



University
of Glasgow

Microsoft Teams for Town Halls and large events

V1.0)

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Introduction

This guide walks you through setting up a town hall in Microsoft Teams using the UofG Town hall template. It is intended for staff running large one-to-many broadcasts: all-staff briefings, Principal's messages, conference keynotes, large open lectures, and any other event where the audience runs into the hundreds or thousands.

1 Town halls

A town hall in Microsoft Teams is a one-to-many broadcast event designed for very large audiences. Unlike a meeting (where everyone can speak) or a webinar (where attendees register in advance), a town hall is a controlled broadcast: presenters speak, attendees watch and ask questions through Q&A.

If the event is small enough that everyone could plausibly contribute, a meeting or webinar is the right choice. If you're broadcasting to hundreds or thousands of people who are there to listen and ask the occasional question, a town hall is what you want.

a. Template

A template in Teams is a pre-configured starting point for a meeting, webinar or town hall — a saved bundle of settings the University supplies or that you can create yourself. When you create a new event from a template, those settings (attendee permissions, Q&A, recording behaviour, capacity defaults and so on) are applied automatically. You can still change most of them afterwards, but you don't have to remember each one from scratch.

At the time of writing UofG IT Services maintains four organisation templates:

- Webinar
- Town hall
- Class
- Lecture

Each template is created for a specific kind of event. They appear in your Teams Calendar under the heading "Organisation templates" when you click the dropdown arrow next to + New meeting. Starting from a template saves time, makes events feel consistent across the institution, and helps ensure the settings that matter most for a particular scenario (such as locking attendee mics and cameras for a 5,000-person broadcast) are right first time.

2 When to use a Town hall (vs a Meeting or Webinar)

Teams gives you three event types. Picking the right one matters more for town halls than for anything else — choosing the wrong type for a big event leads to chaos.

	Meeting	Webinar	Town hall
Typical use	Working group, tutorial, 1:1, team meeting	Open seminar, public lecture, recruitment	All-staff briefing, very large broadcast,

	Meeting	Webinar	Town hall
		event, training with sign-up	conference keynote
Attendee cap (standard licence)	1,000	1,000	10,000
Registration page	No	Yes — with a custom event site	No — invite-based, single join link
Attendees interact	Full — mic, camera, chat	Q&A, reactions, chat. Mics/cameras off by default.	Q&A and reactions only. Mics/cameras locked off.
Best when...	Everyone needs to talk	You need an attendee list and a controlled experience	You're broadcasting to a large audience

RULE OF THUMB If you're broadcasting to a large audience that mostly needs to listen, use a Town hall. If you need to know who's coming in advance and want a registration page, use a Webinar. If everyone needs to talk freely, use a Meeting.

3 Zoom vs Teams town halls — the key differences

There isn't a direct Zoom equivalent of a Teams Town hall — most UofG colleagues running large events in Zoom used Zoom Webinars (a paid add-on) or Zoom Events (Zoom's events platform). Here's what changes when you move to Teams.

Capacity and licensing

- **Zoom:** Large events needed a paid Webinar add-on or Zoom Events licence, with capacity tiers that cost more the bigger the audience.
- **Teams:** Town halls are included in the standard UofG licence at no extra cost. Capacity is up to 10,000 attendees on a standard licence, with higher caps available via Teams Premium (up to 50,000) or an Attendee Capacity Pack (up to 100,000).

Registration vs invites

- **Zoom Webinars:** Attendees registered through a Zoom-hosted form and received a confirmation email with a join link.
- **Teams Town halls:** No registration page. You either invite specific people or groups (they get a calendar invite by email) or share the join link openly (any UofG or public-facing audience can use it, depending on event access).

Note — If you need attendee details before the event — sign-up names, dietary requirements, school affiliation — use a Webinar instead, not a Town hall.

Attendee experience

- **Zoom Webinars:** Attendees joined muted with cameras off. Hosts could promote attendees to "panellist" to bring them on stage briefly.
- **Teams Town halls:** Attendees join muted with cameras off and cannot be unmuted at all. Interaction is via Q&A, chat and reactions. There is no equivalent of promoting an attendee to speak live mid-event.

What attendees see on screen

- **Zoom Webinars:** Attendees see whatever the host shares — typically all panellists' video feeds plus shared content.
- **Teams Town halls:** The template defaults to "Manage what attendees see" being ON, meaning organisers and presenters control the view. Only the active speaker and shared content appear on attendees' screens, giving a more polished broadcast feel.

Roles

- **Zoom:** Host, alternative host, co-host, panellist, attendee.
- **Teams:** Organiser, co-organiser, presenter, attendee. Co-organisers must have a UofG account; external speakers are added as presenters with their email address.

Recording

- **Zoom:** Cloud or local recording, configured per webinar.
- **Teams:** Cloud only — to the organiser's OneDrive. Town hall recordings are automatically shared with attendees by default; tighten access via Manage access in OneDrive if needed.

4 The UofG Town hall template — what it gives you

When you open Teams Calendar and click the dropdown next to + New meeting, you'll see an Organisation templates section with four UofG templates: Webinar, Town hall, Class, and Lecture. The Town hall template is the one to use for very large broadcasts.

a. Why use the template

The template pre-configures the settings that matter most for a large broadcast — particularly the production view (only the active speaker visible), attendee permissions (mics and cameras locked off), and automatic recording. Starting from the template gets you to a sensible default in seconds; you can then tailor the bits that matter for your event.

b. What the template sets up automatically

Out of the box, the template configures the following.

Basic event setup

- **Event access:** Your organisation — only UofG-signed-in attendees can watch. Change to Public for events open to the wider world, or People and groups for restricted invite-only events.
- **Enable attendee emails:** ON — invited attendees receive a calendar invite and updates.

Attendee experience

- **Max event capacity:** defaults to your maximum available capacity (up to 10,000 on a standard licence; higher with Premium).
- **Allow mic for attendees:** OFF — attendees cannot unmute. This setting is locked in the town hall format.
- **Allow camera for attendees:** OFF — attendees cannot turn on a camera. Also locked.
- **Meeting chat:** In-meeting only — attendees can use chat during the live event; chat is not available before or after.
- **Q&A:** ON — attendees can submit questions; organisers and co-organisers publish and answer them.
- **Who can manage Q&A:** Only organisers and co-organisers.
- **Allow attendance report:** ON — a CSV attendance report is available after the event.
- **Polls:** OFF — you can turn this on; the Polls app must be installed before the event starts.

Production tools (the broadcast view)

- **Manage what attendees see:** ON — attendees see only the active speaker and shared content, not a gallery of presenter tiles. This is the headline difference from a normal meeting or webinar.
- **Meeting chat type:** Comment Stream — attendee chat appears as a moving stream of comments, optimised for broadcast.

Meeting access (lobby)

- **People dialing in can bypass the lobby:** OFF — dial-in joiners go to the lobby first.
- **Who can admit from the lobby:** Organisers, co-organisers and presenters.

Recording and transcription

- **Record and transcribe automatically:** ON — both start when the event begins.
- **Spoken language:** English (UK) — change before the event if your speaker uses a different language for accurate captions and transcript.
- **Who can record and transcribe:** Organisers, co-organisers and presenters.

Copilot and AI

- **Allow Copilot:** During and after the meeting — Copilot and recap are available during the live event and after.
- **Enable multilingual speech recognition:** OFF.

Emails

The template configures only two automated emails. You can edit either via the Emails tab on the setup page.

- **Event invitation** — sent when you publish the event, and again whenever you make updates.
- **Event recording available** — sent as soon as the recording is published.

That's a lot less than the Webinar template's nine emails — because town halls don't have a registration flow, there's no waitlist, approval, rejection, or cancellation email to send.

Premium-locked options

These show in the template but require Teams Premium to actually use:

- End-to-end encryption.
- Watermarks on shared content and video feeds.
- CART (human-typed) captions.
- Higher capacity tiers (above 10,000 attendees).
- "On with preview" production view — letting organisers preview what attendees will see before pushing it live.

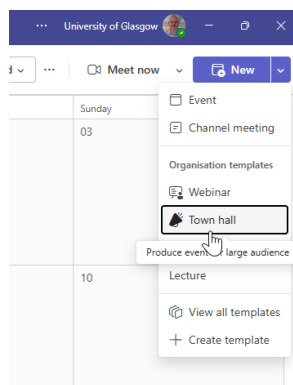
Note — If you need any of these for a high-profile event, contact IT Services about a temporary Premium uplift.

5 Step-by-step: creating your town hall

Allow about 15 minutes to set up a town hall from the template the first time. Subsequent ones go faster.

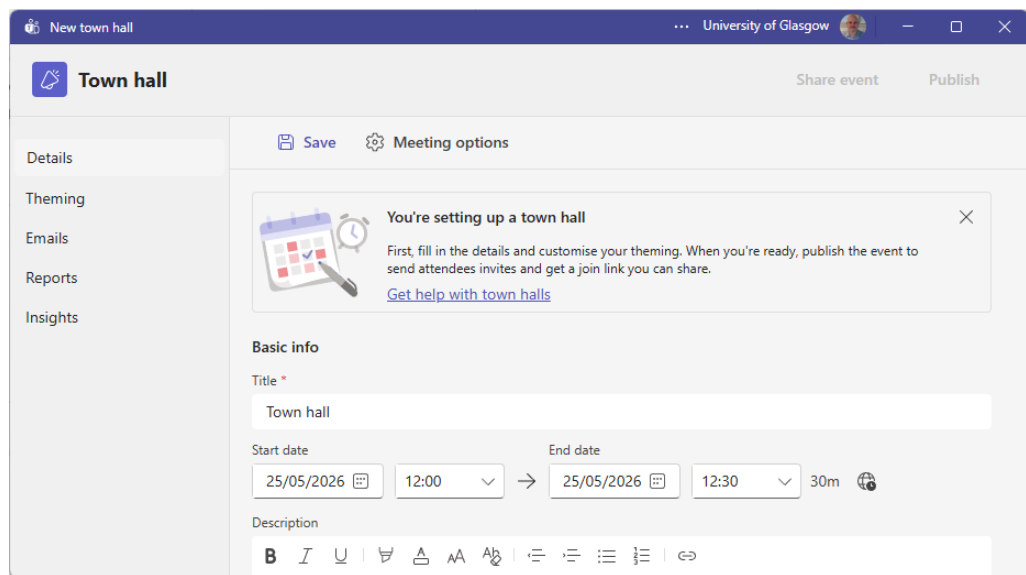
a. Open the template

- 1 Open Teams and go to the Calendar.
- 2 Click the dropdown arrow next to the + New meeting button (top right).



- 3 Under Organisation templates, choose Town hall.

- 4 A new town hall setup page opens.



b. Basic info

Fill in the basics under the Details tab:

- **Title** — this is what invited attendees see in their calendar invite and on the join screen. Be specific ("All-Staff Briefing: April Update" rather than "Town hall").
- **Start and end date/time** — double-check the time zone before publishing if you have international audiences.
- **Description** — appears in the invite email and on the join screen. Use bold, lists and links to set expectations (running order, Q&A approach, etc.).



You're setting up a town hall

First, fill in the details and customise your theming. When you're ready, publish the event to send attendees invites and get a join link you can share.

[Get help with town halls](#)

Basic info

Title *

Town hall

Start date

22/05/2026 15:00 → 22/05/2026 15:30 30m

End date

Description

B *I* U        

Add a description to share with attendees

Event group

They'll receive invites when you save the event.

Organiser:  Blair Thompson

Co-organisers: 

Add people to help organise the event

Presenters from your org: 

Add people from your org to speak at your event

Add external presenters

 Chat with event group

Event access

☐ Public
The event is open to anyone. Choose this if there will be attendees outside your organisation.

☒ **Your organisation**
The event is only open to people in your organisation and guests of your organisation.

☐ People and groups
Only invited people and groups in your organisation can watch the event.

Invite attendees

They'll receive invites after you publish the event and when you make updates.

Add people and groups if you want attendees to receive emails about this event

☒ Enable attendee emails 

Attendee experience

Attendees will join the town hall with their cameras and mics off. They can participate in Q&A unless it has been turned off by an admin or organiser. They'll be able to access published recordings after the event ends.

Max event capacity

20,000 attendees

Meeting chat

In-meeting only

Q&A 
Organizers can customize Q&A to allow anonymous posts, review questions before they are published, and more. ☒

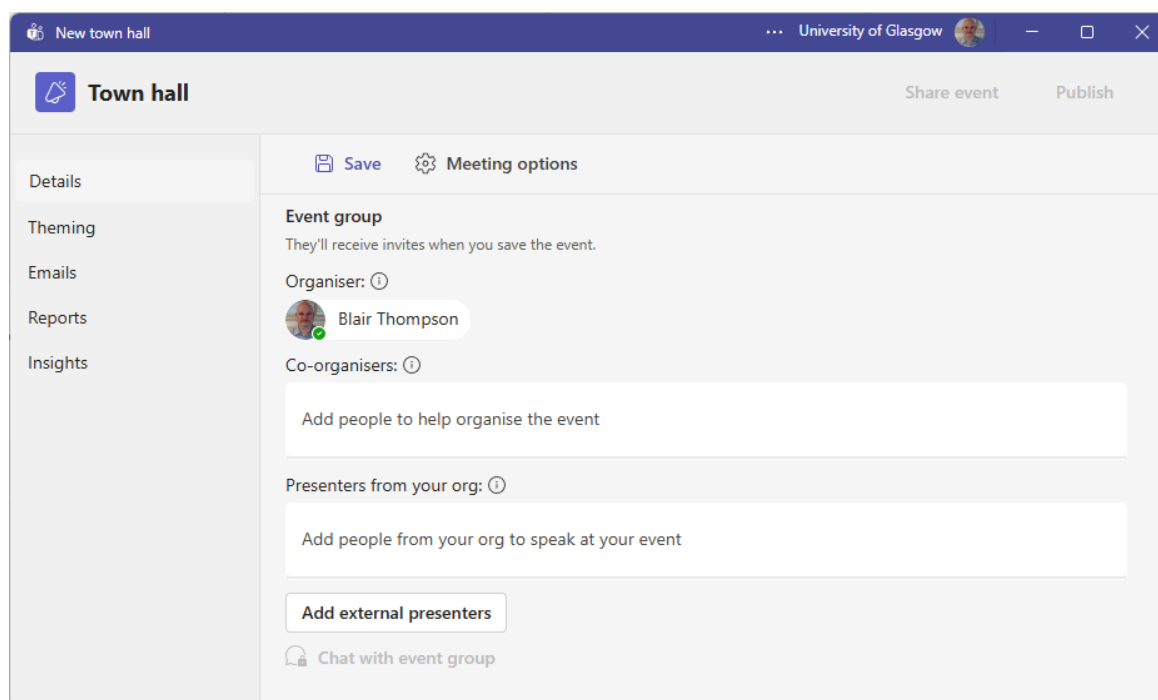
Allow attendance report ☒

Polls
Make sure you install the Polls app before your event starts. ☐

Meeting options

c. Add your event group

Scroll down to find three roles to fill in:



Organiser

This is you, by default. Only the organiser can transfer ownership of the event.

Co-organisers

Up to 10 UofG colleagues who share full control of the event — they can edit the setup, start the recording, manage Q&A and end the event. Add them by typing names or UofG email addresses.

Presenters from your org

Colleagues who will speak at the event. Presenters get mic, camera and screen-share rights during the broadcast, but no edit access to the setup page.

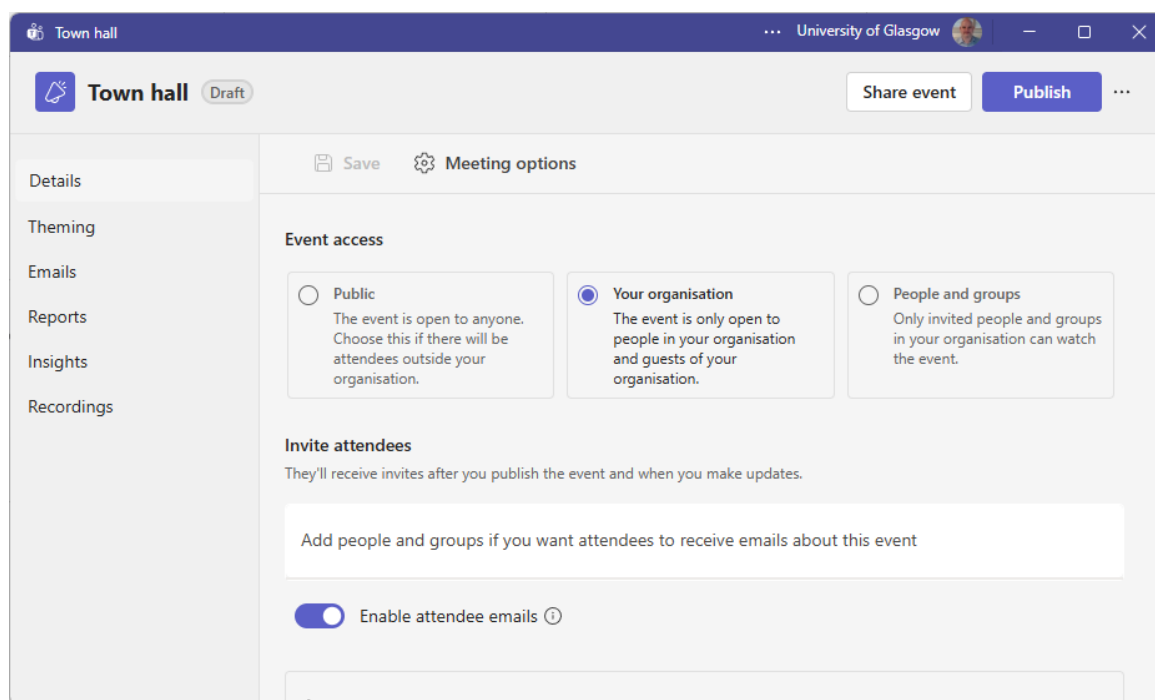
External presenters

Click Add external presenters to invite speakers from outside UofG (e.g., a visiting expert for a public open lecture). You only need their email address — they don't need a UofG account. They'll get a unique join link in their invite email.

Note — External speakers can be presenters but not co-organisers. If your visiting keynote needs to manage Q&A or start the recording, you'll need to do that yourself or have a UofG co-organiser on hand.

d. Event access — who can watch

Event access controls who can watch the broadcast. There are three options:

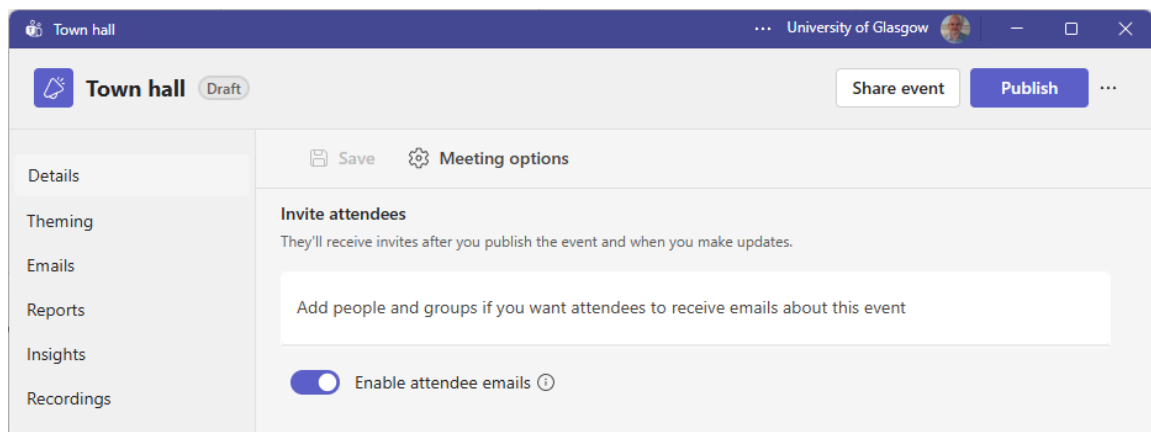


- **Your organisation** (template default) — only people signed in with a UofG account can watch. Best for internal all-staff events, briefings, training.
- **Public** — anyone on the internet with the link can watch. Best for public lectures, recruitment events, open conferences.
- **People and groups** — only specifically invited people or groups in your organisation can watch. Best for restricted internal events (e.g., briefings for a specific Faculty or Senate-only sessions).

Important — Switching event access after invites have gone out can invalidate join links for some attendees. Decide this before publishing.

e. Invite attendees

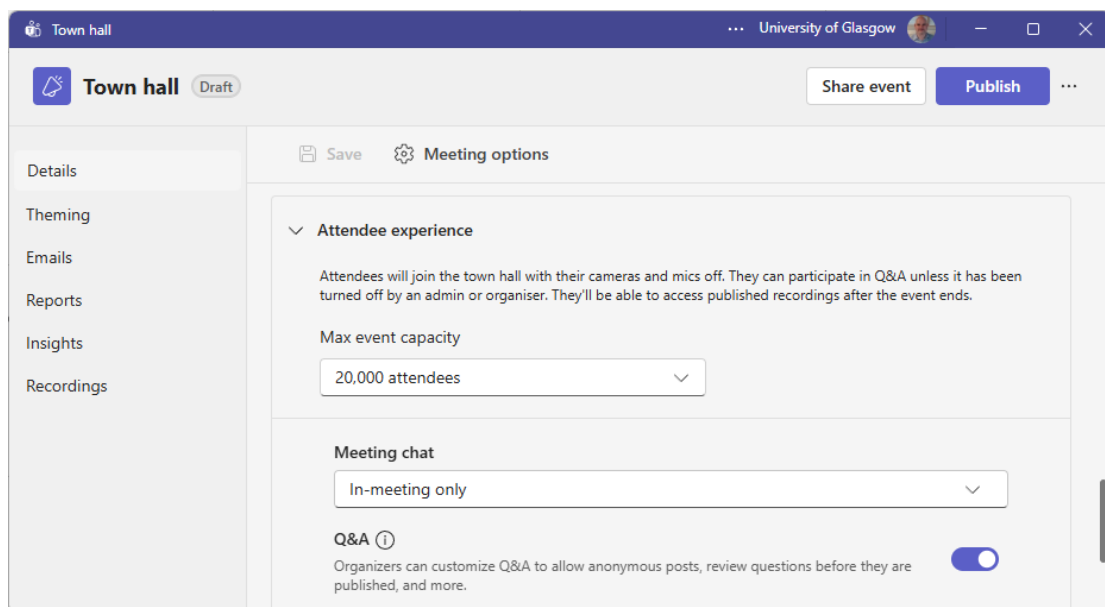
Under Invite attendees, add the people or groups who should receive an email invitation. You can paste individual addresses or distribution lists (e.g. an all-staff group). Make sure Enable attendee emails is ON.



For very large events, the audience is often broader than any single list. In that case, leave the invitees field empty and instead share the join link via your normal comms channels (all-staff email, Moodle, intranet, etc.) once the event is published.

f. Attendee experience

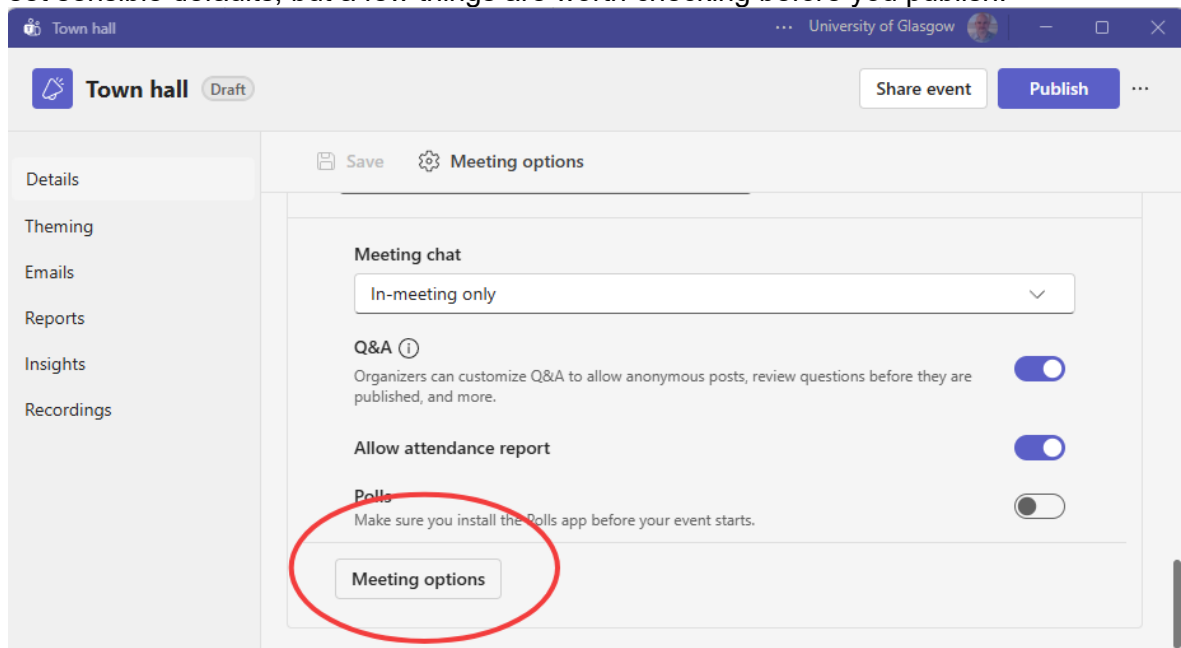
The template defaults are right for most events, but four things are worth checking explicitly:



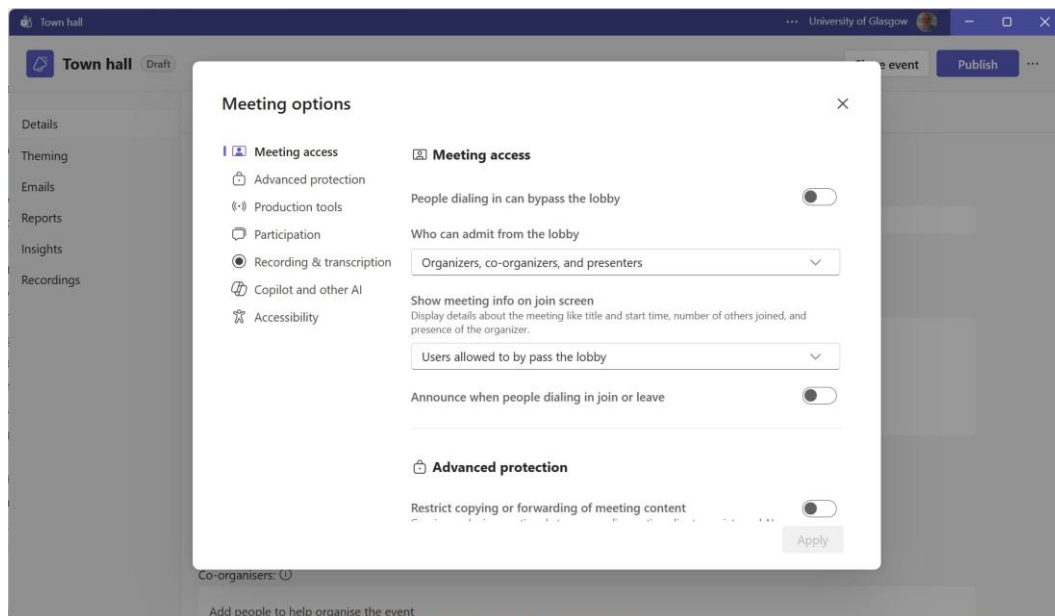
- **Max event capacity** — defaults to your maximum. Set lower if you want a hard cap.
- **Meeting chat** — leave as "In-meeting only" for most events. Turn off entirely for formal one-way broadcasts where the only intended interaction is Q&A.
- **Q&A** — leave ON for most town halls. The Q&A panel is moderated by organisers and co-organisers, so it stays manageable even at scale.
- **Polls** — turn ON if you plan to run polls during the event. Install the Polls app before the event starts; you can't add it mid-broadcast.

g. Meeting options — recording, lobby, production tools

Click Meeting options at the top of the setup page. There's a lot here — the template has set sensible defaults, but a few things are worth checking before you publish.

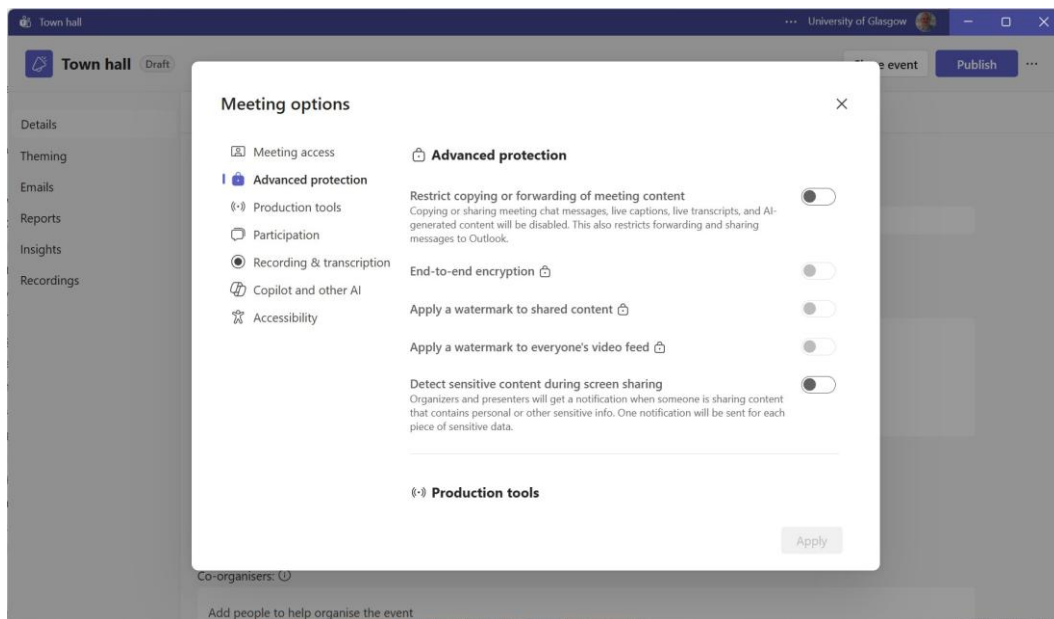


Meeting access



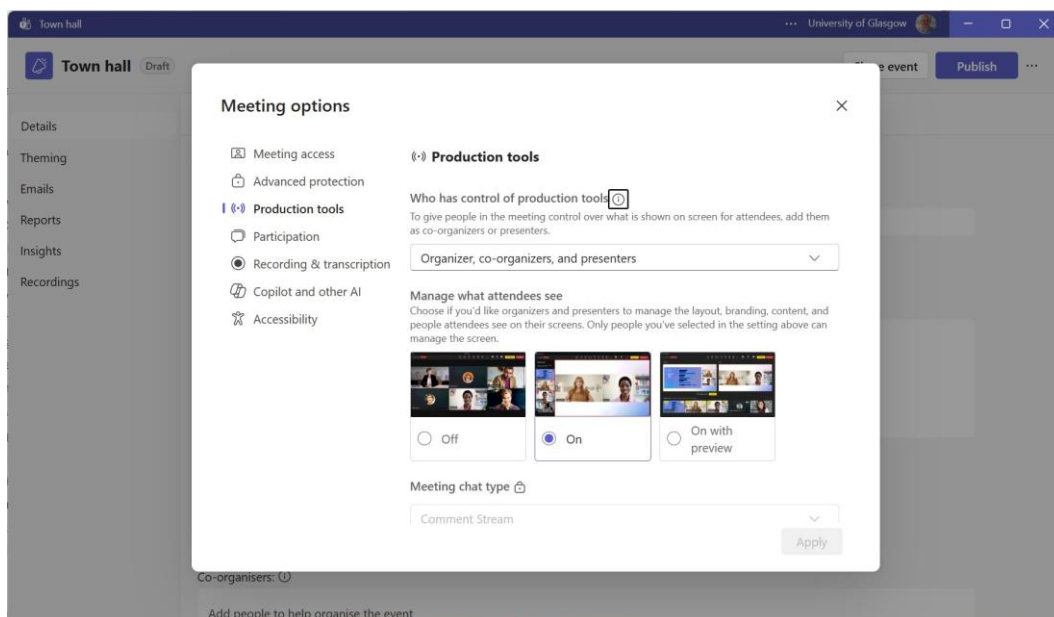
- **Who can admit from the lobby** — defaults to Organisers, co-organisers and presenters.
- **People dialing in can bypass the lobby** — OFF by default. Leave OFF unless you have a specific reason.

Advanced protection



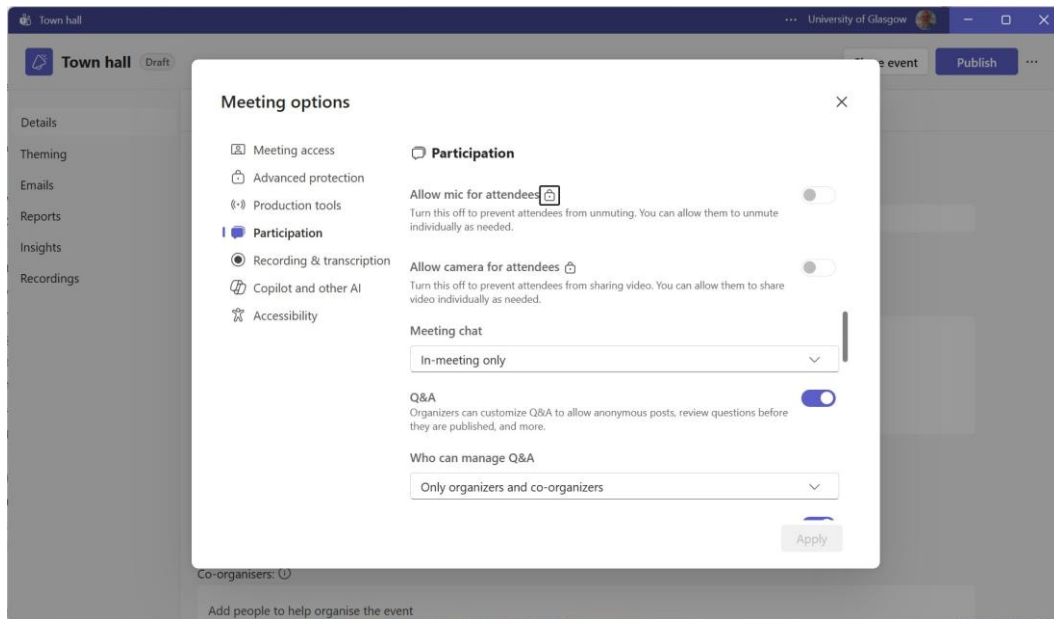
All advanced protection options (watermarks, end-to-end encryption, sensitive-content detection) are OFF by default. End-to-end encryption and watermarks require Teams Premium.

Production tools — the broadcast view



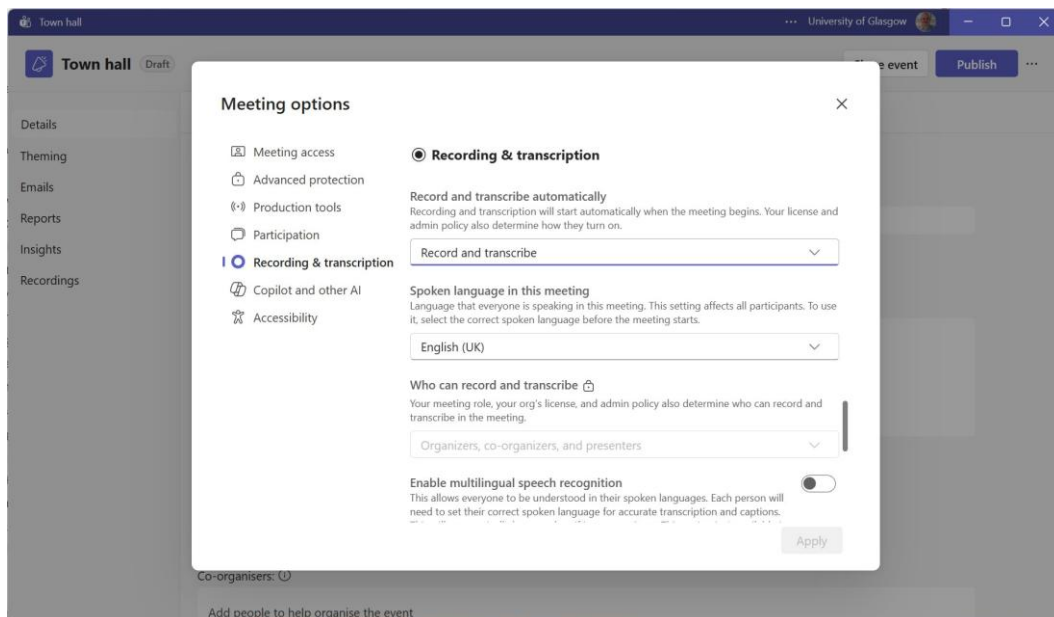
- **Manage what attendees see** — ON by default. This is the key town hall setting: attendees see only the active speaker and any shared content, not a gallery of presenter tiles. Turn OFF only if you want a more meeting-like view.
- **Meeting chat type** — Comment Stream. Optimised for a large audience.
- **On with preview** — gives organisers a preview of what attendees see before pushing it live. Teams Premium only.

Participation



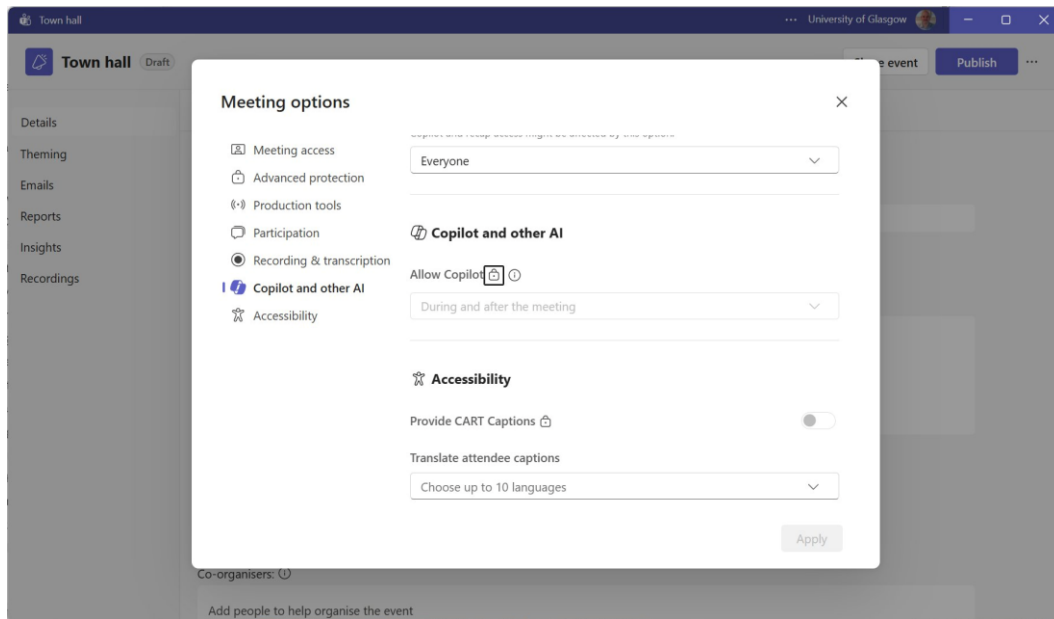
- Allow mic for attendees — OFF and locked.
- Allow camera for attendees — OFF and locked.
- Q&A — ON, managed by organisers and co-organisers.

Recording & transcription



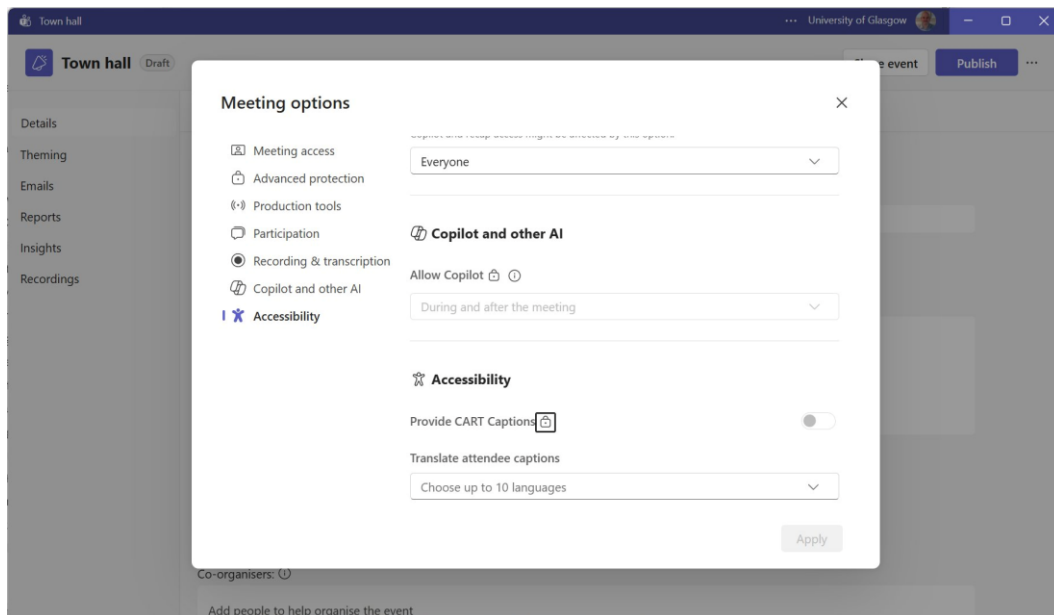
- **Record and transcribe automatically** — defaults to "Record and transcribe". Leave on unless you have a specific reason not to record.
- **Spoken language** — English (UK) by default. Change if your keynote speaks a different language; this affects transcription accuracy and caption quality.
- **Enable multilingual speech recognition** — OFF. Useful if you genuinely have multiple speakers in different languages.

Copilot and other AI



- **Allow Copilot** — During and after the meeting. Copilot can be used by organisers and presenters during the event and to generate the recap afterwards.

Accessibility

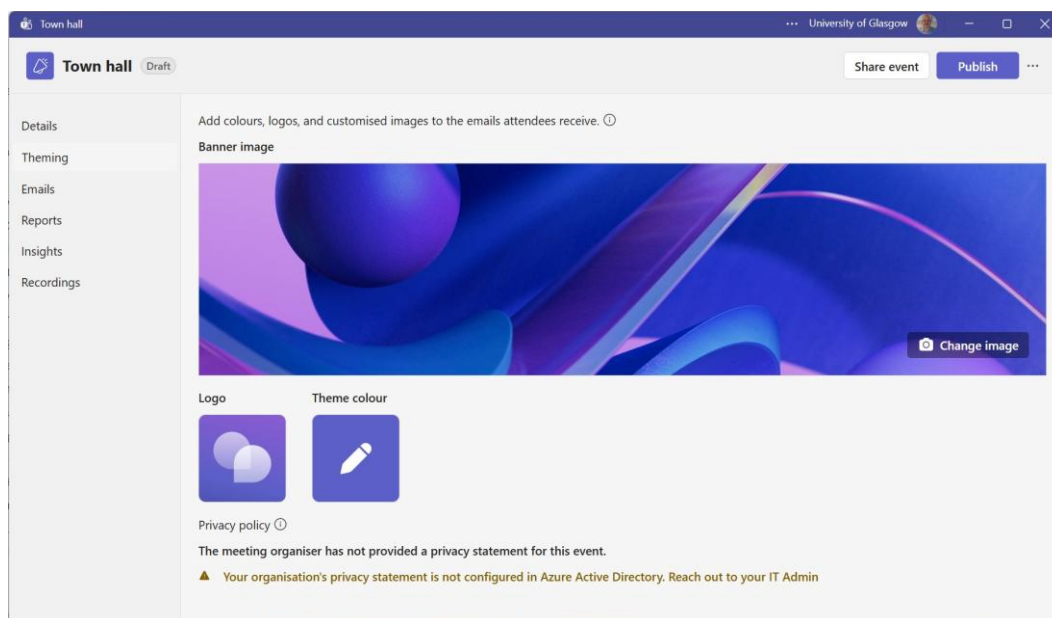


- **Translate attendee captions** — choose up to 10 languages to make available to attendees during the event.
- **Provide CART captions** (human-typed captions from a CART provider) — Teams Premium only.

Click Apply when done.

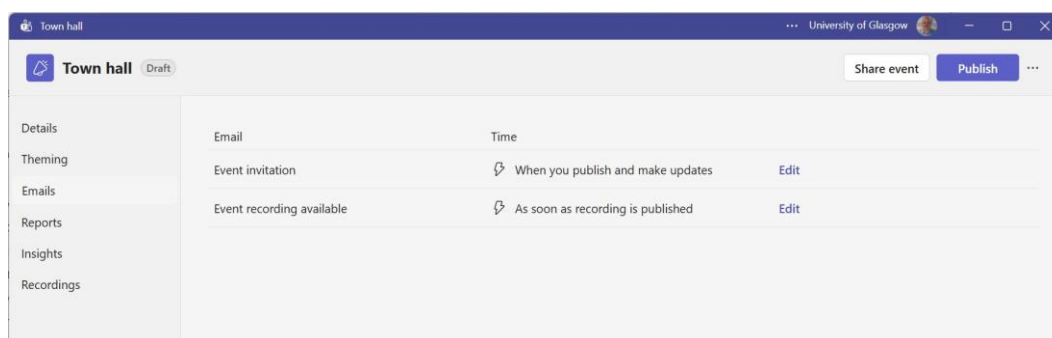
h. Theming (optional)

Under Setup → Theming you can add a banner image, an icon, and pick a colour scheme. The banner appears in invite emails and on the join screen. UofG-branded assets (banners, colours) are available from the Brand Hub. A themed event looks much more professional and is well worth the five minutes for any high-profile event.



i. Customise the automated emails

Go to the Emails tab. You'll see two emails:



- **Event invitation** — sent when you publish, and whenever you make updates.
- **Event recording available** — sent automatically when the recording is published.

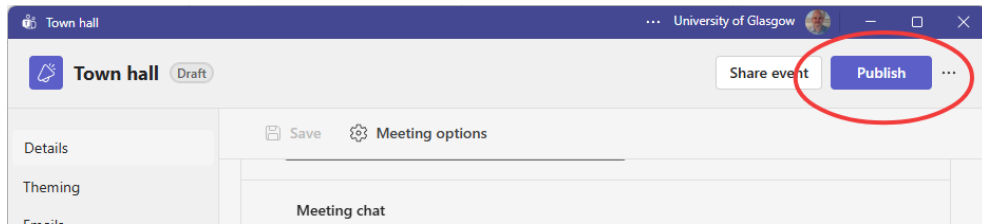
For each, click Edit to change the sender name, subject and body text. Add your own signature, links, and any pre-event instructions (e.g. a link to a Sli.do or pre-reading).

Note — Town halls don't have a "reminder" email like webinars do. If you want to remind attendees the day before, send a manual email or rely on the calendar invite's built-in reminder.

j. Publishing the town hall

This is the step everyone forgets the first time.

- 1 **Save** your changes (Save button at the top of the page).
- 2 Click **Publish** in the top right.



- 3 The town hall is now live — invited attendees receive their email invites, and you can share the join link with broader audiences.

6 Sharing the town hall with attendees

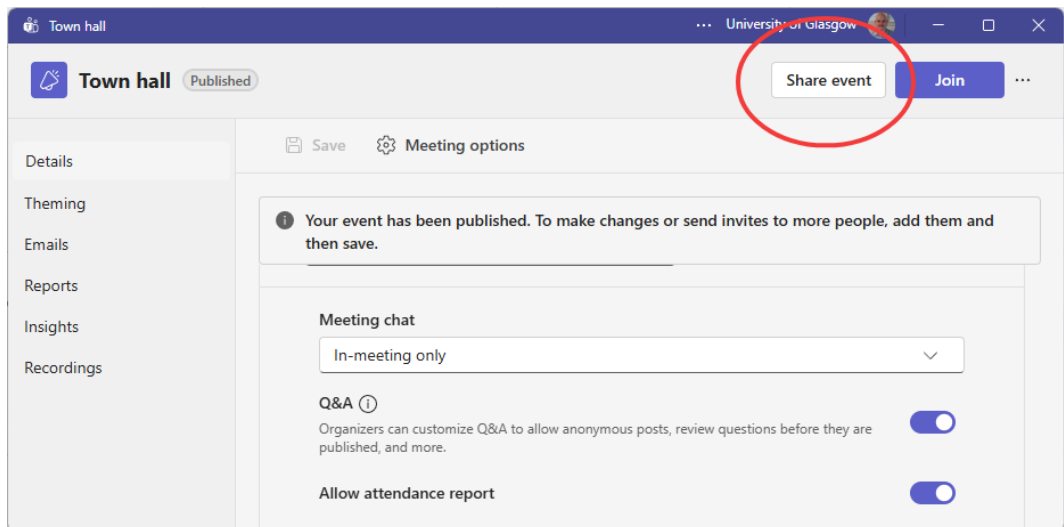
a. Invited attendees

Anyone you added in the Invite attendees field on the setup page automatically receives the Event invitation email when you publish. They can join from the calendar invite when the event starts.

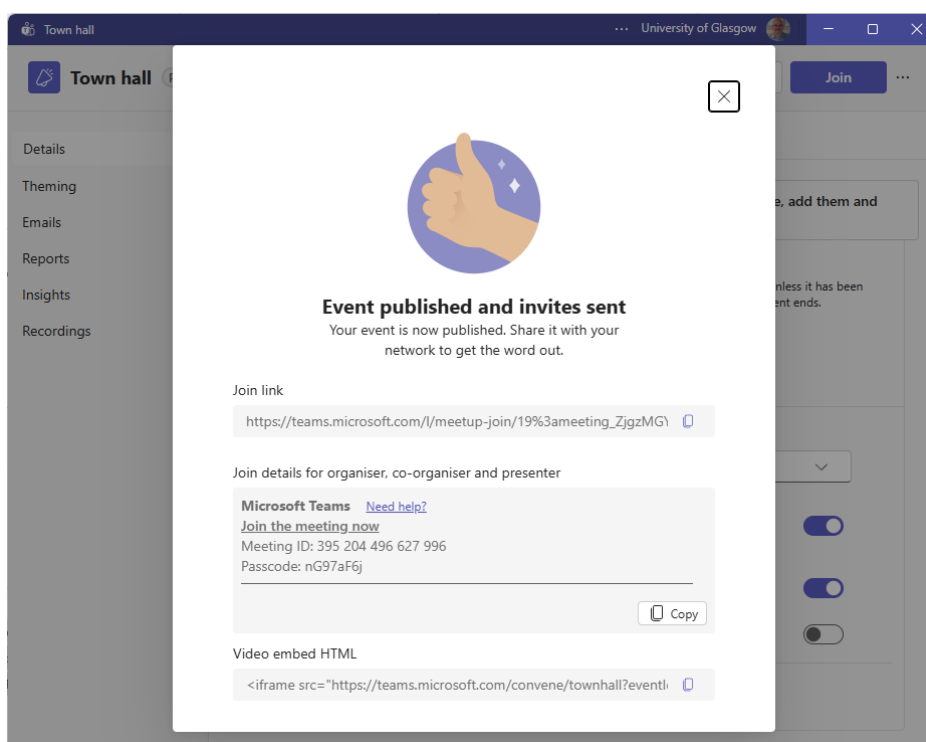
b. Wider audiences — sharing the join link

For broader audiences (all-staff, students, the public), share the join link after publishing.

- 1 In the town hall setup page, click Share event in the top right.



- 2 Copy the join link.



- 3 Paste it into your normal communication channel — all-staff email, Moodle course page, intranet article, social media (for public events).

IMPORTANT There is only one link for a town hall, not two like a webinar. The link works for everyone who has permission to join (defined by your Event access setting). Anyone with the link who matches the access rules can join.

c. Adding the link to Moodle

At the time of writing there is no LTI connector between Teams and Moodle, so there is no direct equivalent to the old Zoom plug-in. The interim approach is:

- 1 Create and publish your town hall in Teams.
- 2 Copy the join link.
- 3 In Moodle, add a URL resource (or Label) on the course page and paste the link.
- 4 Give it a clear name and a short description so students know what the event is.

IMPORTANT Watch for institutional guidance on the recommended approach for Semester 1 2026/27 — this area is still being finalised. Don't rebuild your Moodle pages around town halls until the agreed workflow is confirmed.

d. Adding the link to Inkpath

For events tracked in Inkpath (PGR development, professional development), paste the join link into the Inkpath activity record. Note that Inkpath can't auto-pull attendance from a town hall, so attendees still need to mark their own attendance in Inkpath or you'll need to cross-reference the Teams attendance report manually.

7 On the day — running the town hall

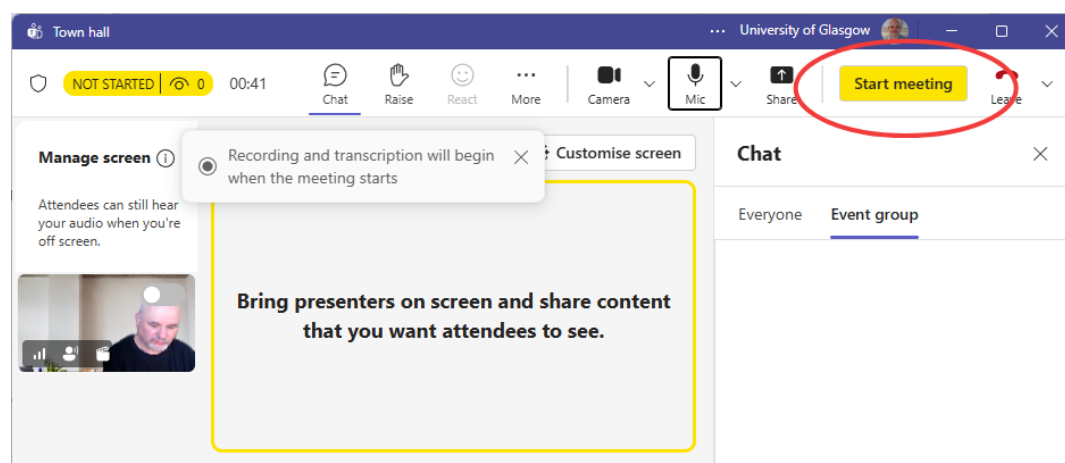
A few minutes before the start time, the organiser and presenters join from the event in the Teams Calendar.

Before going live

- Check audio and video before clicking Start. Attendees can't see you until you start the event.
- Confirm your slide deck is ready to share. Use PowerPoint Live if you want speaker notes and accessibility benefits.
- Designate someone to monitor Q&A — this is essential for any event over a couple of hundred attendees, and a full-time job for one person at very large events.
- If you're using polls, confirm the Polls app is installed and your polls are ready to launch.

Starting the event

Click Start when ready. Until you do this, attendees see a "the event will begin shortly" holding screen.



During the event

- Attendees can submit Q&A questions — these appear in the Q&A panel. Publish ones you want everyone to see; reply privately to others.
- The "Manage what attendees see" setting means only the active speaker is on screen by default. Presenters joining or speaking are prioritised automatically; if you want to switch what attendees see (e.g., to bring in a specific speaker or display shared content), use the Manage view controls in the meeting toolbar.
- Attendees use chat (if enabled) and reactions to engage. They cannot unmute or turn on cameras.

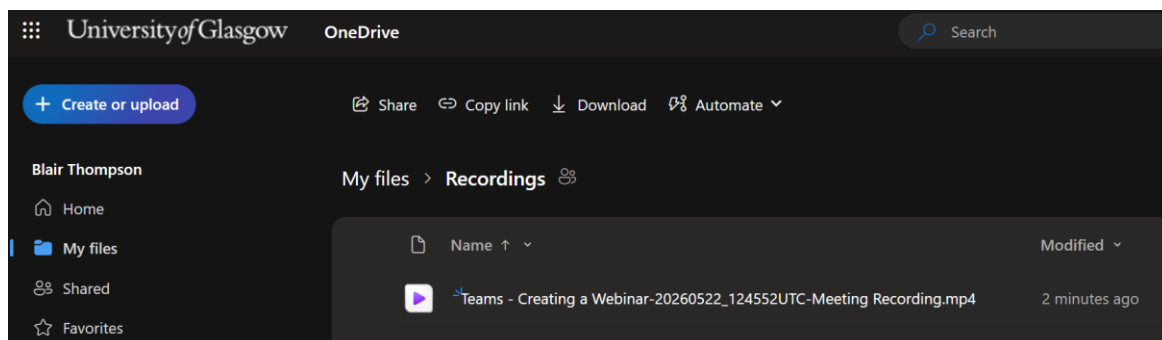
Ending

Click End event (not just Leave) so the recording stops and the post-event emails fire. If you just click Leave, the recording continues until the last presenter leaves — which can leave a lot of awkward silence on the recording.

8 After the event

a. Recording and transcript

If you turned on automatic recording (the template default), the file lands in your OneDrive in the Recordings folder. The transcript sits alongside it. Both are owned by you (the organiser).



By default, the recording is shared with everyone the event was sent to. To restrict it, open the file in OneDrive and use Manage access to remove or limit sharing.

b. Sharing the recording with attendees

The Event recording available email fires automatically when the recording is published — attendees get a link without you doing anything.

IMPORTANT For teaching content that needs to live on Moodle long-term, download the file from OneDrive and upload it to Kaltura. This is the supported route for teaching recordings at UofG. OneDrive isn't designed as a long-term streaming platform for large student cohorts.

c. Attendance report

Open the event in your Teams Calendar. Click the Attendance tab. You'll see who joined, when they joined, and when they left. Click Download to export as a CSV.

For very large events the attendance report can run to 5,000+ rows. Use Excel filters or a quick pivot to summarise by school, role, or any other field you've captured.

9 Common mistakes — a checklist

Run through this list before publishing every town hall:

- ✓ Did you click Publish? Nothing goes out until you do.
- ✓ Is Event access set correctly — Your organisation for internal, Public for external, People and groups for restricted?
- ✓ Have you added all your presenters, including external speakers, before publishing? Adding presenters after publishing is fiddly.
- ✓ Have you checked the time zone if international attendees might join?
- ✓ Have you decided who monitors the Q&A? At scale this is a full-time job for one person.
- ✓ Have you confirmed the spoken language matches what your speakers will actually speak (for accurate transcription and captions)?
- ✓ Have you turned on the right caption languages if your audience needs translation?
- ✓ Have you installed the Polls app if you plan to use polls? It must be installed before the event starts.
- ✓ Have you allowed enough capacity? Town halls have a hard cap — once full, no more can join.
- ✓ For public events: have you reviewed the description and theming for anything that shouldn't be public?
- ✓ If you're using Moodle: are you using a URL resource as the interim workflow?
- ✓ Have you clicked End event (not just Leave) at the close, so the recording stops cleanly?

10 What Teams Town halls don't do (on a standard licence)

Things that work in some other tools but not in standard Teams Town halls:

- **Custom registration page** with custom fields — use a Webinar instead.
- **More than 10,000 attendees** — requires Teams Premium (up to 50,000) or an Attendee Capacity Pack (up to 100,000).
- **"On with preview" production view** (preview what attendees will see before pushing it live) — Teams Premium.
- **End-to-end encryption** — Teams Premium.
- **Watermarks** on shared content or video — Teams Premium.
- **CART captions** (human-typed) — Teams Premium.
- **Promoting an attendee to presenter mid-event** for live Q&A — town halls don't support this. If you need attendees to speak, use a Webinar.
- **Custom reminder emails** — there's no built-in reminder for town halls. Send a manual reminder or rely on calendar reminders.

For high-profile events where any of the Premium features matter, contact IT Services about a temporary Premium uplift.

11 Useful shortcut keys

Using keyboard shortcuts can help you become more efficient when running events in Teams. Most keyboard shortcuts require you to use two or more keys at the same time. To use a keyboard shortcut, first press and hold the modifier key(s) (SHIFT, CTRL, ALT), then press the corresponding standard key.

Function	Windows	Mac
Toggle mute	Ctrl + Shift + M	Cmd + Shift + M
Temporarily unmute (hold)	Ctrl + Spacebar	Option + Spacebar
Toggle video on/off	Ctrl + Shift + O	Cmd + Shift + O
Raise or lower hand	Ctrl + Shift + K	Cmd + Shift + K
Announce raised hands (screen reader)	Ctrl + Shift + L	Cmd + Shift + L
Admit people from lobby notification	Ctrl + Shift + Y	Cmd + Shift + Y
Start audio call	Alt + Shift + A	Cmd + Option + S
Start video call	Alt + Shift + V	Cmd + Shift + S
End call	Ctrl + Shift + H	Cmd + Shift + H
Accept screen share	Ctrl + Shift + A	Cmd + Shift + V
Decline screen share	Ctrl + Shift + D	Cmd + Shift + D
Zoom into shared content	Alt + Shift + =	Option + Cmd + =
Zoom out from shared content	Alt + Shift + -	Option + Cmd + -
Reset zoom on shared content	Alt + Shift + 0	Option + Cmd + 0
Pan shared content (up/down/left/right)	Alt + Shift + arrow key	Option + Cmd + arrow key
Join from meeting details	Alt + Shift + J	Ctrl + Cmd + K
Open in-app shortcut panel	Ctrl + .	Cmd + .