



Stamford is full of charm. It was once an important coaching stop on the route between London in Edinburgh and is famous for its many fine stone buildings. However, it has much more than heritage to offer to employers and employees alike.

Stamford is evolving. Like many small towns in Britain the nature of what makes Stamford tick is changing. The big changes like the closure of the large manufacturing concerns have made the headlines in the last year. However, these are only part of the picture.

Stamford Vision: Business was set up in January as one of three focussed working groups under the guidance of Stamford Vision the town centre management partnership. Their remit is to address those issues identified in Vision 2015 as being important to the future development of the economy. We want to help to deliver a successful and diverse economy which provides a range of employment and career opportunities.

In order to implement any future strategies we need to understand what businesses there are in the town now and what their needs are. In an effort to do that we are sending out over the summer a short one page questionnaire to all businesses in the town to canvas their views.

As a part of this effort to understand the local economy we have looked at the jobs advertised in the local paper, the Stamford Mercury now and ten years ago. This is admittedly only a snapshot of job opportunities, but nevertheless some interesting changes are revealed.

Overall for the Mercury area there were three times as many vacancies offered in 2003 than in 1993. In terms of just Stamford and its immediate rural area, there were in fact seven times more jobs offered than ten years ago. Perhaps these jobs are in part time rather than full time work? Here is surprise number two, in fact three quarters of the current jobs offered are full time compared to a little under half ten years ago. The jobs must be in quite different areas? Well that isn't quite the case either. There is a wider range of job available now with nearly twice as many categories of job available. It isn't true that there are more service sector jobs now compared to more traditional manufacturing jobs in the past. Ten years ago the biggest opportunity came in the education sector which is still important today. Today the biggest area of jobs offered comes in the care sector but there are

also opportunities in more traditional employment sectors such as light manufacturing and the building trade.

This all paints a picture of a town with a vibrant economy that is adapting to the new challenges facing all market towns today. A large part of Stamford's charm is that it is a real place with a diverse pattern of employment. That doesn't mean that the old trades are completely dying out, Stamford has its own stonemason, for example, alongside its wireless broadband providers. What we as a group are hoping, is that by finding out what business clusters there are in the community their needs can be catered for effectively and support can be delivered to those areas which the businesses themselves have identified.

For the employees the quality of life is high, with excellent primary and secondary schools providing an incentive for many families with young children to want to relocate to the area. Sporting facilities include a leisure pool in town and within 5 miles of the town centre, a dry ski slope and the UK's Centre of Sailing excellence. More traditional recreational activities are well catered for, with the town having a far higher than average number of cafes, restaurants and pubs all within the central area.

There is a thriving Arts Centre which has a packed programme of events and activities, with never a dull moment, whether you are interested in folk music, the latest films or quality touring theatre. The nationally acclaimed Stamford Shakespeare open-air theatre has a 3 month summer season. Set in the grounds of historic Tolethorpe Hall it has been described as one of the Europe's finest alfresco venues, although the audience is protected from the vagaries of an English summer with a huge canopy. Another national jewel, within easy walking distance of the town centre, is Burghley House, built by Queen Elizabeth I's most trusted courtier Lord Cecil. It is home to the Burghley Horse trials an international event.

So whether its 5 mediaeval churches, its fine Georgian buildings or its more modern attractions and business opportunities captivate you, Stamford has something to charm everyone.

Catherine Hammant
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