



**BEDFORD RIVER
FESTIVAL**
18TH & 19TH
JULY 2026

BEDFORD RIVER FESTIVAL 2026

**SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**

The 18th & 19th July 2026 will see the return of the iconic Bedford River Festival

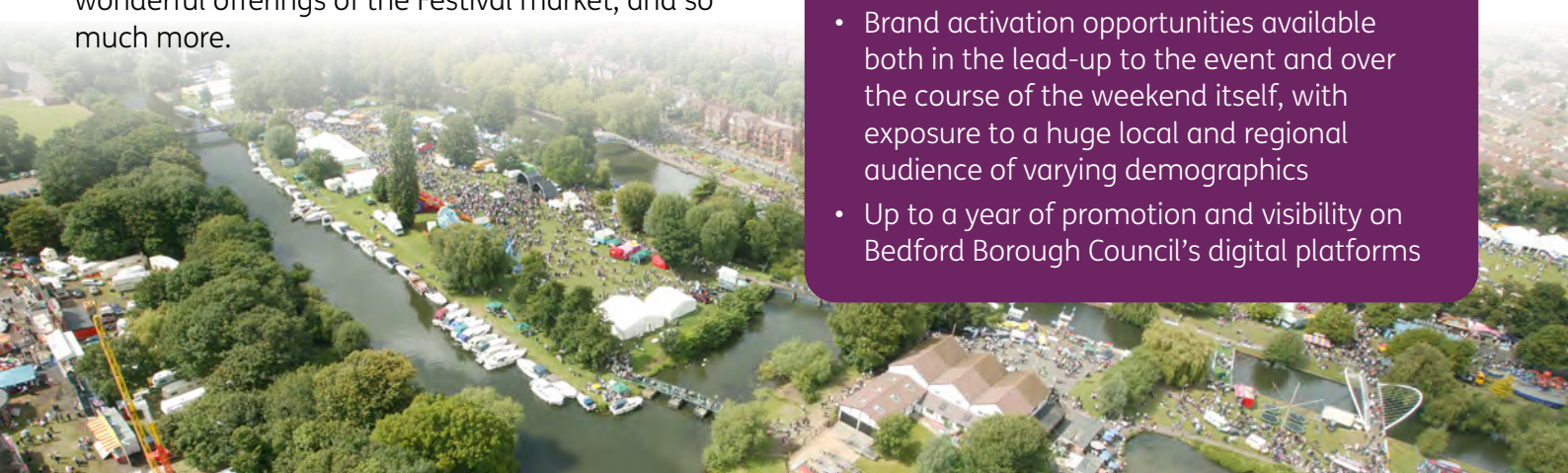
From its humble beginnings in 1978 to the biennial behemoth it has since become, the River Festival is a remarkable and unmissable event that brings the community of Bedfordshire (and beyond) together. The Festival is staged across a unique site encompassing the Victorian Embankment Promenade, the River Great Ouse, scenic local parkland and the town centre to welcome a wealth of attractions to Bedford.

Estimated to attract in excess of 250,000 visitors over the two days, the River Festival is now described as the second largest outdoor event of its kind in the UK. The site itself measures 107 acres, the equivalent of 71 football pitches! Visitors from the region and indeed all across the UK are invited to enjoy a weekend of festival fun, diverse entertainment, and of course, all things nautical.

The 2026 River Festival will include countless river activities and displays, multiple live music and performance stages, arts, crafts and sports, the wonderful offerings of the Festival market, and so much more.

The value of becoming a River Festival sponsor:

- Align your business with the Festival's established brand values of community, inclusion, creativity, diversity and celebration
- Fantastic opportunities for Bedfordshire businesses, stakeholders, and clients to form links and engage with regional partners and customers alike
- Engage your employees in team-building activities such as the Dragon Boat Races and Raft Races
- Brand activation opportunities available both in the lead-up to the event and over the course of the weekend itself, with exposure to a huge local and regional audience of varying demographics
- Up to a year of promotion and visibility on Bedford Borough Council's digital platforms



Bedford River Festival in figures



Over 250,000 visitors



100,000
peak-time visitors



3 full-size
temporary
bridges installed



Over 100 boats
travelling to site



7 days of set-up,
2 days of Festival,
2 days to dismantle



18,000
social media
followers
[@BedfordEvents](#)



29,000
Bedford Borough
social media
followers



80,000+
unique visitors to
website in 4 weeks
prior to Festival (2022)



150+ performers,
musicians
& bands



[@BedfordEvents](#)

A flexible approach

If you can't find what you're looking for in this brochure, please contact the Events Team at events@bedford.gov.uk to discuss a bespoke package to suit your business requirements.

Bedford River Festival Headline Sponsors

Gold Package - £50,000

Silver Package - £25,000

Imagine ‘Bedford River Festival in association with’ ...YOUR business!

We are looking for headline sponsors to take advantage of the phenomenal branding opportunities found across the entire Festival site and in the lead-up to the event. You could be one of the headline sponsors of a River Festival that promises to be bigger and better than ever before!

These packages offer the unmissable opportunity to have your name directly associated with Bedford’s biggest community event from the very moment the anticipation for the 23rd Festival begins.

This could mean a YEAR of promotion to a huge local and regional audience for your business, culminating in a momentous weekend of community spirit and family fun during which your brand will have a hugely visible presence onsite. There are also multiple opportunities for your business to attend and engage first-hand with Festival visitors and key Bedford-based stakeholders and clients.



Gold Headline Sponsor Benefits - £50,000

- Association with the prestige of the River Festival name – ‘Bedford River Festival, in association with...’
(wording to be agreed)
- Your name and logo featured prominently on the River Festival web pages and associated social media event coverage:
riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- Branding of the River Festival 2026 staff uniform
- A large pitch (exact size is negotiable), including a 9m x 9m marquee, which could be used for trading, promotional or exclusive hospitality purposes
- Multiple prominent banner sites in hotspot locations with the highest footfall (up to twenty banners)
- Your name and logo featured prominently on promotional event literature
- Full page advert in the digital programme
- An endorsement banner featuring your name and logo on Bedford Borough Council’s landing page for an agreed number of days over the course of the 6 months leading up to the Festival:
www.bedford.gov.uk
- Promotional announcements made across the Festival PA system throughout the weekend
- Your pre-recorded promotional messages shown on the Russell Park big screen throughout the weekend
- Ten invitations to the Mayor’s Festival Reception

2026 could be the year your business brings a unique touch to the Bedford River Festival – don’t miss out on this incredible opportunity!



Silver Headline Sponsor Benefits - £25,000

- Your name and logo featured prominently on the River Festival webpages and associated social media event coverage: riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- Branding of the River Festival 2026 staff uniform
- A large pitch, including a 9m x 9m marquee, which could be used for trading, promotional or exclusive hospitality purposes
- Multiple prominent banner sites in hotspot locations with the highest footfall (up to twenty of your banners)
- Your name and logo featured prominently on promotional event literature, including the event programme
- An endorsement banner featuring your name and logo added to Bedford Borough Council's landing page for an agreed number of days over the course of the 6 months leading up to the Festival: www.bedford.gov.uk
- Promotional announcements made across the Festival PA system throughout the weekend
- Your pre-recorded promotional messages shown on the Russell Park big screen throughout the weekend
- Six invitations to the Mayor's Festival Reception
- A full page advert in the festival programme

2026 could be the year your business brings a unique touch to the Bedford River Festival – don't miss out on this incredible opportunity!



Premium Activity Sponsor - £7,500

The Premium Activity sponsorship packages offer exclusive onsite branding opportunities and include the following fantastic benefits:

- Prime sites for up to ten promotional banners
- Your business name and logo featured on the River Festival webpages and associated social media event coverage: riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- Your logo featured on the event programme
- Promotional announcements made across the Festival PA system throughout the weekend
- Your pre-recorded promotional messages shown on the Russell Park big screen throughout the weekend
- Four invitations to the Mayor's Festival Reception
- The option to have a 3m x 3m pitch onsite which could be used for promotional activities or trading
- The opportunity to brand one of the major River Festival activity areas (listed below)
- A full page advert in the Festival programme

The Main Stage

The beating heart of the Festival site is located in Russell Park; the Main Stage attracts huge audiences across the weekend and offers your business unparalleled branding opportunities across the stage and frontage area.

This stage showcases the best of Bedford's talented bands and musicians, plus a variety of unique acts touring the UK.



Bridges

Imagine your logo emblazoned on Bedford's iconic Suspension Bridge! With 250,000 people crossing the 14 permanent and temporary bridges over the course of the Festival weekend, this package will ensure your business' branding will be seen by everyone as they explore our expansive site. A prime opportunity to put yourselves (literally) on the map.

Car Parks and Park & Ride

Want to reach the visitors who bring over 5,000 cars to the Festival car parks over the weekend? This package offers a simple and highly effective solution, with great opportunities for a physical advertising presence for your products or services.

High Street

With the successful expansion of the event onto Bedford's High Street, the Bedford Festival of Motoring has become a draw to people whether you are a car enthusiast or not.

This central activity area offers the opportunity to link in with many of Bedford's local businesses or expand your presence at the event if your business already occupies a physical location in the town centre.

Dancing Waters

To mesmerise the public we are seeking support to have a professional display of jets to create dancing water on the river for the whole event. This is a display that has not been done before at the River Festival and will enhance the beautiful river which is the reason that the River Festival exists.

On Road Protection Barriers

As a safety measure for the Festival we will again have Hostile Vehicle Mitigation barriers on all 11 of the main entrances to the Festival.

Being the sponsor of this specialist equipment will allow you to have your company branding on all of these points which would get your brand recognition to most people as they enter and exit the Festival.



Activity Sponsor - £5,500

The Activity sponsorship packages offer a variety of attractive sponsorship options and associated activities to suit your business needs, including:

- Your business name and logo featured on the River Festival webpages and associated social media event coverage: riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- Your logo featured on the event programme
- Prime sites for up to six promotional banners
- Two invitations to the Mayor's Festival Reception
- The option to have a 3m x 3m pitch onsite which could be used for promotional activities or trading
- The opportunity to brand one of the major River Festival activity areas (listed below)
- A full page advert in the Festival programme

Boat Parades

If your brand is all about traditional values, you may like to sponsor the very essence of the River Festival and its array of classic river events.

Your brand would be seen by thousands upon thousands of visitors watching or taking part in river parades, including the Grand Parade of Cabin Cruisers and Narrow Boats, the Illuminated Boat Parade.



Community Stage

Could your business or organisation engage with and promote local talent? The ever-popular Community Stage on Mill Meadows plays host to a multitude of bands and musicians, artists, dance schools and community groups from across Bedfordshire. Amazing branding opportunities are available for this stage, including banners and PA announcements, plus the opportunity to support a diverse range of home-grown performers.

Sports Island

Calling all Bedford-based gyms, fitness brands, and sporting organisations! The Sports Island on Longholme Island showcases a wide range of sporting activities, demonstrations and 'have a go' sessions for the whole family, both on the land and in the water. The sponsor also has the opportunity to host their own stand on a 3m x 3m pitch within the Island, which could be used for promotion, education or displays.

Castle Mound Green Earth Lounge

The Green Earth Lounge was undeniably 2024's hidden gem. It completely transformed the northern area of Castle Mound into a bohemian den of delicious vegan food, unique trade offerings, and a laidback festival atmosphere; we are excited to see it grow in 2026!

In addition to the Vegan Lounge, Castle Mound will feature cultural and arts offerings from local providers and organisations, so would be an ideal location for interactive engagement between a sponsor and visitors. Lastly, this area is a prime spot to catch the attention of visitors arriving from the town centre car parks and train station; it is also a fantastic river activities viewing area.



Festival Funfair

Want to sponsor an element of the Festival that reflects your brand's own values of adventure and fun? We have an array of funfair sites situated across the event which offer fantastic branding and interactive engagement opportunities in Russell Park, on Mill Meadows island. With a variety of both vintage classics and modern adrenaline-inducing rides, the Festival funfairs attract visitors of all ages.

St. Mary's Garden Island

St. Mary's Garden Island will once again offer a chilled out and friendly vibe that is particularly suitable for families with children and visitors who would like to simply relax and enjoy the attractive parkland surroundings and Riverside development. Attractions on offer include the ever-popular Adventure Village, childrens activities, river racing viewing, picnic spots, plus a bar and catering outlets, with more to be confirmed.



Bands on the Bridge

The iconic Town Bridge for one weekend only is transformed into a traditional Bandstand performance area.

For the whole weekend traditional big bands and brass bands will serenade the public, whilst they either sit on the deckchairs to enjoy or as they view the river activities from the bridge.

Arts & Culture Island

Following a successful introduction to the 2024 River Festival, 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.

Over both days there will be a range of activities across a variety of artforms including the like of music, dance, storytelling, poetry, visual art and crafts.

Delivered collaboratively by the Bedford Cultural Partnership.

The Embankment

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

The Embankment is the main artery of the Festival which becomes a hive of activity during the River Festival. 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.

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.



Partners of the River Festival Sponsorship Package - £2,500

The Partners of the River Festival sponsorship package includes two key benefits:

- Two invitations to the Mayor's Festival Reception
- A 3m x 3m promotional/trading pitch onsite

Plus:

- Your logo featured on the River Festival webpages: riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- A 'thank you' post on our associated social media channels
- Your logo featured on the event programme
- Up to three banners onsite for everyone to see
- A half page advert in the Festival programme

Friends of the River Festival Sponsorship Package - £800

The Friends sponsorship package is designed to offer smaller businesses the perfect opportunity to be associated with the River Festival and to promote their services and products to a large local and regional audience.

Investing in the Friends package offers the following benefits:

- Your logo featured on the River Festival webpages: riverfestival.bedford.gov.uk
- A 'thank you' post on our associated social media channels
- Your logo featured on the event programme
- A banner onsite for everyone to see
- A half page advert in the Festival programme



Summary of Sponsorship Packages

	Gold Headline Sponsorship	Silver Headline Sponsorship	Premium Activity Sponsorship	Activity Sponsorship	Partners Sponsorship	Friends Sponsorship
	£50,000	£25,000	£7,500	£5,500	£2,500	£800
PRE EVENT RECOGNITION						
'Bedford River Festival 2026 in association with YOUR BUSINESS' branding	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Logo on Festival poster	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Logo on Festival webpages and programme & social media posts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo on Council Homepage	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Advert in Festival programme	Full page	Full page	Full page	Full page	Half page	Half page
ONSITE RECOGNITION						
Festival Uniform Branding	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Large Multi-use Pitch	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Zone or Activity Branding	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
9m x 9m Marquee	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Number of Banner(s) onsite	20	20	10	6	3	1
PA Announcements	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Big Screen Promo Messages	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Invite(s) to Mayor's Reception	10	6	4	2	2	-
3m x 3m Promo Pitch	Included in large pitch	Included in large pitch	✓	✓	✓	-

Please note that the above is a guide to the sponsorship packages available. All prices are excluding VAT. For further information please see enclosed or contact the Events Team at events@bedford.gov.uk



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BEDFORD RIVER FESTIVAL



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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