

STRAT > FORWARD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

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Stratford Shows It's Passion for Fashion

Stratford's very first online fashion campaign is underway, showcasing the town's true passion for fashion to thousands of potential new customers.

The campaign, dubbed SS17 Passion for Fashion, aims to put Stratford on the map as a great destination for clothes shopping using a series of stunning images of models selected from staff at 14 town centre fashion retailers.

The pictures form the basis of a social media campaign, introducing the shop staff whose personal touch is one of the unique elements of Stratford's shopping experience, as well as promoting the diverse range of styles on offer in the town's array of shops.



L-R Erica (Cancer Research), Sue (Gemini), Rose (Gerry Weber), John (Charles French), Rachel (Mosaïque), Lesley (M&S), Kirsty (Aspire Style), Sheila (East), Janey (VH & Co), Levie (EWM)

The fashionistas from a mixture of independents and high street big names glammed up to strike a pose for the campaign, each providing a sneak peek into their lives that is the trademark friendly approach that makes Stratford stand out from the crowd, when it comes to a fantastic shopping experience.

As well as the Facebook campaign, the information will be featured on a whole new section of fashion pages on the [Stratforward website](#) that will eventually cover every single clothing retailer in the town centre. Each participating shop has been given their own A2 poster to show off the fruits of their fashion labours.

Joe Baconnet, Director at Stratforward BID, said: "We can't ignore and we can't compete with online stores. But what we can do is promote the unique selling point of the Stratford shopping experience - the fantastic customer service and personal touch provided by our wide range of retailers, and this campaign showcases this for all to see."

Each model was styled by Matthew Curtis Hair Design, Toni & Guy, Gorgeous Obsession Beauty Salon or Debenhams, before getting in front of the camera at Studio Stratford to show off their latest looks. All three businesses gave up their time for free to support the campaign and their fellow BID members.

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Are You Up To Speed With Your New Business Rates?



The new business rates listing takes effect from Saturday (1st April) with bills being issued by Stratford District Council over the next few days.

The large majority of businesses in the town centre have seen their rateable values fall, with a good number (we estimate around 50) now likely to pay no rates whatsoever as the Small Business Rates Relief threshold has risen to £12,500.

If you haven't checked your rateable value, you can check it at <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/view-my-valuation/search>

Annual BID members levy bills - based on the new rateable values - will be going out at around the same timealong with our Action Plan for 17/18.

In addition we are writing to those members whose status as levy payers has changed, in particular:

- those whose rateable value is above the BID threshold of £9,500, but below the Small Business Rates Relief threshold of £12,500.
- those who will no longer be automatic BID members because their rateable value falls below the BID threshold of £9,500.
- those businesses who will become BID members for the first time.

Those businesses who suddenly find they no longer automatically qualify to be supported by the BID - including the new much anticipated Members Benefits Scheme which is expected to bring substantial discounts on services (waste, utilities etc) for BID members - can still choose to be involved by using our Associate Member scheme.

For more information please contact Joe Baconnet at the Stratford Office on 01789 292718

Get Switched On To Retail Radio

For BID members with a radio..... we are reminding all to turn the radios on and sign in daily. **We are seeing a number of businesses who don't use their radios are now being actively targeted by shoplifters.** This, in turn, creates issues for other businesses in town as Stratford starts to be perceived as a soft touch.

Stratford's relaunch of Bardwatch under the WRCI banner will have an effect by identifying (and banning) individuals, but it is a team effort and we need to make it difficult for criminals to operate in town.

We think it's unacceptable for businesses to have to put up with prolific shoplifting, fraud, customers to be subject to purse dipping or staff being abused by 'customers'. Reporting it via the radios will ensure that all of us, as a town centre, can deal with these individuals.

If you're shy or not sure how the radio works, please contact the Stratford office and the Town Hosts can give you a five minute training session to show you the basics and boost your confidence. The key to being comfortable with the radio is using it regularly.

Call the Town Hosts on 01789 268291



BID Flies Flag For Business In Stratford With Its Response To Town Transport Strategy



The consultation on Stratford's Draft Transport Strategy ended last week (23rd March). Stratforward has responded on behalf of its members to Warwickshire County Council and Stratford District Council via the Town Transport Group (which it sits on) and as a body in its own right.

Joe Baconnet, BID Director said: "Whilst Stratford businesses and residents have had enough of the traffic issues, we think that if rapid progress is made from this point, then the strategy represents a reasonable, if admittedly, uninspiring, agreed starting point and identifies all the issues that **Stratford is suffering from and some broad brush solutions to deal with them.**"

"If WCC & SDC had presented ready designed detailed solutions, then there would have been cries of foul or a stitch up with the strategy failing to even pass Go, let alone collect the £200 needed for the Birmingham Road works. We have asked for more detailed engagement with the **town to help design the solutions needed.**"

"We also urged the authorities to respect the balance of parking in the town centre and not rush the implementation of changes to parking if businesses and their staff, are placed at a disadvantage without alternatives. Parking cannot be seen as a cash cow - we need to break that **cycle and thought process.**"

"We made the point that the cost of parking for staff is a critical issue and one that we cannot ignore - the park and ride is more expensive than a BID discount card for the NCP and less **flexible, which is just plain wrong.**"

"We have also asked for future documents to identify which parts of the strategy are linked to others, so we can see how changes impact on the town."

He added:

"The consequences of getting it wrong don't bear thinking about, but it is going to take time, meetings, arguments, compromise, more meetings and engagement."

Stratforward will be looking for a second representative for the Town Transport Group to help shape on-going responses. Joe Baconnet will be talking to a number of potential business candidates over the coming weeks, who can articulate the business perspective and bring positive passion to one of Stratford's biggest challenges.



Sunday Waterside Market is Back

The crowds turned out for the return of Stratford's Sunday 'Upmarket' at the weekend.

The market, which takes place on Waterside every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday right up until Christmas, has more than 70 unique craft and food traders and acts as a draw for tourists as well as locals.



Photo courtesy of Stratford Markets

The market, which is free for customers to attend, opens at 9am and runs until 4pm. The market is currently run by Geraud Markets.

Flowers and Festive Fun Boost From Stratford Town Trust



Stratford Town Trust has announced its first round of grants for 2017 - with the Stratford Christmas Lights and Stratford in Bloom among the organisations to benefit.

In total, 18 grants have been awarded to support the Stratford community, totalling £180,336.

Stratford's Christmas Lights has been awarded £15,000 to support this year's festive display, with the same amount going to Stratford in Bloom.

Claire Bowry, Grants Manager for Stratford Town Trust, said: "We are delighted to be awarding more than £180,000 in grants to support the community of Stratford-upon-Avon.

"Thanks to the incredibly hard work of the very many different charities and groups working across our town to provide invaluable support and services, we know this money makes a very real difference to local lives."

Since 2001, the Town Trust has given out around £2 million each year to local good causes, community projects and initiatives. For more information on the first round of grants for 2017, visit <http://www.stratfordtowntrust.co.uk/news/more-than-180k-in-grants-just-awarded/>

Grants are awarded three times a year. Applications for Round Two of 2017 must be submitted by 5pm on Friday, May 12th.

And if your business wants to help make Stratford beautiful this summer for the millions of visitors why not pop along to Stratford in Bloom's annual Coffee Morning this Saturday (1st April).

It takes place in the Town Hall from from 10am until 2pm. All welcome - it's a chance to learn more about Stratford in Bloom and support the tremendous work the volunteer committee does.

Walk This Way - Second Ambassador Tour A Huge Success

The second Ambassador Tour of 2017 took place yesterday (29th March), with 20 staff from businesses across Stratford turning out for a whistlestop tour around Stratford, enabling them then act as "ambassadors" for the town in their day-to-day jobs.

The weather was slightly better than last week's tour and participants were taken

around the town to check out attractions like Shakespeare's Birthplace, the RSC, Creaky Coudron, The Mad Museum, The Butterfly Farm as well as "hidden Stratford" areas like Shrieves Walk, Red Lion Court and The Minories.



The next Ambassador Tour will take place in October and Stratford will be releasing more information on how to sign up later in the summer. A big thanks to all the businesses who have supported the tour by attending and by hosting visits.

For more information, check the Stratford website, pop into our Sheep Street office or speak to one of our award-winning Town Hosts.

Dates for your diary!

If you have an event you would like us to list here please email Sandi - sandi@stratforward.co.uk

March

30th The Hypocrite opens (Swan)

April

1st Stratford in Bloom Coffee Morning
1st, 15th & 23rd Stratford Races
1st to 18th Northants & Buckinghamshire schools Easter holidays
8th to 23rd Coventry & Warks schools Easter holidays (Also Oxon, Brum & Leicestershire)
8th Grand National
10th - 23rd Shakespeare Hospice Forget Me Not display outside RSC
14th to 17th Easter Bank Holiday weekend
22nd Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations
23rd St Georges Day
23rd - 30th Stratford Literary Festival
30th & 1st May Stratford Festival of Motoring

May

1st May Day
4th Local Elections
7th Stratford Marathon
13th Let it Glow Moonlit Walk
8th & 21st Stratford Races
27th FA Cup Final
26th - 24th June Ramadan
29th Spring Bank Holiday

June

9th, 10th & 20th Stratford Races
18th **Father's Day**



30th April & 1st May 2017

www.stratfordfestivalofmotoring.co.uk



1st & 2nd July 2017

www.stratfordriverfestival.co.uk



23rd to 24th September 2017

www.stratfordtowncentrefoodfestival.co.uk

Contact Us - Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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