

STRAT > FORWARD

NEWSLETTER

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Town Hosts Are Our Pride of Stratford

Stratforward's popular Town Hosts have been named as finalists for the Customer Care Award at this year's Pride of Stratford Awards organised by Touch FM after receiving widespread praise from businesses across the town.

The Town Host team act as the face of Stratford for visitors to the town offering a range of services including information, basic first aid, helping find and reunite lost people, as well as helping with security issues. In addition they act as the link between the rest of the Stratforward team and businesses carrying out surveys, promoting discount BID member staff schemes like the BID Discount card, reporting member concerns about everything from busking and begging to pot holes to the relevant agencies, aiding with major events in the town and running the Ambassador Tour and security radio schemes.

And now their efforts are being recognised after a nomination packed with praise scooped them a place in the finals. The team was commended for providing "excellent customer service" and described as "a credit to the town" and "an asset to Stratford".

The Town Hosts are up against fellow BID member The One Elm as well as the Charlecote Pheasant, with winners set to be announced at a glittering ceremony on February 3rd at The Crowne Plaza.

The River Festival, which scooped the Tourism Initiative of the Year Award last year, is up for the same gong again and will go up against fellow finalists Stratford Butterfly Farm, Shakespeare's Celebrations 2016, and Shakespeare's New Place.

Stratforward also sponsors the Town Centre Business of the Year award and this year's finalists are The Dirty Duck, A Fine Tattoo Establishment, Gemini and Hooray's British Gelato Kitchen.

Other BID members are also in the running for awards in various categories, including Gemini, the MAD Museum, Alveston Manor Hotel, the RSC and Nuts in Ya Mouth.

For a full list of finalists visit

www.102touchfm.co.uk/pride-of-stratford-awards-2017/2017-finalists



L-R O'Neal Spencer, Elizabeth Hartley, Terry Jones & Shan Smith

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No Doom and Gloom as New Idle Closes

Popular BID member New Idle is to close after four years of successful trading in Stratford.

The clothing boutique on Wood Street, which opened in July 2013, is closing its doors for the last time at the end of the month following what owner Libby Simpson described as an **“amazing” four years.**



A combination of factors led to the difficult decision to close, Libby said, including tough economic times and a struggle to gain a large enough customer base to balance the costs of running a small independent business in Stratford.

“It’s all of those things combined - we just didn’t have enough customers to keep us going, so we decided to call it a day when we’re on a high.

“We smashed our targets for October and November and December was our best month ever, but we know it will go quiet again now”

“It was a really hard decision to make because I have absolutely loved every minute of being here and everything we have done over the past four years.

“But there’s no doom and gloom. I feel like it’s such an accomplishment and I’m walking away with skills I couldn’t have gained in any other way.”

Libby credited fellow BID member Aspire - where she spent three years before opening her own shop - with giving her the skills she needed to run her own business in Stratford.

As she prepares to close her doors, she encouraged people to support their own local independent businesses.

“If you need a present, go into your local boutique. If you’re looking for something for dinner, use your local butcher. Put money back into your town as much as you can. And to anyone who thinks about starting their own business, do your research and go for it.”

New Idle is holding a final in-store party on January 20th from 5pm, offering epic discounts, live acoustic music from Tex from the Texan Peacocks, and The Little Rum Company's licensed pop-up bar. They'd love as many BID members as possible to join them for a celebratory drink!

Tell us your Blue Monday-busting busting plans

Monday is officially 'Blue Monday' - apparently the most depressing day of the year!

Post-Christmas bulges, gloomy weather, a return to work and limited money in the bank all contribute to make us feel a bit blue - **so we’re on the lookout for what** our members are doing to brighten Stratford up.

Get in touch to let us know your plans to battle the blues.

:: The countdown is on for Burns Night. We want to hear what all our BID members are doing to mark the occasion, including any special deals. Let us know and we can publicise your offers in the newsletter or via the BID discount card mail out.



Emergency Training Exercise 'Incredibly Valuable' for RSC

A large-scaled emergency services training exercise held in **Stratford at the weekend has been dubbed "incredibly valuable" to all involved.**

Exercise Titus, which took place at the RSC on Sunday, aimed to test the response of the emergency services to a firearms incident in a busy place.

It involved more than 200 staff and officers from Warwickshire Police, West Mercia Police, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and West Midlands Ambulance Service. The one-day exercise also gave the chance for teams from the RSC to get valuable insights for their own planning.

Catherine Mallyon, RSC Executive Director, said: "The large scale training exercise was incredibly valuable, not only for the emergency services who took part, but also for our own teams.

"We continuously train our staff to deal with a vast range of possible events and, although we hope that we never have to utilise that training, it is essential that we are prepared. Operation Titus gave us an insight into how the emergency services approach such events, and we can draw upon this to help with our own future planning.

"It is important to stress that the exercise was not in response to any particular threat, but because our building provided the different agencies with an interesting and unusual place for the exercise to take place."



Photo courtesy of the Herald



Auditorium reconfiguration and the wider building works

In January 2017, at the end of the run of *The Tempest*, the RSC will **undertake some essential maintenance work across its estate** including the reconfiguration of the RST auditorium for the Rome Season, which opens in March. Each year the RSC building has a footfall of over 1 million, and since the building opened in 2010 the RSC has not had the time in the performance schedule to undertake specific maintenance work to many areas. They now need to complete this work for the upkeep of the building.

The reconfiguration will create a fantastic season staging for *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Coriolanus*, and the wider building works include a shop-refit, sanding and re-finishing the Rooftop Restaurant floor, upgrading and maintenance of the stage and overhead grid, a general deep clean, decoration works, as well as upgrades to a number of residential properties ready for the arrival of our new acting company.

When changing from one production to another, the Royal Shakespeare and Swan Theatres would normally be closed for 1½ weeks as they create the new set on stage. The creation of the Rome season environment, alongside all of the other essential maintenance around the building, will take 6 weeks to complete, and the RST will be closed during this period. The wider building will be open as usual with *The Play's The Thing* exhibition, the Rooftop Restaurant and cafes welcoming visitors, and productions in the Swan Theatre throughout most of the works period.



'Better Late Than Never' Christmas Party for former Stratford GP

A former Stratford GP is looking forward to a return to the town after winning a competition organised by BID member El Greco and the Stratford Herald.

Eithne Batt won a 'Better Late Than Never' Christmas party for herself and nine friends, to be taken this month at the Rother Street restaurant.

Eithne worked as a GP at Bridge House Surgery until she retired in 2012. Despite living in Warwick, she said she still buys the

Herald every week to keep in touch with everything going on in her "old stomping ground".

"It's fantastic to have won," she said. "I particularly liked the idea of being able to share the prize with friends, and being able to take them back to Stratford upon Avon, the town in which I worked for over 20 years."

Dimitrios Gougoulis, owner of El Greco, said: "It was great that El Greco and The Herald were able to come together and offer this fantastic prize. Eithne chose to take her prize in the New Year with one of our Better Late Than Never Christmas Parties that we run throughout January and into February, so she and her friends had something great to look forward after the festive season."

On Street Loading and Unloading



The team at Stratforward has received a number of requests from BID members to help clarify the situation with loading and unloading on the highway. This has primarily been where tickets have been issued to those businesses delivering to their own premises (or warnings issued by the Civil Enforcement Officers). Warwickshire County Council have supplied us with the following clarification, which it is hoped will help all our businesses.

Loading and unloading must be a continuous activity, and the vehicle must be moved as soon as it is complete.

It is considered to be taking the items to and from the vehicle, but does not cover packing or unpacking. Stopping for a conversation or for any other activity not involved in the actual moving or delivery of the items is also not considered part of the process.

Loading and unloading is allowed on double and single yellow lines, unless any other loading/unloading restriction applies. This would be indicated by signs and/or road markings, such as double or single kerb markings.

Loading is prohibited in Disabled Persons bays, Taxi bays, Bus Stops, pedestrian crossings and other places where the vehicle would cause an obstruction.

It is up to the driver to prove that the vehicle was being loaded or unloaded, and the test to be applied is whether the vehicle is *required* to move the goods, and not simply that it is convenient to use the vehicle.

Should the driver wish to remain in the area after loading/unloading has finished, alternative parking must be found. Motorists are not permitted to remain in the area when the activity of loading/unloading is not taking place.

Further information can be found here: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parking

Dates for your diary!

January

to 21st	The Tempest (RSC)
22nd	RST auditorium closes for building works (RSC open)
16th	Blue Monday (3rd Monday)
20th	Inauguration of US President
25th	Burns Night
28th	Chinese New Year
28-30th	RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

February

3rd	Pride of Stratford Awards
4th to Mar 19th	Six Nations (Rugby)
5th	Superbowl (American Football)
14th	Valentine's Day
18-26th	Warwickshire schools half-term
23rd	Snow in Midsummer opens (Swan)
27th	Fair Trade Fortnight begins
28th	Shrove Tuesday

March

1st	St David's Day
2nd	World Book Day
3rd	Julius Caesar opens (RSC)
8th	Budget Day
11th	Antony and Cleopatra opens (RSC)
13th	Stratford Races – Irish Day
15th	Ladies Day Cheltenham (Horse Racing)
17th	St Patrick's Day
17th	Cheltenham Gold Cup (Horse Racing)
24th	Red Nose Day
25th	Stratford Races
26th	Mothering Sunday
26th	British Summer Time begins
26th	England v Lithuania (World Cup qualifier – Football)
30th	The Hypocrite opens (Swan)

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