Instructions

How to Organise a Townhall Meeting

Computing Support Team 2025

Introduction

The town hall meeting is more complicated Teams meeting but is comes with some advanced features which allow a better experience for the audience and the presenters.

Core Features & Format

- One-to-Many Experience: Town halls are ideal for delivering information to a large group where direct interaction isn't the primary goal.
- Managed Q&A: Attendees engage by asking questions and reacting to others' questions in a managed Q&A format.
- Limited Attendee Interaction: By default, attendee cameras and microphones are turned off to maintain focus on presenters and shared content.
- Presenter-Centric: A limited number of organizers, co-organizers, and presenters lead the event, sharing content with the audience.

Customization & Capacity

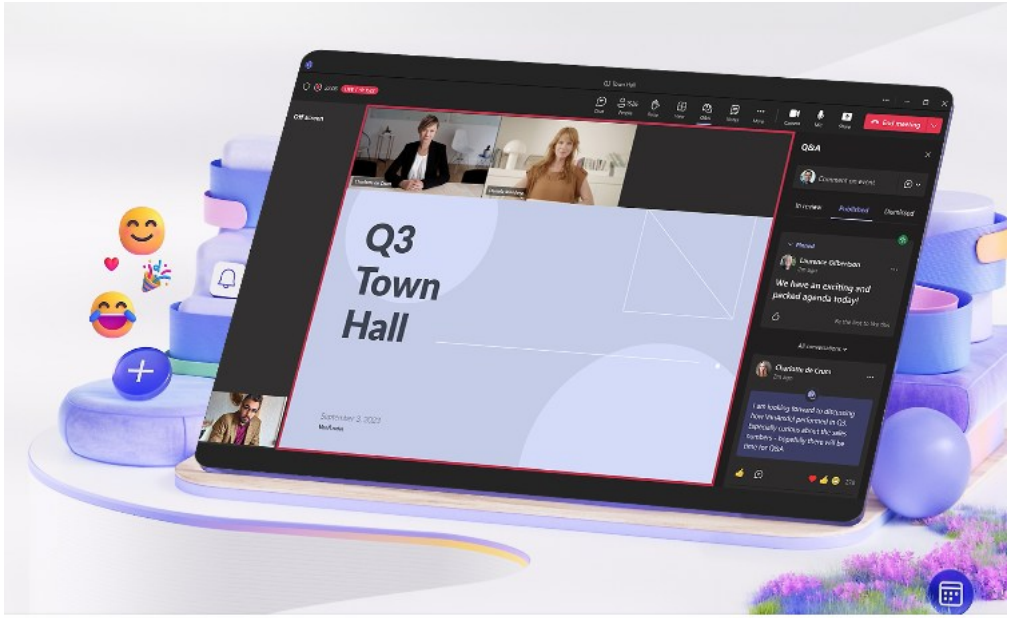
- Attendee Capacity: Standard town halls support up to 10,000 attendees, with capacity increasing to 50,000 with a Teams Premium license.
- Branding: Teams Premium allows for event branding, including customized colours, logos, and banners to match your organization's identity.
- Template: A dedicated town hall template is available with pre-configured settings to simplify event scheduling.

Context

This guide will cover how create a Townhall Meeting in 5 simple steps.

1. Planning Phase
2. Setup in Microsoft Teams
3. Preparation
4. During the Town Hall meeting
5. After the Town Hall meeting

This guide includes several screenshots from a test setup. You can simply select the same options shown in the following slides.



Planning phase

Assign roles

In Teams Town Halls, roles are important:

- **Organizer**: Schedules town hall, manages settings, ensures recording, oversees logistics, moderates Q&A
- **Co-Organizers :** manages settings, ensures recording, oversees logistics, moderates Q&A
- **Presenters**: Deliver content (slides, demos, video).
- **Attendees**: View and participate.

Choose format

- **Presentation + Q&A :** One person – presenting with a Q&A session at the end.
- **Panel discussion :** Multiple presenters remote and onsite

Decide on duration

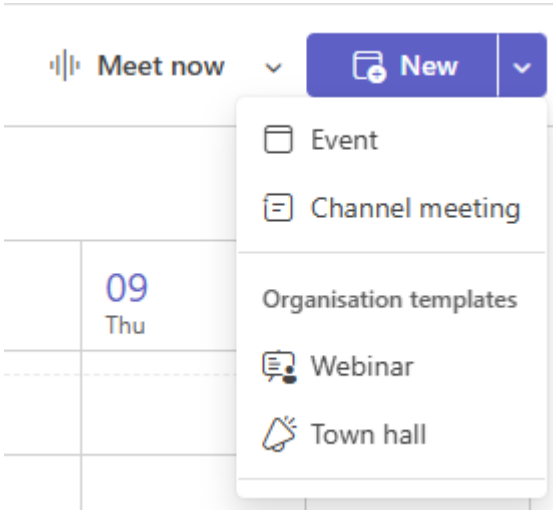
(45–90 min is typical).

Communications Timeline

- T-14 days Save-the-date email + calendar invite.
- T-7 days : Agenda + speaker line-up posted in Teams channel.
- T-1 day : Reminder email with join link + Q&A/polling instructions.
- Event day : Live updates via internal chat during event.
- T+1 day : Recording, slides, Q&A summary, feedback survey shared.

Setup in Microsoft Teams

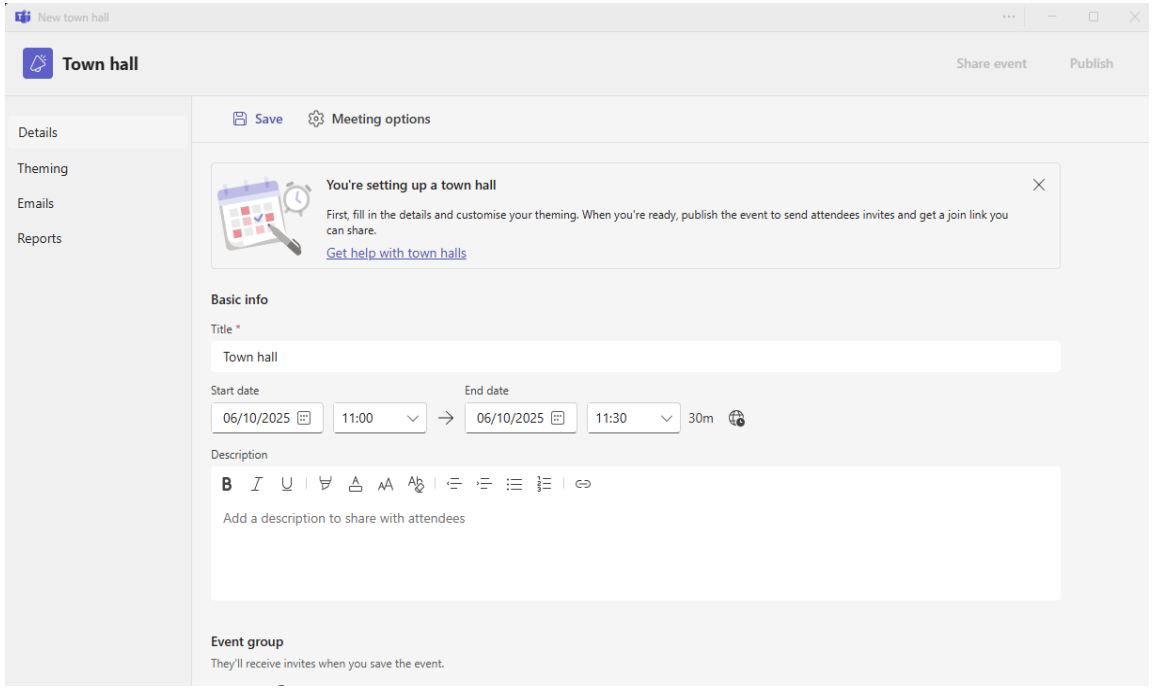
1. Open Microsoft Teams.
2. Go to Calendar
3. Click the little arrow next to the new button and select Town Hall.

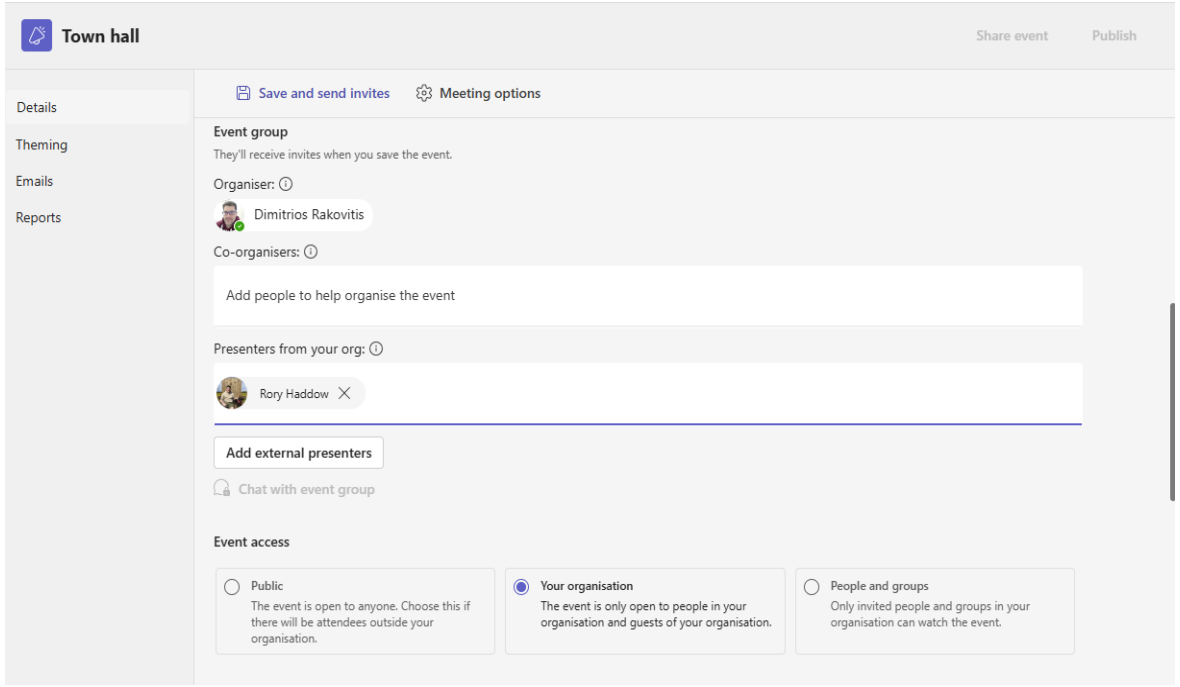


Fill in details :

- Title
- Date and time duration. Makes sure to include a 30 minute preparation time before the event starts.
- Description of the event

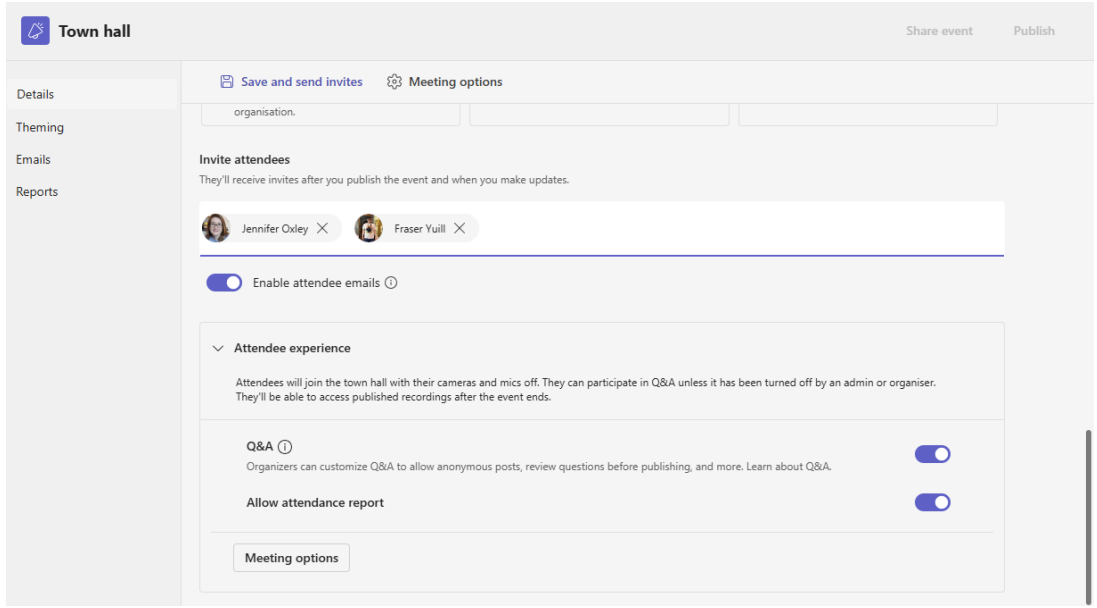
Here you can add your co-organisers, presenters.
You have the option to make as many changes as you want.
It is always better to decide the presenters in advance because once you click save they will receive an email invitation.
For the Event access option you normally select the option your organisation to avoid any person not related to the University getting access to the event.



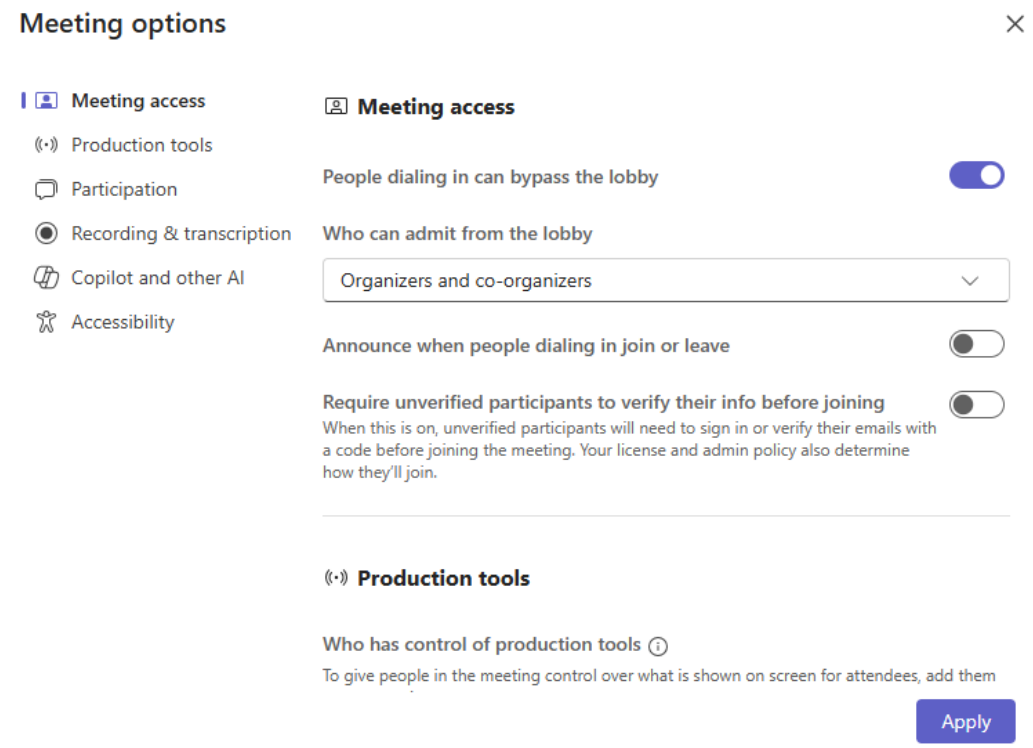


You can add individual attendees if you want. For large audiences or mailing lists we advise to just share the link of the event with your email invitation

As shown bellow we keep the Q&A enabled and the attendance report enabled. Q&A gives the option for the audience to ask questions during the event and the attendance report helps us get some feedback about the presentations.

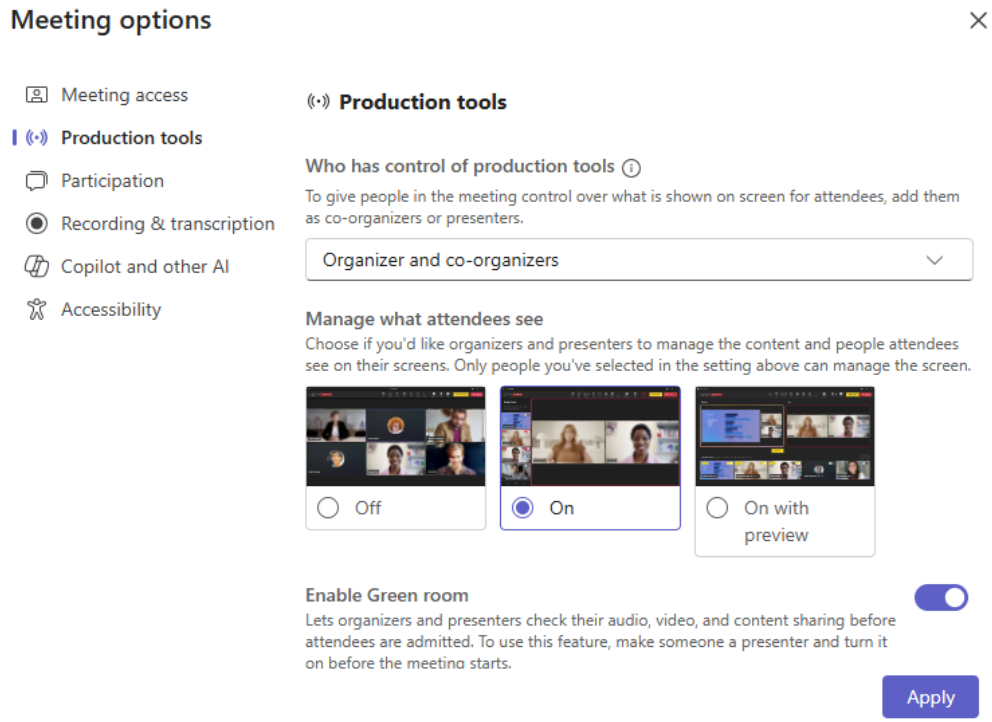


For advance settings we select the meeting options.
The options bellow allow the attendees to join without having to wait for approval. These selections reduce the distractions and the notifications you could get in a normal meeting.

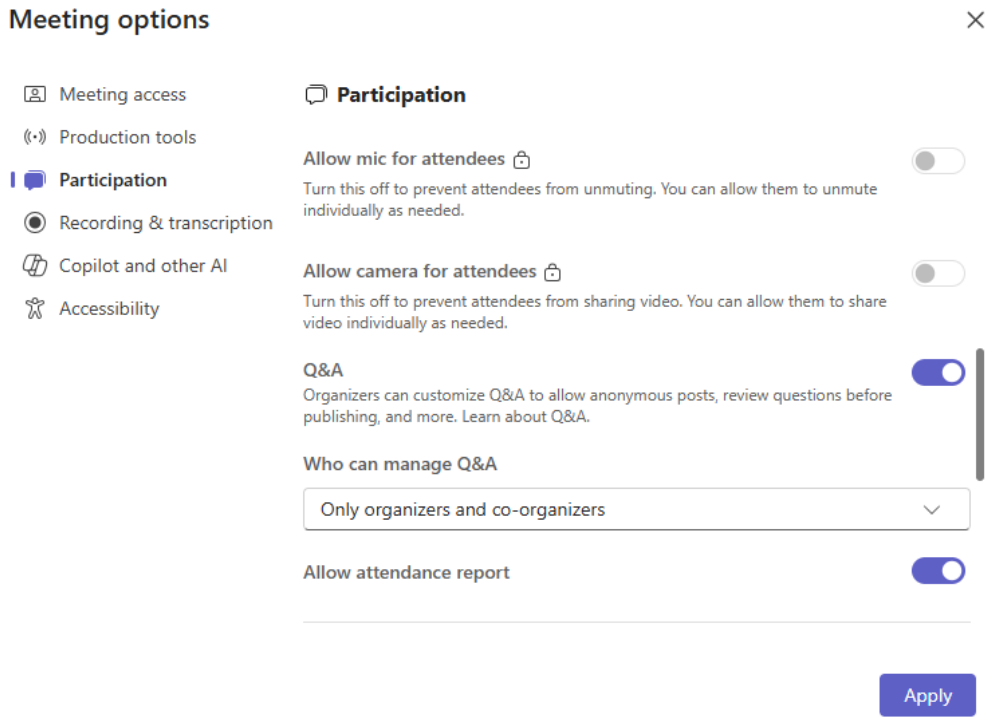


The organiser and co-organiser should be the only members that control what the attendees see. We want to reduce the distractions and options from the presenters so they can focus on the presentation.

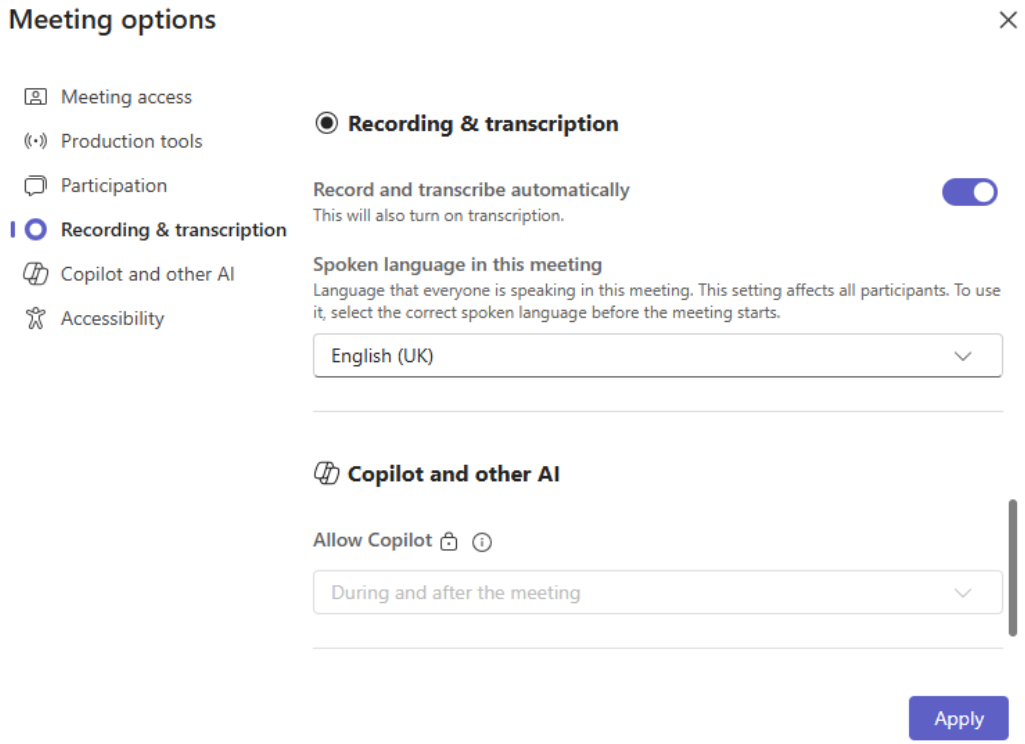
The organiser and co-organiser have the ability to select what attendees will see. The options bellow allow you to disable that feature or allow a preview option so you can see before you send it live.



Here we can see that the mic and camera is by default disabled and that only the organiser and co-organiser can answer or archive Q&A questions.

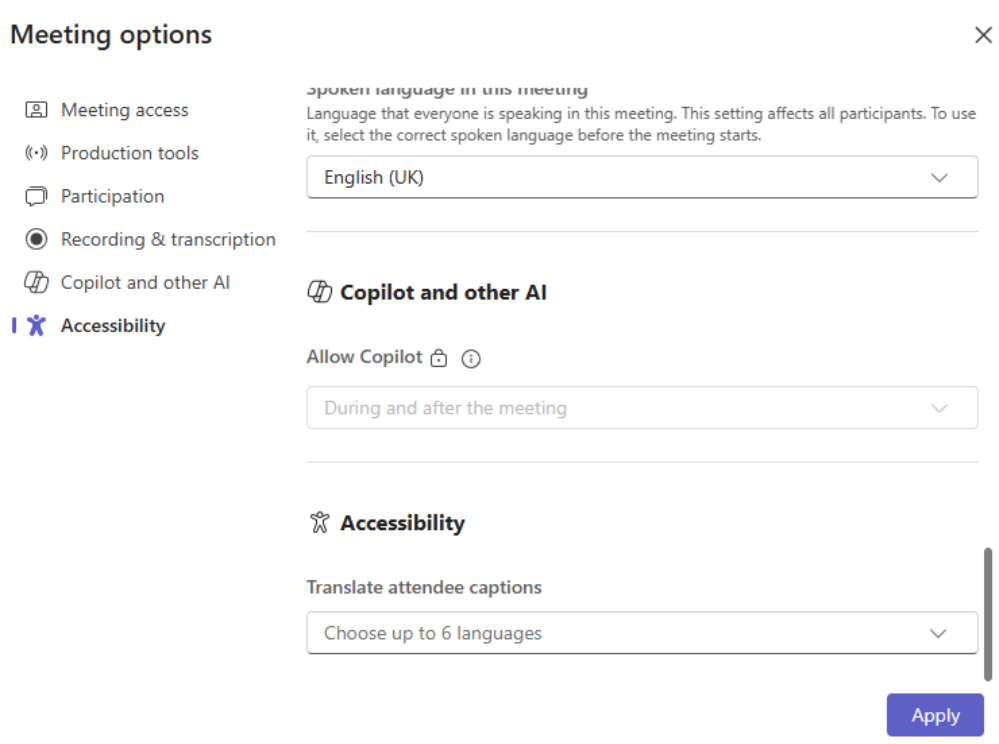


We keep the automatic recording and transcription enabled. Once you start the event the recording will start automatically.

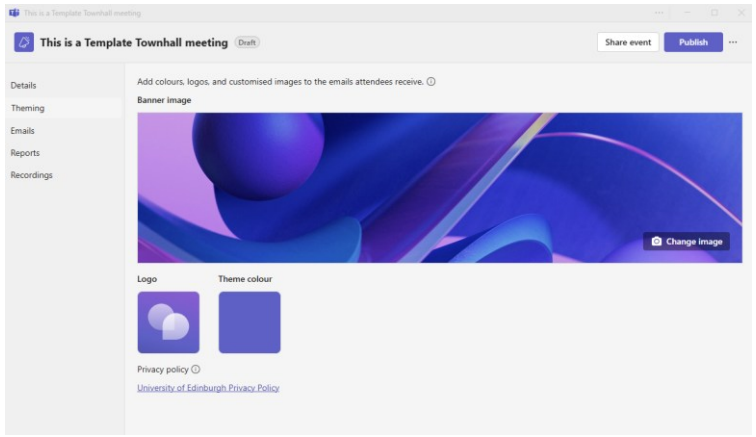


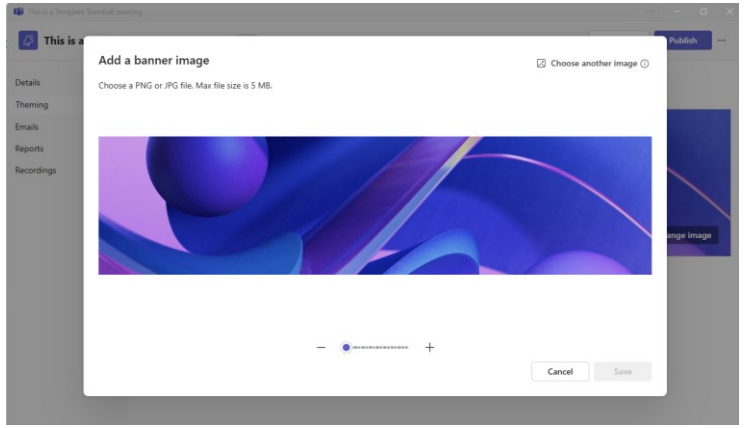
If you want you can add attendee captions in multiple languages depending your target audience.

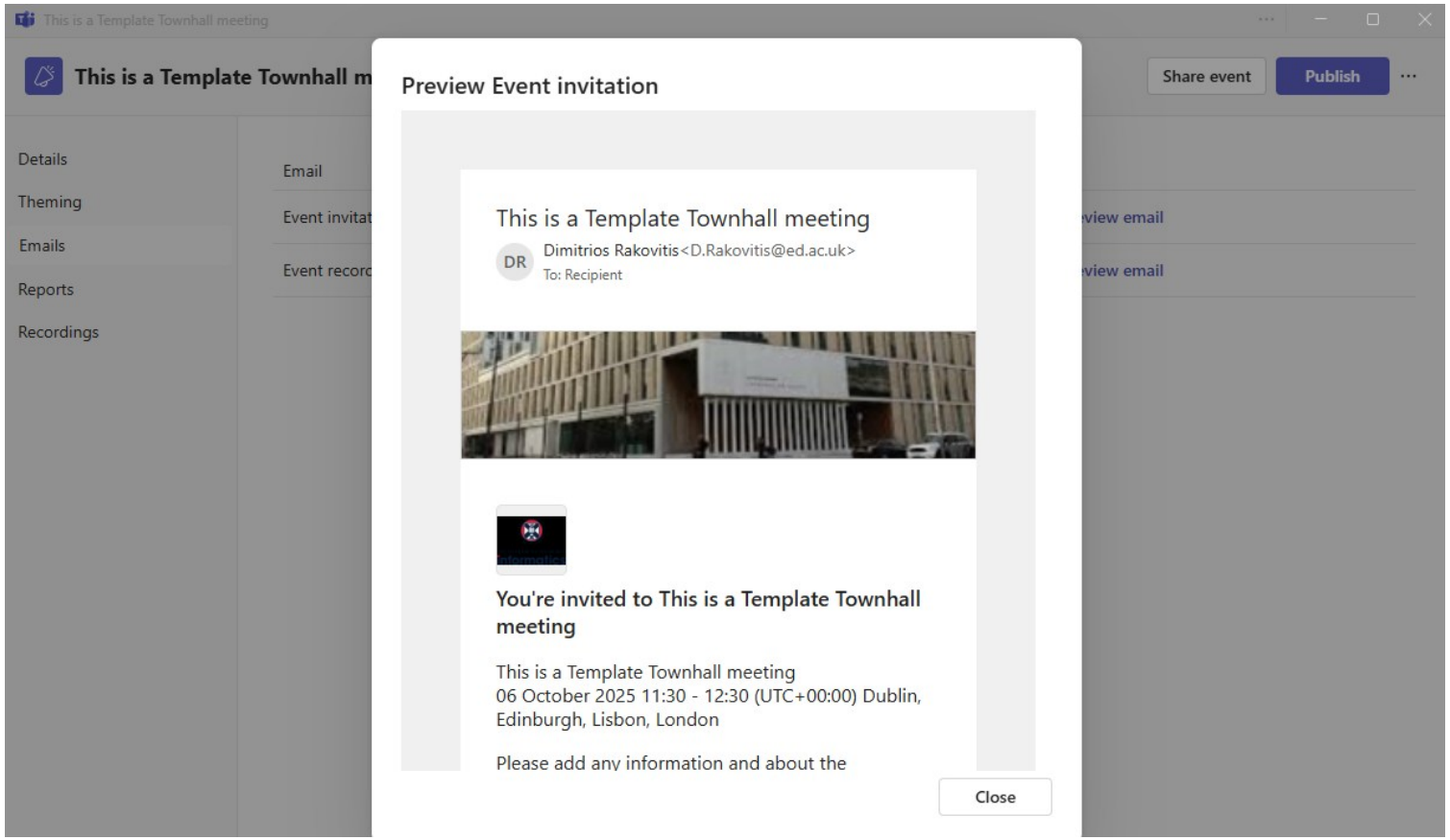
Once you finish with your settings make sure you click Apply.



On the side panel there is an option Theming.
If you have selected individual attendees here you can customise the automatic emails they will get. You can change the banner, the logo and the colour.



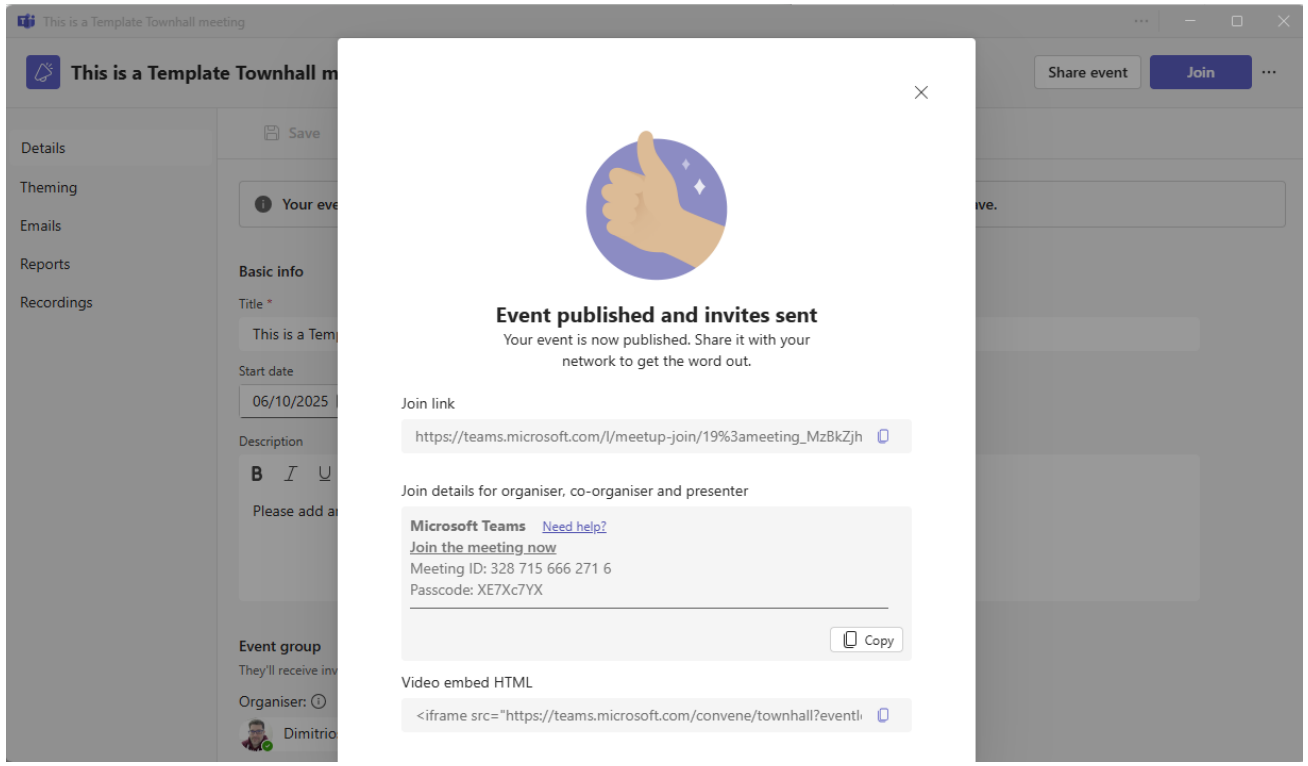




Final step for the Teams Setup

Organising a Town Hall event can take many days. You can make as many changes as you want.

Once you finish with all your editing then you can click publish and generate the public link which you can add to your invites and reminder emails.



Preparation

Technical check

- Book the room for a Town Hall test . Test audio, video, and slides in a dry run.
- Ensure presenters know how to share screen, mute/unmute, and switch slides. Ideally the main Host will have all the presentations or one joined presentation.
- Encourage use of a good microphone and stable internet for remote presenters.
- Make sure that the presenters know that there is private chat and they can communicate with the organisers directly.
- Make sure the co-Ordinator is wearing a headset to monitor the hybrid audio for issues.
- If the coordinator or organiser are using laptops make sure they are fully charged.

Content prep

- There is a 60 sec delay with the remote attendees make sure to communicate that through Q&A.
- Remind remote attendees about the Q&A section.

Backstage prep (new in Teams Town Hall)

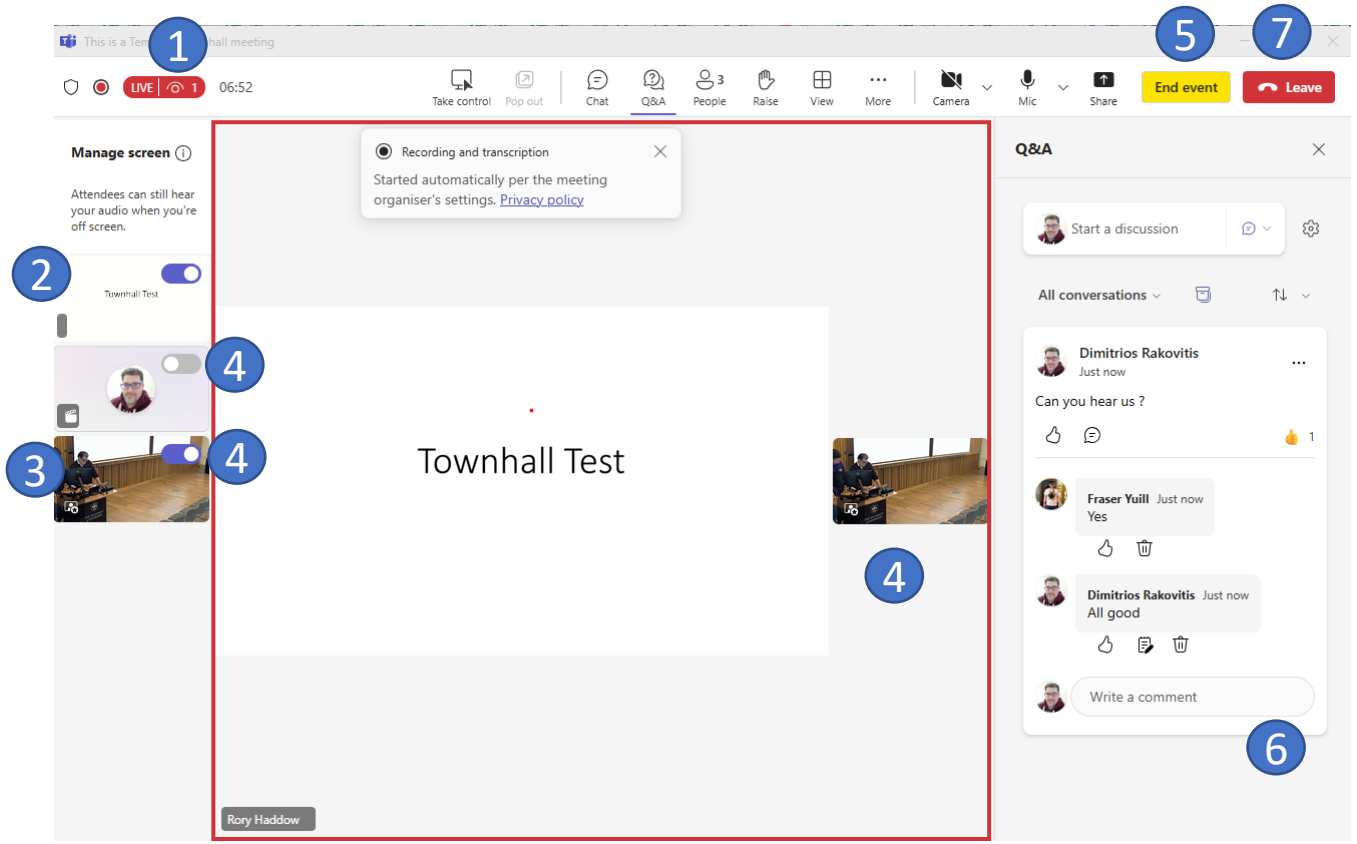
- Presenters can join 15 minutes before and wait backstage.
- Use chat to coordinate before going live.

During the Town Hall – Organiser, Co-organiser

The organiser and the backup co-organiser they should have the event open with a screen like the one on the right.

Here you can :

1. See how many viewers you have online.
2. See the presentation
3. See the main presenter
4. Control what the viewers see by sliding the switch on the side next to number four.
5. Press the Start /End event option.
6. Preview and moderate the Q&A
7. Press the leave to close the pre-event call.



During the Town Hall – Host, Presenter

Make sure your presentation is shared in the Teams Town Hall in full screen.

Check the camera and audio is active.

If you get a message at the top of the screen (This screen is being shared) you need to click on the left side of the message and press ctrl + w to hide the menu

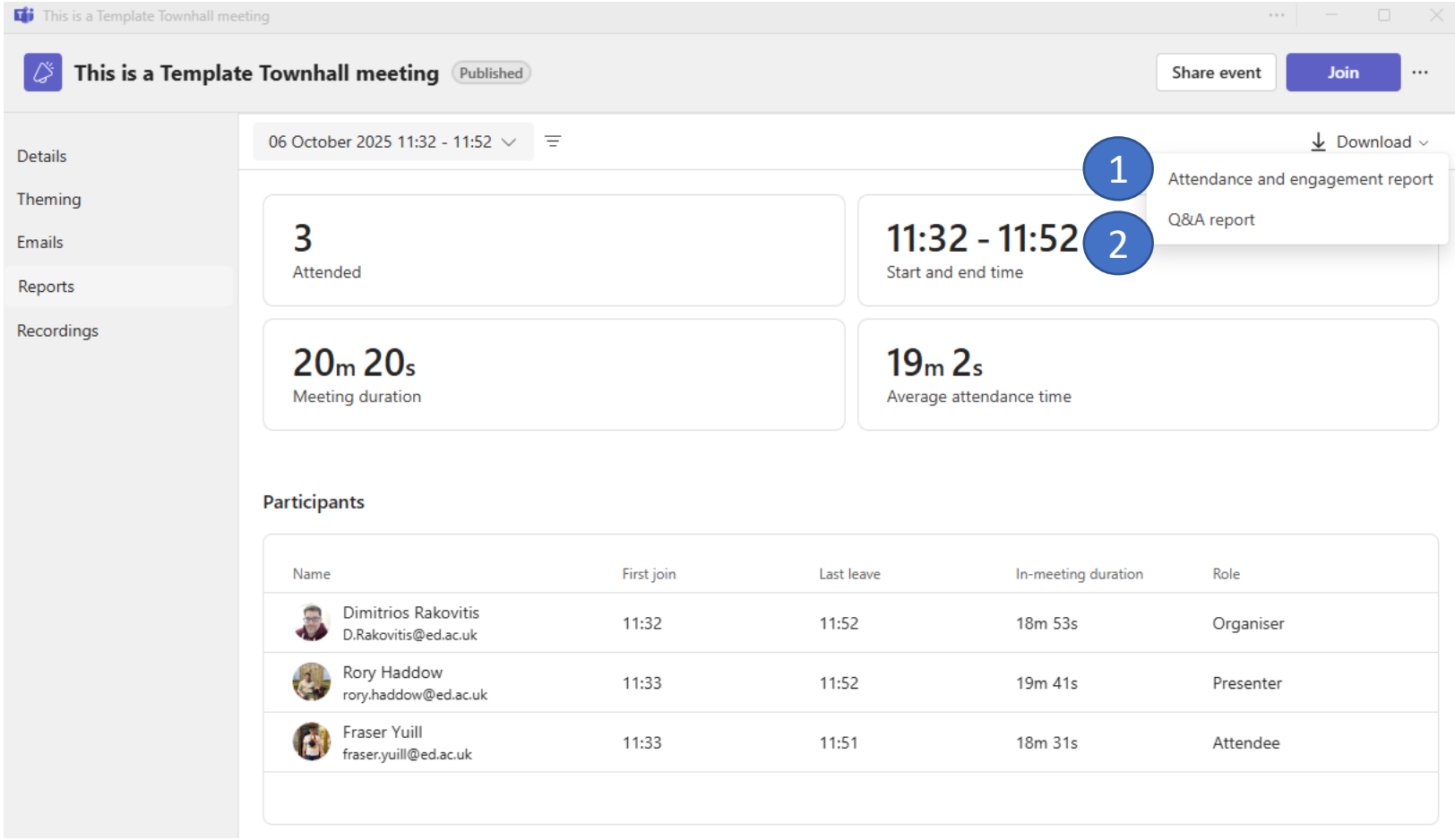
Accessing and Downloading Reports

After the Town hall event you can select the option reports from the left panel and access the report for the event.

You can download :

1. The attendance and engagement report
2. The Q&A report

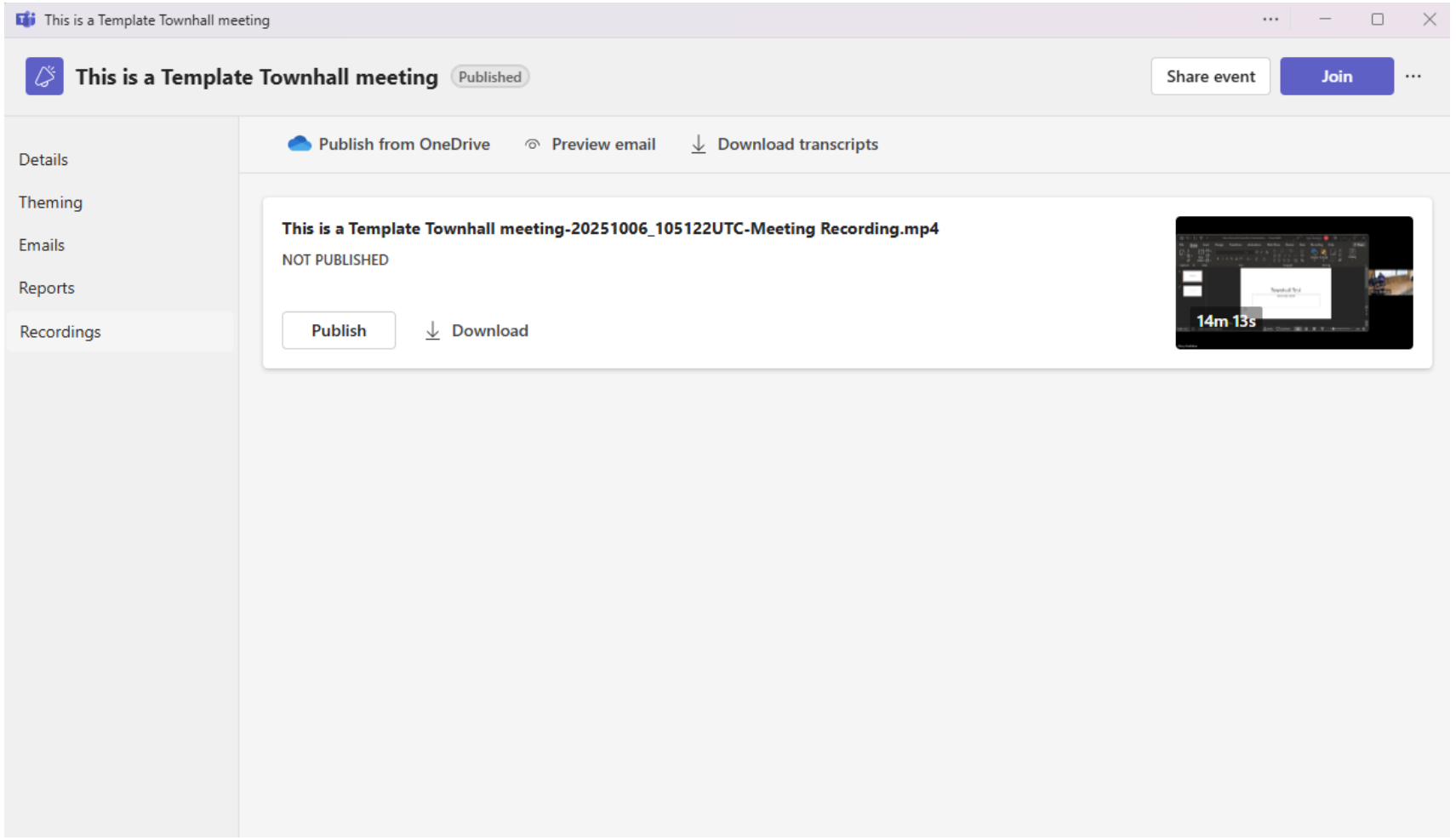
This information will help you reflect and focus on making the next meeting more appealing to your audience.



Accessing and Downloading Recordings

The final step is to access and download the recordings.

During the event, you can start, stop, and resume recording as needed, which may result in multiple recording files.
If you have manually added attendees, you can simply click the **Publish** button.

The system will then send each attendee an email with a link to the video, using the template email you created earlier.

Alternatively, you can download the recording files and host them in your archive. Once uploaded, you can email users directly with a link to access the recordings.