

# Inside **Kingston First**

## Keeping You Informed

It's been a busy few months here at Kingston First, here's a few highlights of what we've been up to.

### Christmas in Kingston

Every year Kingston First invest in a comprehensive programme of events, marketing initiatives and street dressing to bring festive cheer, encourage footfall and increase dwell time in the town centre.

The festivities kick off on Thursday 14 November with the opening of the Christmas Market and the Christmas Lights Switch On event. To help promote the town and its festive offering we will be distributing over 65,000 booklets to local homes and have invested in a large advertising and digital marketing campaign to encourage visitors to the town.

We have also invested in some extra festive lighting this year that will see new illuminations on Wilko and the installation of a giant walk-through bauble outside Kingston station.

### A new five-year term for Kingston First

At the end of June this year we announced that following a successful renewal ballot, Kingston First had been renewed for another five-year term. The ballot saw a highly-engaged response rate of 65% with 92% of businesses and organisations voting in favour, and 90% voting in favour by rateable value. Thank you for your support!

The new five-year term will commence in January 2020 and we are looking forward to working with local businesses and partners to improve and expand on the projects and services we currently deliver, whilst exploring new ways to ensure the commercial success of the town.



# Celebrating Kingston's Businesses

In October, the winners of the Kingston Business Excellence Awards were announced at a special black tie dinner on Ravens Ait Island. The awards are a great way to celebrate the breadth and strength of the Kingston business community and demonstrates the diversity and exceptional standards we have across all business sectors. Most importantly, the awards are a wonderful celebration of the successes and achievements of Kingston businesses.

Our congratulations to all the winners and in particular, well done to Pangea Connected who received the overall 'Business of the Year' award, Fortunella who won the 'Food & Beverage' award and 7000 Jars of Beer who were voted by the public to receive the 'Love your local retailer' award.



The team at Pangea Connected who won Business of the Year and Best Small Business. Dan Cunliffe (centre) was awarded Business Entrepreneur of the Year.



Love your local retailer Award winners, 7000 Jars of Beer



Food & Beverage Award winners Fortunella

## Helping you prepare for Brexit

The Brexit deadline has been extended until 31 January 2020. To help your business prepare for Brexit, we will continue to circulate any information with you as soon as it is provided from official channels.

If you have any queries in the meantime, there are a number of tools online at [gov.uk/brexit](https://gov.uk/brexit) that you may find useful.

# What's Coming Up

## A new look for vacant shops

Kingston First have commissioned students at Kingston University to help bring some colour to a few ground-floor shops that are currently vacant. Over the past few weeks, students from the prestigious Kingston School of Art have been working on their own designs that celebrate 'Kingston: Past, Present and Future'. These

designs will then be printed onto vinyl and applied to the shop windows, providing a great opportunity for students to publicly display their work, whilst adding something new, colourful and Instagram-worthy to Kingston's shopping areas. Keep an eye out for the new artworks popping up from the start of December.

## Kingston's star volunteers

A big thank you to a number of Kingston businesses who have continued to volunteer their time to help us keep the town looking clean and attractive. Over a number of months, employees from Yellow Zebra Safaris, Barclays, Pryzm, McDonalds, Amadeus and BoConcept have helped with a number of initiatives including weeding, litter picking and graffiti removal. One of the largest projects undertaken has been the tidying and replanting of a number of flower beds throughout the town. As well as adding colour, the plants have been specifically chosen to maximise sustainability and pollution reduction and support pollinating species.



## RadioLink goes Digital

RadioLink is a Kingston First led initiative connecting local businesses, CCTV and the enforcement team (NSL) on a town centre radio network. The radios allow members to send real-time updates on theft, anti-social behaviour or suspicious behaviour in their area.

Over the last 12 months, our service provider Servicom have been gradually switching over to a new digital service as the old analogue channel

will cease on 1 December 2019. If you are still using an analogue radio, please get in touch with Kadian who will help you switch over.

With the new service now in place, Kingston First have a number of the new digital radios that can be hired for a short period as a 'try before you buy', allowing you to test and review the scheme's benefits before investing.

If you would like to give RadioLink a try, please contact Kadian on **020 8547 1221** or email [kadian.thomas@kingstonfirst.co.uk](mailto:kadian.thomas@kingstonfirst.co.uk)

# Keep It Kingston

## Introducing the New Keep it Kingston app

Since its launch in 2017, Keep it Kingston continues to grow, offering a platform for members to promote their products and services, as well as providing a useful benefit scheme for employees of the town.

Following feedback from businesses and card-users, we have developed an app which will be launched before the end of this year, replacing the old plastic cards that expire at the end of 2019. The app will allow users to navigate the 200 offers with more ease and convenience and will include a map, showing offers near to them. This also means that users will no longer need to carry a plastic card, instead, offers will be redeemed at the touch of a button on their phone. Along with the new app, the scheme has been given a bit of a makeover.

### What businesses need to do

If you are running an offer on the Keep it Kingston scheme, your current offer details will be transferred over to the app, so you just need to accept this new look scheme when it is presented to you. Users will be able to show you a card on their screen which will be time-stamped at the moment they click redeem.

The old-style plastic cards expire on 31 December 2019, so after this date, you don't need to accept them. Instead, we'd ask that you encourage the guest to visit us at the Kingston First office and apply for the app.

### What card-holders need to do

All current card-holders will need to reapply for the new app. This process is necessary to ensure that everyone using the scheme is still an employee in Kingston town centre. The app will be available to download from Google Play and the App Store. To register, employees will need to present proof of employment as they did before and



will be issued with a unique registration code to allow them access to the app. For more details on how to apply, you can go to the website, [keepitkingston.co.uk](http://keepitkingston.co.uk)

### What about people who don't have smartphones

We understand that not everyone has a smartphone or wishes to use an app, so for those that would prefer, we do have a number of plastic cards instead. These will still need to be reapplied for as the old green cards will no longer be accepted from 1 January 2020. All offers will continue to be listed on the website.

We will be in touch with businesses and card-holders directly with further details when the app is fully launched. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Tav or Lucy on **020 8547 1221**, or email [info@kingstonfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@kingstonfirst.co.uk)



# Shining a spotlight on Kingston's heritage

To help encourage more people to discover the hidden history on their doorstep, we collaborated with Kingston Council's Heritage Service and a number of local heritage groups to launch a new Kingston Heritage Festival.



Cleave's Almshouses, Old London Road

Throughout September, the festival saw a month-long celebration of Kingston's rich history with a series of events and open house days. Across the borough, buildings and venues usually closed to the general public, opened their doors to allow a rare glimpse inside along with guided tours, allowing guests to admire the architecture, discover its historical importance and learn something new about the area.



We developed a new marketing campaign to unite the various events and open house days to encourage attendance and drive visitors into Kingston. We also helped to deliver a number of events in the town centre to bring history to life and celebrate the diverse cultural heritage Kingston has, including the Korea Festival and a street theatre act of escapology based on the last public ducking in the Thames that took place here in Kingston in 1745 (pictured above).

# Your Kingston First

## In Focus: Thumbs Up It's Thursday

The ever-popular Thumbs Up It's Thursday initiative continues to prove a huge hit amongst local families with attendance across the events this year some of the highest ever seen.



In a recent survey with parents, we discovered:

- **80%** of children attending are aged 3-5
- **48%** of attendees usually attend 3 or 4 events each day
- **Two thirds** of families attending eat out in Kingston as part of their day
- All respondents said they spend time in other (including non-participating) businesses during their visit, highlighting the wider benefit for businesses in Kingston
- Craft activities were by far the favourite type of activity. Cookie decorating/ baking, face painting and treasure hunts were also popular
- Parents would like to see new events involving sports, dance, theatre, cooking and character mascots

Dates for the 2020 events have now been confirmed and all details for how to get involved are available on our website at [kingstonfirst.co.uk/thumbsup](http://kingstonfirst.co.uk/thumbsup)

Alternatively, for more information, please get in touch with Eleanor on **020 8547 1221** or email [eleanor.swan@kingstonfirst.co.uk](mailto:eleanor.swan@kingstonfirst.co.uk)

## Tea with....

**Mark McClarnon**  
**Markets Manager**

Getting to know your  
Kingston First team  
over a quick cuppa



### Firstly, what's your drink of choice?

*During the day I tend to have coffee, in the evenings I drink fruit juice or lemonade. Sometimes I push the boat out and have alcohol-free lager!*

### How long have you been at Kingston First and what roles have you had?

*I started three years ago as a Ranger and have since moved into the roles of Assistant Market Manager and now Market Manager. I oversee the operation of the Monday Market which is weekly value market near the Fairfield bus station, and also the daily market in Ancient Market Place.*

### What do you enjoy most about working at Kingston First?

*I really enjoy working as part of a team which is enhancing the Kingston shopping experience.*

### What's your favourite thing about Kingston?

*I think the shopping offering in Kingston is great, I can get everything I need in one place. Which is especially helpful at Christmas!*

### Tell us something about yourself that people might find surprising

*I was quite good at athletics when I was younger and used to run the 100m. I had a trial for the England junior athletic team.*

**Kingston First**  
3rd Floor Neville House  
55 Eden Street  
Kingston upon Thames  
Surrey KT1 1BW

**T 020 8547 1221**  
[info@kingstonfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@kingstonfirst.co.uk)  
[kingstonfirst.co.uk](http://kingstonfirst.co.uk)

Company registered  
in England No. 3838618

