

Report on	Corporate Events 2024 Update
Date of Meeting	16 th January 2025
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	John Howard, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Sharon Arbuthnot, Events & Promotions Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide an update to Members on the corporate events programme from September 2024 to December 2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	In March 2024, Members at the Development Committee resolved to approve the schedule of corporate events for the 2024 year.
2.2	The approved schedule of corporate events for 2024 reflects the Council's commitment to delivering high-quality events that enrich the vibrancy and well-being of our district. While the Health, Leisure & Wellbeing service area oversees the coordination, these events are a shared responsibility across the Council. Their success depends on the collaborative efforts of multiple departments and services within council working together.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	From September to December 2024, a total of 10 events took place in our Town Centres or Council facilities, attracting impressive attendance and fostering vibrant community engagement.
3.2	<p>Maghera Party in the Garden Event</p> <p>The Party in the Garden event, held on 7th September 2024 in the picturesque Maghera Walled Garden, attracted thousands of attendees who enjoyed a day of outdoor activities under sunny skies.</p> <p>The family-focused event featured a variety of entertainment options for children, including the Rangers Quest, Paintball Target Shooting, a Bubble Bike, Jitterbug Jackson performances, LEGO activities, Garden Games, and a dance session with Jump Jiggle and Jive.</p> <p>A wide selection of food and refreshments was available, including sweet treats, ice cream, and a BBQ organised by Lurach Church along the garden lane.</p> <p>The event, organised in four time slots between 12 noon and 4 pm, offered free tickets that were quickly reserved, highlighting the event's strong appeal within the community.</p>

3.3	<p>Dungannon Halloween</p> <p>The Dungannon Halloween Event, held on Friday 25th October 2024, drew a large crowd and concluded with a spectacular fireworks display over The Hill of The O'Neill at 7:45 pm.</p> <p>The free, family-friendly event began at 6:30 pm and featured a variety of activities for all ages. Highlights included appearances by Halloween-themed walkabout characters, a fire juggler performance, music by a DJ and the Glasgowbury Samba Band, and face painting for children.</p>
3.4	<p>Cookstown Halloween</p> <p>A large crowd gathered at Mid Ulster Sports Arena to celebrate the Cookstown Halloween Event, on Saturday 26 October 2024 which finished in a stunning fireworks display at 8 pm.</p> <p>The event, running from 5 pm, featured a wide range of activities that catered to all ages. Attendees enjoyed live music, thrilling funfair rides, bumper cars, fire juggling displays and a soft play trailer. The Halloween Trail, crafts and colouring, magic shows, magician walkabouts, and street performances added to the atmosphere for families.</p>
3.5	<p>Maghera Hooley and Fireworks</p> <p>Thousands turned out for a night of Spooktacular family fun and fireworks in Maghera on Halloween night on Thursday 31st October 2024.</p> <p>Hosted at Maghera Leisure Centre, the event offered an array of activities for families, with plenty of mysterious and spooky fun. Families enjoyed Fun Fair Rides, face painting, Arts and Crafts, fire juggling performances, indoor inflatables, Magic Shows and an opportunity to visit Pirates Soft Play throughout the evening.</p> <p>The festivities concluded with a dazzling fireworks display that lit up the sky, providing a perfect finale to the Halloween celebrations launched from St Patricks College.</p>
3.6	<p>Coalisland Halloween Event</p> <p>A large crowd gathered for Coalisland's Halloween Event on Halloween Night on Thursday 31st October 2024, which featured funfair rides and a spectacular fireworks display.</p> <p>The evening began with a funfair at the Parochial Centre from 6 pm to 8 pm, for attendees of all ages. Big and little kids alike experienced the rides and attractions, with the festive atmosphere undeterred by the weather.</p> <p>The celebration culminated in a dazzling fireworks display at 8:45 pm, launched from Na Fianna G.F.C., lighting up the night sky in a breathtaking finale.</p>
	<p>The Town Centre Christmas Lights Switch On's officially marked the beginning of the festive season within Mid Ulster District:</p>
3.7	<p>Cookstown Switch On 2024</p> <p>Attended by thousands of people, the Cookstown Christmas Lights Switch-On event took place on Friday 22nd November 2024, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm on William Street.</p> <p>The event featured performances by Stewartstown Panto, Tullylagan Pipe Band, and musicians Ryan McGarrity and Alan McPhearson. A Showstoppers Parade was also part of the program.</p>

On-street entertainment included face painting, The Gaming Bus, and character walkabouts.

Santa Claus arrived just before 7:30 pm to switch on the Christmas lights.

3.8 **Dungannon Christmas Lights Switch On 2024**

The Dungannon Christmas Lights Switch-On event took place on Saturday 23rd November 2024, attracting thousands of attendees to Market Square for a day of festive activities.

The event began at 2:30 pm with family-focused activities, including music from an on-stage DJ and live musical performances. Free drop-in arts and crafts sessions were also available at Ranfurly House.

A Christmas Pageant paraded through the streets of Dungannon, followed by a Santa Dash organised by Southern Area Hospice Services.

Santa Claus arrived in style to switch on the Christmas lights.

3.9 **Magherafelt Christmas Lights Switch On 2024**

Despite the weather, a large crowd gathered in Magherafelt for the annual Christmas Lights Switch-On event at Market Square on Saturday 23 November 2024.

The event featured a Children's Christmas Village offering activities such as Christmas crafts, puppet shows, face painting, silent disco and an opportunity to meet the Grinch.

Live entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon, with performances by local choirs and musicians.

Santa Claus arrived to switch on the Christmas lights, followed by a fireworks display lighting up the night sky in a breathtaking finale to finish to the festivities.

3.10 **Maghera Christmas Lights Switch On 2024**

Maghera kicked off the festive season on Saturday 30th November 2024, with an afternoon of holiday cheer as Santa took up his annual residence in the potting shed at Maghera Walled Garden before officially switching on the town's Christmas lights.

The event began with a range of festive activities at Maghera Walled Garden, including Christmas crafts at the Lurach Centre and a special visit from Mrs. Claus at Maghera Library.

Friendly elves, along with Anna and Elsa, entertained the crowds throughout the afternoon, while attendees enjoyed festive treats like toasted marshmallows.

Santa made his way to Hall Street via Fairhill, before he led the countdown to switch-on of the Christmas lights for 2024.

3.11 **Coalisland Switch On Event**

A large crowd attended the Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On event, on Sunday 1st December 2024.

The event took place at the Cornmill in the town centre from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Festive activities included live Christmas music by Reverb on stage, face painting, walkabout characters, and the chance to meet Santa in his grotto, all running from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm.

	<p>Craic Theatre performed on stage before Santa led the countdown to illuminate the town's Christmas lights and tree just before 7:00 pm.</p> <p>Additionally, the Coalisland Fianna GFC Annual Christmas Fair took place at the Parochial Centre from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.</p>
	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial: Delivered within the departmental budget allocation as per the 2024/25 rates estimates process.</p>
	<p>Human: Delivered with staff from various departments/services.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: Risk Assessments to be continually reviewed with assistance from Council Corporate Health & Safety team. Assessing each event needs to be considered on its individual merits - Events plans are also presented to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) at relevant times in the year.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of the report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A – Images from events held September to December 2024.