

# Your local shops need you this Christmas



THE HUMMINGBIRDS PERFORMING IN OKEHAMPTON'S VICTORIAN ARCADE TO PROMOTE LOCAL SHOPPING



*Continued from front page*

'Even if you do have to shop online for certain items, many of our independent retailers now sell online and stores such as Etsy actually allow you to locate sellers close to you. So, there are plenty of ways we can support our local traders and help give their businesses a boost even if you aren't able to show your support in person.'

'Please spread the word: Shop Safely – Shop Locally!'

To help local businesses and to encourage shopping in person, retailers will be able to extend their daily opening hours from Monday to Saturday in the run up to Christmas and throughout January. All non-essential retail across England can now reopen, and planning rules limiting opening hours will be eased to allow shops to be open for longer from Monday to Saturday. Whilst being a boost to business, these measures will also help ease transport pressures and make socially distanced shopping easier by giving people greater flexibility to choose when they shop.

Central Devon MP Mel Stride, who chairs the influential House of Commons Treasury Select Committee, said: "Businesses in Central Devon have done an outstanding job making their premises COVID-19-secure and have taken all the necessary steps to keep their customers safe. Allowing businesses that want, to open longer to do so, is a good move that will help spread

out their trade and hopefully be good for their takings too."

West Devon Borough Council is working with Everything Okehampton and Okehampton Town Council on a shop local campaign to highlight the wonderful range of exciting gifts available within the town.

In Okehampton, whether buying for the old or young, shoppers can buy those individual antique and electrical gifts that are fun to shop for. Relish in the excitement of buying a bike, or some delicious local produce for yourself and to make into hampers for gifts, and don't forget those beautiful floral displays which always make the Christmas table so very special.

Men's, women's and children's clothes can be found in independent shops around the town, and there are fantastic selections available for those special handmade gifts and artist supplies.

Children can be kept entertained with a Carnival quiz, a Spot the Reindeer and Odd Object in the Window. Father Christmas may even find time to make an appearance.

Cllr Neil Jory, Leader of West Devon Borough Council, said: "It's been really difficult for local businesses this year and especially over the last month when they should have been gearing up for the important Christmas trading period.



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'I really understand and appreciate the sacrifices they have made as part of the national effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, keep us all safe and prevent unnecessary deaths.'

'It would be amazing if our community would now rally round them, keep Christmas local and make a special effort to buy from our local businesses this year of all years.'

Shops in the town have been working hard to make their businesses COVID-19 safe, with hand gel, social distancing and reduced numbers in the shops at any one time.

Okehampton Town Mayor, Cllr Julie Yelland, said: "I can't begin to thank everyone enough for the way you have responded during this pandemic by keeping yourselves, your families and members of the wider community safe and supported. In Okehampton we are very fortunate to have such a wonderful selection of locally owned independent shops who are looking forward to welcoming you through their doors as we emerge from the second lockdown and look towards Christmas."

'The town centre is looking very festive with its gorgeous display of Christmas lights and parking in the Simmons Park and Mill Road car parks is free after 3pm and all day on Saturdays during December, so please do head into town and enjoy all there is to offer.'

Chagford is foregoing its usual late night Christmas shopping event this year but shop owners have agreed to stay open later each Thursday in the run up to Christmas to allow shoppers more time and space to shop.

A lantern parade plus carols was performed by the school children and individual shops and residents of the town have decorated their windows, each one opening their display on a different night in Chagford's very own advent calendar.

Various craft fairs will be held in the coming weeks to give people the opportunity to not only shop local, but support their own artisan makers and crafters.

As previously advertised in *The Moorlander*, Tavistock is the latest local town to launch its own gift card in the hope of keeping their shoppers shopping locally. It has launched in time for Christmas, making it even easier to give the gift of Tavistock this festive season. Each gift card is a prepaid Mastercard that can be redeemed with over 50 businesses in the town, keeping money locked into Tavistock, and driving high street recovery.

Tavistock Gift Cards can be purchased online, or from Lawsons, Tavistock in early December, and spent in person or online with retail, leisure, hospitality and on services in the town, offering



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a way for people to support Tavistock businesses after a period of economic instability.

Boutique 32 owner Danni, said the Tavistock Gift Card will help people to shop locally: "We have a lot of independent businesses in Tavistock, which makes it unique. More people want to shop locally now and support us, and the Tavistock Gift Card is an easy way for them to do that."

"Around 40% of the shop's income is from Christmas sales, and another 30% from summer sales. We have experienced lockdowns in both of these key periods. When people shop locally, it is helping businesses in Tavistock to keep going and keep giving our customers the best shopping experience. You don't get that with Amazon. I'm really grateful that the gift card has been set up."

Tavistock's new gift card is part of the Town and City Gift Cards programme from Miconex. Exeter launched its Town and City Gift Card, the In Exeter Gift Card, in 2018 with thousands spent through the programme since then. Data from the Centre for Cities suggests Exeter is experiencing a moderately strong recovery from lockdown, whilst McKinsey data pinpoints the South West as one of the regions of the UK with the greatest percentage of jobs at risk.

BID Manager Janna Sanders said the Tavistock Gift Card will drive the recovery of the town and encourage visitors in a careful, managed way: "With the introduction of the Tavistock Gift Card, we are bringing the focus back to our town and encouraging visitors and locals alike to look at what we have on offer in Tavistock. We have recently welcomed new traders to the town including homeware and lifestyle, a wine bar and an antiques shop.

"We've had a very positive response from residents about the introduction of the card and from businesses too. It's free for businesses to be a part of the scheme. COVID-19 has been hugely challenging for businesses so the launch of the card comes at a really critical moment for our high street."

"With Christmas around the corner, there is an opportunity for people to buy the Tavistock Gift Card as a present for others. We hope employers will buy the card for their staff as a reward through the UK trivial benefits scheme, and that cards will be given as gifts for teachers, for birthdays and more. It is the card for all events."

Managing director of Miconex Colin Munro said the programmes are instrumental in driving high street regeneration: "2020 has made us appreciate our communities, towns and cities all the more. Small local businesses give high streets their heart, their buzz and their atmosphere but without local support, they will close. Amazon is posting record profits but local traders are facing

a real fight for survival. From other places, we know that recipients of gift cards spend around 65% more than the value of the card they receive, and they are more experimental. This means more revenue for traders, and new customers too. Every Tavistock Gift Card sold is money locked into the area, protecting jobs and protecting livelihoods."

Cllr Mrs Anne Johnson, Mayor of Tavistock Town Council, said: "It's really good news that the Pannier Market and Butcher's Hall will be re-opening on Wednesday, 2nd December, and will continue to trade up until Christmas. There really is no better place than Tavistock to buy those special Christmas gifts."

Ashburton is another perfect place to shop this Christmas. The high street is full of independent traders who have everything you need for the festive season – whether it be thoughtful cards, unique presents, sumptuous food or quirky decorations.

Enjoy Christmas shopping at a slower pace and in a relaxed atmosphere with friendly shop keepers who are passionate about their beautifully curated shops and their goods. The streets are adorned with twinkling lights and each shop window has a delightful display to enjoy.

After shopping you'll be spoilt for choice for places to eat and drink with a range of restaurants and cafes showcasing the best of local produce. Ashburton is hosting its final late night shopping evening on Thursday, 17th December, to give you even more chance to shop. Parking in the car park is free from 4pm!

In these unprecedented times, Father Christmas has taken time out of his busy schedule to visit Ashburton and help to promote the town's Christmas campaign, 'Ashburton Believes' and spread the message: 'Shop Safe, Shop Local, Shop Ashburton'.

Father Christmas has even unveiled new signs in town, declaring that Ashburton is officially 'Twinned with The North Pole'.

He has also worked with Ashburton Post Office and local designer Mark Burley to create a range of festive felt decoration kits which are being sold in the town in aid of local charities.

Lydia Wood, chair of Ashburton Chamber of Trade, says: "COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on local high streets and they all need our help and support now. After such a difficult year it is more important than ever to show your support by shopping locally at Christmas."

"Safety is being taken incredibly seriously and shops and businesses are mindful of social distancing with all necessary precautions in place to ensure you can shop safely."

# CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN OKEHAMPTON

## Okehampton's got it all



Art

Antiques

Books

Cards

Clothes

Charity Shops

Coffee

Computers

Crafts

Cycle Shops

Decorations

Electricals

Fabric &amp; Wool

Farm Shops

Food &amp; Drink

Flowers

&amp; Wreaths



Garden

Centre

Hairdressers

&amp; Barbers

Hardware &amp; Paint

Health Foods

Housewares

Jewellery &amp; Watches

Musical Instruments

Photo Supplies &amp; Frames

Rugs, Carpets &amp; Flooring

Painting &amp; Art Supplies

Perfume &amp; Toiletries

Pet Supplies

Supermarkets

Toys &amp; Games

Unique Gifts

Weekly Market

# SHOP LOCAL

## this Christmas!



**There's lots of Christmas fun to be had in Okehampton and it has begun. Yay!**

There's a Reindeer Trail with prizes for everyone. You need to get a sheet from the newsagent on West Bridge.

Look out for mistakes in shop windows! Something that shop doesn't sell will be in their Christmas window display. Spotters' sheets will be available soon – keep your eyes open!

Free parking after 3pm and all day Saturdays in Simmons Park and Mill Road car parks throughout December.

The lights are on! The lights on the Lions' tree in Red Lion Yard are on!

The Ockment quilters are raffling a quilt! Look out for tickets around the town.

Hamper and £20 prizes with the Carnival raffle – look out for tickets.

Red Lion Yard shops will be open on Sundays during December.

And the trees are up in the town centre and the Christmas lights are on!

**Merry Christmas everyone!**