



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – May 27, 2016

Section 1: Town Centre

TALBOT GATEWAY TRAM TERMINUS



Blackpool Council has acquired the Wilkinson building on Talbot Road as part of the next development phase of Talbot Gateway.

The existing store and car park will eventually make way for a new tram terminus adjacent to Blackpool North railway station. Work on the £22m scheme to extend the tramway from the Promenade to North Station is due to start in 2018. The tram terminus will form part of a new interchange linking trains and trams.

Options to integrate residential, office and retail outlets, plus a new hotel are also being explored as part of the terminus development.

While detailed development plans are drawn up for the new terminus, the current occupiers of the building – Wilko, Age UK and APCOA multi-storey car park - will continue to operate. Wilko is planning to relocate to a new store adjacent to the Houndhill Shopping Centre on Tower Street.

Preparatory work on the tramline extension is currently underway, with a business case for funding to be presented to Transport For Lancashire and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership in coming weeks.

HAPPY SHOPPING

Blackpool-based agency Happy Creative has been appointed as marketing partner by Houndshill Shopping Centre. The agency will handle all marketing campaigns for the 300,000sq ft centre, which is home to 70 tenants.

£1M INVESTMENT IN RUMOURS

The former owners of The Syndicate nightclub have returned to Blackpool to invest in a new £1.3m entertainment venue in Talbot Square. The Nordwind family are creating a city-style entertainment space, incorporating three distinct venues, in the former Rumours and Nyx building.

The basement will be developed as The Urban Lounge, an R&B music venue; the ground floor is being turned into Home, a table-service bar with live music; and upstairs, there will be a warehouse-style club called Headquarters.

THE BIG CAT'S IN TOWN



A new exhibition of work by Turner Prize-winning artist Mark Leckey has been unveiled at The Grundy Art Gallery.

This Kolossal Kat, That Massive MOG brings together works that celebrate the artist's long-standing interest in the original Felix The Cat character.

Central to the exhibition, is FEELINTHECAT, a newly-commissioned installation in which visitors can walk into a giant paper version of Felix to watch video footage.

The installation has been commissioned to mark the Arts Council Collection's 70th anniversary. The exhibition runs at The Grundy until August 13.

LION'S DEN

Blackpool-based boxing champion, Brian "The Lion" Rose, is planning to open his own boxing gym in Blackpool town centre. He is seeking to use a disused space above Ma Kelly's on Dickson Road to develop the gym and personal fitness centre.

LEBANESE RESTAURANT GETS STARTED

A taste of the Middle East has opened up in Blackpool town centre with the help of Blackpool Council's Get Started business service.

Lebanese couple Fidaa Slim and Ahmad Moustapha opened the Nour Lebanese Restaurant on Topping Street last month, after running a successful restaurant in their previous home in Belgium.

The restaurant specialises in traditional Middle Eastern food, including baba ganoush, falafel and stuffed vine leaves, as well as a variety of charcoal grilled meats and stuffed pastries.

Further information on the Get Started service can be found at:

www.blackpool.gov.uk/getstarted

URBAN ARTS FESTIVAL

Sand, Sea & Spray - Blackpool's celebration of urban art - is returning to the resort this summer.

Now in its fourth year, the festival will take place over the weekend of July 29-31 and will bring together some of the world's finest street artists to work alongside the best of local talent to create amazing and unique artworks around the town.

Full details of the Sand Sea & Spray festival including the artists, venues, events and registration for volunteers can be found on the website,

<http://www.sandseaandspray.co.uk/>

Section 2: Visitor Economy

FLYING THE FLAG FOR BLACKPOOL

Blackpool has won its first Blue Flag award after one of its beaches met the international standard for cleanliness.

The beach at Blackpool South has been named in the list of Blue Flag beaches for 2016, putting it on a par with the best beaches in the UK and beyond.

The stretch of beach, which is located opposite Blackpool Pleasure Beach, became eligible for Blue Flag status after being classed as having “excellent” sea water quality by the Environment Agency last year.



Blackpool is the only beach in the North West to win a prestigious Blue Flag in 2016 where its local facilities as well as access, cleanliness and public safety were assessed to make sure the beach reached the high international standards required.

At the same time, three other areas of beach in Blackpool – Blackpool North, Blackpool Central and Bispham - have been granted Seaside Awards for the third successive year, giving the resort an entire coastline of award-winning beaches.

The Blue Flag is the culmination of years of work to improve the quality of the resort’s sea water. It marks a remarkable turnaround for Blackpool’s beaches where there has been heavy investment, coupled with extensive partnership working with businesses, communities and public sector.

Over the past 20 years, United Utilities has invested more than £600m along the Fylde Coast on schemes to capture and treat wastewater. Most recently, this included a huge storage tunnel system at Preston to improve the Ribble Estuary.

The water company is carrying out a further £100m worth of infrastructure improvements across the coast, including a storm water storage tank and new outfall pipe at Anchorsholme Park.

As part of the celebrations, a large Blue Flag will fly from the top of The Blackpool Tower for the rest of this month. The Blue Flag scheme is operated across the world and administered in the UK by environmental charity, Keep Britain Tidy.

The award of the Blue Flag accreditation attracted significant media coverage on television, as well as local, regional and national newspapers.

OPERA COMES NORTH

The English National Opera (ENO) has announced that it is coming to Blackpool next year – the first time it has staged a full-scale production outside London for many years.

The ENO will leave its home at the London Coliseum in late spring 2017 to stage director Jonathan Miller's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* at the Opera House within the Winter Gardens for 10 performances opening on May 25.

The Mikado was first performed by the ENO at the London Coliseum in 1986, featuring an all-star cast including Lesley Garrett, Dame Felicity Palmer and Eric Idle. Since then, it has been performed more than 200 times to over 400,000 people.

Further information including ticket booking details will be announced soon.

HARRY RAMSDEN OPENING

The new Harry Ramsden restaurant in the former Tower Lounge is scheduled for a summer launch. Construction work has been ongoing for several weeks and the recruitment of staff is now underway.

STAR TREKKING

Blackpool is to host a major celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Star Trek franchise with the opening of a new exhibition on the Golden Mile.



In a unique deal with Paramount and CBS, the resort will stage *Star Trek: The Exhibition* from June 8 for the rest of the season.

The exhibition, which will be in the former Dinosaur World building between Coral Island and Madam Tussauds, will take audiences on a journey through the 50-year history of Star Trek. It will include original props, costumes, scripts and photographs that have never previously been seen in Europe, as well as the opportunity to step aboard a spectacular recreation of the iconic bridge from the Starship Enterprise.

- As part of the same anniversary celebrations, Star Trek will also be featured in a section of this year's Illuminations.

INTERNATIONAL SOUL FESTIVAL

An international line-up of soul stars will appear in a new festival at the Winter Gardens. It will be staged over three days (from June 17-19) and will feature some of the biggest names in Northern and Modern Soul, with various American artists including Bettye Lavette, who performed at President Obama's inauguration ceremony.

The event is being put together by Richard Searling, who has been organising Northern Soul events for more than 25 years. There will be performances throughout the Winter Gardens with the main stage in the Empress Ballroom.

For more information go to www.blackpoolsoulfestival.co.uk or www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk

SLIMEFEST

Tickets for Nickelodeon's first SLIMEFEST event in the UK will go on sale at the end of May.



The two-day festival forms part of this year's Illuminations Switch-On Weekend and will comprise two ticketed live concerts in the Winter Gardens on Saturday 3 September, and a free outdoor Nickelodeon festival on the Tower Festival Headland on both the Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets for the Winter Gardens events will go on sale at the end of May.

SWITCH ON REGISTRATION

Registration is now open for Blackpool's annual Illuminations Switch-On celebration.

This year's event will take place in front of a 20,000 capacity audience on the Tower Festival Headland on Friday 2 September. It will feature a host of celebrity stars as well as the big moment when the resort's annual illuminations display is turned on.

It is free to attend and there will be a reserved allocation for locals. People can apply for the wristbands by registering at www.visitblackpool.com/switchon for their chance to receive up to four wristbands per household. Last year, around 80,000 people applied for tickets to attend.

TOP GEAR BROADCAST

The new season of BBC's Top Gear returns on Sunday 29 May – with Blackpool taking centre stage.

The long-awaited first episode will include the road trip in which host Chris Evans and former Friends star Matt Le Blanc drive from London to a rain-soaked Blackpool in a pair of roofless Reliant Rialtos.

Once in resort, the pair took part in a series of UK v USA challenges on the beach and promenade.



LEMON ZEST

Marketing Lancashire has appointed specialist food and drink agency Lemon Zest PR to help promote the region's food and drink offer on a national and international level.

The appointment of Lemon Zest forms part of a wider Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy, which aims to increase visitor numbers to 70 million, visitor spend by £650m and support an additional 5,000 jobs by 2020.

Lemon Zest PR currently works with Lancashire retailer Booth's, Tebay & Gloucester motorway services and the Prince's Countryside Fund. It has also launched regional food groups *DeliciouslyYorkshire* and *Taste Cumbria*.

- ✨ Maria Moriarty Eames has been appointed as Marketing Lancashire's new head of partnerships.

BLACKPOOL HAS IT ALL



A new destination marketing campaign has been launched to promote Blackpool this summer. ***Blackpool Has It All*** campaign replaces ***Blackpool's Back***, which ran for two years.

The new campaign, which has been funded by various partners including Blackpool Council, Merlin Entertainments, Winter Gardens, Sandcastle Waterpark, Blackpool Transport Services and several accommodation providers, will include TV advertising in Scotland and the North of England, PR and digital activity. The TV advertising commences in mid-June and continues until August.

LIGHTPOOL 2016

International film projection company, The Macula, have won the contract to provide the main show for this year's LightPool programme.

The Czech-based company, which has done projection work in several major European cities, including a show on the Liverpool waterfront in 2011, has been commissioned to produce a new show for projection on to The Blackpool Tower buildings during the 2016 Illuminations season.

This year's LightPool programme, which was funded from a £2m Coastal Communities Fund grant, will also include at least one other new projection show as well as a new exhibition at The Grundy Art Gallery; light installations and entertainment in the town centre; the creation of a LightPool "village" on the Tower Festival Headland; and the recruitment of a team of meet and greet ambassadors.

Initial research findings from the inaugural LightPool programme in 2015 revealed that the show attracted around 450,000 visitors to the resort during the Illuminations season, boosting the local economy by an estimated £50m.

- ✨ The Government has announced a new round of bidding for the Coastal Communities Fund. Around £90m will be made available from 2017 to 2021. Grants of between £50k and £4m are available to a range of organisations including Councils, charities, private sector companies, development agencies and local enterprise partnerships.

LYTHAM FESTIVAL LINE-UP

The full line-up has been revealed for the 2016 Lytham Festival 2016 in August, including a fifth night of entertainment in the main arena which will feature the UK's largest seaside outdoor cinema.



Organisers Cuffe & Taylor have revealed that the film night on August 5 will show *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* on a giant 144sq metre high definition screen on Lytham Green.

They have also announced that in addition to the large-scale music concerts in the main arena (featuring the likes of Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Bryan Adams, The Village People and Collabro), there will be live entertainment taking place at Lowther Pavilion, the Assembly Rooms, St Cuthbert's Church, Victory Hall, Lytham Hall and the RNLI Lifeboat House.

For the first time, the festival will include a series of art installations around Lytham presented by local, regional, national and international artists.

For more details about all events at Lytham Festival (between August 1 and 7) go to www.lythamfestival.com

IMPERIAL SALE

A portfolio of 10 regional UK hotels, including the Imperial Hotel in Blackpool, has been put up for sale with a guide price in excess of £130m.

The Hotel Collection has brought to market the portfolio of various hotels including The Imperial and Shrigley Hotel, Golf and Country Club in Cheshire.

The four-star Imperial Hotel on Blackpool's North Promenade, which features 180 bedrooms, beauty rooms, a health club with swimming pool, and conference facilities, is operating as usual pending the sale.

WINTER GARDENS WONDERLAND

The Winter Gardens has announced that a new family musical based on Lewis Carroll's classic Alice In Wonderland stories will be staged next year.

Wonderland, which has already had hugely successful runs in America, will run at Blackpool Opera House from 10 – 15 April 2017. Tickets are on sale now from

www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk



TRIP ADVISOR AWARDS

Blackpool has again been named in the UK's top 10 destinations in TripAdvisor's annual Travellers' Choice Awards.

The resort took fifth place behind London, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Llandudno, and ahead of York, Glasgow and Manchester.

The Travellers' Choice Awards take into account the quantity and quality of reviews for hotels, restaurants and attractions gathered over a 12-month period.

Among the top 10 UK destinations, Blackpool was singled out for offering the most affordable accommodation, with the average bookable hotel rate on TripAdvisor at £66, less than half the price of a comparable hotel room in London.

SKOOL OF STREET PREMIERE

The Blackpool-based urban collective, Skool Of Street (who presented at the last BBLG meeting in March) are to stage their new production at The Grand Theatre in the autumn.

Their production of Popnocchio, which they describe as an urban twist on the classic tale of Pinocchio, will be premiered at The Grand on September 28. It will also be staged at Blackpool Sixth Form Theatre on September 24 and Blackpool & Fylde Brickwork Theatre on September 30.

It is being staged in association with WingZ Theatreworks. The collective comprises dancers, singers, actors, rappers, beat-boxers, graffiti artists, DJs, as well as spoken word and movement artists.

For more information, email: skoolofstreet@live.com

UK COACH RALLY

The UK Coach Rally was staged in Blackpool at the end of April with hundreds of delegates staying in resort. The event, which was previously staged at Alton Towers, featured competitive events on the promenade, a coach rally around the Comedy Carpet and a formal dinner at the Tower Ballroom. Organisers say the event was so well attended that they are planning to return to Blackpool for the 2017 event.

PRIDE FESTIVAL

The 10th Blackpool Pride Festival will take place in June with its most ambitious programme to date.

This year's event over the weekend of Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June includes the annual Pride Parade along the promenade, five stages of entertainment within the Winter Gardens and more than 70 market stalls.



There will also be a preliminary celebration on Sunday 5 June with the staging of a masquerade ball at Blackpool Tower Ballroom.

Full details at: www.blackpoolpridefest.com

MISS PEREGRINE DESTINATION CAMPAIGN

VisitBlackpool is to work in partnership with 20th Century Fox to co-promote Blackpool and its role in the forthcoming Tim Burton movie, Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children.

Scenes from the film, which stars Samuel L Jackson, Eva Green and Judi Dench, were shot in and around Blackpool Tower last year.

A range of activities will be developed in resort in the run-up to the film's release on September 30, including a children's competition in which they will be encouraged to visit various locations linked to the filming activity.

ARMED FORCES WEEK

Blackpool will once again celebrate Armed Forces week with a full programme of activities between June 20 and 26.

The resort will welcome serving military personnel, veterans and cadets, with a wide range of events targeted at them and their families.

On Armed Forces Day itself (June 25) there will be free events on both St John's Square and the Tower Festival Headland. The following day, June 26, there will be the traditional Sunday Morning Service and Parade at the Cenotaph.

Other events have been organised by Houndshell Shopping Centre, Viva Blackpool, the Winter Gardens, Odeon Cinema, Blackpool Tower and Marton Institute. The Mandarin Restaurant and the Buccaneer Family Bar at Coral Island are both offering "dine out for free" offers to veterans.

The full programme of events can be found at www.visitblackpool.com/armedforces

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

ENERGY COLLEGE

Blackpool and The Fylde College has appointed the main contractor for the construction of its new Lancashire Energy HQ at Blackpool Airport.

Manchester-based Bardsley Construction will oversee construction of the £9.8million project, due to be completed in the autumn of 2017.

Lancashire Energy HQ will provide a cutting edge training centre, delivering the specialist technical and professional skills required by the energy industry.



The centre will focus on all types of energy production including offshore, renewable and low carbon, with courses and training aligned to future industry needs and labour requirements.

It will be sited within the newly-formed Blackpool Enterprise Zone and it is hoped the flagship development will be a catalyst for further investment in the area. The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership is providing more than £6m of Growth Deal funding towards the cost of the centre.

ENTERPRISE ZONE UPDATE

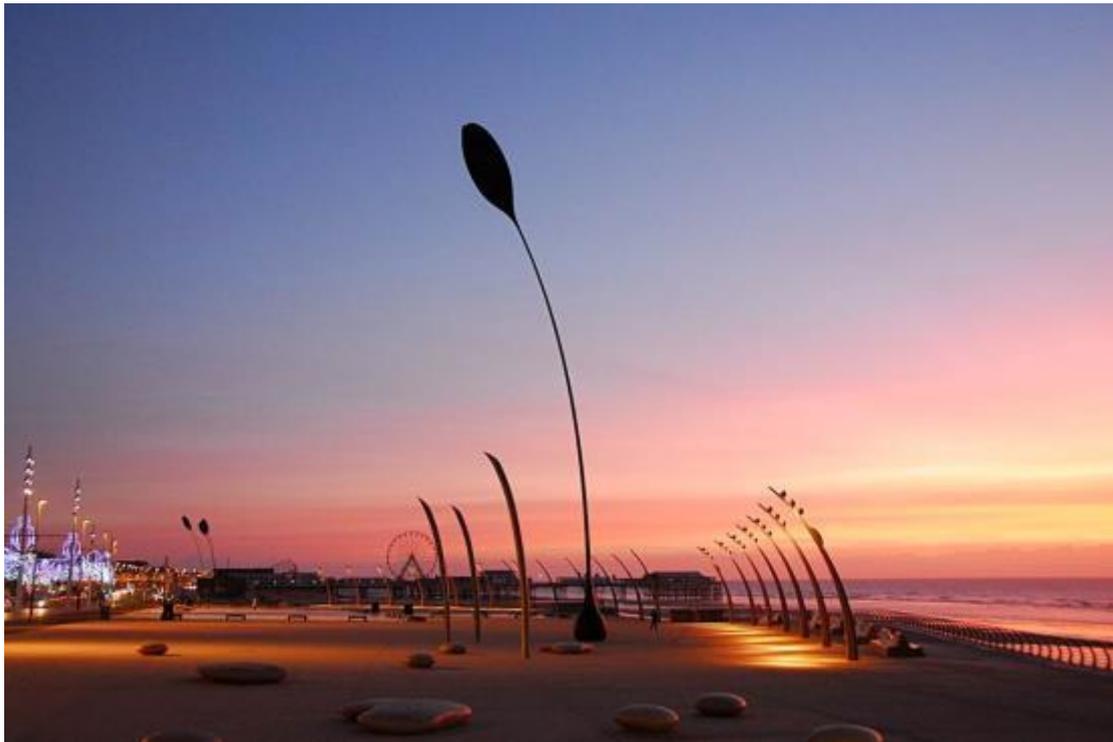
Blackpool's new Enterprise Zone at Blackpool Airport went "live" from April 1.

To mark the launch of the Zone, Force Technology was welcomed as the first new private business moving on to the site.

Force Technology specialises in the development and innovation of high-precision spring applications for the automotive, transport and shipping industry. They will initially be based within Lightworks, Blackpool Council's Illuminations depot, whilst a bespoke facility is developed for the company within the Enterprise Zone. Force Technology hopes to grow their workforce to over 120 in the next five years

The new Enterprise Zone, along with a sister Enterprise Zone at Hillhouse International Business Park near Thornton, will be overseen by the Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Economic Development Company on behalf of the local authorities and Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. Both sites will now provide further opportunities for local businesses to develop.

GREAT PLACE



Blackpool has been nominated for a place-making award by the London-based Academy of Urbanism. It is one of three selected finalists in the “Great Town” category alongside Todmorden in Yorkshire and Clonakilty in County Cork.

The Academy of Urbanism is an autonomous, politically-independent organisation that promotes and encourages great place-making.

Following the nomination, the academy will undertake an assessment visit to the resort where they will take the opportunity to meet local residents, council officers, and relevant representatives from the business and community sectors. The results will be announced at an awards ceremony in London in November.

ENTREPRENEUR STEPS UP TO THE MARK

Blackpool-based entrepreneur Jennifer Duthie was invited to showcase her new business concept at a business growth exhibition in London.

Her children’s fashion enterprise, Skibbies, was selected for inclusion in the Spotlight on Growth Hubs exhibition. Jennifer started her business, which sells customisable children’s shoes, in 2013 after turning to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership’s (LEP) Boost Business Lancashire growth hub for support.

Since its launch, Skibbies has begun working with retailers and distributors across France, Germany, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands.

Since it was set up in 2013, Boost Business Lancashire has supported more than 2,800 firms across the county, creating around 1,200 new jobs and stimulating new economic activity worth an estimated £50m.

Section 4: General News

RAIL ELECTRIFICATION: BRIEFING NOTE

Discussions have taken place between Network Rail and the local authorities on the Fylde Coast in readiness for work that will be undertaken to electrify the Blackpool to Preston line.

The work itself, which includes a remodelling of the platform side of Blackpool North Station, will bring great economic benefits once electrification is completed (currently scheduled for May 2018). Around 10% of Blackpool's visitors arrive by rail, but growth has been constrained by peak-time over-crowding and poor-quality rolling stock.

Travel times and ride quality between Blackpool and Manchester will be improved and the direct Liverpool service can be reintroduced. The Great North Western Railway will also be able to introduce its proposed six trains per day to London from spring/summer 2018.

However, there will be significant rail service disruption in and out of Blackpool in the two years leading up to electrification. In summary this includes:

Two periods of enabling works at night and at weekends

1. Night-working at Blackpool North Station between September 24, 2016 and May 6, 2018 will take place between 11.10pm and 6.10am, Sunday night to Thursday morning, and 11.35pm and 10.15am, Friday night to Sunday morning. This will result in the loss of the early morning Manchester Airport service out of Blackpool as well as the loss of the direct Virgin service to London. It is likely that these two trains will start from Preston with a bus transfer from Blackpool.
2. Weekend working between January 21, 2017 and April 2, 2017 (apart from 18-19 February 2017). This will mean no services for entire weekends, albeit at a low demand period.
3. Note that the night-time enabling works will impinge on all bank holidays and other peak periods in 2017 and the Easter bank holiday in 2018. The weekend working does not affect any bank holidays, but does affect the October half-term and larger early-year events such as February half term and the pigeon fanciers' convention.

A full 18-week closure of Blackpool North between November 25, 2017 and March 29, 2018.

For the first seven weeks of this period, South Fylde line (into Blackpool South) will remain open; both routes will then be blocked for four weeks; the South Fylde line will re-open for five weeks; and then both routes will be blocked for two weeks of completion work.

South Fylde line's frequency cannot be increased (as it is a single track line), but it may be possible to increase the length of trains. Rail replacement buses will be provided from Preston during this full closure period. Blackpool Council is working with Network Rail to ensure that these bus services are fit for purpose for such a large tourism destination.

The Council's transport representatives will continue to work with Network Rail to mitigate the negative impact of this disruption and also with rail operators to ensure that closures and service changes are effectively communicated.

NOTE: This is the latest Network Rail schedule but may be subject to change. I will provide updates in future Partnerships Reports where necessary.

DIY SOS COMES TO BLACKPOOL



THE BBC is bringing its DIY SOS team to Blackpool for a special collaboration with Children In Need that will result in the development of a new Young Carers' Centre.

The team will be in resort to carry out The Big Build from June 28 until July 7 and they are looking for more than 200 tradespeople to help out on the project.

A special trades day will be held at the premises – Blenheim House on Newton Drive, Blackpool – on Wednesday 8 June. If you are interested in helping out please email lucy.jones@bbc.co.uk with your trade details, telephone contact details and a copy of your Public Liability Insurance to apply.

NOTE: A more detailed presentation on the project will be given at the BBLG meeting on Friday 27 May.

MONEY EXCHANGE EXPANSION

Vacation Money Exchange has expanded, opening its third Foreign Exchange Bureau within the last year. The new bureau is located inside Morrison's Supermarket at Squires Gate. There are already branches at the World Travel Lounges in Birley Street, Blackpool, and Park Road, St Annes.

- ✦ BBLG members are being offered exclusive exchange rates in any of the three bureaus if they state they are members of the group prior to purchase.

TOWER BLOCKS

The demolition of the three remaining tower blocks at Queens Park has been delayed until later this summer.

Elizabeth Court, Churchill Court and Walter Robinson Court were due to be brought down by an explosive demolition on Sunday 15 May. The delay is because more time is needed to ensure the safe demolition of the blocks.

Updates can be found at www.queensparkredevelopment.co.uk

Section 5: Requests for private sector support

FUNDRAISING BALL

Blackpool-based Community Interest Company UR Potential is holding its first fundraising ball at The Imperial Hotel, Blackpool, on Saturday 10 September. The ball will raise money for an Educational Youth Fund that will support disadvantaged young people to be able to access resources such as transport, specialist clothing, equipment and accommodation.

Tickets are £50 per person to include champagne reception, four-course meal and entertainment. To book your ticket, [click here](#)

BLACKPOOL IN BLOOM

The annual Blackpool In Bloom competition has been launched and businesses are being encouraged to do their bit to brighten up the town.

The competition includes several prize categories for the commercial sector including:

- ✨ Hotels and holiday flats (10 rooms or less)
- ✨ Hotels and holiday flats (10 rooms or more)
- ✨ Pubs, restaurants and licensed premises
- ✨ Commercial offices, shops, factories
- ✨ Hanging baskets (commercial)

Entries close on Friday 24 June. Entry forms available from elaine@blackpoolcivictrust.org.uk

Judging of the various categories will take place in the week commencing July 11.

CARERS TRUST CASH QUEST

Carers Trust Fylde Coast has launched a “Cash Quest For Carers” – challenging people to turn £50 into as much money as possible in aid of the charity.

Businesses, schools, community groups of any size and individuals can take on the challenge. Click on this link to enter: [Entry Form](#)

GRAND THEATRE BOARD RECRUITMENT

Blackpool Grand Theatre is now seeking to recruit a number of skilled, experienced and committed people to join the board of management of its operating company, Blackpool Grand Theatre (Arts & Entertainment) Ltd.

As one of the theatre’s Trustees you will be able to contribute to the continuing growth and development of one of Blackpool’s iconic heritage assets.

Further details here: [Board Recruitment Form 2016](#)

**Philip Welsh,
Head of Visitor Economy**