



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 20th November 2023**

**Christmas Lights Switch On Event with Festive Light & Lantern  
Parade – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November**

This year's Christmas event began at 1pm with vocal performances on the outdoor stage from St Mary's Primary Academy Choir and Morehall, Martello & Folkestone Primary Academy combined choirs, each of which sang confidently and beautifully, delighting the crowds.

A series of professional and entertaining musical and dance acts followed with performances from Folkestone Teeny Boppers, Folkestone Academy Band & Vocalist, KM Dance Group, Duncan Moris, The Dulcettes, Chloe Scott's Dance for Fun Group, Special Guest 'Q & A' Section with the Leas Cliff Hall Pantomime Cast of Beauty & The Beast, Studio Six, Annette Wardell International Soprano Opera Singer and Shepway Voices Choir.

There was much excitement at the lantern & light parade with festivities at the Clifton Hotel before the procession, led by the Deputy Town Mayor and Rentadinosaur with 'Santasaurus' & Dino Babies, Leas Cliff Hall Pantomime Cast of Beauty & The Beast, children's animated film themed characters, stilt walkers, local dance groups and choirs set off down Sandgate Road to the precinct to be welcomed by the growing crowd.

Santa made his way to the stage where he delivered a special Christmas message to children and residents with the Deputy Mayor, welcoming everyone and thanking all those involved.

The brilliant Academy FM team working with Paul Reynolds (Sound Experience Disco), who once again provided brilliant sound and technical support, continued to professionally host the main stage event in a fun-filled manner, introducing and engaging with performers and the audience respectively.

Members of the crowd were invited on to the stage for fun competitions with prizes and gifts, generously donated by Tesco Supermarket and Folkestone Town Councillors, presented to winning recipients.

The entertainment programme wowed the crowds and the headline act, East 17 certainly did not disappoint and thrilled the thousands of audience members performing all their best known and popular 90's tracks with exciting dance routines.

The annual Mayors Christmas Card competition winners who were presented with their prizes on stage by East 17 were

*First prize: Jessica Clarke of The Folkestone School for Girls – receiving a £30 voucher  
Second Prize: Imogen Winchester of The Folkestone School for Girls – receiving a £20 voucher*

*Third Prize: William Sangster Morris of The Harvey Grammar School – receiving a £15 voucher*

The Deputy Town Mayor, Abena Akuffo-Kelly was accompanied by East 17 and Leas Cliff Hall pantomime cast to turn on the lights to sounds of gasps, cheers and applause for the eagerly anticipated display.

This year sees new and updated additions to the existing lighting scheme with Folkestone Town Council to consider developing and extending it even further for 2024 and beyond.

This Folkestone Town Council event was supported by, the Leas Cliff Hall, Academy FM, Paul Reynolds Sound Experience Disco, Bouverie Place Shopping Centre, The Rotary Club of Folkestone, Fosbery Studio, Suite Twenty Eight, Tesco Supermarket - Cheriton and Folkestone & Hythe District Council.

A very merry Christmas is wished for all from everyone at Folkestone Town Council.

**ENDS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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