We can't gather for our annual switch-on event, but we're still dedicated to bringing you a town glowing with Christmas lights.

Festive wishes from the Lions Club of Felixstowe
Looking forward to Christmas this year has a completely different feel to all previous years. Sadly, for first time in 43 years the Lions Club of Felixstowe is unable to hold their usual, very popular Christmas Lights Switch-On, with a children’s candlelight parade and, of course, the very special visit from Father Christmas himself. However, all is not lost. We are working extremely hard to put some joy into the end of this unique year by making final adjustments to the lights, which have had their own problems due to the drying up of spares and replacements due to the worldwide lockdown. However, I am pleased to say that they will be going up in town on the weekend of 14/15 November. I would like to take this opportunity to apologise in advance if you are held up due to the slow progress of the two cherry pickers we use.

The Switch-On by Mark Jepson, the Town Mayor, would normally have taken place on Saturday 28 November. This year’s special switch-on is to be a very secret affair to keep everybody safe, and to cheer them up in these unprecedented times. When the switch-on does take place, I’m reliably informed that there will be a live link on Facebook for you to follow, and that you can then go out and enjoy the lights at a safe time that suits you.

On behalf of the Lions Club of Felixstowe and everyone who enjoys the lights, I would like to thank Lion Phil Weatherhogg, the lighting manager, and his team for getting all the lights ready – even though we were locked down for two months not able to do anything. Thanks must also go to the Felixstowe Town Council for their financial support. We would also like to thank MSC for their main sponsorship and all the shops and businesses who have continued to support the Christmas Lights this year even though they are going through such difficult times themselves. So please support your local businesses, they all need our help.

Talking of help, there are two ways you could help us for the future. Firstly, you could volunteer and become a Member of the Lions Club of Felixstowe. Who knows, you could end up driving one of our Cherry Pickers next year. How exciting is that? Secondly, you could TEXT the word LIGHTS (followed by the number of pounds you would like to donate) to 70085 and all your donation will go towards next year’s display, i.e.: LIGHTS5 will donate £5, LIGHTS10 will donate £10 or LIGHTS3 will donate £3. Please help the Christmas Lights to brighten up the town centre for years to come.

May you all have a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I hope that 2021 is a better year for you all.

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From everyone at MSC, Season’s Greetings & a safe, happy and healthy New Year!

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The Mayor's Christmas Message

from Councillor Mark Jepson – Mayor of Felixstowe 2020/21

It is incredibly disappointing that the Felixstowe Christmas Light Switch-On has had to be cancelled, it was one of the events I was looking forward to attending before I even became Mayor!

It is not just disappointing for me; a large number of volunteers dedicate a lot of time to the maintenance of the lights, and I have no doubt they gain a lot of satisfaction seeing thousands of people come along to witness the event.

For the residents and the town centre shops it will also be hugely disappointing because it brings so many people into the town on what is always a very enjoyable evening, which also sees significant funds raised for charities.

Sadly, the fact that so many people support the switch-on is the exact reason it has had to be cancelled. The safety and wellbeing of you all must take precedence. Hopefully by next year we will be able to witness this excellent spectacle again.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in maintaining the lights over the last few months.

I wish a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year to you all.
A Message to the Children of Felixstowe from Santa

I’m very busy getting all the presents ready for all you children in Felixstowe!

I’m planning to have a drive round to wave to you all before Christmas – so be good! I’m so looking forward to seeing you.

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas
A Message to the Grown-ups from the Lions Club

Santa's age is well past the vulnerable category so we have to be concerned about social distancing. We will make a final decision in mid November, but we have every expectation of taking him round the streets on a 'Wave to Santa' tour. Please do not approach the sleigh. Look out on social media for route, date and time details. We will not knock on doors or collect any money, but if you want to make a donation please text FXSANTA2 to 70085 to donate £2, or FXSANTA5 to donate £5 etc. All money received will be used to help local families either by ourselves or via Basic or the Salvation Army.
I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you some of our special LIONS CHRISTMAS LIGHTS HEROES. These are unsung people that have helped us each Christmas, some for over 20 years, who have never been mentioned in this programme before. Without them, and many others, the Lions could not erect the lights each Christmas. We are enshrining their names forever in a set of collectable cards!

Roger Wood
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 1
Roger has supported the lights longer than most of the present Lions.
For over 20 years he has done just about every job going.
In recent years he has been a mainstay on the three-man team in the materials moving van.

Stuart Birchall
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 2
Some 15 years ago Stuart joined the team and refurbished the Santa and reindeer display that is now on the cinema roof.
In recent years he has been promoted to materials lumper and humper on the van.

Ian King
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 3
I run Kingsound Public Address. Over the years I’ve been proud to provide the sound for the turn on of the lights. Last year we teamed up with Fresh Gold Radio for the switch-on, it’s a shame this can’t be repeated this year. For more information see our Facebook page.

Stuart Humphrey
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 4
Stuart had a lifelong career in merchant shipping as an electrician. When he retired he joined the lights team as one of our main electricians. His work building and maintaining the displays over many years has been crucial to our success.

Mark Davis
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 5
One year we turned the lights on early. The next year Mark was appointed Stage Manager to control the switch-on event to the second.
Redundant this year, Mark will no doubt be assisting as van driver and Cherry Picker marshal.

Lisa Tyte
Lions Christmas Lights Hero
No. 6
Lisa has designed the Christmas Lights programme for a number of years, and has always exceeded the Lions’ expectations in the quality of her work.
Lisa says...
It is always a pleasure to work with the Lions. I’m just a small cog in a big wheel of dedicated people.
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We would like to thank:

- Quinto Crane Hire for free use of a crane
- Suffolk County Council for providing a store and workshop for the lights
- Spotlight Magazine for designing and hosting this programme
- Sky High Access for reduced rates on the Cherry Pickers
- T H Moss for scaffolding
- Swans Nursery for a good deal on the tree
- Palace Cinema for allowing our display on their roof
- Abbeygate Lighting
- BETFRED
- East of England Co-op
- Bobby at Wimpys
- Diamond Mills
- Poor Richards
- Russell Smith

for financial and other support

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