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BUMPER CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR PLYMOUTH CITY SHOPPERS

Shoppers heading for Plymouth look set to enjoy a bumper Christmas present with free parking in some of the city's West End car parks.

Plymouth City Council is waiving the charges for shoppers on a Thursday night – the traditional late night shopping night.

Three car parks will be free from 4pm and the Council is deliberately targeting those in the West End to encourage people to pop in and visit the independent retailers of the city centre. They are:

- Western Approach with 1,094 spaces
- Woolworth East 45 spaces
- Plymouth City Market 36 spaces

The Council has also installed seven extra car parking bays around the City Market that have been created by moving street furniture.

The Council has been working closely with the City Centre Company to make sure Christmas 2013 will be a cracker. The Christmas package also includes a free 15-minute 'park and pop-in' deal in the West End and a voucher discount system for shoppers, which will be unveiled shortly.

Councillor Mark Coker, Cabinet Member for Transport said: "This is the biggest package of free offers that the Council has given. We are doing this because we want to support the traders where we can and to send out the signal come to Plymouth for your Christmas shopping.

"We are all living and working in tough times and want to help where we are able to. While we have thousands of spaces in our city centre car parks, we want to make it that bit easier for West End traders to get a slice of the shopping action. If shoppers park nearby, they are more likely to be drawn to their stores."

The free parking starts on 14 November – the Festival of Lights – where thousands of families and friends countdown the moment to the dazzling Christmas light switch-on.

Ahead of the switch-on will be a parade of children and adults weaving through the city centre bearing lanterns. It starts at the Market car park and will finish by Santa's Grotto at Frankfort Gate.

City Centre manager Stefan Krause said: "We have an incredible programme of events for the Christmas lights switch on – but this is the icing on the Christmas cake! The City Centre Company and retailers really appreciate this support from the Council and look forward to some busy evenings in the build-up to the festive season."

Plymouth's annual Winter Festival includes the Christmas ice rink and Santa's Grotto on the piazza, festive shows at Plymouth Pavilions, the Christmas Market, West End Circus on 30 November and Christmas Crackers to celebrate independent shops.

Late-night shopping will run every Thursday – including 26 December – with most shops open until 8pm. Because of the parade, Market car park will be closed from 3pm on 14 November. For more information visit [Shop Plymouth](#) and [Visit Plymouth](#).

4 November 2013