



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – November 29, 2013

Section 1: Town Centre Economy

CHRISTMAS IN BLACKPOOL TOWN CENTRE

The town centre Christmas switch-on event will take place in St John's Square on the afternoon of Saturday 30 November.

The event will commence at 2pm with a "TV Reality Show" hosted by Rock FM and featuring a line-up of acts that have appeared on The X-Factor and Britain's Got Talent.

The line-up includes stars from Emmerdale and Coronation Street and will also include a guest appearance by The Dynamos (pictured right), the leading ladies from the smash-hit musical Mamma Mia!



The Dynamos will perform two songs from the show ahead of its opening in Blackpool for a full summer season in June 2014. The actual switch-on is scheduled for 4.45pm.

The Town Centre BID has arranged a Christmas media campaign using The Gazette and The Wave to encourage people into the town centre over the Christmas period. Blackpool Council and the Blackpool BID have also joined forces to offer free car parking ahead of the Christmas shopping period.

The main promotion will see shoppers offered free parking in the newly-refurbished Talbot Road multi-storey car park for the four Thursday late night shopping events on November 28 and December 5, 12 and 19 from 5pm until midnight. Free parking is also being offered on the same evenings by the Houndshill Shopping Centre.

- The Rotary Club will be hosting the annual Santa Sleigh every Saturday and Sunday in Adelaide Street West from December 7-22 inclusive.
- Blackpool Council will be running a market throughout St John's Square, Abingdon and Coronation Streets from December 9 until January 11.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

A second free parking offer has also been arranged by the BID and Blackpool Council to mark national Small Business Saturday on December 7.

Aimed at supporting local firms and encouraging visitors and residents to discover Blackpool's small shops, the event will see free parking offered at all town centre and South Beach council car parks (with the exception of the Sandcastle car park) throughout December 7.

A Get Started showcase is also being staged in the Floral Hall of the Winter Gardens to celebrate Small Business Saturday.

It will be held from 11am until 3pm and will feature 15 fledgling businesses in Blackpool ranging from legal services to cake-making, surveillance, dog grooming, vintage clothing, joinery and photography.

This is a rare opportunity to meet local entrepreneurs in one place. The event has been organised by the Council's Get Started team with the help of the Winter Gardens.

WALKABOUT REOPENS



The Walkabout bar in Blackpool town centre has re-opened after the venue was badly damaged by fire earlier this year.

The £3million redevelopment sees the addition of more bars and an outdoor balcony overlooking Queen Street.

The re-opening saw the return of the original 18 members of the Walkabout team who worked in other bars across the UK while the rebuild was underway. The redevelopment

has created more than 40 new roles.

SYNDICATE DEMOLITION

Work is expected to commence on the demolition of the former Syndicate nightclub in the New Year.

Planners have given the go-ahead for the Church Street building to be knocked down and replaced with a 60-space car park for a temporary three-year period.

The Council has confirmed that any features of interest within the building will be photographed and recorded.

Longer-term usage of the site is still under consideration.

RETAIL RENTS

Blackpool is one of only two towns in the North West that have shown an increase in prime retail rents, according to a new survey.

The GB Retail Paper produced by Colliers International revealed that the North West was the worst performing region in the UK for retail rents, with 25 out of 39 town centres showing a decline in performance. Only Blackpool and Chester showed an increase in retail rents.

BUS STATION CAR PARK REOPENS

Blackpool's refurbished Talbot Road multi-storey car park is now open for business.

Externally, it has been re-clad with a glass and stainless steel façade and internally the car park has been completely refurbished providing 650 spaces.

A new "pay on foot" system has been introduced which will give shoppers the option to stay longer in the town centre rather than committing to a specific time period on arrival.

The car park will be open between 7am and midnight and costs £1.50 an hour with discounts on a sliding scale for long stay parking. The renovation forms part of the Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme.

EMRO HEARING

A new date has been set for the hearing into the possible introduction of an Early Morning Restriction Order (EMRO) in part of Blackpool town centre.

The proposed EMRO would prohibit the sale of alcohol between the hours of 3am and 6am, Monday to Sunday, in a designated area.

It is aimed at addressing recurring problems within the town centre such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour that is not directly attributable to specific premises.

The areas affected (all or part of) are: Queen Street/Queen Square; Springfield Road; Promenade (between New Bonny Street and Banks Street); Bank Hey Street; Market Street; Dickson Road; Talbot Road; West Street; Corporation Street; Abingdon Street and The Strand. A total of 24 premises in this area currently have the ability to sell alcohol after 3am.

Five days have been set aside for the Licensing Committee to consider the EMRO proposal. It will meet from Monday 9 December to Friday 13 December to hear various representations.

A number of businesses have been working on alternative proposals to improve the night-time economy. These will be presented at the hearing.

CREATIVE POP-UP FOR ST JOHNS

A new pop-up shop is to open in St John's Square offering locally produced fashion, jewellery, and arts and crafts for sale in the lead up to Christmas.

"Shop Boutique" will feature the works of 17 local and regional designer-makers and artists such as trendy pop-culture fashion label, Me&Yu; natural soap maker, Soapure; the Crafty Cloth clothing label; fabric printing company Squirrel and Tiffin; glassmaker Collette Halstead; and unique jewellery from Yappers Chappers Design.

The shop will be officially opened to the public at 6pm on Thursday 5 December and will remain open for two weeks only until Saturday 21 December.

The pop-up shop has been facilitated by the Blackpool Council's creative industry centre, FYCreatives, and the Grundy Art Gallery. Support has also been provided by Crown Entertainment Ltd, and the team from Blackpool Illuminations.

For more information on the pop-up shop visit www.facebook.com/meandfyc

NEW NAMES IN HOUNDSHILL

The Houndshill Shopping Centre has confirmed the arrival of several new brands.

The latest arrivals include Peacocks (which is returning to the town centre after its original Bank Hey Street store closed last year), Caffè Nero and Bodycare, which is relocating from its Church Street premises.

Fashion chain Jane Norman has also committed to the Houndshill for a longer term and Blackpool Football Club has opened a club shop for a six-month trial period, which will sell merchandise and match day tickets. The existing club shop and ticket office will remain open at the stadium.

NEW GRUNDY EXHIBITION

The latest exhibition at The Grundy Art Gallery on Queen Street features a range of unusual collections gathered from residents of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Exhibits in The Collections Show range from an array of lighters; a set of Andy Capp paintings; Daleks of all shapes and sizes; Jelly Babies; to a submariner's escape suit! The show runs until January 18.

TOWN CENTRE VACANCIES

An updated report on town centre vacancies has shown a slight decrease during the past three months.

As of the first week of November, there has been a net reduction of two units since the last survey was carried out in August – bringing the total number of empty units across the whole of the town centre to 118.

Newly-vacated units include Vacation Travel on Birley Street; Evans/Dorothy Perkins on Victoria Street; Utopia on Bank Hey Street; Copacabana on Clifton Street; and The Blue Room on Church Street.

The vacancy rate for the town centre is now running at 17.8% although this falls to just over 14% in the core retail area.

WINTER GARDENS OPEN HOUSE

The Winter Gardens is opening all of its doors to the public on Wednesday 4 December.

Between 11am and 3pm, the public will be able to view all of the spectacular venues and learn about the history of the Winter Gardens.

Entry is free but donations can be made to the Winter Gardens Trust.

Note that the Winter Gardens Trust annual dinner will be staged on the following day, Thursday 5 December in the Spanish Hall at 7.30pm.

At the same event, the Friends of the Winter Gardens will be launched. Membership is £10, which entitles members to discounts off food, drinks and some shows, and free entry to events such as organ recitals and afternoon tea dances.

For further information on all of these activities, contact Elaine Smith on 01253-318948 or email Elaine@blackpoolcivictrust.org.uk

Section 2: Visitor Economy

ROD STEWART IN CONCERT

Singing star Rod Stewart is to play a 25,000-capacity outdoor gig at Blackpool Football Club next June.

The concert, on Friday 20 June, is the first to be staged at Bloomfield Road. A total of 10,000 seats will be available on the covered pitch, with a further 15,000 available in the east, west and south stands. Tickets went on sale on November 22, priced from £55.

Stewart's return to Blackpool marks the 40th anniversary of the last time he played here – back in December 1974 with The Faces.

ILLUMINASIA



Details of a new £4million indoor attraction at Blackpool's Winter Gardens have been revealed.

IlluminAsia will feature more than 450 lighting structures set over five distinct areas in the Olympia exhibition hall. It will open to the public on Good Friday, April 18, 2014, and will become an all-year round paid-for attraction.

The exhibition will be the biggest indoor illuminations show in the world and will be constructed using traditional Chinese lantern-making crafts, coupled with the latest in lighting technology.

It will feature five "worlds" including a Chinese Temple; Land Of The Giants; Under The Sea; a Planetarium; and The Wonders Of The World which will include a 45-ft high model of Blackpool Tower.

It is being staged by the International Special Attractions Group based in Shanghai and Los Angeles, together with UK co-producer Jon Conway as part of a three-year deal with Blackpool.

It is anticipated that it will take 35 Chinese artisans to build the attraction, with 15 full-time jobs created once it opens.

- A presentation on the new IlluminAsia exhibition has been provisionally scheduled for the January meeting of the Business Leadership Group.

ILLUMINATIONS COLLECTIONS

After a slow start, public donations to the Illuminations improved during the final weeks of the season, and the total exceeded £120,000.

The Friends Of The Illuminations have done a tremendous job in generating interest among the business community and before the end of the year they will be gathering in the dozens of collection tins that were given out to businesses at the start of the Illuminations season.

CHINESE CONNECTION

Chancellor George Osborne has announced that rules governing the visa application process for Chinese visitors will be relaxed in a move that will open up one of the world's fastest growing economies to British business and tourism opportunities.

Blackpool Council and some of the town's key businesses established links earlier this year with government officials from the Chinese seaside town of Sanya and further discussions over potential cultural, educational and economic links are planned for next year.

The Chinese officials have expressed significant interest in Blackpool's seaside heritage and, in particular, its ballroom dancing competitions and facilities.



2014 DESTINATION GUIDE

The 2014 Destination Guide has now been published by Marketing Blackpool.

As well as featuring Blackpool's huge range of attractions and accommodation within the 100 pages, the guide features for the first time a section aimed at encouraging investment in Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, and another promoting the benefits of living here.

Around 80,000 copies of the Guide will be distributed nationally before the end of the year.

It can be viewed online at

www.visitblackpool.com/blackpoolnow

SHOWZAM 2014

The next major event within the resort will be the Showzam! festival of circus, magic and new variety which will be held from February 14-21.

The line-up of shows and acts is almost complete with more than 70 performers taking part and 30,000 guides are being distributed to give prospective visitors a sneak preview of what is going on during the festival.

Arts Council England has confirmed a grant of £99k which will directly support five Showzam! shows including No Fit State Circus, which will run at 15-minute intervals at Showzam! Central in the Winter Gardens Olympia each day of the festival.

NEW LOOS FOR PROMENADE

A nine-unit toilet block is being planned on the promenade on the south side of Central Pier. The new toilets will be funded by operator, Danfo, who manage such facilities on behalf of Blackpool Council.

It is hoped that the unit will be available at the start of the main season in 2014 subject to planning permission.

TOWER ARCHES

Blackpool Tower's famous arches are to be restored to their former glory as part of a new heritage conservation project.



The works, part of a huge investment being made in restoring and protecting the future of The Tower by Blackpool Council and Merlin Entertainments, will see the promenade-facing facade restored to the original design.

The first phase of work involves seven of the arches restored with a second phase expected to restore two more.

Damage to the original terracotta through weathering and changes to the Tower frontage has been sustained over many years.

Blackpool construction firm F Parkinson has been appointed as the principal contractor.

The work is expected to take up to nine months and The Tower will remain open as normal throughout the duration of the works. It is hoped the work will be complete in time for the 120th birthday celebrations in May next year.

When the work is finished the existing vinyl display boards that currently adorn the lower frontage of the building will be taken down.

FAMILY ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

Businesses in Blackpool are being urged to gain a stamp of approval to prove they excel at being family-friendly.

Marketing Blackpool is backing the Approved Family Friendly scheme and is encouraging as many attractions, accommodation providers and food outlets in the resort to support it too.

Approved Family Friendly is a nationwide scheme launched last year which aims to give assurance of confidence to families by awarding an official seal of approval to businesses that have met certain assessed criteria.

There is an extensive list of requirements to gain the seal with key indicators depending on the type of business being assessed. Requirements for accommodation providers include non-smoking family rooms, children's menus and plug covers. Attractions must provide services such as bottle warming, accessibility facilities and an information point. Food outlets need to include facilities such as baby changing, high chairs and storage for pushchairs.

Businesses wishing to find out more about the Approved Family Friendly status can contact Diane Blakemore at Marketing Blackpool by emailing diane@marketingblackpool.com or calling 01253 478223.

RETURN OF STRICTLY

Strictly Come Dancing returned to Blackpool over the weekend of November 16/17, giving the resort several hours of prime-time TV coverage.



Picture: BBC

The BBC has revealed that viewing figures for the Blackpool Tower Ballroom show pulled in an additional 100,000 viewers compared to the previous weekend. The Saturday night show attracted 10.44m viewers.

In addition to the extensive TV and media coverage, several businesses in the resort benefited directly from the cast and crew staying over.

RESORT PASS

Sales of the Blackpool Resort Pass have now ceased for the year following the end of the Illuminations season.

The money-saving pass was launched earlier this year in an effort to save visitors money and encourage overnight stays in Blackpool.

It is estimated that this first full year of operating the pass has generated sales close to £1m.

There are two Resort Pass options. The Original Resort Pass gives visitors access to six attractions – Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Nickelodeon Land, The Blackpool Tower Eye and 4D Experience, The Blackpool Tower Dungeon, SEA LIFE Blackpool and Madame Tussauds.

Resort Pass Plus offers access to nine attractions – those in the Original Resort Pass plus Blackpool Zoo, Sandcastle Waterpark and Blackpool Model Village.

- At the Lancashire Tourism Awards held in early November, the Resort Pass was named as Best Marketing Initiative.

LANCASHIRE TOURISM AWARDS

The Blackpool Resort Pass was not the only winner for Blackpool at the Lancashire Tourism Awards. Blackpool Zoo was named winner in the Large Visitor Attraction category, Blackpool Pleasure Beach won the Best for Groups category and Sandcastle Waterpark the Customer Service Award.

Overall Blackpool's attractions and accommodation businesses were shortlisted in 12 categories.

EXTRA WEEK OF LIGHTS

The additional week of the Illuminations appears to have been well received with some businesses reporting significant increases in trade compared to the same week last year.

Volumes of people going through the Lights during that week seem to have been comparable with an average September week.

Once we have more detailed feedback we will review the overall impact to determine whether the additional week should be repeated next year.

SEA WATER IMPROVEMENT

Blackpool North, South, Central and Bispham beaches have all met European water quality standards for 2013.

It is the first time since 2005 all four of Blackpool's beaches have passed, although testing was suspended during work to rebuild the Promenade.

The results are an important step forward as the resort strives to meet even stricter water quality standards to be introduced in 2015 which could result in people being advised not to bathe in the sea.

St Annes and Fleetwood beaches were among just five nationally that failed tests.

- A new scheme to encourage local businesses in Blackpool to play an active role in helping the resort achieve European bathing water standards will be tabled at the January meeting of the BBLG.

BLACKPOOL ROCKS FESTIVAL

The Winter Gardens is hosting the UK's newest indoor musical festival.

Blackpool Rocks will be staged throughout the entertainment complex on Saturday 21 December with a range of dance, urban and indie acts.

Organisers are hoping the event will attract several thousand revellers to the resort.



SOUTH PROM APARTMENT PLAN

Plans have been approved to demolish a disused hotel at South Beach and replace it with residential apartments, bars and restaurants.

The development will result in the former Tudor Rose Hotel being demolished and the site converted into a five-storey complex that will house 15 permanent apartments all with sea views and balconies, together with two restaurants and two bars on the ground floor.

The scheme is being developed by DY Property Services based on Church Street, Blackpool.

The Tudor Rose Hotel, which had 50 bedrooms, has not traded for some time.

HERITAGE MUSEUM BID

A substantial bid is to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help build a heritage centre that would celebrate Blackpool's rich history as the world's first working class seaside resort.

The intention is to house the attraction – which could cost up to £20m – in the Pavilion Theatre within the Winter Gardens. It would be a unique blend of museum, visitor attraction and theatre, filled with artefacts, music, film and live performance.

A feasibility scheme has already been completed and it is estimated that the centre could attract over 300,000 visitors a year and create 70 full-time jobs.

An initial submission will be made to the HLF at the end of November. Subject to approval, the attraction could be operational as early as summer 2018.

Section 3: Company News

BURTON'S ACQUISITION

A Canadian pension fund has confirmed it has agreed a deal to buy the Burton's Biscuit Company, which has a large manufacturing plant in Blackpool.

Under the terms of the deal, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) will buy Burton's as a whole including its manufacturing sites in Blackpool, Edinburgh and Llantarnam along with its chocolate refinery in Moreton and head office in St Albans.

It will continue to be led by its existing management team and operate under its existing name. The business employs 2,200 staff and also manufactures Wagon Wheels, Maryland cookies and Cadbury's biscuits. The sale is expected to complete later this month.

Burton's has already declared its intention to invest £2m in the Blackpool site in order to make it the company's "Cookie Centre of Excellence".

TANGERINE GROWTH

Revenue at Blackpool-based sweet manufacturer Tangerine Confectionery has increased to a record level. The company, which also has operations in Liverpool and Yorkshire, said its growth was in spite of intense competition in the market.

Tangerine, which owns the Barratt brand producing Sherbet Fountains, Refreshers, Blackjacks and Fruit Salads, posted revenues of £169m for the year to 31 December 2012 – up from £156.6m in the previous year. Pre-tax profit also increased from £30,000 in 2011 to £3m.

ACCOUNTANCY ACQUISITION

Champion Accountants has acquired Blackpool accountancy firm, Boniface & Co.

Boniface & Co was founded in 1978 by Michael Boniface with his brother Andrew joining the firm as partner in 2001. As part of the deal Michael and Andrew Boniface will join Champion as client partners.

Champion originally established a presence in Blackpool in 2007 when it acquired Haworth Moore in the town. Staff from Boniface & Co have moved into Champion's base on Whitehills Business Park.

Champion has its headquarters in Manchester and also has sites in Chester, Preston and Southport.

HILTON OFF MARKET

Blackpool's Hilton Hotel has been taken off the market after its owners failed to agree any deals for its sale.

The landmark seafront building had been offered for a guide price of £8.5m by the Hilton Worldwide Group as part of a review of its property portfolio.

The company has now announced that the 274-room hotel is no longer being advertised for sale and says it is business as usual for the hotel and its staff.

MERLIN FLOTATION

Merlin Entertainments, operator of various attractions in Blackpool including The Tower, Sea Life Centre and Madame Tussauds, has floated on the London Stock Exchange.

The company, which operates 99 attractions in 22 countries and is the world's second biggest leisure operator behind Disney, began trading earlier this month with an initial valuation of over £3.2bn.

The offer of just under a third of Merlin's shares raised an initial £957m for the company and its selling shareholders.

Merlin says that becoming a public company enables the next stage of development as it seeks to expand its international portfolio.

The company's other UK attractions include Alton Towers, Legoland and the London Eye as well as Madame Tussauds in London and various Sea Life centres.

Section 4: General News

LANCASHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS

Two Lancashire-wide business award ceremonies are returning to Blackpool in 2014.

Lancashire Business View magazine's **Red Rose Awards** will be staged at the Winter Gardens on Thursday 13 March.

There are 20 entry categories. Details of how to enter can be found at www.redroseawards.co.uk. Entries close on January 17.

Meanwhile, North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that the **BIBA** business awards will return to the Tower Ballroom on the evening of September 12. The BIBAs will open for entries on January 15 with 18 different award categories.

BOAT TRAM ACROSS THE POND

An historic Blackpool tram is to get a new lease of life in San Francisco. Transport enthusiasts in the city have bought one of the resort's former boat trams to operate as part of the city's streetcar service.

The tram, which was bought from Blackpool Transport by the Lancastrian Transport Trust (LTT) when the heritage fleet was disbanded to make way for the new trams, was due to make its way across the Atlantic last month.

For the past two years it has been on loan to the Beamish Museum in County Durham, but the sale of the tram will raise much-needed funds to help LTT restore one of its other vintage trams.

It will be the second Blackpool boat tram to operate in San Francisco, after another one was gifted to the city in 1985. It now operates along the city's waterfront.



Three boat trams will continue to operate in Blackpool as part of Blackpool Transport's remaining heritage fleet.

VITAL SIGNS LAUNCH

The Community Foundation for Lancashire is to unveil its Vital Signs research and demonstrate how businesses can help support the local community at a special event at the Tower Ballroom on Tuesday 3 December.

The Foundation says that the research will underline how drastically people's lives in Lancashire can change depending on where they live.

The breakfast launch event, which will include a panoramic view of the resort from the top of Blackpool Tower, will provide an opportunity for businesses to discuss with the Community Foundation how they can support and interact with the local community.

INDOOR FOOTBALL PLAN

A fitness operator is seeking to convert the former MFI furniture store on Vicarage Lane, Blackpool, into an indoor five-a-side football centre. DW Fitness, which already operates a gym in the next door premises, has applied to Blackpool Council seeking planning permission for the scheme which could create up to 15 new jobs.

DW Fitness opened a gym in the former Focus DIY store in 2011 after taking over the site when both Focus and MFI closed down.

COLLEGE RATED “OUTSTANDING”

Blackpool & The Fylde College has been recognised as one of the UK’s leading colleges after the overall effectiveness of its provision was judged “Outstanding” by national inspection body, Ofsted.

It becomes just the third general Further Education College in the UK to receive Grade 1 Outstanding across each of the main areas since a new framework was put into place in September last year.

In addition to overall effectiveness, the College was rated Outstanding for:

- Outcomes for learners
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Effectiveness of leadership and management

The College’s effective partnership work with local schools and employers; contribution to the local community, high proportion of learners progressing into employment or higher education; outstanding academic and pastoral support and innovative teaching techniques were all praised during the inspection which took place in early October.

- The College is staging a supplier briefing event next month, giving businesses information on how to become a supplier and learn about forthcoming opportunities. It will be held on **Tuesday 10 December** from 12.00-14.00 in the hub @ Bispham Campus, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0HB. To book a free place, please e-mail Pat Condon, Procurement and Legal Services Manager, on pat.condon@blackpool.ac.uk advising of company details and the number of attendees for catering purposes.

CENTRAL DRIVE SHOPS

A scheme is underway to improve the appearance of empty shops along Central Drive using historic photography. The first property at 127 Central Drive has now been decorated using a picture of the road dated 1894, juxtaposed against its modern equivalent. Blackpool Council is working with businesses and landlords to identify other empty shops that could take part.

CENTRAL DRIVE CONTRAFLOW

Work has begun on a highway scheme that will create a contraflow bus lane on Central Drive. Once completed, the work is expected to improve the reliability of bus and taxi journeys around the town centre.

Work will take place on both lanes of the road by the junctions of Reads Avenue and Chapel Street, which will include some lane closures and temporary traffic lights. It is expected that the work will be completed around February 2014.

NEW SEA DEFENCE SCHEME

An £80m sea defence scheme has been announced for the Fylde Coast.

The Government has approved the funding for flood defence work at Rossall and Anchorsholme. The seawalls between Rossall Hospital and Rossall Point and Kingsway to Little Bispham at Anchorsholme, will be improved under the scheme.

The scheme, which aims to protect up to 12,000 properties from coastal flooding, will be delivered by Balfour Beatty.

The Anchorsholme section is expected to be completed by the summer of 2015, the Rossall section by summer 2017.

Funding is also being sought for sea defence improvements between Fairhaven Lake and Lytham.

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL ADOPTS LIVING WAGE

Blackpool Council is now officially a UK Living Wage accredited employer.

It follows a pledge by Council Leader, Cllr Simon Blackburn, to ensure a fair wage is paid to all members of staff. He said the authority was keen to set an example to employers throughout the borough.

In practical terms it means that, from April 1, no-one working for the Council (with the exception of apprentices and interns) earns less than £7.45 an hour.

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL JOB CUTS

Blackpool Council is to cut 700 jobs as it tries to make savings of £36m over the next two years.

Staff have been asked to consider options such as voluntary redundancy, five days unpaid leave a year and a pay freeze.

In the next financial year cuts of £15.8m will leave the council with a budget of £141m. One of several areas to come under scrutiny will be new ways of funding and delivering the illuminations.

It is expected that 250 permanent jobs and 100 contract positions will be lost in each of the next two financial years.

The workforce has been reduced by a quarter since 2010.

MAYORAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

The second of the Mayoral business networking meetings held on September 10 attracted around 30 businesses.

It is intended to stage the next event at 4.30pm on **Tuesday 10 December**.

All businesses will be welcome to attend, regardless of whether they have attended either of the first two sessions.

Any business wishing to attend please email Philip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support



Blackpool Council has now launched the 2013 *Give A Little* Christmas campaign to distribute donated gifts to children and young people in need across Blackpool.

Over the past two years, the campaign has been heavily supported by the Blackpool Business Leadership Group and the private sector has helped contribute more than £100,000 in cash, gifts and vouchers for events and attractions, ensuring that more than 1,000 children from vulnerable families received Christmas presents each year.

Any businesses interested in supporting the appeal can do so by:

- Donating cash, new toys, games, books, toiletries, clothing or experiences
- Encouraging their own staff to donate

Please note that the campaign is aimed at children and young people aged from 0-19 years old in Blackpool. In all cases, gifts should be new, unwrapped and in their original, unopened packaging.

Items can be donated at the reception points of all the main Council offices and The Gazette offices on Blackpool Business Park.

Cash donations can be made in person at the Customer First Centre in Municipal Buildings. Cheques should be made payable to Blackpool Council, but please mark the back of the cheque and envelope "Give A Little Campaign". You can also donate by telephone using a credit or debit card on 01253 477477

The deadline for donations is **Monday 9 December**.

If you need any further help or advice, then please email me at: philiip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk.

Otherwise, more details about the campaign can be found at www.blackpool.gov.uk/givealittle

Any support you can offer is greatly appreciated.

Philip Welsh
Head of Partnerships & Business Development