

BUSINESS NEWS

Stratforward Newsletter

Issue 26 - 6 July 2016

STRATFORWARD APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR TO TAKE ON HIGH STREET CHALLENGE

One of the regions' top experts has been appointed as the new Director of Stratforward – Stratford's Business Improvement District.

Joseph Baconnet – a specialist in economic development, town centre management, tourism and planning - was announced as the new boss of the BID at a major regional business and tourism conference yesterday (Monday). Forty-six-year-old Mr Baconnet will take up his appointment on Monday 11 July.

News of his appointment has already been welcomed by business leaders in Stratford and beyond.

Sara Aspley, Chairman of Stratforward and Director of Commercial Services at the Royal Shakespeare Company said:

"This is a real coup for Stratforward and Stratford upon Avon. To have someone with the experience and expertise that Mr Baconnet brings to the table will be a massive boost for the town and the region."

She added:

"Stratford is unique. In essence, it is a working Warwickshire market town with all the issues that such towns face in these challenging economic times, but with the added demands and opportunities that its international status and resulting tourist trade brings. Getting the balance right for local residents,

(Continued on page 2)



In This Issue

- New Director Appointment
- River Festival
- Food Glorious Food
- Gondola Launch
- Lucy Sainsbury
- BBC Filming
- Shakespeare's England
- Festival Music
- Rubbish Handling
- Diary Dates
- Performance Data

MORE ON THE RIVER FESTIVAL ON PAGE 3.....

STRAT > FORWARD would like to thank all the funders, partners, sponsors, supporters and all involved in any way with the 2016 Stratford River Festival.

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(Continued from page 1)

business owners and visitors is no simple task.

"To understand the complexities and nature of this trading environment takes someone special, and I am confident that Mr Baconnet with his in-depth understanding of economic development, planning, management and tourism, coupled with his knowledge of the region and existing relationships with key partners in the patch, makes him perfectly positioned to take on this unique role."

Mr Baconnet was appointed after a three-month nationwide search for the right person to take on the job after former BID boss Karen Wild left at Easter to take up a new post in Basingstoke.

Speaking yesterday Mr Baconnet said:

"This is such an exciting opportunity during what are truly exciting times. Stratford has been important in history and globally for so long and it is going to be a privilege to help shape its future for generations to come."

Mr Baconnet was born in Rugby. After school in Northamptonshire he went onto university in Staffordshire and Oxford where he specialised in economic development, town planning and tourism.

He worked in research and economic development in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire for six years before taking up the post of Town Centre Manager for Warwick and Kenilworth in 1998. When the role was split in 2004 he took on the Kenilworth remit.

In 2010 he was made Economic Development and Regeneration Manager at Warwick District Council and **has in recent times played a key role in the development of Shakespeare's England** – the highly regarded Destination Management Organisation for the region.

His appointment was welcomed by Shakespeare's England at their quarterly Tourism Forum at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon yesterday.

Speaking to an audience that included representatives of key regional tourist attractions, transport providers, accommodation providers, leisure industry experts - as well as representatives from Visit Britain and TripAdvisor - Helen Peters, Chief Executive said:

"Stratford is key to the tourism offer we have in this region, so it is vital that we have the strongest team possible to help build the brand nationally and internationally.

"Inbound Tourism like most industries is extremely competitive. Stratford, Warwickshire and the Midlands are fighting not just on a national stage but an international one to drive visitors to the area.

"Mr Baconnet has been involved with Shakespeare's England since its conception and has also been a lead on the on-going delivery of the Destination Management Plan, a vital component in the future economic planning for the region. As such he has a true understanding of tourism and the value it brings to the regional and national economy. "

Mr Baconnet is married with two young children and lives in Kenilworth

Stratford District Council have also welcomed the appointment

Cllr Dave Riches, Enterprise & Revenues Portfolio for Stratford-on-Avon District Council said:

"He brings a significant amount of experience to the role including an appreciation of the importance of an effective partnership with the local authority. We look forward to working with Joe and the Stratford team in the future."

STRATFORD RIVER FESTIVAL 2016

60,000 Flow Into Stratford For River Festival

THE HOT dogs were sizzling and the Pimms flowing as 60,000 people flocked to Stratford over the weekend for the eighth annual Stratford River Festival.

The Stratford-run event attracted visitors from around the globe to enjoy live music, food and drink as well as a huge selection of stalls and plenty of fun and games all celebrating Stratford's glorious River Avon.

This year's event matched last year's record breaker with a massive 60,000 people attending the festivities, centred riverside on the Recreation Ground, against a backdrop of around 100 boats moored up on the Avon behind.

Stratford was packed throughout the two days as visitors from home and abroad soaked up the atmosphere at **what has rapidly become one of the region's leading free festivals.**

Since it started in 2008 the River Festival has grown and grown. Back then there were six stalls – this year there were more than 100; a unique opportunity for local businesses to showcase their town.

The event has become one of the biggest in the town's calendar – winning the Tourism Initiative of the Year Award 2016 in the Touch FM Pride of Stratford Awards.

Traders have reported 2016 as their best year yet, thousands of people browsing and buying at the craft market and sampling the huge variety of foods on offer, from the traditional barbecue to wood-fired pizzas or Thai cuisine. The drinks were flowing too – gallons of ales, ciders, Pimms and prosecco being enjoyed.

There was a strong charity presence at the festival; everything from Shakespeare Hospice scratch cards to a Lions tombola, with a family area for fairy face-painting, swing boat rides and a chance to scale the climbing wall.

World-class live music played throughout the weekend, on the Bandstand and Acoustic Stage, with Stratford lit-up on Saturday night by a fireworks extravaganza and illuminated boats.

Event Organiser Ruth Wood said the Stratford team were once again immensely proud:

"We were absolutely delighted with the support that the River Festival got in its eighth year – with bad weather expected we were staggered at the attendance figures – and rewarded with an incredible day of sunshine on Sunday. Even in the downpours on Saturday, it was amazing to see people simply putting up their brollies and getting on with the party.

"Our traders within the festival have reported it was their best ever year – and footfall across Stratford was very high too. The hotels and B&Bs were all full – and so were the restaurants and bars, especially on Saturday night when the rain encouraged people indoors.

"And what's important is the long-lasting impact this event has too – it showcases Stratford far and wide and encourages visitors to come back again and again."

Enquiries about next year's River Festival are already coming in.

It will be held on July 1st and 2nd 2017 so get it in your diary now!





Food glorious food!

AMONGST those sizzling up supplies was Adam Lucock from Stratford's Barry the Butcher. Adam was prepped to sell 1,000 hot dogs and 1,000 burgers over the weekend – but by 9pm on Saturday he had sold out and had a team of butchers beavering away at his Chapel Lane premises making more for the next day

"It was just fantastic – the atmosphere was wonderful and we'll definitely be back next year," he said.

In total, Barry the Butcher sold 2,000 hot dogs, 2,000 burgers, 100 kilos of barbeque chicken wings – and around 100 impromptu bacon butties.

"I was cooking bacon for our staff on the Sunday morning and everyone kept asking for one so we ended up selling loads," Mr Lucock added.

"We also supplied other meat – 100 shoulders of lamb, two pigs for the spit roast and 20 legs of pork, so it was a great weekend for us. My shop in town was packed too – there were queues out of the door."

At the One Elm's pop-up bars, the drinks were flowing.

"We sold an unreal amount," Mat Faulkner said.

"Around 100 barrels of beers, ales and ciders, 2,000 bottles of prosecco and 1,000 pints of Pimms. We also sold 2,000 hot dogs, 2,000 burgers and 1,000 lamb burgers too on our own bbq. It was a brilliant weekend."



It was worth a punt!

One of the highlights of the weekend was the successful launch of a very unique gondola made entirely of cardboard.

The 6.5m gondola made its maiden voyage on Sunday - and is now ready to head off to the canals of Venice.

It had been made specially for the event by renowned 'cardboard' artist Will Alexander, in partnership with Avon Boating.

Festival-goers could see Will putting the final touches to his gondola on Saturday before the big launch at 1pm on Sunday – when Will took to the Avon to practice his gondoliering skills ahead of plans to travel to Venice, where he will show his creation at international exhibition.

"Nobody knew whether it was going to sink or float but I'm pleased to say it did float and I was able to get out on the river," Will said.

He first dreamed up his gondola project five years ago and **enlisted the help of Stratford's**

Avon Boating, which has its own fully restored gondola originally owned by Marie Corelli. Avon Boating gave Will access to a barn just outside Stratford where he was able to build his craft, and helped with transportation and the all-important maiden voyage.



Lucy had a Bright Idea!

One of those turning a profit at the River Festival was 12-year-old Lucy Sainsbury – making her retail debut!

Lucy – whose mum Jo runs Bright Ideas in Henley Street – had a bright idea of her own, making and selling her handmade candles on a **stall next to mum's.**

She took 16 candles to the festival on Sunday and managed to sell all but one, banking a nice £45 profit.

"She costed it all and paid me for all of the raw ingredients – the wax, the essence, the wicks," Jo said.

"So it was a real first lesson in retail and she did ever so well!"

Jo has had a stall at the River Festival every year since it started in 2008, watching the festival grow and grow first-hand.

"This was our best year by far," she said.

"But it's not just about the weekend - the festival portrays Stratford in such a beautiful light, I truly believe everyone there plans to come back to our town."



Showcasing Stratford on the BBC

FILMS crews were out and about amongst the crowds on Sunday putting together a piece for BBC Midlands Today.

They interviewed stall-holders and festival-goers all revelling in the feel-good atmosphere.

The film aired on Sunday night and again on Monday morning, showcasing Stratford to an audience far and wide.



Among those interviewed for the piece were: Adam Lucock from Barry the Butcher; Mat Faulkner from The One Elm; Tara Robinson from The Eden Hotel Group (Arden Hotel) and Stratford's own Ruth Wood.

Thank you to all who gave up their time on Sunday to assist with the filming

If you missed it, you can still view it online via the Midlands Today Facebook page: www.facebook.com/midlandstoday

Flying the flag for Shakespeare's England.

The 'English quirkiness' of the event has attracted the praise of one of the UK's leading tourism bosses. Helen Peters, Chief Executive of Shakespeare's England - the Destination Management Organisation for the region - attended on Saturday.

Afterwards she commented:

"This is now the eighth River Festival and every year I it just gets better and better.

"I have received so many positive comments, especially from local residents who had not been since year one, and could not believe how it had grown and developed.



"It was great to see so many Shakespeare's England members like The One Elm, The Arden Hotel and Bancroft Cruises joining with so many Stratford member businesses and getting actively involved and supporting this unique event, not just and flying the flag for Stratford but for Warwickshire and the UK."

She added:

"We at Shakespeare's England look forward to supporting the ninth River Festival and promoting it further and further afield."



Striking The Right Note - a weekend of world-class music and home-grown talent

HAPPY crowds gathered throughout both days to enjoy world-class music on both the Bandstand and Acoustic Stage.

Bands included the six-piece party band **Mister Shakes**, featuring **Brian Ferry's** sax player, who headlined on the Saturday. Closing the event on the Sunday were one of the UK's leading **Glenn Miller tribute groups**, the **Ashby Big Band**.

And there was plenty of home-grown talent too.

"The music we programmed this year proved to be a real hit with the festival crowd with something for everyone," music organiser **Marion Morgan** said.

The line-up reflected the amazing talent we have on our doorstep - from young Shipston band **Battered Soul** to Stratford's own **Rock Choir**. In fact, more than 70 per cent of this year's acts either came from or had a connection with the town.

"It's great to be able to not only showcase the area's fantastic musicians, but also to give them the chance to play in front of thousands of people," Marion added.

"We had many different dance groups taking part which added a dynamic visual element - and made many parents proud.

"For the first time we had interactive sessions including harp, ukulele and choir workshops which people enthusiastically took part in too.

"With visiting musicians adding to the mix, I think we put on a great show - the feedback so far has been universally positive and acts are already queuing up to apply for a slot at next year's festival, which we'll start planning early in the new year."



The Morning After the Night Before....

Like every good party there is aftermath to deal with - but Stratforward's band of staff and volunteers proved they were up for the challenge - getting one of Stratford's key attractions ship-shape and ready for business as usual again on Monday.

And it was not just after the event - a whole 'Bogs and Bins army' were responsible for keeping the litter down and the toilets clean and working over the two-days...not easy with tens of thousands of partying people on site.

Queen of Bogs & Bins, Stratforward Events Assistant Tor Wilkes said:

"Keeping the site clean during and after any festival and event is a major undertaking. Fortunately, Stratforward has years of experience in running events and works with a great team of volunteers and specialists to ensure the Recreation Ground was kept pleasant and safe for visitors throughout, and returned to its pre-event state immediately after."

She added:

"I am particularly proud this year that we were able to introduce a recycling policy for the first time, so minimising the tonnes of waste going to landfill that events like this inevitably produce. It was hard work separating waste for recycling from general waste but the visitors to the festival got behind the initiative and really had a go at putting the right stuff in the right bins"

The other thing that stood out for me was the volunteers that turned out at 6am on Sunday morning to help with a mass litter-pick to get the site ready for Day Two of the Festival. I would particularly like to thank the many boaters who came off their boats to help and Cllr Kate Rolfe, who is on the Board of Stratforward and chairs our Events Group, who got well and truly stuck in."

Key River Festival rubbish facts:

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

- 🗑 there were 44 large public rubbish bins on site (14 regular bins already on site plus 10 additional recycling bins and 20 additional general waste bins). These were in addition to bins on individual stalls and stands.
- 🗑 a rubbish Hub was established in a discreet but central location on the site where all the rubbish was delivered to by businesses with stands and stalls and a dedicated litter team
- 🗑 Biffa were contracted to pick up the rubbish from the Hub and bins 6 times each day
- 🗑 a team of 5 full-time litter pickers were employed to pick up litter off the ground and empty the bins to the Hub as required.
- 🗑 In addition, 10 event "welcome event hosts" regularly went round the site offering free rubbish and recycling bags to revelers
- 🗑 organisers also worked with SDC's Landscape Group - who are responsible generally for the litter picking on The Recreation Ground and Bancroft Gardens to ensure the wider Festival area was kept well.



Dates for your diary!

Now to 10th July - Wimbledon

Now to 10 July - Euro 16

9th July - Stratford Rowing Club Fun Regatta

11th July - New SF Director starts work

14 July - Stratford Home & Garden Show Charity Night

15-17 July - Stratford Home & Garden Show

19th July - Stratford Networking Briefing

23rd July - Warwickshire School summer holidays

24th July - Lions Raft Race, River Avon

25th July - Full meeting of SDC

27th July - Stratford in Bloom Regional judging

28 July - Face of Stratford Finals

5th September - Warwickshire Schools return

11th September - Stratford Big 10K Run

23rd to 25th September - Stratford Town Food Festival

29th September - Stratford Community Forum (SDC)

New Place Re-opening - date to be confirmed

Contact Us

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

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Visit us on the web at
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Town Centre - Performance Data

Day	Total Visitors	+/- Prior Week	Av Stay (mins)	New Visitors	Repeat Visitors	Busiest Time
Sunday 19th June	18927	28.83%	61	3449	15478	14:00
Monday 20th June	18652	7.22%	45	2418	16234	17:00
Tuesday 21st June	20870	6.91%	48	3566	17304	17:00
Wednesday 22nd June	20098	1.95%	50	2792	17306	14:00
Thursday 23rd June	20867	15.72%	49	2886	17981	17:00
Friday 24th June	22325	6.02%	49	3040	19285	14:00
Saturday 25th June	23042	-10.31%	56	3640	19402	13:00
Total or Average	144781	6.38%	51	3113	17570	-
Sunday 26th June	18145	-4.13%	61	3345	14800	13:00
Monday 27th June	20785	11.44%	45	2666	18119	14:00
Tuesday 28th June	20709	-0.77%	48	2712	17997	14:00
Wednesday 29th June	19645	-2.25%	50	2774	16871	17:00
Thursday 30th June	22691	8.74%	49	4046	18645	17:00
Friday 1st July	22354	0.13%	49	3671	18683	14:00
Saturday 2nd July	31825	38.12%	56	5710	26115	17:00
Total or Average	156154	7.86%	51	3561	18747	-