Ripon BID

Funded by the Ripon city region businesses

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Ripon Throws Open Its Doors: Heritage Open Days 2026 Brings New Sites and Rare Access

Ripon is gearing up for one of its most exciting Heritage Open Days yet, with two brand-new venues joining the programme for 2026 and a rare chance for the public to step inside one of the City's best-kept secrets.

Heritage Open Days, England's largest festival of history and culture, returns this year with Ripon once again playing a starring role. For four days, the City's historic buildings, hidden corners and community spaces will throw open their doors completely free of charge, offering residents and visitors alike a chance to explore places that are usually off-limits or easily overlooked.

New for 2026

Topping the list of exciting additions this year is The Portly Pig, a much-loved local spot that will be welcoming Heritage Open Days visitors for the very first time. Expect a warm welcome and a chance to discover a little more about the building's history and character alongside its usual charm.

Joining it on the programme is the Chapel and Hospital of St Anne, another newcomer to the trail, giving visitors fresh ground to explore and yet another reason to spend a day wandering the City's streets with a Heritage Open Days guide in hand.

A Once-a-Year Chance to See The Gazebo

Perhaps the biggest draw for regulars will be the return of The Gazebo to the programme. This charming and rarely-seen structure is only ever opened to the public during Heritage Open Days, making it a genuine once-a-year opportunity. Anyone who has walked past and wondered what lies behind its walls now has their chance - but only for this brief window, so it's well worth planning ahead.

To help everyone make the most of it, Ripon BID will be producing a full brochure detailing every site, opening time and special event taking place across the festival. Whether you're planning a single afternoon out or a full week of exploring, the brochure will be the essential guide to make sure you don't miss a thing.

Join our Halloween Trail, Pumpkin Patch Fun and Spooky Windows Competition

Ripon BID will be bringing back the popular Pop-up Pumpkin Patch to the Market Square on 30th October and this is your chance to join in by being Pumpkin Patch Trail Stop. There are limited spots and they will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Last year saw 600 participants over 2 days with 4 press articles. 25 businesses entered our Spooky Windows competition and we gained coverage on BBC Look North featuring interviews with two BID businesses and 5 business windows filmed.

Enter our Spooky Windows Competition to be in with the chance of winning a full page advertisement in Review Ripon. Decorate your window for Hallowe'en and we will feature you in our socials and on our website. Register for the trail and/or the Spooky Windows now by emailing info@riponbid.co.uk.

New "Stay Awhile" Signs Restore Ripon's Historic Welcome Points

Ripon BID has taken on responsibility for replacing the wooden heritage "Stay Awhile" welcome signs at key entry points to the City.

We have successfully replaced the two missing signs on Boroughbridge Road and Studley Road and removed and replaced the badly damaged sign at North Bridge. The intention is to replace the remaining three signs at Morrisons, Palace Road and Rotary way when needed. We are now working with partners to improve the flower beds below these 3 signs.

The project was undertaken with the use of local contractors from the immediate area.

Ripon BID always strives to give visitors the best welcome into the City and the replacement of these signs was long overdue.

Summer Roundup

Initial footfall figures show that in the period from July 1st to August 16th overall footfall rose by 13.31% compared with the same period in 2025 and 18.14% when compared with 2024.

On three consecutive Saturdays in August families enjoyed a brilliant day of FREE activities. Ripon BID brought a FREE mobile climbing wall for anyone brave enough to take on the challenge with over 160 people climbing. The BID also brought FREE face painting at the Cabman's Shelter with over 200 children's faces painted! The BID worked closely with Ripon City Council to ensure that all the August Saturdays were packed with free activities to encourage families into Ripon to explore, browse independent shops and grab and bite to eat or drink.

The response to our Ripon BID Summer Trail - Walter's Whippet Walk, has been absolutely fantastic with over 200 trail sheets given out and more than 50% returned! 28 businesses took part and we had a brilliant response from people who took part including this from Jean Walker:

"On Tuesday 28th July, my grandson, Finlay, and I visited Ripon to walk the Walter's Whippet Walk. When in Ripon the previous week, I saw these flyers and knew we had to do this because Finlay has a Whippet called Walter! Attached is a photo of the trail form and a photo collage of our day plus our very own Walter Whippet!

What a brilliant way to encourage visitors to wander around the town (and spend money!) We bought lunch in one of the participating cafés, a purse in a participating shop, a visit to the Cathedral and a cruise on the canal. Finlay bought an air fix car, from the Easy Learning Shop, which he proudly showed me, the following day, fully completed.

The icing on the cake was, however, when Finlay was allowed to take the wheel of the canal boat on the return trip. All in all a very enjoyable day. Regards to all, Jean Walker and Finlay"

The prize draw is now complete and four lucky winners will each receive a wonderful prize from some brilliant businesses, including Ripon Scenic Cruises, Portofino, Next and The Little Ripon Bookshop.

A massive thank you to everyone who took part and helped make the trail such a success.

Rejoicing in Ripon: Share Your Story

Ripon's business community has a powerful storytelling platform - the Rejoicing in Ripon Blog. It's full of positive, high-impact stories about local businesses, events and achievements, helping levy payers boost their visibility across the city and beyond. Visit **www.visitripon.co.uk/blog**

Why get involved: The blog regularly features Ripon's independents, cultural organisations and hospitality venues. Posts are shared across Visit Ripon and BID channels and often picked up by the press - giving your business valuable exposure.

Benefits for businesses: More eyes on your story - journalists use the blog for local leads. More engagement - features help residents and visitors discover what's new. More pride - every story strengthens Ripon's reputation as a vibrant, ambitious city.

Share your news: Ripon BID welcomes updates from all levy-paying businesses - from new launches and milestones to charity work and events. The team can help turn your news into a polished, shareable story.

Get involved: Browse the latest posts on the BID Blog and see how Ripon's businesses are shining. Then send your ideas to Ripon BID - it could be the next one read by thousands and picked up by the press.

Christmas in Ripon Brochure – Advertising Opportunity

Last chance to secure your advertising space in this year's Christmas in Ripon brochure!

Ripon BID will once again be producing its popular Christmas in Ripon brochure, now in its fifth year, helping to showcase the city and encourage visitors to shop, eat, drink and enjoy Ripon throughout the festive season.

This year, over 30,000 copies will be distributed to households and businesses during November, reaching audiences across Ripon, Boroughbridge, Thirsk, Masham, Harrogate and surrounding villages, including communities along the 36 bus route. Advertising in the brochure is a fantastic opportunity for BID businesses to put themselves in front of thousands of potential customers ahead of the important Christmas trading period, while helping Ripon BID extend the reach of the campaign even further.

A range of advertising packages are available, with fully paid-up BID members receiving a 20% discount on the rate card.

Ripon After Dark – Window Wanderland Festival

This October half term, Ripon will host its first Window Wanderland festival, celebrating local stories, wildlife, and heritage through illuminated window displays. Anyone can join in — businesses, households, and artists. Displays can use recycled materials and found objects. Ripon BID has registered with Window Wanderland to provide access to toolkits, maps, and promotional resources.

Sign up: windowwanderland.com/event/ripon-2026

Check out our blog https://visitripon.co.uk/bid-blog/ which contains good news stories, events and more!

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