

## Giant firebird to launch Festival programme

Friday 29 May, 2015

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Basingstoke town centre will be set alight with excitement when a giant firebird struts through the streets to launch the programme for this year's Basingstoke Festival next Friday (29 May).

Hunting for its egg, the large mechanical bird will make its way from outside the back of Debenhams at 12.30pm accompanied by dancers from Youth Theatre and JG Dance.

Led by the firebird, the procession will move up Wote Street stopping occasionally before joining the Ingenious Gentleman band and dancers from Basingstoke Academy of Dance at Market Place in front of the Willis Museum.

The fourth Basingstoke Festival will run from Friday 19 June to Sunday 12 July, with more than 100 events and performances jam-packed into the programme.

This year's festival theme is 'feeling good' and has introduced a carnival theme to the programme, bursting with music, dance, colour and fun! The programme launch has been created with the expertise of outdoor arts company Emergency Exit Arts and locally-based Proteus Theatre Company and supported using public funding by Arts Council England and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. The launch will set the tone for a fantastic 24 days of exciting entertainment throughout the borough.

Cabinet Member for Partnerships Cllr Cathy Osselton said: "The fourth Basingstoke Festival is even bigger than previous years, offering even more festival events in addition to a programme of creative arts and family entertainment independently organised by groups and organisations throughout the borough.

"We are delighted by the wealth of quality events in the programme and can't wait to share this with people at our programme launch. I would like to encourage people to come along to the Top of the Town to enjoy the firebird procession and pick up a copy of the programme."

For more information about the festival see [www.basingstokefestival.co.uk](http://www.basingstokefestival.co.uk) or follow the festival on Twitter @BstokeFestival, Facebook Basingstokefestival and on Instagram #Bstokefestival

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