

According to the weather report 'Meteorological Winter' officially starts on 1 December, however, most of us would agree it began early this week with crisp frosty mornings and biting evening winds. Everywhere you look people are wrapped up in all the layers they can muster and although the nights are noticeably longer the one bonus is it gives us more time to enjoy all the Christmas lights, which are popping up on high streets and in homes as the festive season gets underway.

Yes, the inevitable march towards Christmas has gathered pace and with it the excitement, or panic depending on your point of view, of presents and parties with your nearest and dearest. It is the time of year to think of others and where possible take small steps to help those who may struggle during this period. It is well known how the elderly can find the winter months challenging, not just with the cold but also loneliness taking its toll. If you are concerned about an older neighbour during these months a knock on their front door and a friendly enquiry can make a big difference. Be brave and do it. Older people charities such as Age UK and the Silverline face high demand at this time of year and would welcome any donation or time people can offer.

For those thoroughly bitten by the spirit of Christmas and wishing to share the goodwill the Salvation Army run a wonderful scheme, with varying donation levels, to provide a good Christmas to those in need. Even a small sum will give joy to so many this holiday and go a long way towards lifting hope in hard places.

Winter is most definitely here so let's all remember to keep body and soul warm this season.