



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

NOTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JULY 26TH, 2013 AT THE WINTER GARDENS, BLACKPOOL

Name	Organisation
Present:	
Martin Long (chair)	Napthens
Steve Pye	Federation of Small Business
Mike Coleman	Blackpool & The Fylde College
David Cam	Pleasure Beach
Felicity Greeves	Blackpool Sixth
Carl Simpson	Marks & Spencer
Philip Owen	Barclays
John Hesketh	One Blackpool
Jane Littlewood	Rabbit Design/Wyred Up
Emdad Hussain	The Villa Outside
Iain Hawkins, Jenn Newton, Matthew Titherington	Merlin, Sea Life and Madame Tussauds
Gareth Carr	Job Centre Plus
Alex McIntyre	The Property Scene
Rob Knighton	Eclipse Developments
Trevor Roberts	Blackpool Transport
Wayne Smith	Northern Rail
Neil Foulkes	HSBC
Eileen Ormand	Town Centre BID
Bev Wood	BWD Design
Alison Gilmore	Imperial
Deborah Parker	Progress Recruitment
Colin Johnston	Blackpool Grand Theatre
Nathan Butters	NB Energy
Mark Hickey	Hounds Hill
Robin Ross	Blackpool Artists
Richard Lefton	Lefton's Furniture
Yvonne Ralston, Steve Bevan	Santander
Lindsay Campbell	Rowleys
John Woodman	Blackpool FC
Carmen Conquer	Aspired Futures
David Hardy	Champion Accountants
David Chapman	Linksgate Leisure
Tommy Baldwin	Northern Security
Marco Calle-Calatayud	Kwizeen
Riccy Caunce	Toast
Pauline Lai	Mandarin
Gary Sawyer	AI Claims
John Child	Sandcastle Waterpark
Natalie Brown	Business In The Community
Nick Leach	RBS
Rob Walker	Yes magazine
Paul Whelan, Nick Bell	Tyson Construction
David Houston	Trinity Hospice
Nick Taylor	Hilton Blackpool
Alistair Baines	Cassidy Ashton
Clare Taylor	Duxburys Commercial
Philip Holmes, Pearl Mina	In The Pink
Rob Green	Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Economic Development Co
Mark Yates	Brooks Collectables
John Barnett	Stardream
Shirley Hunt	Cranstone Hotel/Friends Of The Illuminations
Vicky Reynolds	Ashworth Treasure
Karen Leather	H Samuel
Graham Wood	Consultant
Vanda De Freitas	A4e
Glenn Woodham	Nandos
Neil Sutch	RBS
Amanda Bennett	Marketing Blackpool
Roger Mellor	Glasdon
Chris Hibbert	Henco
Kevin Bambury	Pixel Work Design
Paul Farrell/Dan Scott	PHX Training
Janine Marshall, Tony Ward	Genting Casinos
Steve Singleton	Cuadrilla
Michael Williams	Crown Entertainments
Kathryn O'Brien	First Group
Fred Mills	First Medical
Guy Shorroch	Aldrock Surveyors
Natalie Smith, David Burnett	Colossal Training, Colossal Security
Jonathan Cropper	Kingswood Stationers
Paul Mathison	Create Construction
Advisers/Observers/Guests	
Peter Legg, Philip Welsh, Janine Bradley	Blackpool Council
Tony Morgan	Superfast Lancashire
Sarah Pearson	New Schools Network
Apologies	
Bev Robinson	Blackpool & The Fylde College
Neil Jack, Alan Cavill, Polly Hamilton	Blackpool Council
Natalie Wyatt	Marketing Blackpool
Barry Howard	McDonalds UK
Sean Killingbeck	Giles Insurance
Paula Davies	The Wave
Stephen Thorpe	CME Medical
Heleen and Damian Broughton	Danbro
Kate Shane	Blackpool Tower
Coral Horn	Pink Link
David Jones	Thirty30Media
Kath Howard	PK Kids Nursery
Wendy Swift	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
Wendy Harrison	Café Fresch
Andrew Wareing	Voucher Packs
Cameron Scott	Cam Scott Leisure
Maria Noto	Lancaster House Hotel

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Martin Long (chair) welcomed everyone including new members and guests to the meeting.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting/Matters arising**

Mayoral Business Network Meetings

Philip Welsh (Blackpool Council) reported that the inaugural business network session hosted by Cllr Eddie Collett, the Mayor of Blackpool had been very successful, with over 40 businesses in attendance. A second event was now planned for **4pm on Tuesday 10 September at the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Blackpool**. Invitations to be sent out in w/c July 29.

3. **Superfast Lancashire**

Tony Morgan, Superfast Lancashire, gave a presentation on the roll out of this new broadband investment on the Fylde Coast.

He said this was a £130m investment which, upon completion, would result in 97% of Lancashire having access to superfast broadband. A further £3m has been invested in free business support, including the opening of a new centre at Leyland.

Mr Morgan said there was a variety of ways in which businesses could engage with the programme to ensure they get maximum benefit, starting with an initial face to face contact with an advisor. Subject to eligibility, businesses can then participate in a range of group master classes and workshops run by industry experts.

He urged businesses to register at www.superfastlancashire.com

4. **Business In The Community**

Natalie Brown, Blackpool Business Connector for Business In The Community, gave a presentation on the opportunities that her work offered to businesses in Blackpool.

She said that Business In The Community was one of the Prince of Wales' charities and was a business-led charity with over 850 member companies. It aims to transform communities and tackle key social issues where businesses can make a real difference.

Natalie said that in her Business Connector role she was providing a free brokerage service to businesses – linking them with community organisations to achieve individual aims.

Business benefits include:

- Leadership Development for individuals
- Coaching/mentoring
- Project management
- Team working
- Employee engagement
- Marketing/PR/brand reputation

Community involvement can include:

- Joining a board of trustees
- Mentoring young entrepreneurs
- Planning meaningful work experience opportunities
- Team volunteering projects away from the workplace
- Sharing skills and knowledge for the benefit of the community

Anyone wishing to contact Natalie to explore opportunities for involvement in the programme can do so, free of charge and with no commitment by emailing Natalie.Brown@bitconnect.org or phone 07720 733619

5. Energy Saving For SMEs

Janine Bradley (Blackpool Council) gave an update on a proposed energy saving scheme for SMEs (small to medium enterprises). She said that this followed a similar scheme for households which had been rolled out earlier this year and which had resulted in more than 200 households switching providers and saving an average of £120 per household per year.

She said the next residential campaign would be launched on August 6 and she encouraged employers to communicate this to their employees, perhaps via staff newsletters or noticeboards.

Janine said that the same "Ready To Switch" concept was now being applied to the business community, although because of the complexity and wide range of contracts would not be run on an "auction" basis as was the residential campaign.

In the case of SMEs, direct access would instead be provided to an independent and impartial SME energy broker, Make It Cheaper. This is a free, no obligation service which gives businesses the opportunity to talk to a business energy expert to help determine how much a business could save by switching.

If businesses do choose to switch, Make It Cheaper will oversee the handover without any interruption to energy supplies.

Registration is now open for businesses until October 15, 2013. To register go to the Ready To Switch website www.readytoswitch.co.uk and complete the callback request form, or telephone the Make It Cheaper freephone line on 0800 144 4811.

6. Blackpool Investment Fund

Peter Legg (Head of Economic Development, Blackpool Council) gave an update on the new Blackpool Investment Fund (BIF) which is to be launched in the autumn.

He said that the Council wished to back quality investment that leads to job creation. It was intended that the BIF would offer businesses a mixture of grants and loans subject to them meeting qualifying criteria. It would also enable investment in some sectors not deemed eligible for other funds eg, the retail sector.

Fund priorities would be supporting investment by businesses based in or locating to Blackpool with a focus on:

- Blackpool town centre
- South Beach District Centre
- Existing businesses with growth ambitions (trading more than 3 years)
- New business with growth potential (trading less than three years)

He said that the scheme would be launched at a breakfast event on September 17 at the New Blackpool Enterprise Centre. Further details to follow.

Peter's full presentation showing the funding available under each priority can be found at www.bblq.co.uk under the Reports section

7. New Schools Network

Sarah Pearson (New Schools Network) gave a presentation on the New Schools Challenge for Blackpool.

She said the New Schools Network had spent a week in Blackpool engaging and surveying parents, and talking to schools and charities about the concept of Free Schools. She said that 10 groups or organisations in the area had already expressed a keen interest.

She said that Free Schools had to be:

- New schools offering education for pupils aged 4 to 19
- Open to all pupils regardless of faith, ability or social background
- Set up in areas where they were wanted by parents
- Be held accountable through Ofsted inspection and exam results

She said that 81 Free Schools were now open in England and emphasised that they do not receive any more funding than other State schools and could not select by ability.

Ms Pearson said that the concept was particularly relevant in an area like Blackpool where some of the challenges facing traditional schools were significant.

She said that the business community could help by:

- Sharing facilities or expertise or providing financial support to governors
- Contributing to day-to-day education, hosting workplace visits or talking to students
- Helping to develop a school with skills and employability at its heart

Further information on the New Schools Network can be found at www.newschoolsnetwork.org

Anyone wishing to discuss the concept of free schools in more detail can contact Sarah at sarahpearson@newschoolsnetwork.org

8. **Yes Magazine**

Rob Walker (Yes magazine) gave a presentation on a new Fylde Coast magazine concept, linking charity to business.

He said the aim of the magazine was to promote charities and community fundraising in the Blackpool and Fylde area with the direct support of local businesses.

Businesses that take paid-for space in the magazine automatically sponsor a good cause or charity to which they are associated. The business can use the paid-for space for general advertising purposes, but also receive the equivalent of 50% of that space free of charge to promote their nominated good cause or charity. For example, if a business takes out a full page, their nominated charity would receive half a page free.

The full-colour A4 magazine is free and distributed across the Blackpool and Fylde area.

Anyone interested in talking to Rob about the Yes magazine concept should email info@newleafdesigns.co.uk or call him on 07790 306560

9. **Business Partnerships Report**

Philip Welsh (Blackpool Council) drew the group's attention to a number of items in his report:

EMRO

PW reported that although the formal consultation had ended on July 25, Blackpool Council was keen to see discussions continue with the business community about the night time economy. To that end, a meeting was planned between the Council's Chief Executive and some key town centre businesses on August 1.

Talbot Gateway

Noted that the road works around the new Talbot Gateway scheme were now complete and the roads reopened. There are some outstanding works to the pavements which will be completed over the next few weeks. PW thanked any businesses affected by the works for their patience, but added that the scheme was already starting to have a significant positive impact on the overall appearance of that part of the town centre.

100 Day Challenge

Noted that Blackpool Council and the National Apprenticeships Service were planning to launch a "100 Apprentices in 100 Days" initiative between July 31 and November 8. Businesses are invited to attend the launch event which will be held at The Hilton, Blackpool at 5.30pm on Wednesday 31 July. Please email apprenticeships@blackpool.gov.uk to secure a free ticket.

Employer Ownership Of Skills Fund

It was noted that a decision on Blackpool's bid for funding to support the establishment of a Blackpool Tourism Academy was expected before the end of July.

Illuminations

PW reported that the Friends of Blackpool Illuminations had been invited to speak at the September meeting to talk about the work that they were doing to get local businesses to be more supportive of the Illuminations.

He said that Shirley Hunt (Cranstone Hotel) was taking a lead role in developing a business ambassador scheme.

If any business is interested in talking to Shirley prior to the September BBLG meeting about the opportunities for business to support this year's Illuminations through donations, sponsorship or in other ways, please email her at Shirley.hunt1@btopenworld.com

10. Any Other Business

No further business. Martin Long thanked Michael Williams and his team for hosting the meeting at the Winter Gardens; Howard Plant for providing complimentary car parking and the various speakers who presented at the meeting.

11. Date and time of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for **8am for 8.30am, Friday 27th September, 2013** at **The Paradise Rooms, Pleasure Beach Resort, Blackpool**. Parking and breakfast arrangements to be confirmed.

Note that all of the presentations made at the July 26 meeting can be found at www.bblg.co.uk under the Reports section