

FULL TIMETABLES AND SHOWS

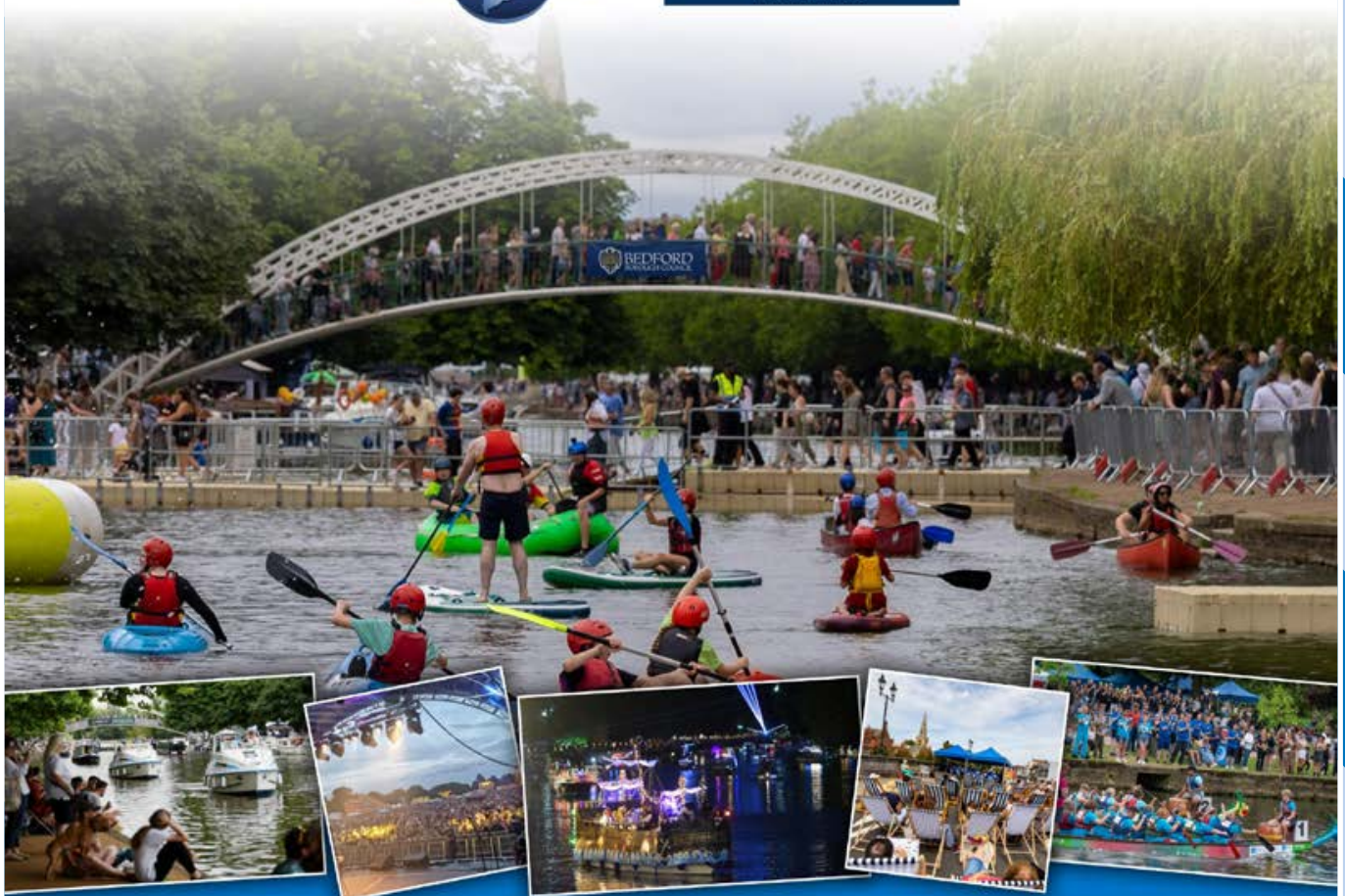
BEDFORD RIVER FESTIVAL

18TH & 19TH JULY 2026

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



GALLAGHER
DEVELOPMENTS



EVENT PROGRAMME

www.bedford.gov.uk/riverfestival

events@bedford.gov.uk

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Welcome to the 2026 Bedford River Festival!



How can anyone capture the spirit of the River Festival in just a few words? I know so many of you will be thrilled to have the return of one of the highlights of our calendar, a vibrant two-day celebration that truly showcases our town and borough.

As ever, the festival blends exciting new attractions with much-loved favourites. I'm certain that, like me, you'll come across something new this year, even among familiar features, because there is simply so much to see and enjoy.

We're especially pleased to continue to offer families with young children the family area in St. Mary's Gardens which will host a full programme of activities and workshops across both days. We're also delighted to welcome back our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team, following their successful involvement in 2024.

In Harpur Square, the Bedford Music Hub Stage will bring together organisations including the BBC, schools, arts groups, and community partners to deliver a rich and collaborative music programme. This partnership highlights the festival's long-standing commitment to providing a platform for local children and young people to share their talents.

Along the Embankment, the new BBC Music Introducing Stage will showcase emerging artists from Bedford and the surrounding area—many of whom could be tomorrow's headline acts.

Over the Butterfly Bridge, the Sports Island provides a unique opportunity to try a wide range of sports and activities offered by local organisations in a relaxed and welcoming environment. With a strong village ethos that celebrates fun, participation, and staying active, the weekend showcases lively dance and exercise performances on stage alongside hands on activities such as climbing, canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddleboarding, rugby skills, gymnastics, golf, and squash.

On Saturday, we're delighted to once again team up with Sue Ryder to bring back the ever-popular dragon boat experience, giving you even more ways to take part while supporting a wonderful cause. Then on Sunday, be sure to catch the raft race, where teams will battle it out on homemade boats along the river, from St. Mary's Gardens to the Suspension Bridge.

At Mill Meadows, a dedicated arts area will showcase local talent through an inspiring mix of displays, performances, installations, and hands-on workshops.

Across the festival, you'll find a wide range of free activities and entertainment, from live music, bushcraft demonstrations to the Festival of Motoring, river displays, arts exhibitions, interactive stalls, and multiple performance stages, just to name a few.

And best of all, the entire weekend is free to attend.

My sincere thanks go to the dedicated team at Bedford Borough Council, whose hard work makes this event and so many others throughout the year, possible. It's wonderful to see the range of new, free activities they've introduced for families to enjoy. I would also like to thank our sponsors and partners, whose support is essential in helping us deliver an event that continues to put Bedford on the map.

We truly believe this year's River Festival offers something for everyone, and I hope you'll join us on July 18 and 19 for what promises to be the best festival yet.

Enjoy the weekend!



Tom Wootton

Elected Mayor and Leader of Bedford Borough Council

GALLAGHER

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River Activities: Main River

The soul of the River Festival is the huge range of entertainment and activities taking place that truly bring the River Great Ouse to life and commemorate the opening of the river from Bedford to The Wash in Norfolk in 1978. Whether you want to see the traditional boat parades, the dragon boat & raft races, or the daring stunts in the Water Sports arena, there is plenty to keep the family entertained right across the festival weekend. These activities take place along the entire length of the festival site, from St. Mary's Gardens to the Sports Island, so there will always be something to see on the water wherever you are.

The cruiser and narrowboat enthusiasts who attend provide the centrepiece to the weekend's celebrations, with many taking part in the Martyn Pearson Grand Parade Cabin Cruisers of Cabin Cruisers and Narrow Boats which take place on both Saturday and Sunday. The Saturday night finale will be the fantastic Illuminated Boat Parade.

Working with [Sue Ryder](#), the Dragon Boat Races take place on Saturday 18th July and the Raft Races, organised by the [Rotary Club of Bedford Park](#) and sponsored by [Fuji Film](#), take place on Sunday 19th July. This year the raft crews will be raising money to support local charities and projects in Bedford – be sure to cheer them on as they compete!



Saturday 18th July 2026: Main River

Time	Activity
2:00pm to 2:30pm	The Martyn Pearson Grand Parade of Cabin Cruisers
4:00pm to 4:30pm	The Martyn Pearson Grand Parade of Narrow Boats
9:30pm approximately	Illuminated Boat Parade

River Activities: Main River *continued*

Sunday 19th July 2026: Main River

Time	Activity
12:00pm to 1:00pm	Stand Up Paddleboard Race
1:00pm to 1:30pm	The Martyn Pearson Grand Parade of Cabin Cruisers
2:00pm to 2:30pm	The Martyn Pearson Grand Parade of Narrow Boats
2:45pm to 3:00pm	Raft Race Heat 1
3:00pm to 3:15pm	Raft Race Heat 2
3:30pm to 3:45pm	Raft Race Final

Stand Up Paddleboard Race – Get involved!!!

Join your fellow paddleboarders for a fun race through the heart of Bedford; in a mile-long challenge, capping off an incredible day at the Bedford River Festival. A relaxing chilled race.

Sunday at 12 noon – booking required for participation, limited numbers available, £15 entry fee.

For more information: www.canoetrail.co.uk/activities/events/river-fest-sup-race

Dragon Boat Race – Get involved!!!

Let the battle begin! Take to the water along a 200-metre River Ouse racecourse, with thousands of spectators roaring your team to the finish line. Race for Sue Ryder and help us be there when it matters.

This year, Sue Ryder will be hosting the Bedford Dragon Boat Race, kindly sponsored by Champneys Wellness Spa, at Bedford River Festival, in association with Bedford Borough Council and New Wave Events.

Over twenty crews are expected to battle it out on an exciting 200 metre course along the picturesque River Ouse.

St. Mary's Gardens is a superb venue for the racing and a fantastic day is guaranteed with bankside entertainment, music, food and activities for the whole family.



Crew information

No previous experience is required, just plenty of team spirit!

- NewWave Events will organise the race schedule, provide the dragon boats and a professional helm to steer the boat.
- Teams must consist of a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 15 crew members.
- Within the team there will be 10 crew members to paddle each boat, with a drummer at the front and up to four reserve crew members.
- Each team is guaranteed three races.
- Trophies for the overall winner and medals for the top three crews placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd place overall.

Sign up your team here: www.sueryder.org/get-involved/fundraise-for-us/events/bedford-dragon-boat-race/

River Activities: Main River *continued*

Saturday 18th July 2026: St. Mary's Gardens

Time	Activity
11:30am to 2:30pm	Dragonboat Race Heats
3:00pm	Dragonboat Race - Semi Final 1
3:10pm	Dragonboat Race - Semi Final 2
3:30pm	Dragonboat Race - Final

The Raft Race, sponsored by Fujifilm and organised by the Rotary Club of Bedford Park, is the grand finale of the 2026 Bedford River Festival.

It's a great opportunity for you to promote yourselves and show how much fun you can have being part of what you do.

Rafters need to be over 18 and are usually made up of 4-8 people, but building the raft and supporting your group is also part of the team-building experience.

For more information or help with materials, please visit the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bedfordraftace> or e-mail bedfordraftace@outlook.com.

FUJIFILM



Sunday 19th July 2026: St. Mary's Gardens

Time	Activity
11:00am to 2:00pm	Raft Preparation sponsored by Fuji Film
2:20pm	Rafts proceed to Start Line (opposite Castle Mound)
4:00pm to 4:10pm	Rafts return



Russell Park



Main Stage sponsored by The Harpur Centre

Russell Park features the River Festival's Main Stage, sponsored by [The Harpur Centre](#), which will bring you top performances from a wide range of bands and musicians throughout the weekend. If having a dance and soaking up the festival atmosphere appeals to you, then Russell Park is the place to be.

The ever-popular craft & gift marquee will now be found in Russell Park bringing in unique sellers from across the country.

At the back of Russell Park you will also find a large picnic area, crazy golf course and the amazing play area which includes a section where all equipment is inclusive. The crazy golf and play area are open all year round, not just at the festival.

There is also entertainment for the kids, including giant inflatable slides and fairground rides.

The main stage content has been selected by our partners at The Pad Presents and the local live music venue Esquires.

THE PAD PRESENTS

ESQUIRES

Saturday 18th July 2026: Main Stage

Time	Performer
11:30am	Song Squad We are Song Squad performing arts, a vibrant and dynamic group delivering classes across Bedford for 3-18 year olds. Our mission is to inspire the future generation and uplift our community through the power of singing, dance and drama. Building confidence & creativity in every child, helping them shine bright! We'll be singing old favourites & the latest, greatest hits for all to enjoy. www.song-squad.co.uk
1:00pm	TBC
2:00pm	Dois Padres Bedfordshire's own high-energy two-piece rock outfit, Dois Padres was formed in 2017 by guitarist and vocalist Danny Young and drummer George Cowan. The band blend elements of blues, garage rock, fuzz, and experimental sounds, building a reputation with their raw, stripped-back approach and explosive live performances. Their music is characterised by gritty riffs, driving rhythms, and a playful, offbeat personality, often mixing humour with a swampy, boogie-infused sound. With multiple albums and a growing presence on the UK live circuit, Dois Padres have become known as a vibrant and unpredictable act, delivering music that feels both chaotic and tightly connected. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqhzXunujYQ&list=RDbqhzXunujYQ&start_radio=1



Russell Park *continued*

Main Stage sponsored by **The Harpur Centre**



Saturday 18th July 2026: Main Stage

Time	Performer
3:00pm	Gemma Rogers Gemma Rogers is a singer-songwriter known for her fiery vocals, poetic lyricism, and socially conscious songwriting. She first emerged on the UK music scene through a blend of spoken word and music before developing a more fully realised sound that fuses elements of ska, punk, and indie pop. Her work has been championed by outlets like BBC 6 Music, and her debut album <i>No Place Like Home</i> (2022) earned critical praise. Gemma Rogers has performed at Glastonbury and supported artists like Paolo Nutini, building a reputation for energetic live shows and bold, thought-provoking music that reflects the realities of contemporary Britain. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJxzuqJWbXA&list=RDoJxzuqJWbXA&start_radio=1
4:00pm	Not A Band A group, completely powered by TV theme songs! Think Knightrider, Airwolf, The A Team, Only Fools and Horses, Dr Who, Red Dwarf and many more! Get ready for a trip down memory lane, with hints of comedy and memes. This is not a set to be missed, especially after quotes such as “possibly the greatest band ever”, what’s not to like?! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-UG_GilrwM
5:30pm	Sambroso Allstars Sambroso All Stars are a dynamic collective known for reimagining classic songs through vibrant Latin styles such as salsa, samba, and Cuban son. Led by Venezuelan musician and producer Orlando Cangrejo, the group brings together top-tier Latin musicians from across the UK and beyond, creating a rich, authentic sound that’s both energetic and soulful. Known for their high-energy live performances, the group deliver a feel-good atmosphere that gets audiences dancing while showcasing the versatility and global appeal of Latin music. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuqL_Ljb3Jc&list=RDxuqL_Ljb3Jc&start_radio=1
7:15pm	The Beat ft. Rankin Junior One of the most influential bands that emerged from the late-1970s UK ska revival, The Beat blend energetic rhythms with sharp social commentary. Now fronted by Rankin’ Junior, their sound fuses ska, punk, pop, and reggae into something both danceable and politically aware. Known for hits like <i>Mirror in the Bathroom</i> and <i>Too Nice to Talk To</i>, the band stood out for their upbeat tempos paired with lyrics addressing issues like race and love. Their music remains iconic for its infectious grooves, distinctive dual vocals, and its role in shaping the 2 Tone movement alongside acts like The Specials and The Selecter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFma4CVRQu8&list=RDCFma4CVRQu8&start_radio=1

Russell Park *continued*

Main Stage sponsored by **The Harpur Centre**



Saturday 18th July 2026: Main Stage

Time	Performer
9:00pm	The Rave Returns - The Drum & Bass Band Closing the Saturday night at River Festival 2026 is The Drum & Bass Band. Breathing new life into the genre's most iconic anthems, the show features 60 minutes of the best live renditions of DnB, Jungle, and exclusive live remixes. The band serve up hit after hit, blending crowd favourites with iconic tracks, all brought to life by a dynamic 5-piece live band and perfectly timed visuals. Expect a journey through sounds from Chase & Status to Shy FX mixed with fresh, unheard mash-ups. Born from the celebrated Hip Hop House Band, this act is powered by exceptional musicians with an impressive track record. Their experience includes collaborations with Ella Henderson and Pixie Lott, alongside performances on some of the biggest stages—from Glastonbury and Buckingham Palace to BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge and Sky TV. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cFSwurCEyA

Sunday 19th July 2026: Main Stage

Time	Performer
11:30am	Bedford Rock Choir Founded in 2005 by singer and musician Caroline Redman Lusher, Rock Choir is the UK's leading contemporary award-winning choir experience, with over 33,000 members across more than 400 towns in the UK and Ireland. Pioneering an inclusive approach, it was the first choir of its kind to offer a no-audition, no-sheet-music format, welcoming people of all abilities. Bedford Rock Choir, led by energetic jazz pianist, singer and composer Rob Baker, has over 150 members who meet at Kings House on Amptill Road and perform regularly across Bedfordshire and beyond. www.rockchoir.com
1:00pm	The Greensands One of the area's most exciting new bands, The Greensands take to the River Festival mainstage in 2026. The 3 piece from Amptill/Bedford are known for high-energy music, mature vocals, and a sound blending 90s Britpop with modern rock edge. Taking inspiration from The Smashing Pumpkins and Radiohead. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax-SbOcDFaQ&list=RDax-SbOcDFaQ&start_radio=1
2:00pm	Bold As Love Bold As Love are a dynamic 3 piece dedicated to celebrating the legendary music and spirit of Jimi Hendrix. Capturing the essence of Hendrix's iconic sound, from the explosive riffs of "Purple Haze" to the soulful melodies of "Little Wing" and way beyond! With an authentic vintage aesthetic and a commitment to delivering an unforgettable live, raw experience, Bold As Love aim to transport audiences back to the golden era of rock and roll. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9ZIZwEAWr0

Russell Park *continued*

Main Stage sponsored by **The Harpur Centre**



Sunday 19th July 2026: Main Stage

Time	Performer
3:20pm	The Ouse Valley Singles Club A completely original act that will give you a show unlike anything you will have seen or heard before. They take the traditional basic sound of Skiffle along with Folk, Funk, Punk, Soul and Rock n Roll and combine it with saucy British postcard humour. Their sound has been described as George Formby meets The Clash and is a Cabaret show in the tradition of Music Hall and Working Men's club values. They will be playing one of their 'clean' sets to kick off the Saturday main stage action. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONGVHbqFUBs&list=RDONGVHbqFUBs&start_radio=1
4:45pm	Laid Blak Laid Blak started over 20 years ago and have cemented themselves as an extremely thought after live act across the UK. The group take inspiration from Ska and Reggae but their sound has often been described as 'Street Soul', merging sounds of everything from funk and jazz to dancehall. Laid Blak have been described as the 'essential festival band' so expect fun filled sunshine dance music that keeps your feet moving and your face smiling into the evening. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NIAPZoFOXI&list=RD-NIAPZoFOXI&start_radio=1
6:30pm	Uncle Funk's Disco Inferno Established in 1997, Uncle Funk's Disco Inferno are the UK's top live disco band, regularly performing at Glastonbury Festival and many other huge events. Get ready for an incredible visual and aural experience whilst Uncle Funk's Disco Inferno play a winning set of disco classics and modern dance bangers! With the band being made of musicians who have played with the likes of Cliff Richard and Bonnie Tyler, expect extreme showmanship and musical skill. Every song in the set has been chosen with the dance-floor in mind – nothing indulgent, nothing obscure, just the hits, the perfect way to end Bedford River Festival 2026! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwFZUm6sG9w&list=RDxwFZUm6sG9w&start_radio=1



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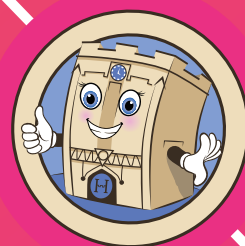
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St. Mary's Gardens: Family Island

Sponsored by **Bedford College**



The River Festival site expanded into St. Mary's Gardens in 2018 to create a chill-out zone perfect for those seeking a quieter side to the festival. In 2026 this area is kindly sponsored by [Bedford College](#) and it will be bursting with family friendly activities. The Family Island, which is aimed at tots to teenagers, will boast a packed programme of children's workshops from dance, storytelling, sensory activities, arts, crafts, fun science and interactive shows brought to you by some fantastic children's entertainers and practitioners. We can't wait to bring some exciting entertainment and create lasting memories this summer!

Workshops are free to attend, but spaces on some of the workshops will be limited, so you will need to arrive early to secure a place. If you happen to miss out, don't worry, children will be surrounded by free entertainment in this area of the site, such as the Little City Role Play Village throughout the weekend.

The Exclusive Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) family area will be located in the family area, in the same area as last time in St. Mary's Gardens. The area will be cordoned off, and will include soft play, and a dedicated bouncy castle for Children and Young People with SEND. A wide range of information will be available about events, clubs and activities for SEND families who live in Bedford Borough.

There are 4 [Changing Places toilets](#) across the River Festival Site – [River Street Car Park](#), [The Pilgrim's Progress](#), [The Higgins Bedford](#), and [Russell Park](#) (opposite the Tennis court, close to the inclusive park).

What is a RADAR toilet key?

A RADAR key opens over 9,000 locked public disabled toilets, enabling people with a disability to use locked toilet facilities across the UK. Anyone who considers themselves to have a disability is eligible for a RADAR Key.

Apply for a RADAR key

To apply for a RADAR key, please download the [RADAR toilet key application form](#) (PDF) and return it to Local Offer by post, in person or by email local.offer@bedford.gov.uk.

Once Bedford Borough Council, receive the completed form, we will call you within five working days to take payment and then issue the key.

How do I find out about all the Changing Places Toilets in Bedford Borough?

Please visit [changing places toilets available in Bedford Borough](#).

The ever popular Adventure Village will also make a triumphant return, with local activity providers [Canoe Trail](#) putting on an array of exciting problem solving, outdoor adventurous activities. This will include bushcraft demonstrations, axe throwing and a climbing wall amongst other things.

St. Mary's Gardens is also the best place to watch the Dragonboat Races from!

On the other side of the river, Riverside Square will feature a static display of unique vehicles presented by the Festival of Motoring.

St. Mary's Gardens: Family Island *continued*

Sponsored by **Bedford College**



Saturday 18th July 2026: Activity Tent

Time	Company	Activity
10:00am to 10:45am	Little Science Lab	Become a little scientist with hands-on dry ice experiments!
11:00am to 11:45am	Little Science Lab	Become a rocket designer and send your creations into orbit using an air pressure cylinder!
12:30pm to 1:30pm & 2pm to 3pm	Drama Geezers	Join The Drama Geezers for a lively, interactive Family Story Telling experience where children create their own tale through imaginative play. Together, they'll build a world full of fun, surprises, and wild adventures, then bring it to life with drawings on giant paper.
3:15pm to 5:00pm	Kaye Leidoskope	Create and decorate your own unique summer crown to wear out into the River Festival. A joyful, hands-on session full of colour, creativity, and sunshine vibes, using earth-friendly materials, run by local creative arts practitioner, Kaye Leidoskope.

Sunday 19th July 2026: Activity Tent

Time	Company	Activity
10:00am to 12:00pm	Kaye Leidoskope	Create and decorate your own unique summer crown to wear out into the River Festival. A joyful, hands-on session full of colour, creativity, and sunshine vibes, using earth-friendly materials, run by local creative arts practitioner, Kaye Leidoskope.
12:15pm to 1:00pm	Little Science Lab	Become a little scientist with hands-on dry ice experiments!
1:15pm to 2:00pm	Little Science Lab	Become a rocket designer and send your creations into orbit using an air pressure cylinder!
2:15pm to 3:00pm	Little Science Lab	Become a little scientist with hands-on dry ice experiments!
3:15pm to 4:00pm	Imajica Theatre	Immersive and interactive musical storytelling shows and sensory experiences with sign language.
4:15pm to 5:00pm	Imajica Theatre	Immersive and interactive musical storytelling shows and sensory experiences with sign language.



St. Mary's Gardens: Family Island *continued*

Sponsored by **Bedford College**



Also available throughout Saturday and Sunday

Role Play Village with Little City

Suitable for ages 6 years up.

At Little City your little ones can 'be' grown ups: where nothing is off limits, they can be the hairdresser, the firefighter, the builder, the café owner and much, much more.

Utilising their bespoke backdrops and specially selected high-quality toys and equipment, your child can fully immerse themselves in their own world and welcome you in too!

Circus Skills with Covent Garden Circus Skills

Suitable for ages 5-11.

Tabatha Ladbrook-Hutt is a former Covent Garden Street Performer with over 25 years experience in the performance and entertainment industry.

She invites all the family to try their hand at a variety of circus skills and have lots of fun along the way!

Animal Encounters with zoo keeper Jonny Young

Saturday at 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm, and Sunday at 11am, 1pm and 3pm.

Canoe and Brew

Coffee and refreshments served with love by locals.

Adventure Village Come and Try It Activities with Canoe Trail

- Climbing wall
- Axe throwing
- Archery
- Gladiator inflatable ring
- Bushcraft Activities

Book beforehand for a cheaper rate! £9 per activity: www.canoetrail.co.uk/activities/events/river-festival-come-and-try-it-activities





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Hire your very own Little City and become mayor for the day!
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Schools and nurseries

Learning through play is what we're all about!
We're here to support EYFS and Early Learning goals.



Come and explore our Little City in St Mary's Gardens during the River Festival Weekend.

www.littlecityuk.com



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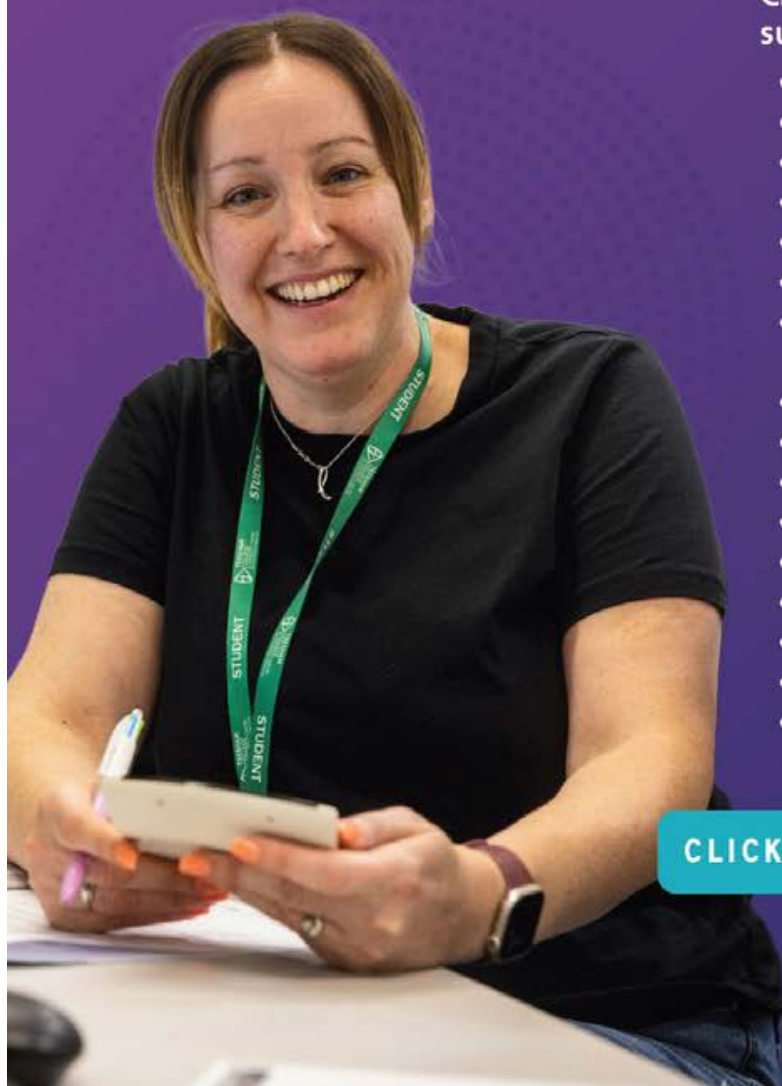
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- Land-Based (Horticulture & RHS)
- Motor Vehicle
- Plumbing & Gas
- Electrical Installation
- Teacher Education
- Skills Bootcamps



CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE

bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk



The Local Offer has up-to-the minute information on what is going on in Bedford Borough to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND) and the families / carers that support them.



For more info visit **localoffer.bedford.gov.uk** or scan the QR code with your smart phone.

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Check out
our website

familyhubs.bedford.gov.uk



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Connecting every family to support, services and things to do



Mill Meadows

Sponsored by **The Harpur Trust**



Mill Meadows is a hub of activity during the River Festival, with trade stalls galore and the ever-popular Community Stages showcasing fantastic performances from the community of Bedfordshire.

The Community Stage is kindly sponsored by [The Harpur Trust](#). This year the Community Stage will be compared by our friends at Bedford Radio.

Mill Meadows will feature an Arts & Culture area showcasing some of the fantastic local creativity. It will be a creative haven for you to enjoy and participate in a range of activities delivered by local cultural organisations and practitioners. Across both days will be a range of activities across a variety of artforms including music, dance, storytelling, poetry, visual art and crafts. Delivered collaboratively by the Bedford Cultural Partnership.

Come and explore a range of free art, performance and cultural activities at the Arts & Culture Island. Meet local arts organisations from the Bedford Cultural Partnership including Ananda Arts, Bedford Creative Arts, Heritage Bedford, Bedford Libraries, The Quarry & BedFringe and many more to find out more about what's on throughout the year, try free creative activities, and watch live dance and music performances.

This area is especially family friendly with space to participate or just watch the many talents of some of Bedford's creative community.

Mill Meadows also hosts viewing areas for the river and a vast array of trade and promotional stalls, alongside some giant inflatables and water activities.



Mill Meadows *continued*

Sponsored by **The Harpur Trust**



Bedford Radio will be hosting the Community Stage at Mill Meadows. Tune in to Bedford's local radio station for full coverage of the River Festival, announcements, interviews, chats, and travel updates. You can listen on 87.8FM (from Friday 17th July), on DAB, online at www.bedford.radio, via the dedicated smartphone app, or by asking your smart speaker to "Play Bedford Radio".



Saturday 18th July 2026: Community Stage

Time	Performer
11:00am	Olivia Lynn Olivia Lynn is a 20-year-old UK country-pop singer-songwriter whose heartfelt songwriting and modern-meets-traditional sound have already delivered multiple iTunes chart-topping singles. https://linktr.ee/olivialynnuk?utm_source=linktree_profile_share&tsid=f5c78d15-516a-44ea-baeb-d41c03aaf9b7
11:25am	Bedford Pipe Band Bedford Pipe Band plays a wide selection of mainly traditional Scottish bagpipe tunes and they perform at various events throughout the year.
12:00pm	DJ Danny Matcham The fattest and fresh tech trance and techno. https://www.tiktok.com/@djdmatcham?_r=1&_t=ZN-95Ytildbtos
12:25pm	Ragged Staff A four-piece folk band performing traditional and contemporary folk songs and tunes and who love to tell a good story. https://sites.google.com/view/ragged-staff/home
1:00pm	Inspire Performing Arts At Inspire Performing Arts, we believe that every child matters. Our children's dance classes are designed to nurture creativity, build confidence, and instil a lifelong love for dance — all in a fun and supportive environment. www.inspirepa.co.uk
1:15pm	Uprising Hailing from across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, Anglo-Polish 10 piece Uprising bring a slice of reggae sunshine to every stage they perform on, rain or shine. https://linktr.ee/uprisingreggaeband
2:00pm	Stagecoach Performing Arts Bedford Join Stagecoach Performing Arts Bedford as our Early Stages and Main Stages students (ages 4–16) bring to life a vibrant collection of well-known and much-loved musical theatre songs. www.stagecoach.co.uk/bedford
2:25pm	The Black and Gold A five-piece Irish band from Bedford featuring banjo, fiddle and harmonica for some mighty craic. Expect Irish trad tunes, folk singalongs and Irish-American bangers. https://www.instagram.com/theblackandgold.bedford
3:00pm	Rohan Regmi Rohan Regmi is a 15-year-old rising pop artist inspired by the raw emotion and powerful vocals of Alex Warren, James Arthur, and Lewis Capaldi, delivering heartfelt performances that blend contemporary pop with honest storytelling and a compelling live presence. https://www.instagram.com/rohanregmi_official

Mill Meadows *continued*

Sponsored by **The Harpur Trust**



Saturday 18th July 2026: Community Stage

Time	Performer
3:25pm	PVE With their last public performance having been at the 2016 River Festival, come and sing along to your favourite indie rock covers as the boys mark their ten-year reunion by returning to the same stage in 2026! https://www.facebook.com/ThePVE
4:00pm	Cameo Cameo is a versatile and passionate vocalist who performs an impressive range of genres, including pop, rock, country, and more. With a repertoire that spans from the 1970s to present-day hits, she brings a unique energy to every performance, connecting with audiences across generations. https://www.cameomusic.co.uk/original-music
4:25pm	Devils Mojo Devil's Mojo are a 5 piece band performing rock and pop covers. Performing mainly in Bedfordshire, Northants, Buckinghamshire the band have an eclectic song list ranging from Adele to AC/DC, Stereophonics to Greenday to Donna Summer. With female and male singers in the band, no song is off limits and together with highly skilled musicians the band always perform a great show. www.devilsmojo.co.uk
5:00pm	Bedford Youth Community Gospel Choir The Bedford Youth Community Gospel Choir will deliver an uplifting and soulful performance at the Bedford River Festival, bringing the community together through powerful harmonies and joyful energy. https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61568704664012
5:25pm	Donna Samuels Local singer Donna Samuels turns every performance into a party, delivering a crowd-pleasing mix of classic pop, Motown, disco, and rock spanning three iconic decades 60s to 80s— so come ready to dance and sing along! www.facebook.com/donnasamuelssinger
6:00pm	Rise Dance Collective Rise Dance Group offers dance classes for ages 4+, including Street, Lyrical, Adult, and Competition classes. We also provide dance parties, private lessons, wedding first dances, and much more. Where every dancer's passion shines. https://www.instagram.com/rise.dancecollective?igsh=aThoOTlvaWR6ZnF1
6:25pm	Bhangra Smash Up Bhangra Smash Up is a high energy percussion collective that fuses traditional Punjabi dhol drumming with contemporary rhythms, creating an interactive performance that gets audiences moving and celebrating together.
7:00pm	WondRWomN WondRWomN brings raw lyricism and effortless flow over hard-hitting beats, delivering high energy with a bold, unapologetic pink aesthetic. https://www.instagram.com/wxndrwxmn
7:25pm	Carbon Daydreams Bedford band Carbon Daydreams create their own brand of melodic, high-tempo 80s-inspired indie music, featuring infectious guitar hooks and disco-inspired rhythms to get you dancing. https://www.facebook.com/carbondaydreams

Mill Meadows *continued*

Sponsored by **The Harpur Trust**



Saturday 18th July 2026: Community Stage

Time	Performer
8:00pm	Dave Bergin presents GoodTimes - 'Back to the 90s' Dave Bergin presents Good Times – 'Back to the 90s': a dynamic, high-energy stage show featuring live vinyl DJing, bringing the crowd together for an unforgettable journey through 90s dance classics. https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559739717404
8:25pm	Frenzy Bedford-based indie rockers FRENZY have been described as a 'masterful blend of sounds from different eras, with influences ranging from CAKE and The Sex Pistols to Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" (Rock the Pigeon). Known for their high energy storytelling and distinctive mix of male and female vocals, the band are guaranteed to get you in a Frenzy™. https://www.instagram.com/frenzy_the_band/

Sunday 19th July 2026: Community Stage

Time	Performer
11:00am	Buskerteers Choir Bedford The Buskerteers Choir are an award-winning community choir, focused on bringing people together and raising money for charity. This performance features the newly re-launched Bedford choir. https://www.buskerteerschoir.com
11:25am	Robbie Herrick Blending country, pop, and romance into his unique and emotive style, Robbie Herrick creates music that tugs at the heartstrings. With influences ranging from Stereophonics right through to Nashville, Robbie's material is stirring and poignant, delivered with a no-nonsense style and a dose of cheeky charm. https://www.instagram.com/robbieherrick?igsh=MTBsdTQ1aTg5Yjd0ZA%3D%3D&utm_source=qr
12:00pm	Swingsters Swingsters.co.uk bring high-energy vintage flair to the Bedford River Festival with a lively Swing dance performance that captures the spirit and joy of the Jazz age. https://swingsters.co.uk/
12:25pm	Simit Maroon Simit Maroon blends punk, reggae, and ska, using their music as a powerful stand against injustice and poverty. https://www.tiktok.com/@simit562
1:00pm	Bedford College A montage of songs from musicals - including A Chorus Line. Performed by level 3 UAL Extended Diploma Performing & Production Arts students. https://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk/
2:00pm	Fight Klub DnB Workout Fight Klub is the high intensity fun workout that makes getting in shape an addiction. Set to music, the programme is a combination of boxing, kick boxing and dance.
2:25pm	Bruce Duke Trio The Bruce Duke Trio plays a collection of soul and jazz songs from vintage classics to the latest releases to connect with all generations of music lovers. Featuring songs from Nina Simone, Michael Buble, Laufey, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Fats Waller, Ray Charles and many more. Classy and cheerful and will get the crowd grooving with every tune!

Mill Meadows *continued*

Sponsored by **The Harpur Trust**



Sunday 19th July 2026: Community Stage

Time	Performer
3:00pm	Capricorn Performing Arts Capricorn Performing Arts is home to a vibrant community of local talent across all ages and disciplines, and we can't wait to light up the stage this summer!
3:25pm	Fe Salomon Fe has been captivating audiences across the UK and Europe, gaining a reputation for her volcanic stage presence and immersive live performances. She has appeared at festivals including Shambala Festival, NorthSide Festival, Denmark and Johannismacht, Germany. www.fesalomon.com
4:00pm	FUZE Dance Company FUZE Dance Company was originally established back in 2016 and ran for 5.5 successful years. FUZE took a 4 year break where they relocated to Bedford and reopened back in September of last year. Styles offered include Street Dance, and Cheerleading, and from October, there will also be Musical Theatre Dance offered as well as Contemporary Dance being in the pipeline! The sole owner, Jemma, has over 20 years experience in the dancing industry, and would love to welcome some new faces to her ever growing dance family. www.fuzedancecompany.co.uk
4:25pm	The Krakens A dynasty and versatile 4 piece rock covers band! Playing anthems through the ages! https://www.instagram.com/the_krakens_band?igsh=bmsxejAzMzBoOGps&utm_source=qr



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Sundays from 3pm to 5pm
Mill Meadows Bandstand
The Embankment, Bedford

Music *in the* Meadows



The Summer Bandstand Concerts
return to the Embankment
Bandstand this August.

Come along, bring the family
& a picnic and enjoy two hours
of traditional bandstand music...

2 nd August 2026	Bedford Town Band
9 th August 2026	May Blossom Vintage Songbird
16 th August 2026	Fynnius Fogg (2pm to 5pm)
23 rd August 2026	South Beds Concert Band



Bands on the Bridge at the Bedford River Festival

If you enjoy the Music in the Meadows Concerts, then join us on
Town Bridge on Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th July...

Saturday 18 th July 2026	11:00am to 12:30pm 1:30pm to 3:00pm 4:00pm to 5:30pm 6:30pm to 8:00pm	Luton Concert Band Mainline Big Band Ukulele Bedford Bedford Town Band
Sunday 19 th July 2026	11:00am to 12:30pm 1:30pm to 3:00pm 4:00pm to 5:30pm	Bedford Town Concert Brass Sax's Cool The Also-Rans



events@bedford.gov.uk



www.bedford.gov.uk



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[@Bedford Events](https://www.facebook.com/BedfordEvents)

River Activities: Water Sports Arena

Coordinated by **Canoe Trail**



Water Sports Arena Brings High-Energy Action to Bedford River Festival Weekend!

Visitors to this year's Bedford River Festival can expect a splash of excitement as the Water Sports Arena returns for two action-packed days on both Saturday and Sunday. Perfectly positioned next to the Butterfly Bridge and the Rowing Club, the arena will transform the river into a hub of thrilling demonstrations and hands-on water activities for all ages.

Coordinated by [Canoe Trail](#), the Water Sports Arena brings together expert instructors and passionate paddlers to deliver a safe, engaging, and memorable experience for festivalgoers of all abilities.

A major highlight of the weekend will be the impressive large ramp installation, where skilled paddlers will perform spectacular canoe flips and freestyle tricks, showcasing agility, balance, and precision on the water.

Festivalgoers won't just be watching from the sidelines — the Water Sports Arena offers a range of “come and try it” sessions, giving attendees the chance to get out on the water themselves. Activities include Stand Up Paddleboarding, Canoeing, and Kayaking, with experienced instructors on hand to guide beginners and build confidence.

For those looking for something a little more adventurous, the arena will also host zorbing sessions and lively water obstacle races, promising fun, laughter, and a bit of friendly competition throughout the weekend.

On Sunday, the excitement continues with a fast-paced Canoe Polo match, where teams will battle it out in a thrilling display of skill, teamwork, and strategy on the water.

Whether you're an experienced paddler or a curious first-timer, the Water Sports Arena offers something for everyone — making it a must-visit destination at this year's Bedford River Festival.

Big Air Ramp Displays

Members of GB Freestyle and World Champion Ian Whitcombe, Local GB Paddler Dean Buckingham, and a host of other stars. Saturday at 11am, 1:30pm, 3pm and 5pm, and Sunday at 12pm, 2pm and 3:30pm.

Activity Races

Races for young people through charity partners each morning on both Saturday and Sunday.

Slalom Demo

With Olympic Medallist Helen Reeves and Viking Kayak Club. Saturday at 11:30am.

Come and Try It Activities:

- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Zorbing

Book beforehand for a cheaper rate! £9 per activity: www.canoetrail.co.uk/activities/events/river-festival-come-and-try-it-activities





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PADDLE ON

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Green Earth Lounge



Produced by **Green Earth Café**

Green Earth Vegan Lounge, situated on Castle Mound, offers a vibrant mix of vegan food, drinks, and ethical products, alongside live demonstrations of willow weaving and wood turning. Families can enjoy nature-inspired children's activities hosted by the Forest of Marston Vale.

Music throughout the event will be provided by Remedy Collective, a Bedford-based group showcasing talented acts from across the UK. Visitors can also relax in dedicated chill-out spaces and explore the Wellbeing Tent, hosted by Bedford's new Wellbeing Hub making its River Festival debut. The programme includes calming and restorative sessions such as Reiki, Qigong demonstrations, and sound baths.

Castle Mound has long offered an excellent viewing spot for the various river activities taking place throughout the festival weekend, including the racing and the Illuminated Boat Parade on Saturday evening. Visitors can enjoy the catering options on offer or bring a picnic.

Saturday 18th July 2026: Green Earth Lounge

Time	Activity
11:00am	Confidence through Dance (all ages) with Audrey from Wellbeing Studio
1:00pm	Reiki Demonstration with Courtney from LotuSpirit
2:00pm	Cacao Ceremony with Lenka from Cacaopura
3:00pm	Relaxation with Dominka from Relief Therapies

Sunday 19th July 2026: Green Earth Lounge

Time	Activity
11:00am	Introduction to Self-Head Massage with Anne from Mindfulness & Massage
12:00pm	Qigong/Tai Chi Taster Session with Chris from Body Aware
1:00pm	Nutrition, Healing and Mindset Liberation Tools with Sharon from Sharon Soul Sanctuary
2:00pm	Soundbath with Victoria from Celestial Sound Healing







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Stop for a bite to eat at our Runway Café as you enjoy the view of our live grass airfield, or head to the Engineering Workshop to see our in-house engineering team at work.

Make the most of our 60+ years' experience and get a real taste of the action with one of our spectacular live air shows, running throughout the summer.

Looking for an iconic venue for your next family celebration or corporate event? Shuttleworth House, an award-winning wedding and events venue, forms part of our stunning Grade II* listed estate.

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Riverside Afternoon Tea at the Mercure Bedford Centre Hotel

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£30.00 for 2 people

Add a glass of Prosecco for £7.00 per adult available from Midday till 3pm — we look forward to welcoming you!

Pre booking recommended, walk ins welcome, subject to availability

Contact our team to book

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Email: Colin.Watts@accor.com

The Embankment

sponsored by **Jewson Partnership Solutions**



Bedford's Victorian Embankment Promenade is often described as 'the jewel in Bedford's crown'.

It becomes a hive of activity during the River Festival when it becomes home to the Festival Market and a multitude of trade stalls, making it the perfect place to peruse a wide variety of both local and regional goods and maybe to pick up a unique souvenir or gift. You can also keep an eye on the various river activities taking place as you stroll along the riverside.

The Embankment is also perfect for viewing the river activities which take place throughout the duration of the Festival, including the various boat parades and thrilling water demonstrations.

BBC
introducing... [BBC Introducing Three Counties & Northants](#) are proud to present a handpicked showcase of the region's most exciting talent.

Curated by the UK platform dedicated to discovering and supporting new music, this stage brings together a diverse lineup of emerging artists making serious waves locally and nationally.

Expect infectious country-pop from Olivia Lynn, who recently played at Country to Country Festival 2026, the atmospheric indie sounds of Spaceacre who supported Skunk Anansie's sold out show at The Great Escape in Brighton back in 2025, heartfelt songwriting from Joe Cullen, and genre-blending energy from Beattie, who will be a big hit with fans of Radiohead.

From fresh new voices to future festival headliners, BBC Introducing shines a spotlight on the artists you need to hear first. Come down, and discover your next favourite artist!

Saturday 18th July 2026: BBC Introducing Stage

Time	Performer
1:00pm	Luke White Luke White is a singer-songwriter living in Barton le Clay, whose guitar-based music, storytelling and heartfelt lyricism mirror his influences, which include Dermot Kennedy, Ben Howard and James Blunt. He describes Bedfordshire venues as a safe haven where he learned his craft as an artist.
2:00pm	Louis Theron An independent, multi-instrumentalist artist based in Luton - writing, recording and producing his own indiepop music. Drawing influence from the likes of Declan McKenna, Wunderhorse, Myles Smith and King Krule.
3:00pm	Joe Cullen A self-taught singer songwriter from Luton making a fusion of indie-pop and rock music.
4:00pm	Givemeyourteeth Givemeyourteeth, from Bedfordshire, is creating rock music people can resonate with and has been a featured artist on Radio 1 Introducing.
5:00pm	Kirsten Knight Kirstin is a singer songwriter based in the UK blending Afrobeats and RnB. She has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Islington Assembly Hall, The Natural History Museum and The O2.
6:00pm	Bettina BCB Bettina is a rising new artist bringing together her British heritage with elements of R&B, pop and hip-hop to the global stage. Her music is reminiscent of early 2000s Timbaland-era pop, but with a fresh, modern twist.

The Embankment *continued*

sponsored by **Jewson Partnership Solutions**



Saturday 18th July 2026: BBC Introducing Stage

Time	Performer
7:00pm	Olivia Lynn Winner of Luton's Young Achiever Award 2021, A young and extremely ambitious up-and-coming UK Country Pop singer/ songwriter. Prior festivals including Country on the Coast, The Longest Day Festival, The Buck N Bull Saloon and Country 2 Country.

Sunday 19th July 2026: BBC Introducing Stage

Time	Performer
1:00pm	Jay Orosz A new and upcoming solo artist from Northampton making RnB / Hip-hop / pop music with influence from the likes of Justin Timberlake, Michael Jackson and The Weekend.
2:00pm	Megaphoney The indie pop solo project of British Indo-Caribbean multi-instrumentalist, Peter Marchant (former frontman of award-winning indietronica band Phantom Isle) - Marchant plays all instruments and produces all of the project's music on record. Awash with the warmth of 70s hitmakers like Queen and Supertramp with precise, meticulous humorous songwriting.
3:00pm	Blame Caesar A high-energy indie-rock five-piece from Bedfordshire, known for their passionate live performances and catchy, anthemic songwriting. With a sound that blends modern indie sensibilities with classic rock influences, Blame Caesar's music captures raw emotion through powerful vocals, intricate guitar work, and tight, driving rhythms.
4:00pm	Beattie Beattie's voice captivates, shifting from delicate vulnerability to gothic power—a haunting mix of Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval and Lana Del Rey, with hints of PJ Harvey and Elliott Smith. Her raw, journal-like lyrics explore young adulthood: navigating city life, losing innocence, and ending relationships, elevated by her poetic phrasing.
5:00pm	Essy Maliya A fresh and new artist, lyricist and instrumentalist who has broken onto the R&B scene with a bang. Her style is heavily influenced from the heavy R&B spirit still thriving to this day, with her sound drawing inspiration from the likes of icons like Summer Walker and Aaliyah.
6:00pm	Greensands A 4 piece alternative rock band from Ampthill and Flitwick, met in secondary school and have been great friends ever since which we think translates a lot into our energetic and emotional live performances. We have been gigging playing together for around 3 years playing in Manchester, London and several festivals.
7:00pm	SpaceAcre An alt rock duo known for their raw, emotive sound and unapologetically bold lyrics. Blending elements of gritty guitars, introspective storytelling and infectious hooks, they have carved a space in the UK indie scene with their fiercely DIY ethos. With their raw energy, heartfelt lyrics, and passionate advocacy for LGBTQ+ representation in music, SpaceAcre continues to push boundaries, connecting with listeners across the globe.



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Sports Island



Sponsored by **Better - Bedford's Leisure Provider**

The Sports Island, kindly sponsored by [Better, Bedford's Leisure Provider](#), is situated beside the Butterfly Bridge—one of the main crossings over the River Ouse—welcomes thousands of visitors to take part in, watch, and explore a wide variety of sports, health, and leisure activities.

At the heart of the event is a lively programme of sporting demonstrations, interactive “come and try” sessions, and a dynamic stage packed with exercise classes, acrobatics, and dance performances. Whether you're keen to get involved or simply enjoy the spectacle, there's something for everyone.

The ethos of the Sports Island is to inspire people of all ages and abilities to have fun and stay active. If you're thinking about trying a new sport or rediscovering an old favourite, this is the perfect place to see what Bedford has to offer. Local clubs, organisations, and gyms will be on hand to provide information, advice, and opportunities to get involved.

Visitors can enjoy a diverse range of activities, including back massages, canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, rugby skills sessions, gymnastics, line dancing, cheerleading demonstrations, squash activities, and even a climbing wall.

Bedford Borough Council
**Active Wellbeing
 & Sports Development Unit**
www.bedford.gov.uk/sport

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Sports Island *continued*



Sponsored by **Better - Bedford's Leisure Provider**

Saturday 18th July 2026: Sports Stage

Time	Activity
10am to 10:45am	Come and try Yoga class <i>with Mo from Better</i> Mo will take you through a gentle yet effective yoga class that focuses on mindful movement, controlled breathing, and full-body awareness. Drawing from practices like Ashtanga Yoga and Yin Yoga, this session helps release tension, improve posture, and enhance flexibility. Ideal for both beginners and experienced participants.
11:00am	Fundamentalz Dance Limited
11:20am	DL Dance
11:40am	Kinetic Vibes Dance Academy
12:00pm	Swingsters.co.uk
12:20pm	VyMy Dancing & Fitness
12:40pm	Mike's Line Dancing
1:00pm	UFM Community Dance Group
1:40pm	Bedford Bhangra Classes
2:00pm	FUZE Dance Company
2:20pm	Street Squad & Show Squad
2:40pm	Elements Elite
3:00pm	Fight Klub DnB Workout
3:20pm	Street Squad & Show Squad
3:40pm	Inspire Performance Arts
4:00pm	Inspire Performance Arts
4:20pm	Mike's Line Dancing
4:40pm	Bedford Kendo Club



Sunday 19th July 2026: Sports Stage

Time	Activity
10am to 10:45am	Come and try Yoga class <i>with Maite from Peacethru yoga</i> A calming and rejuvenating yoga class designed to strengthen the body and relax the mind. Through a series of flowing postures inspired by Hatha Yoga and Vinyasa Yoga, participants improve flexibility, balance, and overall well-being. The session also incorporates mindful breathing and relaxation techniques, helping to reduce stress and promote inner peace. Suitable for all levels, this class offers a supportive space to unwind and reconnect.
11am to 11:45am	Come and try a mix of Fitness Classes <i>with Ginny, Rebecca, Cornelia and others from Better</i> A dynamic and energizing fitness class that combines strength, cardio, and fun all in one session. It blends the muscle-toning power of BodyPump, the high-energy dance moves of Zumba, and overall fitness training to improve endurance, flexibility, and strength. Perfect for all levels, this class keeps you motivated while delivering a full-body workout.
12:00pm	Rise Dance Collective
12:20pm	VyMy Dancing & Fitness
12:40pm	Mike's Line Dancing
1:00pm	UFM Community Dance Group
1:40pm	Swingsters.co.uk
2:00pm	Belle Etoile Dance
2:20pm	DN Dance
2:40pm	Elements Elite
3:00pm	Fight Klub DnB Workout
3:20pm	Belle Etoile Dance
3:40pm	Swingsters.co.uk
4:00pm	Nritham Dance Academy
4:20pm	Mike's Line Dancing
4:40pm	Bedford Kendo Club

Sports Island *continued*

Sponsored by **Better - Bedford's Leisure Provider**



Tennis at Russell Park

Join [Bedford Parks Tennis](#) at Russell Park for an exciting weekend of tennis!

Their FREE Taster Sessions run across both Saturday and Sunday, from 11:00am to 4:30pm, giving you plenty of opportunity to get involved. These sessions are ideal for children aged 4–15 and adults of all abilities who want to try tennis in a fun, friendly, and supportive environment. With activities tailored to different age groups — including the Blue/Red sessions for younger players (ages 4–7) and sessions for adults (16+) — there's something for everyone throughout the weekend. Spaces are limited, so be sure to book in advance to secure your place and experience the joy of tennis.

Location: Russell Park tennis courts – at the back of the park, behind the kiosk and next to the play area.

This is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy free coaching and make the most of the newly refurbished tennis courts — don't miss out!

Saturday 18th July 2026: Russell Park Tennis Courts

Pre-book to avoid disappointment:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/RussellPark2/EventsV2/Summary/553fb591-1061-4279-a09c-e4585284337a>

Time	Activity
11:00am to 11:30am	Children aged 4-7 years (Blue/Red Ball Taster Sessions)
11:30am to 12:00pm	Children aged 4-7 years (Blue/Red Ball Taster Sessions)
12:00pm to 12:30pm	Children aged 8-10 years (Orange/Green Ball Taster Session)
12:30pm to 1:00pm	Children aged 11-15 years (Yellow Ball Taster Sessions)
1:00pm to 1:30pm	Adult Coaching Taster Session
2:00pm to 2:30pm	Children aged 4-7 years (Blue/Red Ball Taster Sessions)
2:30pm to 3:00pm	Children aged 4-7 years (Blue/Red Ball Taster Sessions)
3:00pm to 3:30pm	Children aged 8-10 years (Orange/Green Ball Taster Session)
3:30pm to 4:00pm	Children aged 11-15 years (Yellow Ball Taster Sessions)
4:00pm to 4:30pm	Adult Coaching Taster Session

Sunday 19th July 2026: Russell Park Tennis Courts

Pre-book to avoid disappointment:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/RussellPark2/EventsV2/Summary/81a6b6c6-ede3-4a15-85e2-be4bfc208975>

Time	Activity
11:00am to 11:30am	Children aged 4-7 years (Blue/Red Ball Taster Sessions)
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3:30pm to 4:00pm	Children aged 11-15 years (Yellow Ball Taster Sessions)
4:00pm to 4:30pm	Adult Coaching Taster Session

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Bedford Town Centre

sponsored by **Breheny Civil Engineering**



Visit Bedford High Street to not only see the wonderful businesses and hospitality options that we have all year round but also to admire the display of the Festival of Motoring.

Successfully debuting at the 2022 Bedford River Festival, the Festival of Motoring wowed the crowds with exceptional vehicles of all ages and types. These will be found not only on the High Street, but also on St. Paul's Square, Riverside Square and on Harpur Square. Remember if you want to see these vehicles in motion then the Festival of Motoring will depart the site at 5pm both days.

Town Bridge is known for being an ideal location to view the river activities, and the bridge will also host traditional bands performing in our 'Bands on the Bridge' area. Pull up a chair and relax to some rousing classical tunes performed by some of the best bands in Bedfordshire.

Saturday 18th July 2026: Bands on the Bridge

Time	Activity
11:00am to 12:30pm	Luton Concert Band
1:30pm to 3pm	Mainline Big Band
4:00pm to 5:30pm	Ukulele Bedford
6:30pm to 8pm	Bedford Town Band

Sunday 19th July 2026: Bands on the Bridge

Time	Activity
11:00am to 12:30pm	Bedford Town Concert Brass
1:30pm to 3pm	Sax's Cool
4:00pm to 5:30pm	The Also-Rans

Proud sponsors of *Bedford River Festival 2026*

Kirkby Diamond, part of BTG Eddisons – your local changemakers in real estate and business.

We know the importance of community through working locally with commercial and industrial property owners and occupiers, and supporting events like this mean that our local communities can continue to thrive.



For more information
www.eddisons.com





Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime

19th to 31st December 2026 at Bedford Corn Exchange

Forced to sell his family cow for magic beans (which grow into a giant beanstalk!) Jack seeks adventure and riches at the top of the beanstalk where he stumbles upon a castle – home to a fierce Giant! Experience a traditional, professional production with lots of Fe-Fi-Fo-FUN!

Various Times Tickets: From £18.00 Venue: Main Auditorium

For more information: <https://www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk/events/jack-and-the-beanstalk/>

Bedford Markets

Charter Granted 1166

- **Charter Market**
every Wednesday and Saturday
- **Kempston Market**
every Thursday



email: markets@bedford.gov.uk



/BedfordMarket



/bedfordmarkets





H

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BEDFORD

FREE ENTRY

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H
the Higgins
BEDFORD

Enjoy permanent displays of archaeology, social history and ethnography that tell the story of Bedfordshire's development over time alongside collections of fine and decorative art. There are temporary art exhibitions, tours and talks, wellbeing and family activities.

How to find us

The Higgins Bedford, Castle Lane,
Bedford, MK40 3XD

www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

or call us on **01234 718618**

Open

Tuesday – Saturday: 11am – 5pm

Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday:

2pm – 5pm

Closed on Mondays



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

[f TheHigginsBedford](https://www.facebook.com/TheHigginsBedford)

[@ thehigginsbedford](https://www.instagram.com/thehigginsbedford)

BEDFORD'S MOST WUTHERING HEIGHTS DAY EVER 2026

A GIANT KATE BUSH-INSPIRED CELEBRATION OF JOY AND INCLUSIVITY

NO DANCE EXPERIENCE NEEDED  ALL AGES WELCOME  WEAR RED AND JOIN IN!

KATE BUSH FAN?
NEVER DANCED
BEFORE?
PERFECT.
COME AND
JOIN US!




SATURDAY
18TH JULY
2026


JOIN US AT
12 NOON


ST PAUL'S SQUARE,
BEDFORD

WHAT IS A WUTHERING DAY?

Every year, people around the world dress in red and perform the famous dance from Kate Bush's Wuthering Heights.

For the first time ever, our lovely town is joining the fun as part of **Bedford River Festival 2026**.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN THE DANCE,
JOIN THE EVENT AND FIND OUT MORE!



 QUESTIONS?
bedfordwuthering@gmail.com

FOLLOW US  Bedford Wuthering

 @bedfordwuthering

AS PART OF  BEDFORD RIVER FESTIVAL 2026 

Bedford Festival of Motoring

sponsored by **Breheny Civil Engineering**



The Bedford Festival of Motoring is set to transform Bedford Town Centre into a vibrant celebration of engineering, design, and automotive passion. Over the course of the weekend, the streets will come alive with the sights and sounds of hundreds of amazing and unique vehicles, stretching from the High Street down through Mill Street, Riverside Square, and St. Paul's Square. It's an event that brings together enthusiasts, families, and curious visitors alike, all drawn by a shared appreciation for anything with an engine.

From beautifully restored classic cars to sleek modern sports cars, the festival offers a remarkable variety of vehicles on display. Visitors can expect to see everything from iconic Minis to imposing tanks, each with its own story and character. Whether you're a lifelong motoring enthusiast or simply enjoy admiring impressive machinery, there's something here to capture your imagination.

More than just a static display, the festival creates a lively and welcoming atmosphere in the heart of Bedford.

Don't forget approximately 5pm on both days Motoring Festival will lead a cavalcade of many of the featured vehicles through town to where they can head for home.

The Bedford Festival of Motoring is an opportunity to stroll through the town centre, explore the diverse lineup of vehicles, and connect with owners and fellow fans. With such a wide range of exhibits, the Bedford Festival of Motoring truly offers something for everyone—as long as it has an engine attached.

Nellie - 1963 Morris Traveller

Meet Nellie - a 1963 Morris Traveller with a true dual personality, built by B.M.C. during a unique crossover period using parts from both the outgoing and incoming models. She blends vintage charm with evolving style, from her duo-tone interior to the quirky "clap hands" wipers, while originally featuring the newer 1098cc engine of her era; today, however, she's been transformed with a lively 1275cc Morris Marina engine, enhanced further by a rare period Shorrock supercharger for an extra burst of character and performance. Thoughtfully upgraded with power-assisted front disc brakes for improved safety, Nellie is more than just a classic, she's a captivating mix of nostalgia and spirited engineering, making every drive an experience.



Clara - 1904 Ford Model C

Meet Clara - a remarkable 1904 Ford Model C and a rare survivor from the very dawn of motoring, with only around 850 ever built. Named after Henry Ford's wife, she carries not just history but prestige, having been presented in 1926 by the Ford Motor Company to the Bedfordshire Autocar Co. in recognition of their outstanding success selling the legendary Model T, "the car that put the world on wheels." With a top speed of 30–35 mph (depending, charmingly, on the wind) and a price of £230 when new, Clara embodies the pioneering spirit of early motoring, blending elegance, heritage, and a story that connects Bedford directly to the rise of one of the world's most iconic automotive empires.





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of the Bedford River
Festival 2026**



For any enquiries please contact us at: **Breheny Civil Engineering Ltd (Head Office)**
Flordon Road, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 8NH

☎ 01449 720282
✉ enquiry@breheny.co.uk
💻 breheny.co.uk

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Bedford Music Service Stage

The Bedford Music Service Stage, located in Harpur Square, will showcase an exciting line-up of young local talent. Audiences can enjoy performances from singers, instrumentalists, beatboxers, rappers, DJs, and aspiring rock stars.



Through its Creating Musical Pathways initiative, Bedford Music Service is committed to ensuring that all children and young people across Bedford Borough have access to high-quality, inclusive, and diverse musical opportunities, along with clear routes for progression.

Saturday 18th July 2026: Bedford Music Service Stage

Time	Performer
11:00am to 12:00pm	JFS - DJ Jake, DJ Finn & DJ Spenny (House, Garage, DnB) Dylan (Singer/guitarist) Pink Sparks (Rock band from Goldington Academy) Friday Flyers Jazz Band
12:00pm to 1:00pm	DJ Rae (Pop & Dance) Music Centre Rock Band (Saturday morning student rock band) Hi-Jinx (Rock band from Goldington Academy)
1:00pm to 2:00pm	DJ Jake & DJ Hawke (House) Ursula Taylor C of E School Choir & Church Band Edith Dog (Ron band from Bedford Modern School)
2:00pm to 3:00pm	Creative Beats (Tracks produced by music tech students) Keeley (Solo singer) Vocal Beats (Youth beatbox and rap group) Doppelgänger (Bedford Rockschoool band)
3:00pm to 4:00pm	DJ Hawke (House) Eudamonia (Bedford Rockschoool band) Georgia (Solo singer) Choral Connections
4:00pm to 5:00pm	DJ TJ (Alternative Pop) Sophia (Solo singer) Chemical Garden (Bedford Rockschoool band) Celice & Sophie (Duo from Bedford College)
5:00pm to 5:30pm	Plus One (Student rock band)

Enter The Bedford Music Services competition to win 1 of 10 pairs of headphones

<https://bedfordmusic.org.uk/activities/river-festival/>



Bedford Music Service Stage *continued*

Sunday 19th July 2026: Bedford Music Service Stage

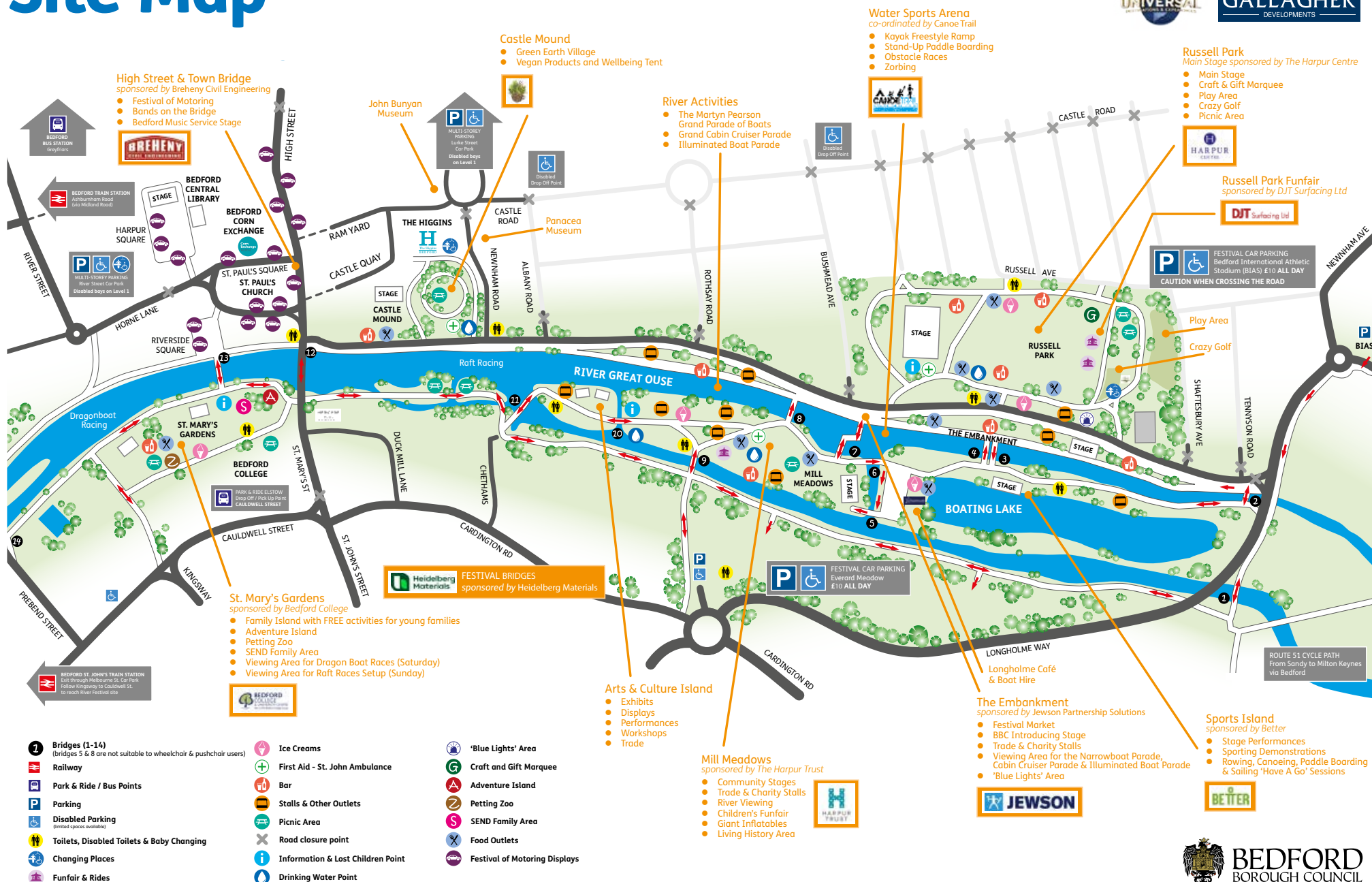
Time	Performer
11:00am to 12:00pm	DJ Flo (Garage & Pop) Philharmonia and Intermediate Wind (Friday Flyers students & members of the Philharmonia Orchestra)
12:00pm to 1:00pm	BIG C (UK Hip Hop, DnB, Garage, Pop) Bedford Road School Choir Aztec (Bedford Rockscool Band) Abbie (Solo singer accompanied by guitarist)
1:00pm to 2:00pm	DJ Rainford (R&B) St John's School Choir Andromeda (Bedford Rockscool Band) Sunnie (Solo singer from Bedford College)
2:00pm to 3:00pm	DJ TJ (Alternative Hip Hop) Great Denham School Choir The Deities (Rock band from Bedford College) Grace (Solo singer)
3:00pm to 4:00pm	DJ Riccardo (Dance & Pop) Bedfordshire Youth Opera (Members of Bedford Youth Opera perform a short excerpt) Dear Neptune (Bedford Rockscool band)
4:00pm to 5:00pm	Goldington Steel Pans (Students from Goldington Academy) Bedford All Star Juniors (Students from Steel Pan Academy) Bedford All Stars (Tuesday and Thursday evening adult groups)



Site Map



HEADLINE SPONSORS



Accessible Site Map

BEDFORD RIVER FESTIVAL | 18TH & 19TH JULY 2026

For more information visit www.bedford.gov.uk/riverfestival



1 Bridges (1-14)
(bridges 5 & 8 are not suitable to wheelchair & pushchair users so have been taken off this map)

Railway

Park & Ride / Bus Points

Parking

Disabled Parking
(limited spaces available)

Toilets, Disabled Toilets & Baby Changing

Changing Places

First Aid - St. John Ambulance

Road closure point

Information & Lost Children Point

Drinking Water Point

SEND Family Area

HEADLINE SPONSORS



Forever Our Harbour Master

Martyn Pearson 04.05.1954 – 13.12.2025

Sadly, our Bedford River Festival Harbour Master passed away last year.

Martyn was involved in the organising of the very first River Festival back in 1978 and had remained heavily involved in every River Festival since.

His passion, his knowledge and experience of everything related to the river will be greatly missed by everyone involved in the event.

Martyn's enthusiasm for events extended far beyond the River Festival as he was also involved in organising many charitable events over the years which raised considerable amounts of money for local charities.

He was also involved for many years in the TA, joining the Beds and Herts regiment as a boy. When it disbanded, he transferred to the HAC and in more recent years he was proud to be part of the Honourable Company of Pikemen and Musketeers.

Martyn truly was a remarkable man.

Martyn was incredibly proud of the Grand Parade of boats at each River Festival – so from this year The Grand Parade of Boats will be named in his honour and will be called the “The Martyn Pearson Grand Parade of Boats.”



Food & Drink

Tickle those Taste Buds!

Across this year's Bedford River Festival site you will find a wonderful selection of food and drink.

With many caterers, including some exclusively selling vegan cuisine, and of course ice cream vans, you should find it easy to find something yummy to chow down on.

There are also 9 festival bars across the event site, to ensure that you can stay hydrated throughout your visit.

The bars provided by 3B1G Events Ltd will be highlighting their environmental credentials and supporting the ethos of the festival by operating a reusable cup scheme. At each bar there will be an area for customers to return their cups should they not wish to continue the cups life by taking it home. Cups returned to the bar will be sterilised in readiness for a future event (there will be a charge for your first cup).

Russell Park

- 3 Festival Bars
- Caribbean
- Vegan Caribbean
- Chicken Shack
- Gourmet Burgers
- Greek
- Hog Roast
- Indian Street Food
- Loaded Duck
- Noodles – Chinese / Japanese
- Wings and Fries

Family Island (St. Mary's Gardens)

- Festival Bar
- Burgers
- Hot Dogs
- Fries
- Pizza

Mill Meadows

- Festival Bar
- Caribbean Food
- Carvery
- Chicken Dishes
- Duck Wraps and Burgers
- Gourmet Burgers
- Kababs Remove line please
- Noodles
- Shawarma Lebanese Pittas
- Wood Fired Pizza

Green Earth Village

- Festival Bar
- Vegan Indian
- Vegan Stews
- Raw Vegan Salads and Roti Wraps

Harpur Square

- Festival Bar
- Caribbean, American and BBQ Soul Food
- Sandwiches

The Embankment

- 3 Festival Bars
- Festival Market including Kielbasa sausage, tacos, burritos, Yorkshire pudding wraps, Wok man, Gyros Kebab, Exotic Meat burgers, Katsu Noodles, various sweets treats, and many more
- African Cuisine
- Loaded Nachos
- Malaysian Food
- Smashed Avocado on Toast
- Thai Food

Sports Island

- Caribbean
- Indian



19th & 20th June 2027

Open 10am to 4pm each day
on Russell Park, The Embankment
& Mill Meadows

- Food & Drink • Vehicle Exhibitions • Kite Flyers & Demonstrations • Vegan Fair • Inflatables • Crafts •
- Traditional Funfair • Watersports • Trade Stalls • Dragon Boats (Sunday) • Bandstand Concerts •

For Trader / Exhibitor / Sponsorship opportunities
please contact the Events Team

@ events@bedford.gov.uk
[www.bedford.gov.uk/
kiteandmotoringfestival](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/kiteandmotoringfestival)

To find out more about this and other activities
going on all year round in Bedford's parks
please follow one of our digital platforms

f @BedfordEvents
 @bedfordevents
 @BedfordEventsUK

Supported by the Town Centre Priority Fund
- a short walk from the event is Bedford
Town Centre, why not give it a visit!

THU 02 JULY



DEACON BLUE

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUESTS
LIGHTNING SEEDS

FRI 03 JULY



UB40

featuring **ALI CAMPBELL**

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

BITTY MCLEAN & REGGAE ROAST
FEATURING MC HORSEMAN

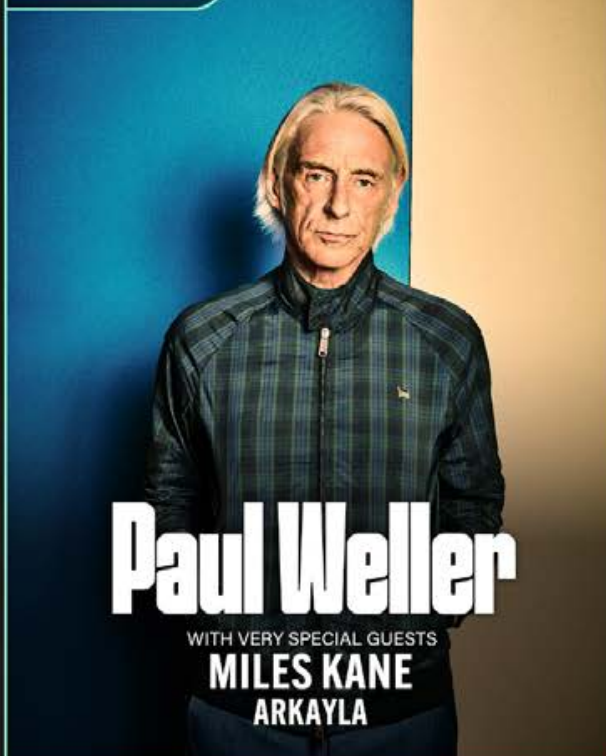
SAT 04 JULY

LAST FEW



TOM GRENNAN

SUN 05 JULY



Paul Weller

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

MILES KANE
ARKAYLA

T.k.maxx PRESENTS
BEDFORD SUMMER SESSIONS

TICKETS → [SMMR.SE/BEDFORD](https://smmr.se/bedford)
[@BEDFORDSMMR](https://twitter.com/BEDFORDSMMR)



Heidelberg Materials

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UK'S
FIRST**

**Driving
innovation,
right here
in Bedford**

heidelbergmaterials.co.uk

Image: The UK's first hydrogen-fuelled, low-carbon asphalt plant, Criggion.



We have delivered a **pioneering road resurfacing trial** using a new single-layer asphalt mix, **Bedford Asphalt Surface Course (BASC)**, developed through the Bedford Network Innovation Partnership.

We're also delivering these UK and world-firsts:

- The UK's first hydrogen-fuelled, low-carbon asphalt at our Criggion plant
- Carbon-captured near-zero cement: **evozero**
- A carbon-capture facility enabling fully decarbonised cement production in Padeswood, north Wales
- Commercial-scale cement production trial using 100% net zero fuels at our Ribblesdale plant



Scan to learn more
about our journey
to net zero



**Driving change,
together.**

In partnership with **BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



Funded by
UK Government

Bedford Borough recycles



BEDFORD
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Join your neighbours... ***recycle your food waste every week!***

Small actions, big impact

Food waste from Bedford Borough's houses and flats helps create renewable energy to power homes and to produce a rich fertiliser for local farms.



Get involved - start recycling your food waste today

Find out what goes in your food waste caddy at
www.bedford.gov.uk/foodwaste

Scan me to learn more
about food waste collections



Scan me to get recycling
and waste updates by email



The introduction of food waste collections in Bedford Borough has been funded by UK Government

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01234 376011 info@djtsurfacing.co.uk
www.djtsurfacing.co.uk

Dacca Farm, Ducks Cross, Colesden Road, Wilden, Bedfordshire, MK44 2QW

Getting to the Event

The Bedford River Festival always draws huge crowds and you are advised to plan ahead and think about how to get here, where to park and how to get around the 105 acre site.

We would like visitors to consider how they travel to the event and where possible use public transport or use other sustainable modes of transport.

Stagecoach will be running extra buses so make it easier for people to get to and from the River Festival, please check their timetables for routes and further information.

Walking or By Bike

Why not walk or cycle to the River Festival and enjoy the journey as part of the day? Choosing to travel actively helps reduce congestion, is better for the environment, and lets you take in more of Bedford's scenery along the way. The Bedford Borough Council website offers a range of useful resources, including walking and cycling maps that highlight the Bedford Cycle Network, rural cycle routes, and town centre walking routes. These maps make it easy to plan a safe and enjoyable route to the festival, whether you're coming from nearby or exploring further afield. www.bedford.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/walking-cycling-and-riding/cycle-lanes-and-routes

We have secure bike storage at the Cycle Shelter on Horne Lane, to register for access please email sustainable.transport@bedford.gov.uk with full name, contact number, and address. Registered users will receive login details within seven working days, granting access through the OneKey app for a more secure and convenient experience.

By Car

Visitor parking is available at the town centre car parks, and Everard Meadow and Bedford International Athletics Stadium (£10 a vehicle per day), ONLY CARD PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Blue badge holders can park in the Everard Meadow and Athletic Stadium car park but please be aware that this is a grass field.

Additional car parking for disabled visitors will be available at Longholme Way (MK42 0BX), and in St. Mary's Car Park (in between Borough Hall and Bedford College) Cauldwell Street (MK42 9AP) - a blue badge will be required.

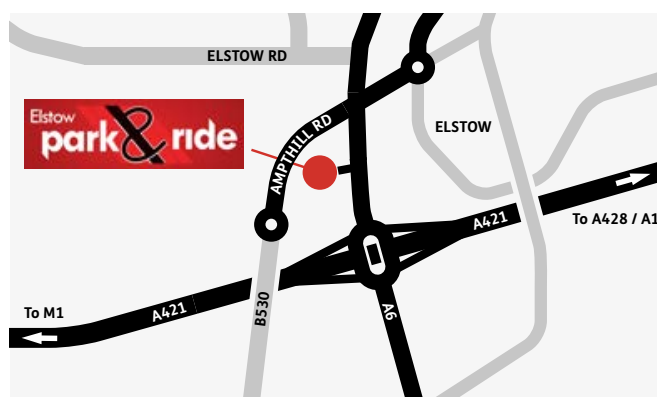
Park & Ride

Elstow Park & Ride (MK42 9XF) will be running an enhanced service during the River Festival weekend.

Grant Palmer will be operating a 15 minute service dropping off and collecting from Bedford town centre. Elstow Park & Ride is located in Progress Park on the A6 - just north of the A6 junction of the A421.

- £2.40 single, £4.80 return.
- Free parking.

For more information, please visit www.grantpalmer.com.



Getting to the Event *continued*

By Train

[Thameslink](#) and [East Midlands Railway](#) trains come to Bedford train station - please check their websites for timings.

Additional train services will be run on Sunday 19th July between Bletchley and Bedford. For more information please visit the [London Northwestern Railway](#) website.

By Bus

Stagecoach will be offering extra late services for our customers on Saturday and Sunday to make your celebrations even easier.



Please visit www.stagecoachbus.com to find out exact times.

Saturday 18th July

- Additional 9D Services added to allow hourly service to Stevenage.
9 / 9A / 9B / 9D Bedford - Hitchin – Stevenage

Sunday 19th July

- 9D Services now extended to serve Hitchin and Stevenage HOURLY all day (between 07:00 and 21:00) with one additional journey at 21:30 too.
9 / 9A / 9B / 9D Bedford - Hitchin – Stevenage
- 1BD - 4 Additional evening journeys added to allow continuous service up until 21:30.
1 Bedford – Kempston
- 5BD - 4 Additional evening journeys added to allow continuous service up until 21:30.
5 Bedford - Elm's Farm
- 6BD - 4 Additional evening journeys added to allow continuous service up until 21:30.
6 Bedford - Kempston

This year, Stagecoach are offering a 25% discount off our Small Group and Large Group Day Riders to attract more visitors to the River Festival. **Discount Code: EARVRFESTGROUP25R46V**
Can only be redeemed on the Stagecoach App between 15/07/2026 and 20/07/2026.

Terms and Conditions:

- *Can be redeemed a maximum of two times per customer.*
- *Only valid for use on the following products:*
 - *Bedford Small Group Day Rider, Bedford Large Group Day Rider, Bedfordshire Plus Small Group Day Rider, and Bedfordshire Plus Large Group Day Rider.*



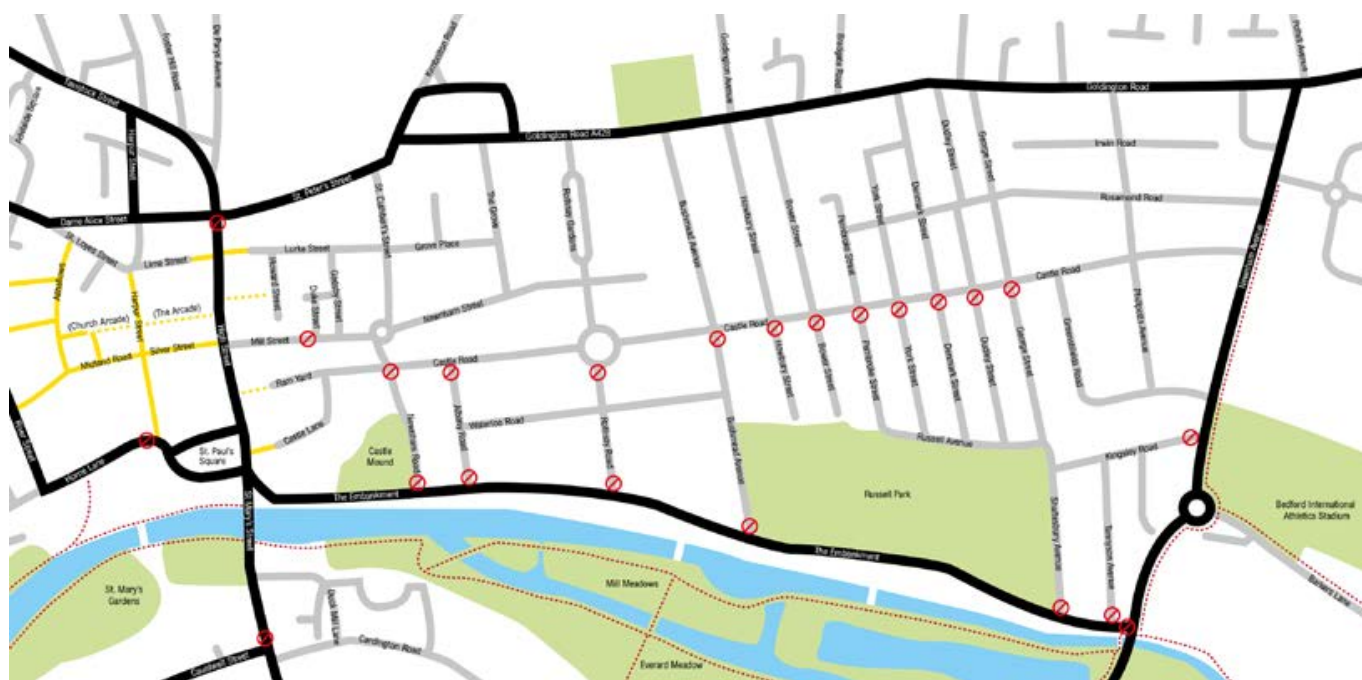
Getting to the Event *continued*

Road Closures

Please be aware of the many road closures that will be in place to allow the Bedford River Festival to happen – please see map below. We ask that if you are attending the event you are considerate of local residents and park in official car parks.

Please note that the following roads will be ‘residents only’ parking:

- Newnham Road
- Albany Road
- Waterloo Road
- Rothsay Road
- Bushmead Avenue (south of Castle Road)
- Howbury Street (south of Castle Road)
- Bower Street (south of Castle Road)
- Pembroke Street (south of Castle Road)
- York Street (south of Castle Road)
- Denmark Street (south of Castle Road)
- Dudley Street (south of Castle Road)
- George Street (south of Castle Road)
- Shaftesbury Avenue
- Kingsley Road
- Tennyson Road
- Beresford Road
- Newnham Avenue (south section)
- Russell Avenue
- The Embankment



Elstow park & ride

MK42 9XF



Park & Ride to Town Centre

**Every 15 minutes
for Bedford River Festival**

Saturday 18th July & Sunday 19th July 2026

£7 Group return for up to 4 people

Adult Day Ticket:
£8.50
or
Group Ticket: £17
(up to 4 people)

Travel to
Bedford
18th - 19th JULY 2026
River Festival
With...

unō

- Frequent services
- Easy to access
- Great value Travel

SCAN HERE

*Avoid the parking
and travel by bus!*
**PLAN YOUR
JOURNEY HERE**
SEE FULL TIMETABLE

Cranfield CONNECT

Saturday 18th July
C1 Arrive: 10:56, 13:35
Return: 20:40, 21:25, 23:50, 00:20
C11 Arrive: 10:05, 12:28
14:33 Return: 17:15, 19:45

Sunday 19th July
C1 Arrive: 10:52, 13:16
Return: 15:30, 17:45, 20:05
C11 Arrive: 09:55, 12:03
Return: 16:45, 18:50

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Partners of the Bedford River Festival 2026:





IF YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT
DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT
DON'T THINK
SOMEONE ELSE
WILL SORT IT

TELL SECURITY

Let's keep the party going
#BeSafeBeSound

ACT | ACTION
COUNTERS
TERRORISM

Finding out more...

For more information and downloads, please visit the Bedford River Festival website:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/riverfestival>

events@bedford.gov.uk

To find out more about this and other activities going on all year round in Bedford's parks, please follow one of our digital platforms:

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Design & Print is a department of Bedford Borough Council

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