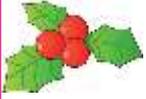


STRAT > FORWARD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

Issue 46: 22nd November 2017



COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS SPECIAL



CHRISTMAS KICKS OFF IN STRATFORD

Christmas kicked off with a bang at the weekend with three lucky winners of the Stratford Make a Christmas Wish Competition enjoying a magical carriage ride with Father Christmas.

The winners were taken on a festive tour of Stratford Town Centre in a carriage pulled by Shire Horses, followed by an afternoon cream tea and special gifts. The competition, organised by Stratforward BID and Magic Alley and supported by BID members WHSmiths, Huffkins, Hathaway Tea Rooms and The Arden Hotel, saw entrants make a wish for someone else and enter that wish for a chance to win.



Joseph Baconnet, Stratforward BID Director, said: "We knew that it would be a special day, but judging from the feedback of the winners and their families and the public on the street, we're going to have to ask Father Christmas to come back early again next year!

"This competition wouldn't have happened without the extraordinary wish of all our competition entrants and winners. Stratforward wants to give a huge thank you to all our BID businesses who supported the competition."



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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON

That's just the start of Christmas in Stratford. Tomorrow (Thursday) sees the annual lights switch-on when Stratford's display - widely regarded as one of the best in the UK - will light up the town. The switch-on ceremony will centre around the Town Hall with carol singing at 4pm following by the switch-on at **4.30pm. It will also include a free santa's grotto** in the Town Hall and an appearance from a special visitor on the balcony.

This year there is more activity taking place around the town on the evening of the Switch on, from late night shopping, to the new look Christmas market on Waterside and entertainment in other areas of the town centre.

The other activity on the Switch on evening includes

Bell Court welcoming its first Switch on evening with a brass band playing Christmas carols, as well as performances from Rosie T dance academy and Everyman cinema hosting a festive screening of the popular Christmas classic Elf, at 6pm, along with giving out free hot chocolate to those visiting Bell Court. Father Christmas and his reindeer will be present to Switch on the 2,500 fairy lights on **Bell Court's 25ft Nordman Fir tree at around 4.45.**

Meanwhile on Henley Street, it will be snowing from 3pm and Father Christmas and his reindeer will make the trip back from Bell Court arriving at his Magic Alley seasonal base just after 5pm where there will be carol singing lead by a local choir followed by performances of A Victorian Nativity in Henley Street by The Magic Alley Players.



FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT MARKS 18TH BIRTHDAY

Meer Street business For Something Different has celebrated its 18th birthday with a special party.

The family-run business, which started trading nearly two decades ago under the name Garden Images, celebrated 18 years in its Meer Street shop in October with a two-day celebration including free prosecco and nibbles and discounts through the shop.

Manager Dayna Edwards said: "We have very loyal local customers and it was fantastic to celebrate and reminisce with them! "We stay true to our green-fingered roots, selling a small selection of gardening equipment and ornaments, and over the years we have also come to specialise in giftware."



MORE MAGIC ALLEY ACTIVITY

On top of the special events staged by Magic Alley, Father Christmas will be at the Henley Street business from Friday (November 24th) until Christmas Eve.



Magic Alley has also teamed up with Stratford to organise 'Stratford's Twelve Days of Christmas' competition, showcasing the town's businesses through the festive season. From December 1st-12th, 12 posters featuring artwork from 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song will be spread across town, displayed in windows and stores. All people have to do is note down which poster is in which store then from December 13th-24th the posters will be displayed in different locations so you'll have to note down where they have moved to. The competition is free to enter and open to everyone. Entry forms are available from Town Hosts, Magic Alley, or the Stratford Office in Sheep Street from December 1st. All entries must be received by December 31st and the draw will take place in early January.

MARKETS

Tomorrow's lights switch-on marks the first of several weekly festive markets on Waterside each Thursday until Christmas.

This year for the first time, Stratford also has a Victorian Christmas Market from Friday, December 8th to Sunday, December 10th, with Victorian stalls, a vintage fun fair with carousel, helter skelter, swing boats and more.

The market is open from 10am to 9pm on the Friday and Saturday, with an opening ceremony on Bridge Street at 11am on the Friday. Entertainment in Rother Street & Henley Street will run from 11am to 9pm. On the Sunday the market will open from 10am-5pm, with entertainment from 11am-5pm.

And on Friday, December 8th, Saturday, December 9th and Sunday, December 10th, the Magic Alley Players will present A Victorian Nativity in Bell Court.



Stratford is also working with the Town and District Councils and LSD Promotions to try and ensure that deliveries and rubbish collection can be accommodated as best as we are able during the three day event.

THANK YOU TO BID BUSINESSES

Dr Roy Lodge from the Christmas Lights Committee has thanked all BID businesses who have contributed to the lights this year. A record number 246 businesses had supported the lights this year, donating towards the costs of the impressive display. He said these included major sponsors the Town Council, Town Trust, Stratforward, as well as Tesco and Waitrose through **their community support schemes. He said: "It is also gratifying to acknowledge the 48 businesses supporting us for the first time making a record total of 246 businesses in and out of town supporting the lights," he said. "Although it is the townspeople and visitors who gain great pleasure from the Lights, from a commercial viewpoint we hope that the town centre traders benefit in a major way. Every year we are looking for new ways to improve and enhance the lights and are pleased to say that this has been achieved in Ely Street and Meer Street this year. Sadly, there are less lights in Chapel Street because of the scaffolding on the Falcon Hotel during their refurbishment".**



SHAKESPEARE HOSPICE

There's something for everyone when it comes to getting involved in the The Shakespeare Hospice's festive fundraising. Here are ways you can help a local charity in the run-up to Christmas.

The Jolly Jumper Campaign, December

The hospice is calling for shops, businesses and schools in and around Stratford to wear their best (or worst!) Christmas jumpers. For more information email Adriana Geary at: Ageary@theshakespearehospice.org.uk or call: 01789 266852.

Christmas Fayre, December 2nd

The Shakespeare Hospice will turn into Santa's Grotto for a day, with a range of stalls to give people the chance to pick up gifts you wouldn't

find on the high street, along with mince pies and mulled wine. Entry is £2 for adults and free for children. To book a stall email Annie Smith at: ASmith@theshakespearehospice.org.uk or call: 01789 266852.

Santa Run, December 9th, £15 adult and £10 under-12s

You can run, walk or jog the 5K course which starts at 11am from the Rec. For more information please email Annie Smith at: ASmith@theshakespearehospice.org.uk or call: 01789 266852

Christmas Hampers

The hospice is offering shops and businesses the chance for customers or staff to win one of their luxury hampers full of Christmas goodies plus a £1,000 scratch card. For more information, contact Nicola Edwards on nedwards@theshakespearehospice.org or call: 01789 266852





Stratford Christmas Window Competition 2017

You will get your own chance to mark Christmas, with the Stratford Christmas Window Competition showcasing our businesses' fun festive displays.

Businesses in Stratford town centre with street-facing windows are automatically entered into the competition, whose theme is simply Christmas. We have two categories: Independent and National, with judging criteria taking in 'creativity', 'engagement', 'experience' and 'impact and visual appeal'.

The winners will be promoted in a press release issued by Stratforward and across our social media accounts.

Winners will be informed on Thursday 7th December.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT THE RSC

The RSC's brand new adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic opens on Monday (November 27th) at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, running until February.

Directed by Rachel Kavanaugh, fresh from stunning the West End with her award-winning production of Half A Sixpence, the production is suitable for ages seven and over and children go half price. Ticket sales have been very strong and we are all positive that this RSC production will have a big impact on our businesses during the run.



IT'S AWARDS TIME

Independent Shop Awards

Nominations for Stratford MP Nadhim Zahawi's Independent Shop Awards close this Friday (November 24th).

The annual awards give people in Stratford the chance to vote for their favourite independent businesses across six categories, including: Best Independent Shop; Best Pub; Best Café; Best Restaurant; Best Village Shop and Best Hotel or B&B.

Nominations, which close this Friday (November 24th), can be made by visiting www.zahawi.com.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony at The Other Place on December 15th.



Pride of Stratford Awards

There's still time to nominate businesses for the Touch FM Pride of Stratford Awards, after the deadline was extended from November 30th to December 8th.

As well as categories for the community, the awards include the following categories for local businesses:-

Business of the Year



Small Business of the Year
Town Centre Business of the Year
Hospitality Business of the Year sponsored by BID member Crowne Plaza
Team of the Year
Customer Care Award - with Shakespeare's England
Business Person of the Year - with The Chamber of Commerce
Tourism Initiative of the Year
Arts Organisation of the Year
Artisan Business Award

Last year BID members scooped a volley of awards, including Stratforward's own Town Hosts, the Dirty Duck, the RSC, Gemini and Hooray's Gelato.

The 2018 awards will culminate in a ceremony at the Crowne Plaza on Friday, February 9th. To nominate a business, visit <http://www.102touchfm.co.uk/pride-of-stratford-awards-2018/business-awards-nomination/>

Tourism Superstar

Nominations for Visit England's Tourism Superstar'

awards 2018 are open.

'Tourism Superstar', now in its seventh year, recognises

and celebrates those in the tourism industry who go the extra mile to make sure tourists in England have an amazing and unforgettable visitor experience.

To qualify, the Tourism Superstar 2018 must:

Work for a tourism business or organisation in England and continue to work for that organisation by the time of English Tourism Week (17-25 March 2018)

Be knowledgeable and passionate about the destination they work in and happy to talk about the destination outside of their work remit

Go above and beyond the call of duty to make a holiday experience to remember for visitors

Be available and willing to travel to London during early January to be filmed and happy for that film to be posted on the Mirror website

Be available to attend the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence on 23 April 2018

Be aware that they have been nominated and happy to participate in any related PR and media opportunities during or post the announcement of the winner.

The deadline for entries is 6th December.

The VisitEngland Awards for Excellence,

which celebrate best practice and excellent customer services, are now open for applications.

Now in their 29th year, the awards feature 18 categories

including "Hotel of the Year", "Small Visitor Attraction of the Year", "Dog Friendly Business of the Year" and "Tourism Pub of the Year". The deadline for applications is 5 January 2018, with finalists revealed in March. The winners will be announced at an afternoon tea awards ceremony on 23 April 2018 at the Bath Assembly Rooms. For more information about the 2018 VisitEngland Awards for Excellence and to apply please visit:

<https://www.visitbritain.org/applications-open-visitengland-awards-excellence-2018>

VisitEngland 

VisitEngland 

POUNDS FOR PANELS RAISES £5,000

The Guild Chapel's Pounds for Panels appeal has raised a whopping £5,000 to pay for a hidden medieval painting to finally be re-revealed.

Members of the public, businesses and residents were encouraged to donate their old £1 coins, which ceased to be legal tender on October 15th, leading to thousands being **dropped into the chapel's collection box.**

With just over £4,000 totted up, one anonymous donor came forward with an extra £1,000 for the appeal, pushing the total over the original £5,000 target.

The appeal's success now means plans are underway to uncover a medieval wall painting that has not been seen since the 16th Century.

The wall paintings at the Guild Chapel, which dates back to the 13th Century, are amongst the finest surviving in all of Europe.

Applied to the walls in the late 15th Century, they were limewashed over less than 70 years later **following the Reformation by William Shakespeare's father John, who was the Chamberlain of the Corporation of Stratford at the time.**

"At this stage we can't yet reveal which painting we are hoping to uncover," said Pippa Brook, Volunteer Coordinator at the Guild Chapel.

"Removing the wooden panels which currently cover a lot of the Chapel - and which we know paintings or fragmentary remains of paintings hide behind - isn't as simple as it may appear.

"We are currently seeking listed building consent and look forward to being able announce which panel will be removed soon."



GET INVOLVED IN REGION'S FIRST EVER BUSINESS FESTIVAL

The first ever Coventry & Warwickshire Business Festival is underway, with business-focused events being staged across the region.



The festival started on Monday and runs until December 1st, featuring more than 100 events from small networking workshops or seminars to large trade shows and national conferences, offering opportunities to grow your business.

They include a Food and Drink Expo TODAY (Weds) at the Warwickshire Golf and Country Club which will connect buyers from around the UK with suppliers based in Warwickshire, as well as showcasing regional food and drink and providing the opportunity to meet experts and peers. For more information on the festival, please visit <https://www.cwbusinessfestival.com/>

Dates for your diary!

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

November

2nd - 24 Feb	Twelfth Night, RSC
23 Nov - 24 Dec	Father Christmas at Magic Alley
23rd	Christmas Lights Switch On outside Town Hall
23rd	1st Christmas Market on Waterside
24th	Black Friday
24th	Project Argus 10am
27 Nov - 4 Feb	A Christmas Carol, RSC
30th	Christmas Market on Waterside
30th	Children's Storytelling & Craft session, Guild Chapel

December

2nd	Small Business Saturday
7th	Christmas Market on Waterside
8th - 10th	Stratford Victorian Christmas Market Festival
9th	The Messiah, Holy Trinity Church
13th - 17th	Midwinter Magic, Dance Circus Spectacular, New Place
14th - 7th Jan	Cinderella, The Attic Theatre
16th	Tudor Christmas @ The Shakespeare Centre
14th	Christmas Market on Waterside
21st	Christmas Market on Waterside
22nd - 30th	Jack & the Beanstalk, Stratford Artshouse
25th	Christmas Day
26th	Boxing Day

January

1st	New Years Day
10th	Stratford Jazz, Stratford Artshouse



6th & 7th May 2018

www.stratfordfestivalofmotoring.co.uk



30th June & 1st July 2018

www.stratfordriverfestival.co.uk



22nd & 23rd September 2018

www.stratfordtowncentrefoodfestival.co.uk

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