



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

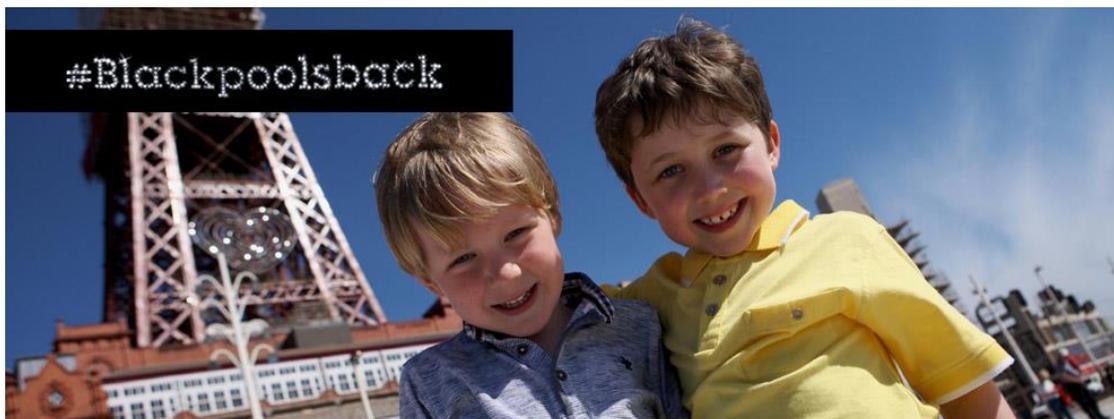
Business Partnerships Report – July 25, 2014

Section 1: Visitor Economy

BLACKPOOL'S BACK!

A £1m marketing campaign including a new TV advertisement has been launched to promote Blackpool to visitors this summer.

The [#Blackpoolsback](#) campaign aims to challenge any negative perceptions of the resort by reminding families of everything Blackpool has to offer. This includes an unrivalled concentration of world-class family attractions, award-winning beaches as well as a summer packed with exciting events.



The campaign, which is a joint venture between VisitBlackpool and Merlin Entertainments, also underlines the massive investment and regeneration that has taken place in the town over the past seven years.

It launched in June with a dedicated microsite [Blackpoolsback.com](#), followed by a unique TV feature on the town created with STV in Scotland, which aired on 1 July featuring visitor-led content. The main TV ad was launched in Scotland on July 7 and the north of England on July 14.

The TV activity is running in tandem with a new digital campaign, which features a host of information for parents and children and a PR campaign which incorporates a large number of familiarisation visits for regional and national media. The PR and social media activity will continue until the end of the Illuminations.

Note: The main TV ad has also been showcased on the two large digital screens at North Pier and on the Golden Mile.

NUMBER ONE ATTRACTION

Blackpool Pleasure Beach has been named as the best amusement park in the UK by social review website TripAdvisor.

Its Travellers' Choice Awards saw the 42-acre park top the list which took into account value for money, customer experience and overall comments on its website from its millions of users.

Reviewers praised the amusement park's commitment to great value for guests, as well as their experience during their visit.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach is also named in the top 10 fun parks in Europe and Blackpool's Sandcastle Waterpark was voted eighth best waterpark in Europe in the Travellers' Choice Awards.

Earlier this year, the Mandarin Restaurant on Clifton Street, Blackpool, was rated third best Chinese restaurant in the UK by Trip Advisor users.

NEW DUNGEON ENTRANCE



The Blackpool Tower Dungeon has now got a new themed entrance on the Promenade side of the Blackpool Tower Building. The launch of the new entrance also coincides with the launch of the 'Summer Carnivale' where Tower Dungeon characters will be performing on to the streets of Blackpool to promote the attraction.

TOWER ARCHES REVEALED

Work on the restoration of Blackpool Tower's famous arches is continuing.

The arches on the Promenade frontage are being restored as part of a heritage conservation project.

The first phase of works will see seven of the arches restored with a second phase expected to restore two more.

SWITCH ON FESTIVAL WEEKEND



Britain's best-loved comedian, Peter Kay, is to switch on this year's Blackpool Illuminations.

The full line-up for the Friday night Switch-On concert is now complete with the UK's biggest girl band Little Mix headlining the star-studded show with a live performance full of their biggest hits.

The Guinness World Record Breaking comedian, who currently holds the record for the biggest live stand-up comedy tour on the planet, has been a lifelong aficionado of Blackpool since he was a child.

Peter's first ever stand-up comedy DVD was recorded in Blackpool 'Live At The Top Of The Tower', and catapulted him into becoming one of the most successful comedians of all time. Peter will proudly flick the switch to launch the 2014 Blackpool Illuminations season on Friday 29 August.

Little Mix were launched into the limelight as the winners of X Factor in 2011 and since then have topped the charts in the UK and America, selling almost two million albums worldwide. The group will have just completed a UK arena tour when they entertain the crowds for Blackpool's biggest weekend of the year.

Little Mix will be joined on switch on night by Texas who are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their debut album in 1989, as well as Union J, Pixie Lott, Neon Jungle and George Ezra.

The Friday night Switch-On, which is being staged in association with media partner Rock FM, marks the start of a three-day festival of entertainment on the Tower Festival Headland; the West End themed Saturday night will be headlined by Thriller Live and the Sunday night concert will be headlined by Rebecca Ferguson.

Early bird tickets for the entire festival weekend are priced at just £20 for adults, £10 per child, with the first 5,000 purchasers guaranteed a wristband for the free Friday night switch-on event.

Further details at www.visitblackpool.com/switchon

VIP hospitality over the switch on festival weekend will be provided by The Sands Venue.

LET IT BE

Following its hugely successful run in London's West End, the hit Beatles show Let It Be is coming to Blackpool this autumn.

It will run from Tuesday 30 September to Sunday 12 October.

The show, which includes more than 40 Beatles' hits, has toured all across the world.



CARNESKY'S CLOSURE

Carnesky's Ghost Train has completed its last journey after a five-year run in Blackpool. The attraction is being dismantled and the site will eventually be cleared. Its future usage has yet to be determined. The ride was officially opened in Blackpool by Paloma Faith who played the part of one of the ghosts on the train prior to her singing career.

BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS

Just some of what's new for 2014:

Alice's Garden

Co-designed by creative curator Laurence Llewelyn Bowen and the in-house design team, this stunning new tableau will be situated by Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Drawing on the story of Alice in Wonderland and, in particular, the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, the design features a magical water garden and is perfect for those who wish to explore the illuminations on foot. It's also large, stretching for more than 100ft and features an 8ft bridge. Alice's Garden is sponsored by the Houndshell centre.

Dynamo

Eviivo are sponsors of the dynamic and dazzling Dynamo. This road-section of 20 major features, located near to South Pier, includes multiple and ever-changing spinning colours.

The Bradshaws



Classic Lancashire radio comedy The Bradshaws first rose to fame on The Gary Davies Show on Piccadilly Radio in 1983 when Buzz Hawkins wrote a poem about a family's day trip to Blackpool.

It has since gone on to be a cult favourite across the airwaves for years, with Hawkins continuing to promote cassettes and later CDs of the material. Some episodes were also made into a television series by Granada TV.

Hawkins' incredible gift for voices and comedy will be used to help accompany the illuminations tour this year.

An audio CD featuring a guide to the illuminations will be available for families to listen to in the car as they drive through the lights.

Blackpool “Will never forget”

Designed by Laurence Llewelyn Bowen, this tasteful and beautiful tribute to the heroes of World War I is particularly poignant in a year which marks 100 years since the start of the conflict. Including a video tribute, it will be based at the Cliffs.

Better Start Illumination

Again designed by Laurence, this colourful tableau displays the uplifting message of a genuine “Better Start” for children in Blackpool featuring bright colours and smiling faces. It will be seen on the cliffs in the 2014 show. (**Note:** This celebrates the Better Start project highlighted in the “General News” section of this report.

Business Sponsorship for 2014

BES Utilities Sponsorship

Fleetwood-based BES Utilities has agreed to fund the electricity that powers the illuminations for two years. The company has signed a deal to provide electricity for free in 2014 and at half price in 2015. Based on current consumption figures the deal equates to more than £100,000 making BES Commercial Electricity the biggest contributor to the lights for the last 10 years.

Logo Lights

Businesses are being invited to see their name up in lights during this year’s Illuminations display. “Logo-lights” are a new addition for 2014 giving businesses a chance to have their logo displayed in the Illuminations. A total of 150 slots are available which will be displayed alongside the popular “Headlights” feature, on the Cliffs section opposite the former Miners’ home building at North Shore. For £150 (plus VAT) businesses can have a starring role in this year’s Illuminations as well as supporting the future of the lights. The deadline for applications is August 15. Call 01253-476406/7 for details.

Headlights

A personalised version of Logo-Lights, the “Headlights” feature is the interactive part of Blackpool Illuminations enabling people (or their pets!) to be featured throughout the 73 nights of the Illuminations for a fee of £49.99. A limited number of spaces are available – call 01253 476406/7 for details.

Sponsorship Renewals

In addition to the new business involvement shown above, a number of companies and organisations that have supported the Illuminations over a number of years are returning for 2014. These include:

Beaverbrooks

Sponsors of the sparkling “Bling” section of lights on the prom by Blackpool Tower.

Knight Rigging Services (KRS)

Sponsors of the arches which welcome people into Blackpool at the south end of the Illuminations

Graham and Brown

Sponsors of “Art for Walls” - the biggest gallery of original illuminated urban art in the world situated near The Metropole Hotel

Other supporters of the 2014 Illuminations include McDonald’s; Stay Blackpool; the Friends Of The Illuminations; Visit Blackpool; Rabbit Patch Design and Blackpool Transport.

AIR SHOW

Blackpool's free Air Show will again take place over two days in August.

Taking place on Sunday 10 and Monday 11 August in association with Heart FM, the 2014 Air Show will have a special theme.

With 2014 featuring a number of important anniversaries for the armed forces including the 100 year anniversary of World War One and the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings, this year's display will have a keen emphasis on celebrating some of the most iconic names in military aviation technology.

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, which features Spitfires, Hurricanes and Lancaster Bombers, will take centre stage in what promises to be an extremely patriotic programme.

The RAF Red Arrows will carry out their own amazing display of aerial control, speed and synergy on the Sunday.



There will also be displays from two local military giants – the BAE Warton built-Eurofighter Typhoon and a fully restored, Blackpool-based “Huey” helicopter. The Huey is an iconic, celebrated American helicopter which played a vital role in the conflicts in Vietnam and Korea.

2014 marks the 105th annual Blackpool Air Show, making it one of the longest running air shows in the world. For more details on the itinerary go to www.visitblackpool.com

150 YEARS OF SERVICE

Blackpool's RNLI service has celebrated 150 years of service on our coastline.

The station was established in 1864 and has been operated by large teams of volunteers ever since.

During its 150-year history, the charity's lifeboats in Blackpool have launched on 1,898 occasions and rescued more than 600 people. For the past 10 years the station's volunteers have launched an average of 64 times a year.

The current lifeboat, *William & Eleanor*, cost over £200k – compared to the boat that went into service in 1885 at a cost of £398!

GIANT FLOATING RIG

A floating rig has been stationed in the sea off South Beach as part of the efforts to meet new European bathing water standards. It has been set up by United Utilities in order to test the ground conditions of the sea bed as part of a five-year sewer investment project.

The rig will be visible from the shore at South Beach for around three weeks. It will then be moved to Anchorsholme Park in August for a further two months.

At each location, a small section of beach will be temporarily closed while the pontoon is on site.

TIGER BILLS

A new restaurant has opened at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Tiger Bills is situated on the ground floor of the art deco Casino Building in the former Grill Restaurant. It features a fusion menu combining Western grill and authentic Thai street food.

It will be open all year round for residents and visitors.

The White Tower Restaurant, also situated in the Casino Building, has reopened on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday lunchtimes for the season.

- The Tiger Bills parent company, Lifestyle Hospitality Group, has also brought its Apple & Parrot pub and live music brand to the former Star pub at the south end of the Pleasure Beach.

DERELICT HOTELS

Work has been carried out to tidy up empty hotels on Blackpool's South Promenade.

Following extensive negative publicity about the condition of some of the hotel frontages and a subsequent fire in the roof of the Palm Beach Hotel, council officers carried out a programme of work aimed at improving the security of the buildings, eradicating fly-tipping and making cosmetic improvements to the worst of the frontages.

Some of the larger derelict hotels including The Warwick and The Kimberley have been re-boarded and re-painted. Measures have also been taken to prevent fly-tipping activity at the rear of premises.

Discussions with owners of properties are continuing to ensure that properties do not fall into further disrepair and a longer-term solution is also being explored through private sector-led mixed use developments in the area.

Demolition work on a cluster of derelict seafront buildings close to Waterloo Road has now started.

HARRY RAMSDEN'S

Blackpool's seafront Harry Ramsden's fish and chip restaurant has reopened after a £750,000 makeover.

As part of the makeover, the traditional menu has been updated, there has been significant investment in a new and improved Harry's Café and Takeaway and there is now an outdoor seating area on the Promenade.

VISITOR NUMBERS

Blackpool's tourism season got off to a flying start with over three million adult visits between January and April, 500,000 higher than in the same period in 2013.

The independent, UK-wide Omnibus survey shows that the resort saw year-on year growth across all four months, with April (which includes Easter) recording the highest visitor figures at one million visits. Visitor satisfaction levels also improved significantly – 89% in 2014 compared to 75% in 2013.

THE BEACH HOUSE

The seafront bar and restaurant which was badly damaged by storms earlier this year will reopen at the start of August. It has been completely re-modelled with an extended outdoor terrace area.

DINOSAUR WORLD OPENS

A new family attraction has opened on Blackpool's Golden Mile.

Dinosaur World includes life-size exhibits of the most renowned dinosaurs showing where, when and how they lived, with films, documentaries and a range of interactive activities.

The attraction is intending to open all year round. More details at www.dinosaurworldblackpool.com



LIGHTS OUT

Blackpool is to take part in "Lights Out" - a special nationwide event that will see places and people turn off their lights to share a moment of reflection.

The concept marks the hour that Britain entered World War I 100 years ago and is expected to see parts of the UK plunge into darkness between 10pm and 11pm on August 4.

Plans are still being finalised but, as a town which has a long tradition of honouring and celebrating our armed forces, as well as being the home of lights in the UK, Blackpool Council is intent on marking the moment.

Local cadets have already decided to carry out a dawn to dusk vigil at the Cenotaph to mark the occasion and plans are being explored as to how an illuminated section of the Promenade can be used as part of the event. Local heritage expert Tony Sharkey will also be giving lectures at Central Library followed by a photographic exhibition depicting life in Blackpool during the wartime years.

Lights Out is funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund and complements a candlelit vigil of prayer to be held at Westminster Abbey from 10pm-11pm on August 4.

The BBC will be filming at various locations and has expressed an initial interest in Blackpool's plans.

THE WEDDING CHAPEL

Blackpool's official Register Office, based in Festival House has been re-branded as The Wedding Chapel. New signage is being planned for the seafront building which has a unique outlook over the sea and promenade.

Since opening in 2012 The Wedding Chapel has hosted an average of 500 weddings a year (including Civil Partnerships and most recently conducting same-sex marriages since their launch last year).

The Wedding Chapel offers two rooms for ceremonies – the Tower View Room which has a full length window enabling couples to take their vows with The Blackpool Tower as a backdrop and the Sea View Room looking out over the Irish Sea.

PROM SCULPTURES

A pair of Sir Peter Blake sculptures has been restored to Blackpool's seafront, three years after they were damaged by thieves.

The bronze statues - Four Man Up and Equestrian Act - were removed from the Promenade after parts were stolen in 2011.

Together they make up a piece of artwork entitled Life As A Circus. The new versions that have been returned to South Beach promenade are made from resin that has no value to thieves.



The artist, who is best known as the co-creator of The Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album sleeve, also designed the statue for the BRIT Awards in 2012.

The original bronze statues have also been restored and will return to a secure space within the town in the near future.

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Car Park Wins Top Award

Muse Developments has been awarded the British Parking Award for "Best Refurbishment" after transforming Talbot Road, the UK's oldest multi-storey car park.



The car park has been renovated as part of the 25-acre Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme. It was originally designed and constructed by Blackpool Council in the 1930s with the town's bus station on the ground floor.

It is now a contemporary car park with 648 spaces over five levels, with the ground floor redeveloped as retail units in keeping with the overall look and feel of the other parts of the Talbot Gateway development.

First Retail Units

The first retail units in the new Talbot Gateway scheme are trading. Fill, a local company which offers takeaway sandwiches, coffee and other refreshments, has opened beneath the new office building, One Bickerstaffe Square.

A new Subway outlet has opened in the same block.

Gateway Gym

Former Olympian Colin Jackson officially opened the Gateway Fitness gym within the Talbot Gateway development at the start of June. The gym is based on the ground floor of One Bickerstaffe Square.

Sainsbury's Store Opens



Blackpool's new Sainsbury's food store opened its doors to the public on July 23. The store has 60,000sq ft of trading space incorporating food, homeware and clothing, and offers 600 car parking spaces. It has created over 350 jobs in the local community. There is extensive promotional activity in place to promote the new store, including the turning of the top of Blackpool Tower orange over the weekend of July 25-27.

TOWN CENTRE BID EVENTS

Blackpool Town Centre BID has put together an extensive events programme. A number of events have already taken place on St John's Square during July including a Rock The Decades concert on July 12 and a Celtic festival on July 19. Other planned BID events in the Square include:

- Trinity Hospice Fun Day on Saturday July 26
- Pop Star Party/Talent Show on Saturday August 2
- Zorbing Fun Day (with children's inflatables and entertainers) on Saturday August 23
- Federation of Small Businesses Day on Saturday 13 September

For further information go to: www.blackpoolbid.org

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

GROWTH DEAL FOR BLACKPOOL

A multi-million pound deal to support the renewal of Blackpool has been agreed by Government. The resort will receive £50m in funding by 2021, with most of it coming in the next two years, as part of the £230m Lancashire Growth Deal.

Blackpool will get £38m by 2016, including a £26m loan to tackle serious housing problems in the town. A further £13m has been provisionally agreed for future years.

Schemes that will receive backing next year include a new heritage visitor attraction at the Winter Gardens and investment in Blackpool and The Fylde College as part of efforts to set up a national energy college.

The provisional list of schemes in the “Revitalising Blackpool” package include:

- A heritage visitor attraction – £21.2m (£1.5m from the Growth Deal)
- Integrated traffic management system – £2.4m (£1.7m from the Growth Deal)
- Bridge maintenance – £4.3m (£3.8m from the Growth Deal)
- M55 link road to St Annes – £15m (£2m from the Growth Deal)
- Creating an energy centre at Blackpool and the Fylde College – £12m (£6.2m from the Growth Deal)
- Green corridors to improve town centre gateways – £7.3m (£6.6m from the Growth Deal)
- Tramway extension to North Station – £18.1m (£2.1m from the Growth Deal)
- Private sector housing intervention – £26m Growth Deal loan
- Mental health and employment pilot scheme – £1.5m from Department for Communities and Local Government.

Note: *Alan Cavill, Director of Places for Blackpool Council, who has been heavily involved in the Government negotiations, will give a more detailed briefing on the Growth Deal for Blackpool at the July 25 meeting.*

NORTHERN NEON LIGHTS

Northern Neon Lights, a business that was originally founded to make signs for Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Blackpool Tower, is to invest in new equipment after securing a funding deal.

The business, which is based off Mowbray Drive, has acquired a fibre laser cutting machine after receiving a £525,000 finance package from HSBC. The investment will allow it to broaden the range of products it offers to customers as it will be able to work with additional materials such as copper, brass and nickel.

Originally founded in 1958, the family business mainly focuses on fabrication and laser cutting, with sign making now only representing 20 per cent of its activities. It employs around 30 staff.

REGIONAL GROWTH FUND

The latest round of the Regional Growth Fund, the Government's flagship economic stimulus, has been launched by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg with £200m of investment available for businesses. Round six is open to private sector bidders seeking £1m or more. Bids can be submitted until noon on 30 September 2014.

SAFEHANDS

Blackpool care provider Safehands Corporation is planning to develop its home care and nursery businesses after securing a £1.5m finance package.

The business, which provides services such as mobile crèches, nurseries, holidays for the disabled and home care, is expecting turnover to rise to more than £10m in the coming years and plans to take on new staff to support its growth.

The £1.5m package has been provided by Yorkshire Bank's business and private banking centre in Preston and follows a £1.6m deal last July which allowed Safehands to invest in its nursery chain.

AMBER TAVERNS

Blackpool-based pub group Amber Taverns has been sold in a management buyout thought to be worth £80m. Amber Taverns specialises in reviving traditional pubs which have been closed or close to collapse. It operates around 100 community pubs across the North West, North East, Midlands and Wales.

Section 4: General News

VIRGIN SECURES WEST COAST

Virgin will continue to operate the West Coast Main Line after being awarded a new £430m deal by the Government. The rail operator has pledged that it will increase capacity, create new journeys (including a direct Blackpool to London service) and create jobs.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that the new contract will run for two years and nine months.

The award follows the fiasco of 2012 when the West Coast contract was initially awarded to First Group but later retracted and Virgin given a temporary extension to November 2014. The new arrangement will run until April 2017 when a new competitive long-term franchise is expected to commence.

The Government says that the new deal will bring £35m worth of passenger benefits including:

- 21 first-class carriages converted to standard class, creating 5,500 extra standard seats per day across the network
- Free WiFi at stations and improved coverage across the entire fleet
- More than £20m invested to modernise and enhance stations
- £2.5m to improve the interiors of the Pendolino train fleet, as well as £2.75m spent on catering facilities

In addition, Virgin will now start work to secure new direct services between Shrewsbury, Blackpool and London from December this year. Virgin will submit plans to the Office of Rail Regulation to give a direct London to Blackpool North service with one journey in each direction, Monday to Friday.

£45M BETTER START FOR BABIES...

Blackpool has been chosen as one of only five locations in the UK to get Big Lottery Funding of £45m to help give the town's new born children a better start in life.

Details of the bid were presented to the BBLG meeting in March this year. In June, it was revealed that the bid, which will potentially provide support services for around 9,000 babies over the next 10 years, had been successful.

The bid was made by the Blackpool Better Start partnership, led by the NSPCC working with Blackpool Council, NHS health organisations in Blackpool, and a number of local parents and community organisations.

The funds will see a new way of key agencies working together to make sure babies born in Blackpool receive the early care and nurturing they need for healthy development. Specific attention will be given to diet and nutrition, social and emotional development, and communication and language.

The money will mean more specialist services to support the most vulnerable families with babies across seven key wards in Blackpool (Claremont, Talbot, Brunswick, Bloomfield, Park, Victoria, Clifton), as well as delivering public health messages and improving public spaces for the benefit of all families in Blackpool.

The new *Blackpool Centre For Early Childhood Development* will be the hub for the partnership. It will oversee the delivery of services and share learning from the programme on a national and international stage, placing Blackpool as a centre of expertise in early years provision.

Currently, 30 per cent of babies in Blackpool are born into poverty, while rates of mental illness, drugs and alcohol abuse and domestic abuse are above the national average.

Some of the schemes that will be rolled out include:

Star Buddies: Volunteer breastfeeding champions will support new mums in hospital and at home to initiate and continue breastfeeding.

Family Nurse Partnership: A proven nurse-led home visiting programme will be expanded to reach all parents under 20 in Blackpool.

Parents Under Pressure: A 20-week intensive programme for parents in receipt of drug or alcohol treatment.

Baby Steps: Supporting people in the transition to parenthood, nurturing healthy relationships and promoting child development.

Blackpool Beach School: With miles of beach right on Blackpool's doorstep, local parents have set out their ambition to create a Beach School. Better Start is working with families to develop the concept for outdoor play and learning on the shore.

Improving safe spaces and play: These projects will enable young children and their families to enjoy the outdoors and also encourage physical exercise.

Food Dudes: A programme to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables in early years and give parents tips to enable them to provide a healthy diet at home.

...AND A £500k HEAD START FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

A project to give emotional support to Blackpool school children has been awarded a £500k boost by The Big Lottery Fund. The funding for the "HeadStart" programme, will provide help and support to 10 to 14-year-olds across Blackpool.

This will include support in seven schools in Blackpool for the next 18 months with the aim of building resilience to help prevent them from developing mental health problems as they get older. This will then be followed by a £10m bid to expand the project to all schools in Blackpool.

The project will work with young people, their families, school staff and other professionals to make sure that children are being supported both at home, at school and in their leisure time. School staff will be trained to identify pupils who are struggling with emotional issues as well as helping parents to support their children with their emotional wellbeing.

The programme will also support any young people who are affected by their parents' substance misuse.

BLACKPOOL FAIR TRADE WEEK

Blackpool's first Fairtrade week is being held over the last week of July.

The event is part of a campaign (revealed at the BBLG meeting in May) to turn Blackpool into a Fairtrade town.

A programme of events is being staged between July 28 and August 1. Fairtrade ambassadors will be out and about throughout the week at various locations including the Comedy Carpet on the Promenade, the town centre, local supermarkets and Stanley Park.

Activities during the week will include a Fairtrade picnic in Stanley Park and an open event at St John's Conference Centre where there will be an opportunity to hear from Bruce Crowther, the founder of the first Fairtrade Town at Garstang.

It is being held at St Johns (opposite the Winter Gardens) on Wednesday 30 July between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. If you would like to attend this event please RSVP to fairness@blackpool.gov.uk

PRESTON GUILD HALL SALE

Fylde-based entrepreneur Simon Rigby is to purchase Preston Guild Hall and Charter Theatre.

Preston City Council has recommended the sale of the venue to Mr Rigby who has indicated that he plans to invest £1m to create a new hub for start-up businesses, restaurant and improved conference facilities to complement the live entertainment venue. Plans to remodel the front of the building are due to be submitted in autumn.

Mr Rigby already owns The Villa in Wrea Green.

BIBA FINALISTS

Seventeen firms from across the Fylde Coast have made it to the final stages of the Be Inspired Business Awards (The BIBAs). They are:

Name of Company	Nominated for...
Inspired Energy plc	Business Of The Year Employer Of The Year Businesswoman (Janet Thornton)
Laila's Fine Foods	Business Of The Year Manufacturer Of The Year Entrepreneur (Laila and Nazir Remtulla)
Colossal Training	Micro Business New Business Of The Year
WJF Technical	Micro Business
Hangerworld	E-Business Entrepreneur (Jim Elliott)
Hesketh Press	Excellence In Customer Care
Excel Fostering	Businesswoman (Michelle Cuffe and Felicity Lacey)
Chelsom Ltd	Exporter Of The Year Creative Business Of The Year
Tangerine Holdings	Exporter Medium Business Of The Year Manufacturer Of The Year
TISS Ltd	Exporter Of The Year
The Ink Squid	E-Business
SPS EU Ltd	Creative Business Of The Year Medium Business Of The Year Manufacturer Of The Year
Blackpool Zoo	Medium Business Of The Year Leisure Business Of The Year
Promenade Hotels	Medium Business Of The Year Leisure Business Of The Year
Homestead CSL	Construction Business Of The Year
Fylde Executive Cars	Leisure Business Of The Year
Winter Gardens	Leisure Business Of The Year

The BIBAs gala final will be held on September 12 with the prize-giving ceremony in the Tower Circus followed by dinner and entertainment in the Tower Ballroom.

FRACKING CONSULTATION

The Environment Agency has announced a four-week extension to the consultation period for Cuadrilla's' permit applications for Roseacre Wood and Preston New Road sites in Lancashire.

The extension has been granted to allow interested groups additional time to respond as these are the first permit applications which include activities relating to high volume hydraulic fracturing for shale gas.

The consultation for the Preston New Road site will run until 5 August and the Roseacre Wood consultation until 19 August. Comments are welcomed from the public and interested groups on local environmental factors that may be important.

The application documents are available online for people to view and provide comments: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal>

SEA WALL CONSTRUCTION

Work is underway on the construction of new seawalls at Anchorsholme and Rossall – and more than 20 local people have already been hired through the scheme.

The £86m coastal defence scheme is being delivered by the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Programme, a partnership between Blackpool Council, Wyre Council and the Environment Agency, with work carried out by Balfour Beatty.

Working with Build Up, a training and employment programme run by Blackpool and The Fylde College, Balfour Beatty is providing local people with valuable guidance and work experience.

Targeting unemployed residents from Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, the scheme provides them with skills and training for a future career in the construction industry. Balfour Beatty is also providing those employed on the project with opportunities to complete further training in their roles. As the project progresses, any additional vacancies will also be advertised through Build Up or local job centres.

BLACKPOOL DANCERS AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES

A company of young dancers are representing Blackpool at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

The Fylde Coast Youth Dance Company, a group of 19 young dancers between the ages of 12 and 19 from Blackpool and Fylde, are one of only eight youth dance groups from across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to be chosen.

They will join 400 dancers from 10 countries for three days of workshops and performances celebrating the vibrancy of dance within Commonwealth countries.

Section 5: Offers for BBLG Members

MAMMA MIA!

A discounted offer for BBLG members is still available. Simply go to the Ticketmaster website and insert BBLG in the offer code or call the box office on 0844 847 2517 and quote BBLG. Tickets normally £39.50 and £35 will be reduced to £35 and £30 for performances Tuesday to Thursday at 7.30pm.

GENTING CASINO

Members of the BBLG are being offered a 50% discount on the “Full Fahrenheit” a la carte menu and a complimentary bottle of wine (terms and conditions apply) when two or more people dine at Genting Casino in Blackpool on a Monday to Thursday in August. Contact: JanineMarshall@gentingcasinos.co.uk for further information.

BLAM!

BBLG members are also being offered tickets at £12.50 (saving £7 each) for the first three performances of BLAM! at Blackpool’s Grand Theatre on the nights of August 20, 21, and 22. This offer is not available online so please book directly with the Grand box office in person or on 01253 743335 quoting 'BBLG'. Billed as “Die Hard meets The Office”, this is the only opportunity to see BLAM! in the UK this year.

Philip Welsh
Head of Marketing Services