



# BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

## Business Partnerships Report – May 29, 2015

### Section 1: Visitor Economy

#### **RESORT FILMING**

Blackpool has been the focal point of significant film activity over the past few months. The resort continues to attract attention from national and international location managers keen to feature the resort in films, TV programmes and advertisements. Highlights include:

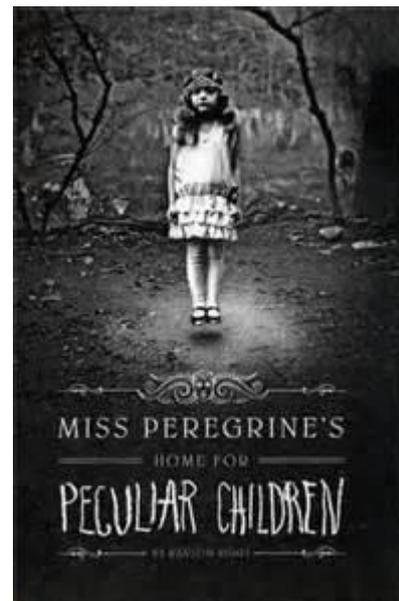
#### Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children

This 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox adaptation of a young adult novel is the highest profile film to be located in Blackpool in recent history. Directed by Tim Burton, it has a stellar cast including Samuel L Jackson, Judi Dench, Eva Green, Rupert Everett and Chris O'Dowd.

A 300-strong crew stayed in the resort, generating significant business for hotels and restaurants. Samuel L Jackson visited several places along the Fylde Coast during his stay.

External shots were filmed on a specially-created set on the Comedy Carpet over several days at the start of May and the film company took over the Tower Circus for several weeks to film indoor scenes.

The Blackpool scenes, which included the creation of a snowy landscape outside the Tower, were written specifically into the screenplay and it is understood that it will be the resort that will be identified within the film, rather than it being a fictional or unidentifiable location.



The film, which is based on the best-selling dark fantasy novel, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, is scheduled for worldwide release in March 2016. Discussions are taking place with Fox as to whether Blackpool can play some part in the official premiere.

The Fox location crew has expressed its gratitude to Blackpool (not least the business community) for co-operating with the filming which forced the closing of the Promenade in front of the Tower for several days as well as some temporary disruption to tram services.

### Away

Scenes for a new feature-length film starring Timothy Spall and Juno Temple were also shot at various locations in the resort during April and May. *Away* tells the story of a widower who saves an orphan on the run from a drug dealer. A release date for the film has yet to be confirmed, but Gateway Productions, which is making the film, is already billing it as “a story of love, loss and hope played out against the magical backdrop of Blackpool”.

### Prey

An episode of the new series of TV drama series, *Prey*, will be filmed in the resort in June. Although most of the story line will be set in Manchester, there will be scenes shot on location around the Promenade.

### Lenny Henry

A new film about the life of comedian Lenny Henry was filmed in resort during May. Scenes were shot at North Pier, the beach and North Promenade.

### Len Goodman

Len Goodman’s *Holiday of a Lifetime* (which filmed last year with Ainsley Harriott and was essentially an hour-long advertisement for Blackpool) is returning with Anton Du Beke. They will be filming in a variety of locations in the first week of June including the Empress, the Tower, Pleasure Beach and Promenade.

## **RESORT IN TRIPADVISOR TOP FIVE**

Blackpool has been named as one of the UK’s top visitor destinations in a survey by TripAdvisor.

The resort was fourth in the chart behind London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, but ahead of the likes of Manchester, Liverpool, York, Bristol and Birmingham.

The chart is based on the number of certificates of excellence each destination received from the TripAdvisor site over the past year. Blackpool received over 350.

## **DANCE FESTIVAL GOES EAST**

The annual Blackpool Dance Festival will be transported to China next year for the launch of its first overseas event.

The event, which is almost a century old, attracts tens of thousands of competitors and spectators from about 60 countries.

The Shanghai version of the festival will take place at the Grand Stage between 19 and 23 August 2016, with participants able to compete in Latin and ballroom dancing. It is planning to expand the event in coming years.

There are plans to expand the Chinese event every year, a spokesperson said.

The Blackpool event, which is currently taking place in the town's Winter Gardens, will continue to be held in the resort every May.

## **RUGBY WORLD CUP**

The Rugby World Cup is to be showcased in Blackpool as part of a 75-day nationwide tour.

The Webb Ellis Trophy will be on display in the Tower Ballroom on July 26 as part of a programme of events that will include touch rugby and other promotional activities adjacent to the Comedy Carpet.

The tour culminates at Twickenham Stadium on September 18 in time for the World Cup opening ceremony and the inaugural match of the tournament, England v Fiji.

## **2015 EVENTS PROGRAMME**

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Pride Festival will take place in and around the Winter Gardens on the weekend of June 13 and 14. It will be launched with a colourful parade along the Promenade.

The main stage line-up includes Jedward, Jake Quickenden, and Bailey McConnell and Harry Mondryk from Britain's Got Talent, with guest appearances by Black Lace, The Krankies and various local performers.



There will be a number of fringe events leading up to the festival weekend, starting with The Pride Ball on Sunday 7 June.



The programme for Blackpool's annual Armed Forces celebration is now confirmed.

Armed Forces Week, which was launched in 2006, will run between June 22 and 28 with a variety of entertainment, largely focused on Blackpool town centre.

Armed Forces Day itself, on Saturday 27 June, will include a full programme of events on St John's Square, as well a display of military vehicles on Blackpool Promenade.

The programme ends with the Blackpool Taxi Pull, an annual event which sees local cabbies raising money for Armed Forces charities, and, most importantly, the Sunday morning service and parade.

Full details of the event can be found at [www.armedforcesweek.co.uk](http://www.armedforcesweek.co.uk)

## **BLACKPOOL AIR SHOW**

Full details have now been confirmed for the Blackpool Air Show. It will take place on Central Promenade on Sunday 9 and Monday 10 August, and will feature the Red Arrows, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Eurofighter and the Red Devils parachute team. The event is being sponsored by TransPennine Express.

Full details, including the full line-up and start times, will be available on the [www.visitblackpool.com](http://www.visitblackpool.com) website.

## SWITCH-ON FESTIVAL

Tickets for the newly-branded iFest (Blackpool Illuminations switch-on festival weekend) are now on sale. The three-night festival includes the annual free switch on event on the Tower Festival Headlands on the Friday night, followed by two commercial concerts – a vintage pop night on the Saturday and a comedy show on the Sunday night.

The line-up for the Saturday includes Jason Donovan, Bananarama, Paul Young and T'Pau. It will be hosted by Pat Sharp and staged in association with Sky's Vintage music channel.

The Sunday night line-up is headlined by Al Murray and includes a host of other comedians including Chris Ramsey, Alun Cochrane and Tiff Stevenson.

The Friday night line-up, which will take the form of an all-star music concert, will be confirmed in coming weeks.

Weekend festival passes cost £30 each, with the first 5,000 sold guaranteed a wristband for the Friday night switch on event. Individual tickets for the Saturday and Sunday concerts cost £15 per night. For more information go to [www.visitblackpool.com/switchon](http://www.visitblackpool.com/switchon)



**BLACKPOOL iFest**  
SWITCH-ON WEEKEND 2015  
4 - 6 SEPTEMBER ★ TOWER FESTIVAL HEADLAND BLACKPOOL

FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER SWITCH-ON	SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER VINTAGE POP	SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER COMEDY NIGHT
BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS FREE ALL STAR CONCERT	BANANARAMA JASON DONOVAN PAUL YOUNG OWEN PAUL T'PAU ★ LIMMAHL HOSTED BY PAT SHARP	AL MURRAY CHRIS RAMSEY ALUN COCHRANE TIFF STEVENSON CARL HUTCHINSON CRAIG CAMPBELL

VIP HOSPITALITY TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR ALL NIGHTS  
For more information tel: 01253 425242  
email: champagne@the-sands.co.uk  
or go to www.the-sands-blackpool.co.uk

For more information go to [www.visitblackpool.com/switchon](http://www.visitblackpool.com/switchon)

To book tickets: See [www.seetickets.com](http://www.seetickets.com) or [www.visitblackpool.com/shop](http://www.visitblackpool.com/shop) or tel: 01253 478222  
or tel: 0871 220 0260

Visit Blackpool Tourist Information Centre, Festival House, Promenade, Blackpool FY1 1AP

## PALM BEACH HOTEL

A plan to replace the burnt-out Palm Beach Hotel on South Beach with a new hotel has been submitted to Blackpool Council.

Blackpool-based Create Developments has announced that it wants to build a 131-bedroomed hotel on the site of the Palm Beach and Bourne Hotels.

The hotel will include a business hub, gym, bar and restaurant, and will operate under the Hampton By Hilton brand. It is envisaged that around 40 new jobs will be created when the hotel opens for business in spring 2017.

The planning application is expected to go before Blackpool's planning committee in July. If granted, demolition of the Palm Beach will begin in the autumn.

## HIRE A BIKE

Blackpool's bike rental scheme has been scaled back for the 2015 season.

The fleet of yellow bikes will be available to hire at four locations – the Solaris Centre on South Promenade; Blackpool Sports Centre; Moor Park and Palatine Leisure Centres. Prices start at £5 for a half day including helmet and route map.

## SANDCASTLE AWARD

Sandcastle Waterpark won silver in the Access For All category of the VisitEngland Awards For Excellence. Sandcastle employee Sue Copp was a runner-up in the Tourism Superstar category. St Annes Beach Huts were highly commended in the Tourism Experience Of The Year category.

## SKYFORCE OPENING



Blackpool Pleasure Beach's new Skyforce ride was officially launched on Bank Holiday Monday with a spectacular seafront display by the Red Arrows.

The new thrill ride is the result of a unique partnership between the Red Arrows and the Pleasure Beach with riders able to manoeuvre their own individual planes.

As part of the partnership, the Pleasure Beach is selling exclusive Red Arrows merchandise.

## TOURISM INFORMATION CENTRE

The VisitBlackpool Tourist Information Centre at Festival House on the Tower Festival Headland, has been given an internal facelift in preparation for the start of the new tourist season.

The changes have created a more visitor-friendly environment, giving users an opportunity to see at a glance where to buy and collect tickets, get advice and information, and purchase souvenirs. Last year, the TIC welcomed more than 85,000 people.

- The pop up ticket office which was launched last year alongside the Comedy Carpet to promote sales of MAMMA MIA! and other shows and attractions, has returned for another year. The box office has been re-liveried with the frontage turned into a generic ticket office selling discounted and full-price tickets for a large range of venues across resort

## WALKER CUP

The world's leading amateur golfers will descend on the Fylde Coast in the autumn for the Walker Cup – the amateurs' equivalent of the Ryder Cup in the professional game.

The leading amateurs from Great Britain and Ireland will take on their opposite numbers from the USA over two days at Royal Lytham on September 12 and 13.

It is over 60 years since the tournament was played in Lancashire – at Birkdale in 1951.

## **BATHING WATERS**

The Environment Agency has warned that a record number of England's bathing waters are at risk of failing to meet EU water quality standards this year.

The agency suggests that the new and more stringent regulations will make it much harder for coastal resorts to achieve the necessary standard. Among those at risk are those in Blackpool (Central and North), Cleveleys, Fleetwood, as well as other UK resorts including Margate, Ilfracombe and Lyme Regis.

Last year, 99.5% of places met the basic standards for clean bathing waters, making the English coast the cleanest since records began. But the Environment Agency says that one in 20 is on course to fail the new standards which come into force this summer.

The Agency will carry out its annual summer testing regime between now and September with the results available to beach users on the agency's new "bathing water explorer" website.

As part of the new EU rules, from next year local authorities will have to display signs on beaches telling bathers whether water quality standards have been met and if bathing is advised.

Work to improve water quality on the Fylde Coast continues with local authorities working in partnership with United Utilities, the Environment Agency, businesses, households and farmers to ensure everyone is playing a part in the improvement programme.

## **BEACH AWARDS**

All of Blackpool's beaches have been granted Seaside Awards this year. The national awards, run by Keep Britain Tidy, have rewarded Blackpool South, Central and North, and Bispham, for high standards of beach management as well as their facilities.

Blackpool Council's beach patrol service has also been commended for the work it does in safeguarding beach users, as well as offering advice on how to protect the beach environment.

It is the second successive year that all four beaches have been granted Seaside Awards.

- In order to keep Blackpool's beaches as clean as possible, dogs are currently excluded from the beach between South Pier and North Pier until October 1.

## **VIRGIN GREAT ESCAPES**

Virgin Trains is to feature Blackpool in a new "Virgin Trains Escapes" campaign in association with Superbreaks. The campaign, to be launched in early summer, will enable travellers to book a complete package including rail travel, hotel accommodation and the Resort Pass.

Blackpool is the only seaside destination to feature in the campaign. The other destinations include London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Chester.

The campaign will include 200,000 copies of a special produced booklet which will be distributed on board all 76 Virgin trains, at ticket offices in 200 stations and in 10 First Class lounges. It will also be integrated into the new Virgin Trains website. Virgin Trains has a formidable reach with 95,000 passenger journeys a day, around 35m annually.

### **VELVET COASTER**

Blackpool's new "super pub", the Velvet Coaster has opened on the site of the former Lucky Star amusement arcade on New South Promenade.

The pub, which is the result of a £4m investment by Wetherspoons, is set over three floors and includes a substantial roof terrace overlooking the sea.



Named after an early ride at the nearby Pleasure Beach, the Velvet Coaster is decorated with historic Blackpool theatre photos and a large wickerwork sculpture of a circus strongman, as well as artwork by local artists.

The opening of the pub, which is one of the biggest in the UK, has created 160 full and part-time jobs.

### **TOWER LOUNGE**

Redevelopment of the former Tower Lounge is now underway after planning consent was granted for the stripping out of the area. Around £2.5m is being invested in a new mid-market themed family restaurant seating 300. It is anticipated it will open before the end of this year, creating around 120 full and part-time jobs. Further planning consent will be required for the construction phase of the project.

### **RETURN OF CATS**



Jane McDonald is to take the starring role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's CATS when it returns to Blackpool direct from its sell-out season at the London Palladium in the West End. Jane, who is one of Britain's best loved singers, presenters and entertainers, will play the role of Grizabella.

The hit show will run at the Blackpool Opera House for a strictly limited eight weeks from July 9 and the Blackpool performances will be the only place theatre-goers can see CATS outside London in 2015.

## COMIC CON

Blackpool is to host its first ever Comic Con conference in the autumn. The event, which will be staged at the Winter Gardens on September 12, will feature celebrity guests from the worlds of sci fi and comic book art, as well as a host of memorabilia and props from big and small screen. The London version of Comic Con, which took place earlier this month, featured actors Gillian Anderson and Richard E Grant.



## BLACKPOOL'S BACK

The filming of the new version of the Blackpool's Back TV advert took place in resort earlier this month. The new ad, which will be broadcast in Scotland from June and the north of England from July onwards, includes replacement scenes for Madame Tussaud's and the Opera House in order to feature the new CATS production.

This year, the VisitBlackpool website will be the central hub for the campaign, providing potential visitors with a wealth of information about key attractions and the extensive events programme, as well as giving the opportunity to book tickets and choose accommodation.



The 2015 campaign is being largely funded by Blackpool Council and Merlin Entertainments, but with significant support from a range of resort partners who will feature extensively on the new-look VisitBlackpool website. Last year's campaign was credited with directly influencing an additional 350,000 visits.

## Section 2: Town Centre Economy

### **GRAND THEATRE REFURBISHMENT**

Work has started on the second phase of the Grand Theatre's development plan that will see the entrance to the theatre restored to its original splendour. The work is expected to take around 12 weeks.



The "Street to Seat" project aims to improve all aspects of the audience's experience as they enter through the Church Street entrance until they take their seat in the stalls.

Outside, the wrought iron canopy and main entrance doors will be stripped back, repaired and repainted.

Inside, the box office will be transformed with new counters and serving windows. The foyer itself will be refurbished with the addition of a platform lift to take wheelchairs to the stalls. The lower toilets will also be renovated with new fittings and lighting.

During the building work the Grand Theatre will be open as normal and will continue to offer a full programme of productions.

The work has been made possible with funding from various sources including the SITA Trust, The Theatres Trust, and the Friends of The Grand.

It has been designed by architectural and planning consultancy, Cassidy & Ashton, project managed by Blackpool Council Leisure and Operational Services and contracted by Blackpool-based F Parkinson Ltd.

### **YATES'S SITE**

Work is underway to repair the wooden panelling around the derelict Yates's site on Talbot Square. Parts of the fencing were damaged by high winds during the winter months.

A planning application to build a Premier Inn hotel and restaurant on the site was turned down several weeks ago. It is anticipated that a revised application will be submitted.

## TOWN CENTRE VACANCIES

There has been a net increase of four vacant units in the town centre since February 2015, bringing the overall total to **120** and increasing the vacancy rate to **18.5%**.

The Principal Retail Core area (see definition in table below) has a vacancy rate of just 14.1%, which is unchanged since the February 2015 survey.

However, the vacancy rate in the Periphery Town Centre area has increased to 24.9%. The units at the refurbished Talbot Road multi storey car park are yet to be partitioned and will be included once they are complete.

Newly vacant units include: Santander (Clifton Street); Premiere People (Birley Street); That's Entertainment, Corinne Calvert (Church Street); The Furniture Shop (Counce Street); Hippo Hair (Cedar Square); American Candy (Corporation Street); Early Learning Centre, Card Outlet, The Vapour Corner (Houndshill) and City Look (Adelaide Street West).

Since February a number of businesses have occupied previously vacant units, including: Theatre Bar, London Accessories Company, Coral (Church Street); Phone Clinic (Victoria Street); Army Store, Yours Retail, Old Guys Rule (Houndshill); Cordant People, World Travel Lounge (Birley Street); DY Property Group (Counce Street) and Pit Bull West Coast (Cookson Street). The May 2015 vacancy rates for the three areas identified are as follows:

Area	Total Units <sup>1</sup>	Total Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
<b>Principle Retail Core</b> (Local Plan boundary based around Houndshill, Victoria Street, Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Corporation Street and Adelaide Street West)	163	23	14.1%
<b>Core Retail Area</b> (as above but also including Topping Street, Queen Street, Clifton Street, Birley Street, Market Street, Talbot Road, Abingdon Street and Cedar Square)	466	75	16.1%
<b>Town Centre Boundary</b> (as above but also including the Promenade, Springfield Road, Dickson Road, King Street, Cookson Street, Counce Street and the new Talbot Gateway area)	647	120	18.5%
<b>Periphery Town Centre Area</b> (the Town Centre Boundary area excluding the units contained within the Core Retail Area)	181	45	24.9%

## NEW TOWN CENTRE RESTAURANTS

A new Italian-styled restaurant, Amaro, has opened on a corner of St John's Square in a former clothing outlet. A few weeks ago, a new Theatre Bar and gourmet burger offer opened in the former Bar Red on St John's Square.

A third new offering, a fish and chip restaurant, is to be opened by The Sea on the ground floor of the former Ponden Mill outlet on St John's Square (opposite Pizza Express). Sea already operates from premises opposite Central Pier.

- Work is now underway on the new Mr Basrai World Buffet restaurant on the ground floor of the Talbot Road multi-storey car park. The fit out, which includes creation of a mezzanine floor is expected to take several weeks.

## POST OFFICE SALE



A major town centre landmark has been put on the market.

The Grade II Listed former Post Office and Royal Mail delivery on Abingdon Street comprises more than 103,000sq ft over three floors on a site covering almost an acre.

The agents handling the sale say that the building offers “potential for a significant refurbishment or partial redevelopment subject to planning and listed building consent for a variety of alternative uses including retail, leisure, hotel, office and residential uses”.

Offers are being invited for the freehold property.

### **NIGHT SAFE HAVEN**

Night-time visitors to Blackpool time are once again being offered a “night safe haven” which offers support to vulnerable people.

Co-ordinated by North West Ambulance Service and commissioned by Blackpool Council, the haven has been running for over four years.

It offers immediate safety and medical attention in a purpose-built facility aimed at reducing the number of patients admitted to Blackpool Victoria Hospital’s A&E department due to alcohol-related injuries.

The scheme began on May 23 and will run for 29 consecutive Saturday nights between 9pm and 4am.

## Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

### FIRST APPRENTICES JOIN TOURISM ACADEMY

The first cohort of apprentices signed up to the Blackpool Tourism Academy, aimed at raising the skills of people who work in the resort's visitor economy, spent a day visiting the attractions they will represent.



The students participated in the Tourism Practitioner induction day and had the opportunity to come together and meet key people at Blackpool's six largest visitor attractions whilst learning about the objectives of the qualification as a whole. During their 12-month apprenticeships, they will learn about tourism with modules including customer service, retail, sales, hospitality, health and safety, and equality and diversity.

Blackpool Tourism Academy is a collaboration between Blackpool and The Fylde College, Blackpool Council, Pleasure Beach, Merlin, Cuerden Leisure, Sandcastle Waterpark and Blackpool Zoo, and Blackpool Transport Services, who provided complimentary passes for the induction day. The College has designed a Level 2 and Level 3 Blackpool Tourism Practitioner qualification for the BTA, which will be delivered over the next three years.

The training package was established with £1m of funding from the government's Employer Ownership Pilot (EOP) and will be co-funded by several leading tourism employers within Blackpool. BTA will deliver a range of training packages aimed at developing the visitor economy workforce and bringing Worldhost status to the resort. Blackpool will be the first resort to achieve this status nationally.

**NOTE:** A WorldHost Roadshow will be held at 2.30pm on Friday 5 June at The Tower Circus. It will be open to all town centre businesses, giving them the opportunity to learn more about the WorldHost training and also meet the trainers. Anyone interested in attending please contact [paula.clark@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:paula.clark@blackpool.gov.uk)

## **WHITEHILLS**

Work is due to begin on the latest stage of development at the Whitehills Business Park on the outskirts of Blackpool.

Property company Henco International, which is based on the Whitehills site, is to build a four-storey office for stockbrokers Hargreave Hale, a three-storey speculative office development offering suites from 3,000sq ft to 9,000sq ft, and a range of industrial/trade units totalling 15,000sq ft.

Henco has already developed Olympic Court and Apollo Court on the Whitehills site.

## **FRACKING**

The decision on whether to allow fracking at two sites near Blackpool will be made towards the end of June, according to Lancashire County Council.

Cuadrilla has applied to extract shale gas at its sites in Little Plumpton and Roseacre Wood. The company had previously asked the county council to defer the applications after planners had recommended rejecting them due to concerns over noise and traffic. The company wanted more time to address the issues.

After further consultation, the County Council says the decision on the Preston New Road site in Little Plumpton will now be made at a meeting scheduled for 23 and 24 June and the application for Roseacre Wood, Roseacre, will be decided on 25 and 26 June.

Cuadrilla says it now has the necessary environmental permissions in place for the two sites and will start operations later this year if planning approval is granted.

## **TRISTAN'S LIGHTHOUSE**

Blackpool Council's Get Started team has helped an innovative new business to set up in South Shore.

Tristan's Lighthouse on Lytham Road has three large multi-light sensory playrooms, which are ideal for anyone with special needs.

All rooms have relaxing music to match the themed room. It is wheelchair accessible and has baby change and disabled toilet facilities. All customers are offered free refreshments. Owner Barbara Hall would appreciate it if members of the BBLG could help with the awareness of the new facility. The website can be found at [www.tristans-lighthouse.co.uk](http://www.tristans-lighthouse.co.uk)

## Section 4: General News

### **THE BLACKPOOL CHALLENGE**

A new vision for improving educational attainment in Blackpool is to be launched next month.

Led by Professor Sonia Blandford, The Blackpool Challenge aims to improve schools performance across the board with an ethos of “supporting 100% of children to progress 100% of the time”.

The initiative seeks to improve outcomes for all children (0-19) and the newly-formed Blackpool Challenge Board will work in partnership with public, private, third sector and voluntary organisations.

The primary objectives are to improve:

- Pupil outcomes in reading, writing, maths, science and technology
- Behaviour and attendance in all schools and settings
- Parent and carer engagement
- Employability and employment prospects of all children and young people

It mirrors similar projects in other areas of the country.

Sonia Blandford, who is Professor of Education and Social Enterprise at University College London Institute of Education, will be leading the initiative on behalf of Blackpool Council.

**NOTE:** The Blackpool Challenge will be officially launched at 4.30pm on Monday 22 June in The Spanish Suite of the Winter Gardens. All members of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group are invited to attend the event, which is expected to finish by 6.30pm. Please confirm your attendance by registering at [www.blackpool.gov.uk/bsc](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/bsc)

### **THE BIBAS**

The finalists of Lancashire’s most-established business awards will be unveiled on June 2.

All those businesses and individuals who will be invited to attend the Be Inspired Business Awards prize-giving ceremony in September will have received notification by this date.

Those businesses shortlisted will receive a visit from the award judging panels as part of a second round of interviews which sees judges go ‘on tour’ from June 8.

The BIBAs, which are being staged at Blackpool Tower on Friday, September 11, are again being supported by the Blackpool Business Leadership Group. The event brings more than 1,000 people from across Lancashire into Blackpool for the evening.

### **COLLEGE TOP RANKING**

Blackpool & The Fylde College has been ranked as the highest performing general further education college in England.

The college's overall success rate of 92.9% placed it ahead of 217 other colleges and significantly ahead of the 83.6% national average in England.

### **NEW BUS FLEET**

Blackpool Transport has officially launched its new mini-fleet of Palladium-branded Mercedes Citaro buses. Six Citaros took part in a launch ceremony on the Tower Festival Headland. The 10 single decker buses are painted light grey with a pale yellow band. The Citaros will be entering service on route 5 from Victoria Hospital to Halfway House on May 31.



### **OXFORD SQUARE**

Development of a new Aldi supermarket is underway at Oxford Square, Marton. It is being constructed on the site of former Thomas Motors building.

As part of the planning consent, the developers are required to retain the ground floor façade of the original building.

Plans for the store include the creation of a new access on Park Road and the creation of 101 parking spaces. The new Aldi will create around 35 new jobs.

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL ELECTIONS**

### **General Election**

There was no change in Blackpool's representation at Westminster following the General Election.

Paul Maynard, MP for Blackpool North & Cleveleys, and Gordon Marsden, MP for Blackpool South, both held their parliamentary seats.

As part of his post-Election Cabinet re-shuffle, David Cameron announced that Greg Clark was to replace Eric Pickles as Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Mr Clark's wife, Helen, is from Blackpool, and in his previous role, the Minister played an influential role in helping to shape the Growth Deal for Lancashire.

### **Local Election**

Blackpool Council remains under the control of the Labour administration following the local elections held on the same day.

Cllr Simon Blackburn has since been re-elected as Council Leader, with Cllr Gillian Campbell appointed his deputy, and Cllr Graham Cain as Cabinet Secretary.

Under the new structure, Cllr Campbell will be responsible for Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs. Cllr Cain will be responsible for Resilient Communities including adult social care, children and safeguarding.

The new Mayor of Blackpool is Cllr Peter Callow. His chosen charity for the year is the Carers' Trust.

## **Section 5: Requests for private sector support**

### **PROPERTY SCENE CHARITY BALL**

The third annual Property Scene Charity Ball and Auction will take place on July 3 at the De Vere Hotel, Blackpool. Tickets cost £45 per person, £400 for a table of 10 and include drinks reception, three course meal with complimentary wine, auction and raffle followed by live entertainment.

The event will raise money for Cancer Research in memory of local estate agent, Jim Broomhead.

If any business wishes to support the event by buying a ticket, taking a table or by donating a gift for the raffle and auction, please contact Alex on 01253 392064.

### **TRINITY HOSPICE**

Thanks to those businesses that responded to the request from David Houston, chief executive of Trinity, asking for support in establishing a better system for running its charity retail distribution hub which services its 15 shops. A number of BBLG members came forward to offer assistance.

### **GOLF DAY**

A golf and networking event is being staged in aid of the Lancashire Association of Boys and Girls Clubs. The Bill Beaumont Pro-Am Golf Tournament is being staged at Hillside Golf Club on Thursday 9 July.

More information can be found at this link: [www.bill-beaumont-pro-am.co.uk](http://www.bill-beaumont-pro-am.co.uk)

The Association, which dates back to 1934, has 50 member clubs that work with 20,000 young people in Lancashire every year.

- If any business wants any more information about the event or the association, please see John Barnett who will be attending the BBLG meeting on May 29.

### **SIXTH FORM COLLEGE EMPLOYER EVENT**

An Employability Networking Evening is being staged by Blackpool Sixth on Monday 22 June between 5pm and 7pm. The event, which will be held at the College, is an opportunity to thank employers and other organisations for their continuing support with careers events and work experience placements.

As well as being open to employers that already work with the College, the event is a chance for new employers to find out how more about the College, its courses and facilities.

Any business interested in attending, please contact Natalie Dobson, Employer Liaison Officer at [Natalie.dobson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk](mailto:Natalie.dobson@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk)

**Philip Welsh**  
**Head of Visitor Economy**