

Kingston upon Thames

Kingston is both a vibrant market town and one of the liveliest Royal London Boroughs, sited on the banks of the River Thames, 12 miles south west of the centre of London. An attractive blend of fine timber-framed Tudor buildings with modern stores and homes, it boasts great shopping, a colourful café culture, thriving arts scene and great nightlife.

The town is a fascinating blend of old and new. First recorded in a Charter in 838, by the tenth century the town was established as the coronation place for Anglo Saxon kings. Today, it has a population of some 150,000, swelled in term-time by 20,000 students. On average, over 300,000 visitors come to the town each week, attracted by the excellent variety of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities on offer.

The riverside development at Charter Quay has expanded Kingston's traditional cultural centre around the ancient market place and church, bringing to the town the Rose Theatre's performance and exhibition space, atmospheric restaurants, specialist retailers and high quality residential accommodation.

The Rotunda's mix of leisure and entertainment right next to train and bus stations includes a 14-screen cinema and 16-lane mega-bowl.

The centre consists of:

- » 2.5 million, night time visitors annually
- » 6,000 residents in 2,500 homes
- » 23 Licensed premises

The Assessors and Panel were particularly impressed by:

- » The strong partnership that exists with the business community in addressing security issues, together with a marked reduction in town centre crime in recent years
- » The innovative approach to managing late night taxis and private hire vehicles, including the provision of marshalled private hire pick up points
- » The Rose Theatre and its contribution to the diversification of town centre users in the evening.

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