na Fianna Craft Fayre at the Parochial Centre, and free family entertainment outside including face painting, balloon modelling and walkabout characters, including the Dame from Craic Theatre's pantomime Rapunzel.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Burnavon Christmas Grotto Experience</u></p> <p>The Christmas Grotto at the Burnavon took place from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December. Children have to write and post their letters to Santa's via his post box located in his magical garden; the older children were entertained by throwing snowballs at Santa's elves through virtual reality headsets. The family was taking on a short journey through Santa's garden passed the reindeers and unicorns to Santa's house where each child got an individual present and photograph of their visit to Santa. Cost per child £8, adults go free.</p> <p>The weekend dates were sold out with 1020 people visiting the grotto. (This number includes free paying adults).</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Delivered within departmental budget allocation.
	Human: Delivered within Council
	Risk Management:
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:
	Rural Needs Implications:

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	N/A
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	n/a