

BUSINESS NEWS

Stratforward Newsletter

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Stratford Gets Simplified Bus Services

Stratford's bus services have undergone an overhaul in an effort to simplify the town's services.

The changes, made by Johnsons Excelbus following a review of its network, took effect on Sunday. According to the company, services 21, 21A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 50A, 222, 268, 269, 270 and X70 are being withdrawn and replaced with 1, 2, 3, 3W, 4, 5, 6, 7 and X7 services. In addition, the X20 Stratford to Birmingham service will operate amended services. Peter Johnson, Operations Director at Johnsons Excelbus, said: "After listening to passenger feedback and reviewing the service times and routes, changes have been made to ensure a quicker, more efficient routes from Stratford town centre to the Cotswolds, Banbury, Birmingham and the Park & Ride.

"We have invested in an additional two new single decker buses to serve our Stratford routes as part of our ongoing investment to improve our bus fleet and offer our high levels of passenger comfort."

The current 21, 21A, 22, 23, 24 and 25 Stratford-upon-Avon to Moreton-in-Marsh services will be replaced by the 1 and 2 service. These two services will offer links between Stratford Park & Ride, Stratford Town Centre, Meon Vale, Lower Quinton, Chipping Campden, Willersey, Broadway, Blockley and Moreton-in-Marsh. Evesham will no longer be served, but this section of the route is covered by other bus operators.

The new 1 and 2 services will omit Trinity Mead and not serve Back Lane in Lower Quinton to improve journey times. Johnsons are replacing the 222 and 221 Park & Ride services with two more straightforward 4 and 5 town centre services. Changes have also been made to ensure a link between Banbury Road and Stratford town centre is re-introduced so local residents and shoppers continue to use the bus services.

The new 4 service connects the Park & Ride to Trinity Mead via Stratford and departs every half an hour, and with the additional through services of the new 1, 2, and 3 services will offer a 15-minute link between the Park & Ride and town centre.

The new 5 service provides a circular town centre route that

(Continued on page 2)



Peter Johnson (Operations Director at Johnsons)
Councillor Lynda Organ (for Bridgetown)
Amelia Bruce (Marketing Assistant at Johnsons)
Martin Meacham (Bus Manager at Johnsons)

In This Issue

- Simplified bus services
- Update from Shakespeare's England
- Christmas Lights
- Vigour Café opens
- 1/2 Term activities
- Memorial musical medley
- Stratford Hospital Appeal
- Diary Dates

(Continued from page 1)

the 221 previously offered. Departing every half an hour, it provides links between Stratford Wood Street, Justins Avenue, Maybird Centre and Stratford Railway Station. The Stratford to Banbury corridor will also see simplified and additional services, with the 268, 269 and 270 services replaced by new 6, 7, and X7 services. The new 6 service will operate the current 269 route but will divert to include the village of Tysoe.



The new 7 service will replace the 268 and 270 services with a new 16.10 departure from Banbury. These new services will operate via Stratford Station Interchange.

All new timetables are on the Johnsons website, but for more information call 01564 797070 or email businfo@johnsonskoaches.co.uk

Update from Shakespeare's England

Shakespeare's England (SE), the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for south Warwickshire and the surrounding area, hosted another successful tourism forum for its members last Wednesday (October 19th) at The Falcon Hotel in Stratford upon Avon.



The team gave an update of the organisations key activities over the last three months. Helen Peters, the Chief Executive, announced that SE had been successful in bidding for the Discover England Fund with Visit Britain to drive inbound visits through delivering world class, bookable tourism products.

Shakespeare's England has been successful in both "Growing New International Audiences for England's Heritage Product" and "Discover the Mighty Rivers & Majestic Canals of England" which focuses on the Warwick Ring and Stratford-upon-Avon canal. The funding should result in plenty of opportunities for local traders. Shakespeare's England is also bidding for the Rural Food Grant and if successful, will want to identify and work with BID Members who use or sell local produce.

It was also announced that Shakespeare's New Place is one of 12 specific Heritage Sites to be featured in the English Heritage Cities programme. This will again raise the profile of Stratford internationally and attract additional visitors to the town.

Stratford and Shakespeare's England continue to work closely together to complement and support each other's initiatives, for instance Shakespeare's England generated lots of social media around the River and Food Festivals.

Shakespeare's England is continually developing as a DMO and growing in reputation. One such achievement was recently winning a Coventry & Warwickshire Tourism & Culture Award in the Creative Marketing Campaign category. SE implemented a national and international marketing campaign to promote Shakespeare's 400th anniversary as a reason for visitors to take a break in Warwickshire.

BID Members who would like to join Shakespeare's England can benefit from 10% discount off membership prices. For more information please visit www.shakespeares-england.co.uk or email enquiries@shakespeares-england.co.uk or call 01789 260 677.

BID Members Vital To Stratford's Stunning Christmas Lights



Businesses are urged to dig deep to help make sure Stratford's Christmas lights continue to be up there with the best in the country.

This year's lights switch-on will take place on Thursday, November 24th, from 4.30pm at the **Town Hall, with Father Christmas and Stratford's first fabulous Christmas Market on Bridge Street.**

But Dr Roy Lodge MBE, marketing member for the Stratford upon Avon **Christmas Lights Committee, said contributions from Stratford's businesses** are increasingly vital in maintaining the high standard of lights that decorate the town throughout the festive period.

Each year the assembly and dismantling of the lights, including all PAT testing, bracket testing, insurance and health and safety procedures, cost around £70,000, he said.

And while the lights have been supported for several years by organisations including the Stratford Town Trust and Stratford upon Avon Town Council, the committee relies heavily on town businesses to support its efforts.

"Not all businesses directly benefit from the footfall such as medical surgeries, dental surgeries, estate agents, accountants, solicitors, banks and out-of-town industries and the Waitrose community support scheme. They all make a significant contribution nevertheless, and we are so grateful," said Dr Lodge.

"We are relying every year more heavily on the businesses in the town to complement the grants we receive from the statutory bodies."

Along with regular costs, the committee carries out a programme of ongoing maintenance and this year plans to upgrade the lights in High Street and Chapel Street - an integral part of the 'historic spine' corridor from Shakespeare's Birthplace in Henley Street to that of his burial in Holy Trinity Church - as well as Union Street and Greenhill Street.

"We are listed as in the top four best Christmas lights in the country after places like Oxford Street and Bath and the only way we can continue to put on such a great display is if the businesses continue to support us," Dr Lodge added.

Many businesses have already responded generously with donations which is much appreciated, he said, but anyone who hasn't yet is more than welcome to get involved.

For any further details or to enquire about donations or advertising, contact Dr Lodge on 01789 204850 or lodgeconstantia1@btinternet.com



Dr Roy Lodge MBE

New Business Has Health At Its Heart

Healthy food is on the menu at one of Stratford's newest businesses. Vigour Cafe, formerly McKechnies, is the brainchild of Aga Szczotka, whose focus is on healthy, tasty homemade food.

Her passion started at home. Aga, who has a degree in environmental engineering, was worked as an environmental officer at the National Grid but was spending more and more time cooking at home for her family.

"I'm generally obsessed with cooking - homemade cooking and cooking from scratch, this is how I cook for my family. I have two little ones and I always try to feed them really healthy food, I don't buy ready meals or anything like that.

"I would develop my own recipes, bake my own bread. Even my kids' childminders used to say that I dropped them off with gourmet food.

"My partner has been telling me for years that I should start my own business but I didn't really have the confidence. I just thought that everybody cooks but it doesn't necessarily mean they start a business."

The crunch came earlier this year when Aga decided to ditch her desk job and take on the premises in the heart of Stratford's market square.

"In one month I went from not really thinking about it to putting in an offer," she said.

She opened as Vigour Cafe, whose name itself reflects the healthy haven she hopes to provide, in mid-September.

"Vigour shows what I want to bring to people - healthy food that makes people feel good and full of energy. To get people away from processed food and feed them really simple, healthy, tasty food.

"My background means I'm really aware of chemicals in food and things like beauty products, so a long time ago I switched to things that are natural and don't have any of that. My studies and my work mean I understand why healthy food is so much better for people."

Eventually, Aga hopes that Vigour Cafe will offer three menus - traditional food, gluten-free dishes, and a vegan menu, catering for a wide range of dietary requirements.

"What I wanted to do was to bring people and families together. If someone has a specific dietary requirement, in some places there's nothing for them to eat so they get left out, but I want to make somewhere where families can all eat together."

In the meantime, she is introducing small changes gradually as she undergoes a revamp of the cafe and gets settled in. The original McKechnies menu currently remains, but look out for small changes and new additions.

"I'm offering homemade soups which are proving a great success - one day we even ran out of bowls."

Other new items include a hotpot-style dish as well as Aga's own homemade feta, pesto and sundried tomato swirls.

A loyalty card is on offer for tea and coffee fans - buy nine coffees or teas and get the 10th free.



Stratford Organisations Offering A Spook-tacular Half-Term and Halloween

Halloween and half-term combined are making for a huge selection of activities on offer from BID members. It's not too late to get involved. Here's what Stratford members and partners have still got going on for the rest of the week and Halloween weekend: -



Creaky Cauldron and Magic Alley

Now in its 11th year, Stratford's Annual Halloween Festival is running all month at the Creaky Cauldron and Magic Alley in Henley Street. From the spooky world of the Pumpkin Father to "Trick or Treating", there's plenty for people to get involved in, while along with Halloween goodies on offer at Magic Alley as well as pumpkin flavoured and themed treats at the Golden Broomstick Café. Book now on 01789 290969

RSC

There are plenty of activities left at various RSC venues for the rest of half-term, from a Family Mask Performance Workshop and a 'Blood, Guts and Gore' workshop with former RSC Head of Wigs and Make-up Brenda Leedham tomorrow (Thursday), and a Stage Fighting Workshop on Friday

Other activities include storytelling at The Other Place on Friday as well as a self-guided tour around Stratford, the chance to dress up in RSC costumes, and craft activities, which all run until Sunday.

For more information visit www.rsc.org.uk/events/october-half-term-activities or call 01789 403493.



Andrew Fox, copyright RSC

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

An array of spooky activities are still on offer at the Shakespeare family homes, running until Sunday.

They include stories from the Halloween Tudor Storyteller at New Place from tomorrow (Thursday) to Saturday, as well as story sessions and pumpkin carving at various other venues including Shakespeare's Birthplace and Hall's Croft in Old Town.

For more information and to plan your visit, see www.shakespeare.org.uk.



(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Stratford Leisure Centre

Activities at Stratford Leisure Centre continue for half-term, **from gymnastics to roller skating, and 'Clip 'n' Climb' climbing.** For more details on any half-term activities, and to book, contact the reception team on 01789 268826.



Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm

Butterfly Farm

Stratford Butterfly Farm is open from 10am to 6pm every day, including during half-term. From Mayan sculptures and artefacts to Giant African Fruit Beetles and Rhinoceros Rat **Snakes on display in the farm's 'Minibeast Metropolis', there's plenty to keep children occupied.**

For more information including admission prices and group rates, visit the website at www.butterflyfarm.co.uk or phone 01789 299288.

Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall

Take a step back to the 15th century, joining the **'Schoolmaster' for a Tudor lesson in Shakespeare's Schoolroom** as well as practising quill and ink writing and dressing up in Tudor clothes.

During half-term the Schoolroom & Guildhall will be open daily from 10am-5pm, with last admission at 4.30pm.



Musical Medley In Memory of Town Centre GP

It's not too late for BID members to support a musical event organised in memory of a popular town centre GP.

The 'Musical Medley' event in memory of Dr Terry Gasper, a well-respected GP at Rother House Surgery, will be held at The Arts House on Thursday (October 27).

Dr Gasper, who was also Governor of South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust and Volunteer for the Stratford Cancer and Eye Hospital Appeal as well as a former club doctor at Worcester Warriors, died in September 2015 after a battle with cancer.

The Musical Medley event is described as "An appreciation of all music and entertainment, inspired by Dr Terry Gasper" and will include some of his favourite music.

Tickets priced £12 (concessions £10) can be booked online at stratfordartshouse.co.uk/whats-on/event/a-musical-medley or in person at the Stratford Arts House Box Office.



Loop the Loop Challenge

And if it's thrill-seeking fundraising you're after, why not try the **Loop the Loop Challenge** - a once-in-a-lifetime adrenaline-fuelled flying challenge that will also raise money for local cause the Stratford Cancer and Eye Hospital Appeal.

The appeal has teamed up with Take Flight Aviation to give people an exciting opportunity for thrillseekers to take to the skies over Warwickshire next month.

During the weekend of November 12 and 13, participants will have a private flying lesson in an aerobatic aircraft, along with demonstrations of loops and rolls. The whole experience will be captured on a GoPro camera, immortalising it in both video and photos for keepsakes.

We'd love to see some of our BID members get involved. To take part in the Loop the Loop Challenge all you have to do is raise a minimum of £300 sponsorship. For more information or book a space email

ali.gray@swft.nhs.uk. The minimum age requirement is 16 years old.



The flyer is for the 'Loop-the-Loop Challenge' on Saturday 12 November. It features logos for the Stratford Cancer & Eye Hospital Appeal, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust, and Take Flight Aviation. The challenge involves a private flying lesson in an aerobatic aircraft with demonstrations of loops and rolls, and a Go-Pro camera recording the flight. The minimum sponsorship required is £300. Spaces are limited, and the contact email is ali.gray@swft.nhs.uk. The background of the flyer shows two pilots in a cockpit.

Stratford Cancer & Eye Hospital Appeal
Registered Charity (1004014)

South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Take Flight AVIATION.com

Loop-the-Loop Challenge

Saturday 12 November

original loop 13 November free too, this is our reserve date if bad weather occurs!

Venue: Take Flight Aviation - Wellesbourne

- Private flying lesson in an aerobatic aircraft
- Demonstrations of loops and rolls
- Go-Pro camera will record your flight for photo and video keepsakes

To take part all you have to do is raise a minimum of £300 sponsorship

Spaces are limited. To reserve your place, please email: ali.gray@swft.nhs.uk

Dates for your diary!

- 1st to 31st October - Stratford Halloween Festival
- 19th October to 14th December - Charity Christmas Card sale at The United Reformed Church
- 22nd to 30th October - Warwickshire half term
- 24th October to 30th November - Stratford Autumn Literary Festival
- 27th October - Stratford Races
- 27th October - Music Medley in memory of Dr Terry Gasper at Stratford Arts House
- 28th October - Mad Hatters Tea Party at Stratford Arts House
- 4th November - Shakespeare Hospice Fire & Ice Challenge
- 12th November - Stratford Cancer and Eye Hospital Appeal Loop the Loop Challenge
- 22nd November - Explore Your Archive at The Shakespeare Centre
- 24th November - American Thanksgiving at Harvard House
- 24th November - Christmas Light Switch On and Celebrations including Christmas Market
- 24th November to 24th December - Father Christmas at the Enchanted Manor, Henley Street
- 1st December - Christmas Market
- 1st December to 6th January 2017 - **A Very Tudor Christmas at Anne Hathaway's Cottage**
- 3rd & 4th December - **Victorian Advent Weekend Anne Hathaway's Cottage**
- 2nd to 10th December - Toad of Toad Hall at Bear Pit Theatre
- 6th December - Orchestra of the Swan at The Arts House
- 8th December - Christmas Market
- 10th December - Shakespeare Hospice Santa Fun Run
- 12th December - Judging of the Christmas Window Competition
- 15th December - Christmas Market
- 15th December - Lions Christmas Carol Service in Bridge Street
- 15th to 17th December - Garden of Curious A-Muse-ments at Shakespeare's New Place
- 16th to 28th December - Beauty and the Beast at The Attic Theatre
- 17th December to 3rd January 2017 - Warwickshire Schools Christmas holiday
- 17th to 23rd December - **Tudor Christmas Talk Shakespeare's Birthplace**

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

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