



Rugby First & Town Centre News



March 2019 Newsletter



Rugby First Appoint New Operations Director



Rich Warren

Rugby First has appointed a new Operations Director, Rich Warren, and bid a fond farewell to Aftab Gaffar. Aftab had successfully steered Rugby BID for 13 years, first as

the Operations Manager and then as the Managing Director and will be taking up a new national role in the retail sector.

Rich, has been supporting businesses across Rugby for the last 4 years in his previous role with the CWLEP Growth Hub. The Growth Hub has supported over

300 Rugby businesses with their growth plans during his time there and he was one of the founders & Chair of the Rugby Drive Collaborative business initiative.

Rich said: *“Aftab has done an excellent job and on behalf of Rugby First and the local business community I would like to extend our thanks and wish him well in his new venture.”*

Rich continued: *“I am passionate about Rugby. It is a great place to live and do business and I am keen to make a difference in my new role. Key priorities for me will be ensuring a smooth transition that continues to deliver quality services in line with the existing mandate, engaging with town centre businesses to understand how best Rugby First can support them*

now and in the future, working with key local stakeholders to investigate opportunities to improve the town centre as a place for people to do business, live, shop, socialise and to understand what support town centre businesses need to be successful and where they can find that help.”

Aftab said: *“Rugby BID was one of the first BID’s in Warwickshire and part of the initial pilot scheme. There are now over 300 BIDS in the UK with Rugby BID being used nationally as an example of best practice and many BID’s visiting Rugby BID for training. I would like to thank everyone for their support over the past 13 years and wish them well under the leadership of the new Director.”*

FREE Town Centre Parking (from 1st April 2019)

To support the town centre, £60,000 collected from businesses based in out of town retail parks during 2019-20 will fund free weekend and evening parking in council-run car parks. Parking will be free all day on Saturdays and Sundays and from 6pm to 6am on weekdays, allowing residents to support town centre shops and restaurants without paying for parking. Charges will still apply to on street parking which is run by Warwickshire County Council.

Aftab Gaffar said: *“This is great news which Rugby First and businesses have lobbied for and will help drive the evening economy. The Council should be congratulated, and this*

will go some way in encouraging people to shop local and support town centre businesses. The investment will certainly encourage shoppers to return to High Street shopping, and Rugby First welcome the initiative and the boost for the town centre. I would encourage businesses to promote the free parking to their customers and make the most of it.”

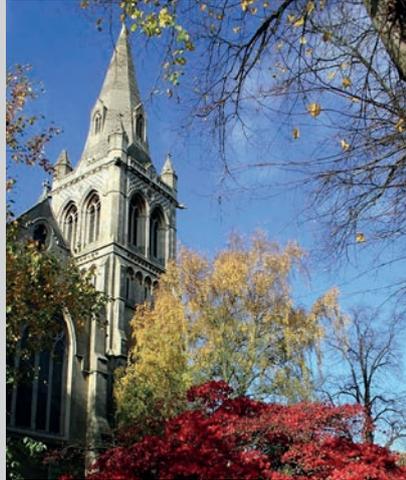
Cllr Michael Stokes, Leader of the Council said; *“Changes to our shopping habits continue to have an impact on high streets across the country, so our commitment to fund free parking on evenings and weekends will give businesses based*

in the town centre their best chance to thrive.”



St Andrew's Gardens Project Receives Funding Boost

The Council has confirmed £5,000 will be donated to St Andrew's Church to rejuvenate its gardens as part of a project the Church hopes will help boost the town centre, with an additional £20,000 match funding available if unlocked by public donations. The project includes a bespoke events space, a flagship bee friendly garden, improved sight lines, a water fountain, charging points and a specially commissioned public art piece. More information and how to pledge and help unlock the Council funding can be found at spacehive.com/standrewsrugby



New Town Centre Vehicle Charging Points

Rugby Borough Council is to continue its drive to encourage greater use of electric vehicles by introducing charging points in the town centre. Exact locations are still to be determined but the news will be well received by motorists committed to the more environmentally friendly vehicles with zero-emissions.



Blooming Marvellous

As part of 'Rugby in Bloom 2019' Rugby First has teamed up with Rugby Borough Council again and is able to offer discounted rates on hanging baskets for interested businesses! The baskets are a great way to add a splash of colour to your business and make the town centre an even more attractive place to work, shop and visit. Baskets go up in June and numbers are limited so if you are interested please contact Adele for an application form on **01788 569436** or email adele@rugbyfirst.org by the end of March.



Open Your Doors For Bikefest

Rugby Bikefest is due in the town centre on Sunday 19 May with more than 5000 people expected to enjoy the event. Why not open for the day or provide a special 'Rugby Bikefest' offer – Rugby First can help promote both to help increase your footfall and income. For further information, sponsorship opportunities or to get involved please email chris@ucltd.co.uk or call **07817 312718**.



Be Part Of The Rugby Festival Of Culture

Why not get involved with the Rugby Festival of Culture (23rd June to 14 July) - a great way to increase awareness of your business, attract new customers, and increase footfall and spend. Why not plan or host an event, be part of the Art Trail or organise a special promotion! To get involved, sponsor an event, or advertise in the festival guide please call **07817 312718** or email chris@ucltd.co.uk.

