

# Stratford's tourist information centre (TIC)

As a prime tourist destination and with many jobs in the area depending upon tourism, for many years the district council has financed a TIC in order to support and encourage tourism.

From the late 1990s until 2010 this was done through a limited company, in conjunction with Warwick District Council. Both councils were keen to promote tourism, both had significant attractions, so it made sense to share costs. At the same time the private sector also contributed significant sums of money.

At Easter 2010, for various reasons, that company closed down and the TIC, located at Bridgefoot in Stratford, also closed. The timing of this was a major blow, just at the start of the main tourist season.

The Conservatives running the district council decided to re-open the TIC, but in rented premises in Henley Street. This was challenged by the Lib Dems on the grounds that it was an inferior location and would be more costly. The district council owned the Bridgefoot site, but had to rent the site in Henley Street.

One of the reasons for this was that the Conservatives hoped to let out the Bridgefoot site at a considerable rent. Although interest was expressed by possible tenants - and one went as far as a planning application for a change of use of the site to a restaurant - the premises were eventually withdrawn from the market. It has proved impossible in the difficult economic climate to find an acceptable tenant at an acceptable rent.

The net result was that the district council ended up paying costs of £130,000 to rent Henley Street whilst Bridgefoot lay empty.

(Figures are per a written answer to a question at December 2011's district council meeting. Available on the council's website).

But the change in location caused a big fall in the number of tourists using the new facilities.

## ***Stratford Herald 21st July 2011***

[Conservative] Council Leader Chris Saint said this week Bridgefoot was 'ideally situated' for a tourist information centre - a complete U turn on an earlier decision to put the building up for sale.

## ***Stratford Observer 21st October 2011***



**The Bridgefoot site - before attempts to let it out ended.**