

Countdown is on to Malmesbury's late night Christmas shopping

Final preparations are underway for Malmesbury's late night shopping, which promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Running from **6pm to 9pm on Friday, December 5**, roads throughout the town centre will be lined with a record number of stalls – more than 70, selling everything from gifts, crafts, jewellery and homewares to food and drink.

Shops will stay open, with Malmesbury boasting a wide range of independent retailers, as well as numerous cafes and restaurants. In fact, the town is bucking the trend with almost all its retail outlets occupied.

The event will be officially opened by Malmesbury Mayor, Cllr Stephen James, accompanied by his Mayoral Cadet Rosa Clough, Mace Bearer Stephen Caygill, new Town Crier Owain Cole, and Cllr Olivia Wallis (this year's event chair). Last year's best dressed window competition winner - Helen Chapman, of Fabric Shack – will announce this year's winner, and present the award.

Throughout the evening entertainment will be provided, including performances from St Joseph's and Lea and Garsdon primary schools; Malmesbury Choir; Malmesbury Town Band; Morris dancers; the Athelstan Players; and singer Tilly Charlton-Hunt.

There will be plenty of games and activities for children, including a grotto with Santa and his elves.

"A huge amount of planning goes into this popular event, which is run by a very hard-working team of dedicated volunteers, and which is so enjoyed by everyone who comes along," said Cllr James. "We hope new businesses in the town will particularly enjoy the benefits of this annual event and wish them luck in their first year of taking part."