

Reading Winter on Ice 2021- 2025

Reading Winter on Ice would like to partner with Reading Borough Council and its stakeholders in the delivery of festive activity, within the heart of Reading, over the next 5 years.

Our proposal is to build upon the hugely successful event of 2019, delivering activity in a tried, tested and locally popular format.

We provide a

socially inclusive and regionally popular event that is proven to attract footfall to Reading over the Festive Period. The activity we provide enables families to make lasting and special memories of a shopping trip to Reading, enhancing Reading's reputation as a visitor destination. Our event, coupled with the retail shopping experience of Reading, provides an attraction that simply can't be rivalled by neighbouring local authorities, such as Bracknell.

Included within the attached appendix document are a number of statistics that support the above claim, coupled with a handful of the many positive images and comments we received from our visitors. As a family business we pride ourselves on reputation and hope to take the event from strength to strength in future years.

We require a 5-year license in order to recover the continued capital investment required to deliver a spectacle of the scale Reading and its stakeholders deserve. We will be able to invest in infrastructure with a medium-term business plan and continue to improve upon the event year on year, with the reinvestment of profits.

Enhanced activities would include larger Family friendly themed Bars, Festive Catering / gift units and performance stages for regional musicians and choirs.

Each year's event will be heralded with a grand opening attended by a popular celebrity and this activity would be coordinated with local interest groups and charities to ensure maximum benefit and social inclusion.

Pre-Covid footfall to town centre locations had slumped to worrying numbers, with those that do chose to venture out, looking to visit places that can cater for a full breadth of a family's needs. As a result of Covid it is now more important than ever to find new and elaborate ways of encouraging footfall to town centres, in a safe manner in order to provide the local economy with the seasonal boost, it so greatly needs and deserves.

Our event alone can demonstrate that it brought thousands of extra visitors to Reading in 2019, at no cost to the Council or its stakeholders, whom include Reading UK CIC and

Reading BID. We wish to continue to build a productive working relationship with all stakeholders to ensure that our festive event plays its roll in a cohesive seasonal package of activity to keep Reading as the go to shopping town for the Festive period.

Due to the impressive amount of planning and coordination work required behind the scenes to produce and deliver an event of the scale of Reading Winter on Ice, we and any credible partner the Council chose to work with would need an answer by no later than the 28th February 2021. This statement is not an attempt to place pressure upon the Council's decision making process, merely a statement of fact that we hope from vast experience of large scale events the Council can understand and appreciate.

Our company has always viewed this event as an investment for the future. We know from decades of event experience that Festive activities take time to establish and require hard work, determination and ultimately financial investment to succeed. We have invested significantly, from personal funds in the delivery of this event and now after successfully building a foundation, would like the ability to move the event on to the next level and deliver the annual spectacle the Town deserves.

We were deeply saddened by the events that occurred in the gardens this summer and assure you that our event will treat the site with the greatest respect, as a management team we would be happy to accommodate any reasonable request the Council may have as a result of any sensitivities that may remain.

Our activity would continue to occupy the same footprint as in previous years, permitting the Council and its partners to deliver complementary activity in other areas of the Forbury Gardens and the Abbey Ruins. We would welcome the opportunity of coordinating our offer and that of other interested parties to provide one immersive and cohesive event package from Winter 2021.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document, I trust that it conveys our passion and desire. I would be very happy to provide any additional information that the Council may require. I would also be grateful for the ability to meet with decision makers to discuss this proposal in further detail.

Kind regards.
Billy Williams.

Appendix 1:

Summary of Reading Winter on Ice 2019/2020 - The Forbury Gardens.

We believe that after a number of years developing and refining the event, we have finally arrived at a product the people of Reading and the surrounding areas want.

We initially tried a large traditional Christmas Market, but the footfall did not materialise, and the activity proved financially unsustainable. Christmas Market traders have a short window of time to recoup their investment and generate the turnover they need to make the activity rewarding. Greater attraction is required to encourage the footfall and ensure the secondary spend the market traders are reliant upon. This model is reflected at London's Hyde Park, which has only a small Market which is viable only as a result of the footfall encouraged by the sheer scale of events activity.

The magic formula in 2019 was to evoke family values and childhood memories - targeting Families, young and old, providing activity that grandchildren and their grandparents could equally enjoy, evoking the magic of Christmas and creating memories that will remain long after the event.

We provide the largest regional open-air Ice Rink, Family Rides and Attractions, a relaxing Bar area, Festive Foods and Gift stalls. The scale and amount of gift stalls will increase as the event grows in the future.

To help people with the cost of the visit in these challenging financial times we operate Free admission into the event and only charge for the Activities the public choose to use. Making the atmosphere of the event accessible to all.





Amanda Cunningham checked in to **Reading Winter on Ice**

Thursday at 16:03 · Reading · 🌐

Great way to end the holiday and so much cheaper than Hyde Park. Xx



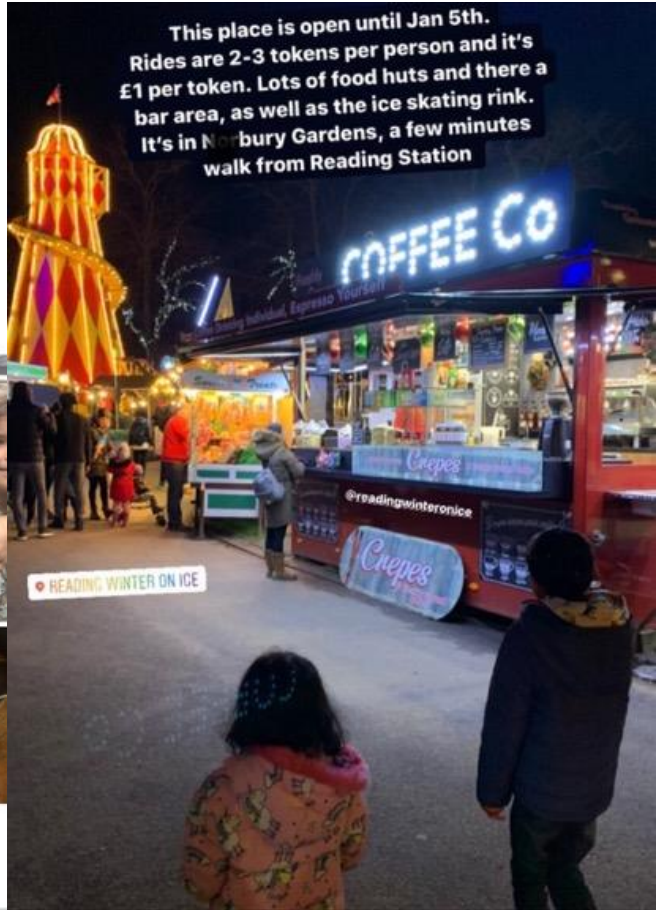
👍❤️ You and 75 others

6 comments 🗨️

👍 Like

🗨️ Comment

➦ Share



Gopinath sridara

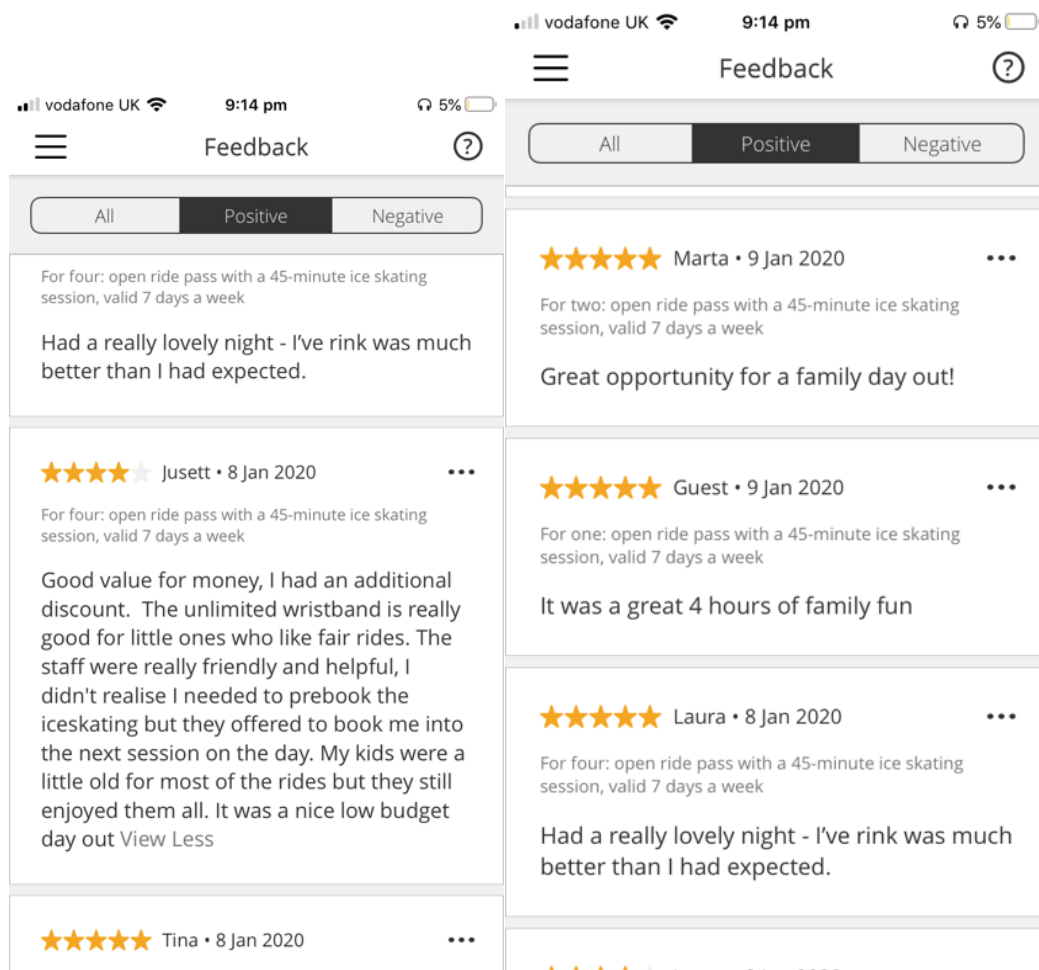
11 Dec · 6:37 pm

★★★★★

Good time to spend with family and friends. Kids will like and fun.



Respond as Reading Winter On Ice...



For 2019 we invested in our own Ice Rink which meant we could keep the cost to the customer to an affordable level. Tokens were available to purchase and also Wristbands. A £15 wristband allowed 4 hours of unlimited ride activity.

Ice Skating cost an average of £10 but if you purchased with a Wristband that incorporated the Rides and the Skating the cost was £20, which made the Ice Skating £5. This price point is not matched anywhere else and provides exceptional value to the town's residents and visitors.

Online sales worked well with the partnership of Groupon offering 50% off our already good price.

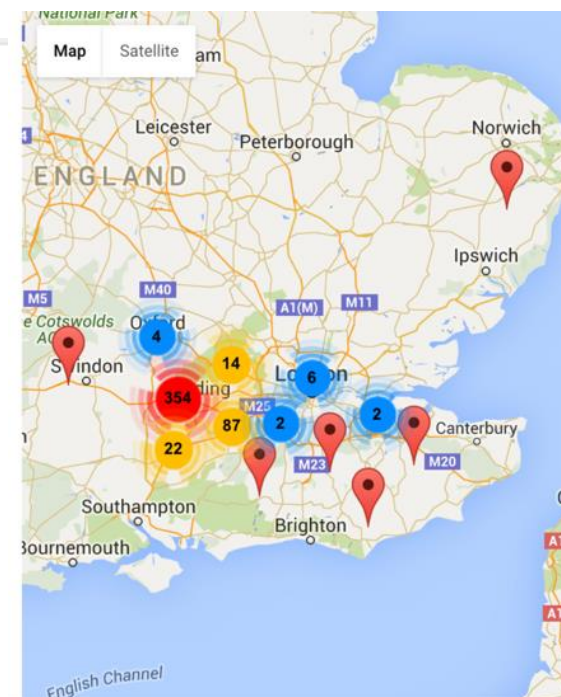
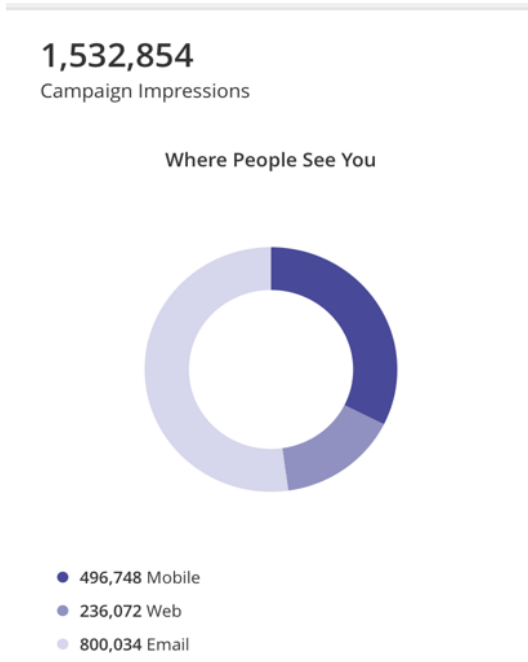
With Online ticket sales we are able to control visitor numbers and also know where our audience travel from. In 2019 this was evidenced as as far afield as a 70 mile radius of Reading, Bognor Regus, Bristol, Oxford and South East London, a great catchment area that may not have otherwise have chose to come to Reading.

Improved advertising, Social Media, Posters and Digital Billboard Advertising, in Reading and Slough.

Facebook has a huge following with video clips being viewed over 30,000 times.

Google search for Reading Winter on Ice 122,000, Activity 77,000 and Views totalling 239,000.

Groupon Campaign Impressions 1,532,854.



Reading Winter on Ice had over 150,000 visitors in 2019, making it by far the biggest family event in Reading's calendar and bringing much needed footfall to the town.

We delivered many sessions for those with special needs as part of our community engagement and inclusion initiatives and made no charge for doing so. This was very well received by this audience and their families and is very much something we would hope to be able to build upon in future years. Making the event an enjoyable and accessible experience for all.



Royal Berkshire Hospital Christmas Eve our Santa giving out presents on the children's ward.

In 2014 we took a vision and made Reading Winter on Ice a reality, after others had failed to make a Christmas event in the Forbury Gardens sustainable.

We as a company are dedicated to invest in the future of Reading Winter on Ice making it a winter destination for many years to come.

Best Regards.
Billy.





vodafone UK 4G 21:36 29%

Page mentions

Okay, Reading Winter on Ice - that was awesome. We took the kids this evening after dragging them around the shops, and it still feels so festive here. Lily didn't want to leave, bopping away to the music while we ate chips. They went through the mirror maze, played hook the duck and we later discovered the kids rides hidden at the back, followed by pleas of "one more ride please!" It's on until January 5th - a good way to pass the time during "Twixmas" 😊



leos



16th November - 5th January. 11am - 10pm...
1 month ago · 36K views





Shannon Jackman

25 November · 🌐



Would like to say a huge thank you to **Reading Winter on Ice** for today!

This morning we travelled an hour to a toddler session ice skating, sadly when we arrived we were unable to use the ice-rink that we had already told the children about. I then called Reading on ice and asked if they would allow two small children on the ice rink. The man who I was in contact with (Billy) was great, he told us to make our way there and he will make sure the children get to have an amazing time on the ice rink as we had promised them earlier this morning. We arrived at Reading on ice and it was raining but that didn't stop the children having fun. The team were fantastic and provided us with extra help to guide the children round the ice rink. So a huge thank you to Billy and the team for giving the children an amazing time with their first ice skating experience!

Sammy Evans Courtney Shield

