



## Employment in Stamford

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 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, in the next few weeks, 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 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. This is a surprise because generally there is a feeling that in the past Stamford offered a better prospect for employment than it does now.

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.

We hope all businesses will feel able to respond to the questionnaire sent out by individual members of the **Stamford Vision: Business** group. This exercise sees approximately 750 businesses contacted in the next few weeks. If you have been left out and would like to add your thoughts please contact Catherine Hammant on 01780 755522. We would be particularly happy to hear from self employed or those working in the not for profit sector as these are particularly difficult to identify through traditional routes.

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