

# BUSINESS NEWS

Stratforward Newsletter

Issue 27 - 13 July 2016

## New BID Boss Sets Out Plans For Stratforward

Stratforward's new Director has set out his priorities as head of the town's BID as he took the reins this week.

Joseph Baconnet was announced as the new boss of Stratford's Business Improvement District (BID) at a major regional business and tourism conference last week and kicked off his first day in the role with meeting with fellow board members on Monday (See pic on page 2).

The 46-year-old, who is a specialist in economic development, town centre management, tourism and planning, said he now plans to "get to grips with the town", meeting as many partners and organisations as possible and understanding the issues facing Stratford.

Mr Baconnet, who has already played a key role in the development of Shakespeare's England, said Stratford is "unique" and many other towns and cities would "kill for what Stratford has got".

"It's got a city attitude but it's a small Warwickshire market town. It punches well above its weight in retail terms from its resident population, it has a lot of visitors. So it's fair to say it's unique."



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### COME AND MEET JOSEPH BACONNET

Mr Baconnet will be at the Networking event, which is free to Stratforward BID members, at the Falcon Hotel at 12.30pm on Tuesday July 19.

Members will get the chance to hear about his plans for the BID and its role in the town, along with details about upcoming Stratforward events including the Food Festival in September.

Attendees will have an opportunity to put questions to Mr Baconnet and raise any issues.

This is the third Stratforward quarterly networking briefing. Previous sessions in January and April included presentations on plans for Stratford throughout 2016 and updates on popular Stratforward-organised events like the River Festival, which drew 60,000 to the town earlier this month.

To book your free place please call or email sandi on 01789 292718 or email her on [sandi@stratforward.co.uk](mailto:sandi@stratforward.co.uk)

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He admitted that there is a "high level of expectation" when it comes to him and his role, but said: "I've got a strong background in town centres, town development, business support as well as tourism.

"So I think it's trying to bring all those elements together and work for the benefit of the levy payers and ultimately for the benefit of Stratford."

"For me it's working with all the partners, all the organisations, to build on what's already here.

"You can pretty much go anywhere in the world and say you work in Stratford-upon-Avon and they know what you're talking about.

"You've got a brilliant product - the town - in an accessible area. And it's about all of the partners working together to get the incremental benefits.

"I'm just keen to work with as many people as possible and to increase the offer to increase what people see about the town."

A key group Mr Baconnet plans to work with are BID members, who are "critical" to Stratford.

"The relationship is critical - Stratford doesn't exist without the support of its levy payers. They voted for it to happen so their support is vital."

He admitted there are issues affecting the town that people would like to see addressed by Stratford and other organisations, but added: "What Stratford is managing is success and that's the other side of the coin - that actually despite all the individual difficulties that people have there are plenty of other towns and possibly cities that would kill for what Stratford has got."

And while the country may be facing uncertain times economically and politically, Mr Baconnet insisted these are exciting times for Stratford and his role is an exciting challenge: "regardless of what the times are".

Rugby-born Mr Baconnet, who now lives in Kenilworth, was appointed after a three-month nationwide search after former BID boss Karen Wild left at Easter to take up a new post in Basingstoke.

He specialised in economic development, town planning and tourism at university, then 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 - a post he held until about 10 days ago.



## Last Call To Get Your Leaflets On The Stratforward Stand at Stratford Home & Garden Show

Also if you would like us to display your pop-up banner at our stall please contact our office.

Stratford Home & Garden Show is this week, and it's the last call for BID members to hand any leaflets they want displayed on the Stratforward stand in at the offices or to the Town Hosts.

The annual Home & Garden Show takes place from Friday to Sunday at the Recreation Ground on Swans Nest Lane.



Last year's show attracted more than 15,000 people and 2016 promises to be a special year as Stratford celebrates the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

The show include a number of Shakespearean-themed features, as well as hosting at least two show gardens.

A key feature will be the 'Shakespearean Globe Theatre Charity Show Garden', a floral representation of the original Globe Theatre, sponsored by Frampton Town Planning.

There is also a chance for everyone to join in a 'Garden in a Wheelbarrow competition' sponsored by Blenheim Nursery - the Bidford nursery contracted to do Stratford's amazing summer floral displays.

Several Stratford members will have stands at the show, including Home of the Sofa, For Something Different and Hidden Garden Florists.

The BID itself will also have a stand at the show throughout with information for visitors on its members, so if you have any promotional material you would like to see on the stand drop it into Stratforward's offices in Sheep Street by lunchtime tomorrow (Thursday).

Alternatively, call Sandi in the Stratforward office and she will arrange for one of our wonderful Town Hosts to pop into you to pick up.

Stratforward BID cardholders can also take advantage of a special offer of two tickets for £5 on Friday. Otherwise tickets are £5 pp in advance and £7 on the gate (over 60's £6. under 16's free)

This year's show is supporting Bliss, a UK charity that works to provide care and support for all premature and sick babies and their families.

Activities throughout the weekend will raise money for the cause - including a charity preview evening tomorrow (Thursday) from 6pm (tickets £20). Stratforward businesses can also get involved in the prize draw being run by Bliss with major contributors to the prize receiving extra free publicity during the weekend.

For more information or to take advantage of any offers at the Home & Garden Show, contact Jacquy Parker at [jacquy@bloomingmarvellousevents.co.uk](mailto:jacquy@bloomingmarvellousevents.co.uk) or 07881 596169.

## Breakfast with JB and MP



New Stratford Director Joe Baconnet will make one of his first appearances at a special charity breakfast organised by Stratford Business Forum.

**The 'big breakfast', which takes place from 7am this Friday on the opening day of the Stratford Home & Garden Show at the show's venue on Swans Nest Lane, will also welcome Stratford MP Nadhim Zahawi, who will give his insight and opinion on the recent political upheaval the UK has seen.**

As well hearing from Mr Zahawi and meeting Mr Baconnet, attendees will get a first view of the show before it opens to the public at 10am. All attendees will also get a free pass to attend the Home & Garden Show.

The SBF, established at the beginning of 2010 to support and help develop businesses, organisations and charities across Stratford and South Warwickshire, now has more than 175 members and organises regular networking events and breakfast meetings to support businesses.

Jonathan Smith, managing director of Business Forums Ltd - organisers of the Stratford Business Forum - **said: "We're honoured that Joe's first public engagement in his post is to come and speak at the big breakfast.**

**"These breakfasts prove invaluable for our members and it's great to be hosting one at one of Stratford's major events.**

**"We're always looking to grow the group, so we're encouraging members to bring along guests."**

**Mr Baconnet, who took up his role this week, said: "One of my first priorities was to get out and about and meet businesses and organisations in Stratford to meet them and hear their thoughts, so this kind of event is perfect for that.**

**"I'm really looking forward to meeting members of Stratford Business Forum and discussing the issues that are most important to them."**

**The Charity of the Day for Friday's event is Bliss, which provides care and support for premature and sick babies and their families.**

Businesses are also encouraged to bring any marketing material they would like to see distributed for a literature table at the event.

Arrivals are 7am for a 7.30am start and the event is due to finish by 9am. Breakfast will be served in the Vintage Tea Room and presentations will be in the Demonstration Marquee.

[Click here to book tickets](#)



## Stratford's Blooming Marvellous



**Stratford's blooming** - but will it be enough to wow Heart of England in Bloom judges?

Businesses and organisations around the town are urged to get involved in making Stratford as presentable as possible to help it get recognised as one of the prettiest places in the region.

**Hundreds of hanging baskets went up across Stratford last month as part of the town's annual display of floral finery.**

Organised by Stratford In Bloom, the 300 displays will decorate streets and businesses until late summer.

But their peak will be this month, when Stratford will get a visit from judges from the prestigious Heart of England competition on Wednesday 27 July.

With that in mind, businesses in the town are urged to get involved and help keep streets, displays and frontages in tip top order before the day.

Stratford In Bloom Chairman Steve Brookes said:

**"We're not just judged on the baskets, it's about the community involvement so we need everyone in Stratford , but particularly businesses in the town centre to not just put out baskets and floral displays, but to ensure their shop fronts and pavement areas outside are as tidy and attractive as possible.**

"Standards around the region and UK just seem to get higher each year, so it is vital that everyone pulls together to make the town look at its best to stand any chance of winning recognition from the judges."

He went on:

"Of course it is not just about making the town look beautiful for one day. It is about making our town, the town we are all so proud of to live and work in, stunning for not just for us to enjoy but for the many thousands of visitors who make the effort to come and spend time and money here each year."

**Judging for Stratford In Bloom's own competition, carried out by its committee members, starts on Monday (July 18) until August 12, with trophies, certificates and Blenheim Nursery vouchers up for grabs as prizes.**

This year's categories are:

Nursery Schools	Public Buildings and spaces	Hotels
Primary Schools	Restaurants & Coffee Shops	Rear Gardens
Community Award	Pubs	Front Gardens
Allotments	Religious Grounds	Bee Friendly - Sponsored by Friends of the Earth
B&Bs and Guest Houses	Shops	Overall Winner for the Chairman's Cup
Local Businesses	Shopping centres	
National Businesses	Tourist Attractions	

## STRATFORWARD MEMBERS OFFERED HELPING HAND TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS

Stratford businesses are being urged to take advantage of newly-opened Venture House and all of its services.

Stratforward members - and any small business from Stratford - can use services offered by the centre, regardless of whether they occupy it or not.

The state-of-the-art business centre, on Avenue Farm Industrial Estate off Birmingham Road, opened for business in April but was officially launched at a special event last week.



Owned by Stratford District Council, the centre is designed to help businesses with growth, innovation and training and is aimed at encouraging start-ups in Stratford.

The formerly redundant council building was transformed thanks to £450,000 in funding from the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) - part of the £88.6million Growth Deal Package for Coventry and Warwickshire announced in January 2015.

The centre, aimed at new and existing small and medium-sized businesses, as well as entrepreneurs and home workers, offers hot-desking space, self-contained offices and meeting spaces.

Facilities including superfast broadband, Wi-Fi, free business support, on-site parking, cycle facilities, and indoor and outdoor chill-out zones and refreshment facilities.

Free business support is available on site provided by experts from the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Growth Hub; a 'one-stop service' offering advice on mentoring, coaching, business planning, access to finance, exporting, apprenticeship opportunities and more.

And Venture House's services aren't just on offer to people who choose to occupy the centre, and the aim of the centre is to support all businesses, said Nancy Singleton, Business, Enterprise & Tourism Manager at Stratford District Council.

She encouraged Stratforward members to take advantage of the centre's services.

"An important message for BID members is that Venture House Business Centre is designed to support all businesses irrespective of whether or not they are occupying the centre.

"So if any BID member would like advice on business planning, access to finance, growth, exporting, apprenticeship opportunities and more, we can provide this at Venture House."

Several Stratforward members have already expressed an interest in using Venture House's meeting space for staff training, workshops, and showcase events, she said.

"It may also be that a BID business would value taking a desk space from time to time at Venture House away from distractions in their own workplace to catch up on business matters in general," she added.

Businesses can take advantage of a deal on offer at Venture House, with the opportunity to try five days for free then buy five days for £60 and get an extra five days for free. The offer is valid until September 9.

For any more details or information on Venture House,

email [nancy.singleton@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:nancy.singleton@stratford-dc.gov.uk), visit [www.venturehousestratford.co.uk](http://www.venturehousestratford.co.uk) or call 01789 207500.



## SHOWCASE TO REVEAL FACE OF STRATFORD

Final preparations are underway for the first ever 'Showcase Stratford' and with it, the announcement of the lucky winner of The Face of Stratford.

The Showcase, which takes place at Stratford Arts House on Thursday, July 28, will bring together the very best of local fashion, beauty, dance and music...as well as celebrate the strength of independent businesses in Stratford

The event, organised by Stratforward members Gorgeous Obsession and New Idle aims to highlight the best of local business and entertainment talent in Stratford . It will also mark the culmination of the search for The Face of Stratford - a major competition launched in March.

Entries for the Face of Stratford contest have just closed with the four finalists set to be announced this Friday.

The winner - to be unveiled on the night - will not only walk away with a prize package including a celebrity-style photoshoot and treats from Stratford's finest independent businesses, but will also front a campaign to Gorgeous Obsession's Gorgeous Tempest makeup collection - inspired by characters from Shakespeare's The Tempest - for a year.

Four guest judges - celebrity hair stylist Matthew Curtis, Stratford Mayor Juliet Short, top business guru Kufa Matiya from Henley-based In2 Ambition and local dance celebrity Rozie T - will help pick the winner

Rachel Ngombe, Managing Director of Minorities-based Gorgeous Obsession, said: "Stratford is full of outstanding, creative, independent businesses that when brought together promise to give an evening to remember - the perfect way to announced the winner of the Face of Stratford."

The Stratford Showcase, which will feature live African drums, flamenco dancers, runway models, dance academy starlets as well as the Tempest characters and William Shakespeare himself as you have never seen them before.

Tickets for the showcase, priced £15, are available from Gorgeous Obsession Boutique, New Idle, and Stratford Arts House.



## We Want Your Celebrity Snaps

Stratford has its fair share of famous faces but last week saw a touch of Hollywood come to the town in the form of film star Russell Crowe.

**The actor popped in to Windsor Street's HR Cafe for a coffee after coming to Stratford to do some sightseeing with his son.**

**It is thought they visited Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust before having coffees from HR Cafe, whose owner David Evans managed to snap a selfie of with the movie star before he was whisked away - apparently to Warwick Castle.**

Crowe is currently filming The Mummy in nearly Oxfordshire with fellow celeb Tom Cruise.

The Gladiator star recently sparked a global guessing game after posting pictures of a bike ride on Twitter, asking fans where he was. It later emerged he was in York.

**Russell Crowe isn't the first famous face to come to Stratford, and certainly not the last.**

**We'd love to hear from Stratforward members who have had their own celebrity visitor - send your snaps and tales of famous faces to [sandi@stratforward.co.uk](mailto:sandi@stratforward.co.uk) and we'll feature them in our newsletter.**



## Stratford Business Will Have You In Stitches This Summer

If you're looking for something creative to do this summer, Sew Me Something is offering workshops for both adults and children throughout July and August.

The classes through the summer range from adult workshops like screen printing and courses teaching people to make anything from Hotch-Potch skirts to summer dresses or jackets, to kids clubs including 'Make a Button Picture' and 'Make a Plushy Monster'.

Based in the Minories, Stratford member Sew Me Something is the brain-child of Jules Fallon, who spent 25 years in the fashion industry.

The mum-of-two, who started making clothes for her dolls when she was a little girl, started in the industry as an apprentice pattern cutter when she left school, getting a Fashion Degree later as a mature student.

After a spell in Hong Kong she returned to the UK and set up her own design company, designing and producing couture and ready-to-wear bridal and evening wear.

After selling her company, she studied for her teaching qualifications, becoming head of a college fashion department.

And now, her emporium in Stratford is a place where people who have always wondered about sewing and making things or who are stuck for inspiration can get together and chat and share ideas, as well as learn new skills, over a cup of tea and piece of cake.

Sew Me Something also has its own range of sewing patterns, each named after a Shakespearean heroine.

Whether you're a beginner or more experienced, Jules and her team of tutors promise to make you feel welcome and inspired.

Summer workshops at Sew Me Something are as follows:



Adult Classes	Kids Club
16 July Hotch-Potch skirt	16 August Make a Plushy Monster
16 July Shirred Summer Dress	18 August Sew A Simple Summer Skirt
22 July Jacket Making Course	23 August Make a Button Picture
22 July Rachel's Dummer Dress	25. August Sew Some Shortie PJs
02 August Pattern Cutting Summer School	
7 August Screen Printing - the Basics	
9 August Teen Sewing - Make a Pattern to Fit You	
13 August Love Your Overlocker	
27 August Imogen top	

## TWEET-TWEET...SUMMER IS HERE....PROMISE!

Stratford businesses turned out in force to celebrate summer and raise money for charity at the annual Stratford Tweetup summer party last week.

The Stratford Tweetup is a regular casual networking event organised by Stratforward member Sharon Stephens from SONA Publishing. The annual bash took place in The Minories Courtyard on Thursday, and was organised in conjunction with Lou Fox from SUA Hour, a weekly networking hour on Twitter.

The Stratford Tweetup, which has been running locally for five years, takes place monthly in Stratford venues offered by local businesses who are on Twitter and offers them a chance to network and make local business connections.

It is the second time The Minories has hosted the summer bash and it proved to be the perfect location with its lovely courtyard being big enough for the numbers of people attending as well as musical entertainment. Many of the businesses located in The Minories are both regular Twitter users and regular tweetup attendees.

The event was well attended by local people and businesses including B&B owners, shop owners and homeworkers who are often unable to attend formal events but use Twitter as part of their local marketing.

Food was provided by Stratforward member El Greco and by HR Cafe on Windsor Street, while drinks were laid on by Rachel Ngombe from Gorgeous Obsession. Donations on the night means nearly £100 going to local charities The Shakespeare Hospice and Cyclists Fighting Cancer.

"It was a fantastic evening of food, chat and live music," said Sharon Stephens. "A great way to enjoy our summer tweetup, and even the sun made an appearance! A huge thank you to the businesses in The Minories who made it possible."

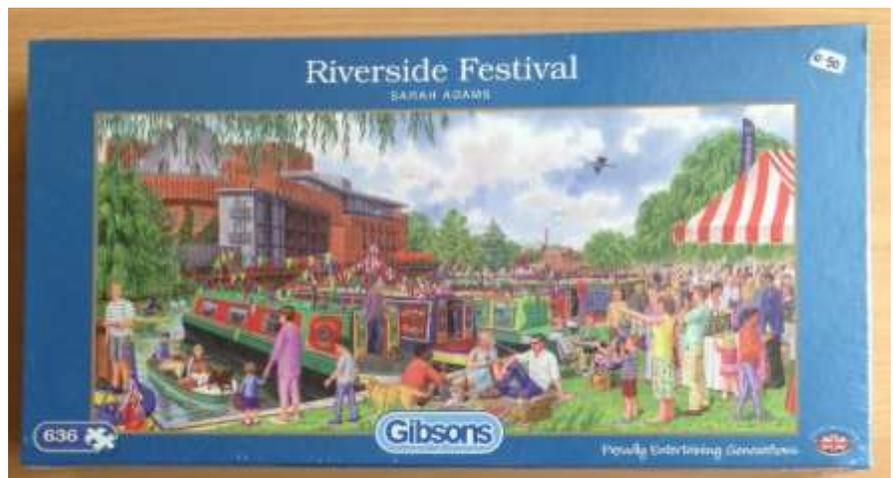
The next Stratford tweetup will be held in early September - watch the #stratfordtweetup hashtag on Twitter for more details.



## It's no puzzle - River Festival is Iconic British Event!

The fabulous 'Riverside Festival' jigsaw puzzle was launched this year after Gibsons commissioned artist Sarah Adams to capture iconic British scenes.

Ruth Wood Stratforwards Event Manager and organiser of the River Festival said '*I was presented with the Jigsaw puzzle by our Town Clerk Sarah Summers last week after a holiday in Devon, it was instantly recognisable as an image of the Stratford River Festival with the RSC in the background. We are delighted that the event has been recognised nationally and we're hoping that this fantastic image of our colourful Festival will encourage even more visitors in the future*'



## Rowing Rivalry At Fun Regatta



Local teams turned out in force for Stratford Boat Club's Fun Regatta at the weekend, bringing a flood of good-humoured rivalry to the Avon.

Cheers from crew supporters and visitors spurred on some 29 crews as they raced from the Chain Ferry to the finish line at the history boat club.

Crews included businesses and organisations from Stratford and nearby towns, as well as a fiercely competitive **race between the mums and dads of Stratford Boat Club's young rowers.**

Established in 1879, Stratford upon Avon Boat Club is the home of Paralympic Gold Medallist James Roe and Junior World Champion Camilla Hadland.

As well as hosting the Fun Regatta, it also holds a Fine Boat Regatta which took place last month.

**Paul Hazelwood, the boat club's Fun Regatta Organiser and Treasurer, said: "This year's Fun Regatta was another great one in terms of number of local crews from companies and organisations such as Blythe Liggins Solicitors, Royal Leamington Spa; two crews from Warwickshire Young Farmers; Simplify IT Solutions Ltd, Alcester; Barford Cricket Club and BNI Warwick 49ers to name just a few.**

**"This year we also had several crews from parents of our young rowers: fierce competition - mums against dads!**

**"The ingenuity and effort put into the fancy dress was amazing – Cool Runnings, Hawaii Five O, Boatylicious and The Cavemen brought a smile to everybody's face!**

**"Already we've seen several competitors sign up for Stratford Boat Club's autumn Learn to Row courses for those wanting to try rowing even more seriously or just for recreational exercise."**

Paul Stanton, the club's president, added: "We enjoyed hosting so many visitors and local residents at the Fun Regatta.

**"This year we were so pleased to have NFU Mutual's Stratford agent sponsor the Fun Regatta: this was a first for us and it proved a great success to have local companies support us in this very exciting year after we have just completed our huge refurbishment and expansion.**

**"The Fun Regatta helps us to show that rowing isn't just about serious competition and that there is also the fun and recreational aspect to our sport.**

**"We are a community club and NFU Mutual's Stratford agent's support will help us to pay for our increase in facilities and increased our ability to provide sport for all especially those looking for weekday recreation and exercise."**



## Town Centre - Performance Data

Day	Total Visitors	+/- Prior Week	Av Stay (mins)	Busiest Time
Sunday 3rd July	31400	73.05%	73	15:00
Monday 4th July	26984	29.82%	74	16:00
Tuesday 5th July	28395	37.11%	51	14:00
Wednesday 6th July	29291	49.10%	53	16:00
Thursday 7th July	27927	23.08%	49	17:00
Friday 8th July	30561	36.71%	54	14:00
Saturday 9th July	31936	-27.92%	63	13:00
<b>Total or Average</b>	<b>206494</b>	<b>+22.45%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>-</b>

### Dates for your diary!

14 July - Stratford Home & Garden Show Charity Night	28 <sup>th</sup> July - Stratford Race Meeting
15-17 July - Stratford Home & Garden Show	11th August - Stratford Race Meeting
17th July - Ladies Day at Stratford Race Course	18th August - Stratford Race Meeting
19th July - Stratforward Networking Briefing	24th August - Stratford Race Meeting
23rd July - Warwickshire School summer holidays	3rd September - Stratford Race Meeting
24th July - Lions Raft Race, River Avon	5th September - Warwickshire Schools return
25th July - Full meeting of SDC	11th September - Stratford Big 10K Run
27th July - Stratford in Bloom Regional judging	23rd to 25th September - Stratford Town Food Festival
28 July - Face of Stratford Finals	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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