



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – July 29, 2016

Section 1: Visitor Economy

BID FOR NEW CONFERENCE CENTRE

A brand new conference centre could form the next step in the regeneration of Blackpool's visitor economy.



Blackpool Council's Executive has agreed to progress plans for the proposed facility at the Winter Gardens. It will now formally submit bids for external funding for the purpose-built facility on the former split-level car park site on Leopold Grove, including a request for support from the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

The venue will include a state-of –the-art conference hall for 2000 delegates, a 1200sqm exhibition hall and break-out spaces as well as much needed catering facilities.

The building will be directly linked to both the Empress Ballroom and the Opera House to form a flexible venue with combined capacities of up to 7,000. Whilst it is unlikely all the spaces will be in use at any one time for conferencing, this flexibility puts Blackpool back in the market to stage major conferences. It was almost 10 years ago, that the major political parties ended their long association of staging conferences in the resort.

Blackpool Council has commissioned outline designs from architects Bissett Adams, who have previously worked in Blackpool on the refurbishment of the Central Library.

PALM BEACH DEMOLITION

A derelict hotel at one of the key gateways into Blackpool could finally be demolished, paving the way for the development of a new seafront hotel.

Blackpool-based company Create Construction was granted planning permission last August for a scheme to build a 130-bedroom Hampton by Hilton hotel on the site of the fire-damaged Palm Beach and the adjoining Bourne Hotel on South Promenade.



Blackpool Council's Executive has now agreed to a £4.5m loan to enable the development to go ahead. Subject to contractual approvals, it is hoped that demolition of the Palm Beach can start before the end of the summer. Discussions are continuing over the future of the former Warwick Hotel which is now derelict and occupies a site next to the new hotel development.

GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

A bid has been submitted to bring a major event to Blackpool: The Great Exhibition of the North, a two month-long festival celebrating the best of art, culture and design.

The Government's Culture Minister announced the competition in April, inviting towns and cities across the north of England to host the event, which will take place in 2018. The bid, which has been submitted on behalf of Lancashire, is a collaborative partnership between Blackpool Council, Marketing Lancashire and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

Blackpool will be the proposed lead venue for the Great Exhibition with a "Pleasure Palaces" theme. The resort has historically been known as the playground of the North, with its thriving visitor economy and a unique, world-famous Victorian infrastructure. If the bid is successful, the exhibition will create the opportunity to showcase some of the leading artists, designers and entrepreneurs from the region.

The Government is contributing £5m towards the exhibition itself and an additional £15m into a legacy fund to attract further cultural investment in the Northern Powerhouse.

A shortlist will be revealed by the end of July, with the chosen venue announced in the autumn.

CREATING COASTAL POWERHOUSES

The British Hospitality Association is pressing the Government to develop and deliver a comprehensive strategy to attract investment into coastal communities. The Association has drawn up a seven-point coastal action plan with the following recommendations:

1. Appointment of a **“Seaside Tsar”** to oversee the development of a Coastal Investment Strategy and the creation of coastal action groups
2. **Coastal Action Groups** should provide a co-ordinated response to the social and economic challenges facing coastal communities and develop a **Coastal Investment Strategy** which identifies and promotes opportunities for investment and helps local authorities to attract new investment
3. A **progressive tax environment** that encourages existing and new coastal enterprises to invest in their business. The Government should recognise the economic evidence and success of 31 other European countries in reducing the rate of VAT on accommodation and attractions
4. Creation of **Coastal Enterprise Zones** to incentivise investment through a mix of time-limited tax exemptions and investment incentives for hospitality, tourism and other businesses
5. **Investment in critical infrastructure** including improved broadband, rail and road connections, as well as protection against the threat of rising sea levels
6. **Improved education and training** provision for young people and adults to ensure they have the skills for a variety of sectors
7. **Support Local Authorities** to tackle social issues and housing problems, including multi-occupancy (HMOs) which creates negative impacts in coastal towns and reduces their attraction as visitor destinations.

The recommendations are based on detailed research – *“The Potential Contribution of Coastal Tourism to the Regeneration of Seaside Towns”* – which is available from the BHA – www.bha.org.uk

BEST VALUE

Blackpool has been named as the UK’s most affordable seaside destination. The survey by PromotionalCodes.org.uk reported that two adults and two children could spend a week in Blackpool, stay at a hotel for seven nights and take in some attractions for around £474, around £250 cheaper than a comparable week in Skegness.

TRIP ADVISOR AWARDS

Blackpool Pleasure Beach was named second best attraction in the UK in the annual Trip Advisor Travellers’ Choice Awards for 2016. Earlier this year, Blackpool was named as fifth best destination in the UK ahead of the likes of Glasgow, Bath and Manchester.

INTERNATIONAL SOUL FESTIVAL

Blackpool’s International Soul Festival is to become an annual event after a successful inaugural event at the Winter Gardens. The three-day event, which featured an international line-up of soul artists, attracted thousands of fans. Two hundred scooters also took part in an organised rally in St John’s Square to coincide with the music event.

Festival organiser Richard Searling is now working with the Winter Gardens team to stage a second event next year. It will take place over the weekend of June 16-18 with tickets already on sale.

ILLUMINATIONS SWITCH-ON WEEKEND

The first acts to perform at Blackpool Illuminations Switch-On Weekend have been revealed.

The Friday night Switch-On, which is being delivered in association with Nickelodeon and Club MTV, will feature pop band, The Vamps, and award-winning dance group, Diversity.

Part of the show will be directed by Ashley Banjo, choreographer and leader of Diversity, who shot to fame after winning Britain's Got Talent and who begin a UK-wide arena tour next year.



The Vamps, who rocked the Switch-On party in 2015 with a stunning headline performance under the world-famous lights, join what promises to be a spectacular line-up. More acts and the celebrity Switch-On personality are yet to be announced.

The Friday night programme will start with a "Blackpool Introduces" showcase featuring the best of talent from local venues including Verity Kinnon, James Edgar and Axi Wild, prior to the start of the main show. The line-up will also include Blackpool's own Stacey McClean, formerly of spin-off band S Club 8 and special sets by Club MTV.

As last year, the Switch-On event will be free, with people invited to apply for the 20,000 wristbands that will guarantee entry to the Tower Festival Headland arena. The wristband ballot closes at 9am on August 1. To register, go to: www.visitblackpool.com/switchon

The Switch-On celebration will lead into a weekend of music and slime as Nickelodeon's first UK SLIMEFEST takes place in the resort on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th September with a mixture of free and ticketed events.

The Nickelodeon SLIMEFEST ticketed shows will take place on the Saturday in the Empress Ballroom. Two identical shows will feature live performances, games, characters and plenty of slime! The first act to be announced is one of America's latest boy-band, The Tide.

SLIMEFEST weekend also features a free outdoor experience on the Tower Festival Headland throughout Saturday and Sunday including character appearances and a host of family activities.

Ticket prices for the live Nickelodeon SLIMEFEST shows begin at £25. Additional ticket packages include a guaranteed space at the Switch-On celebration night, admittance to Blackpool Pleasure Beach and to Nickelodeon Land. Full ticket details are available via Ticketmaster.

Footage from the SLIMEFEST live shows will be broadcast in a special SLIMEFEST programme on Nickelodeon.

LIGHTPOOL 2016



Plans are well advanced for the second year of Blackpool's £2m LightPool programme.

Funded by a grant from the Coastal Communities Fund, the 2016 line-up includes new 3D projection shows on to the front of the Blackpool Tower buildings, a new neon-themed exhibition at the Grundy Art Gallery and a week-long festival of light and entertainment during October half-term.

Starting at the beginning of September, this year's projection shows on to the base of the Blackpool Tower have been supplemented with three new spectacular commissions.

Czech company, and world leaders in projection mapping, The Macula, will showcase their Down The Rabbit Hole production. The projection will bring The Blackpool Tower to life as it portrays an astronaut exploring new worlds.

The space theme continues with another interactive projection which, working with the European Space Agency, takes visitors on a once-in-a-lifetime virtual journey.

A final projection, called Enchanted Blackpool, has been designed by Illuminations curator Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen and his daughter Cecile to show off the architecture of the famous Blackpool Tower building.

All three of the films, along with the two shows from last year's LightPool programme, will be available to watch for free from the Comedy Carpet several times a night throughout the Illuminations season, with extra performances at weekends and half term.



A new 'LightPool village' on the Comedy Carpet will also be operating throughout the Illuminations, selling bespoke merchandise and photo souvenirs.

The Grundy Art Gallery will again play a key role, with the opening of a specially commissioned Neon exhibition featuring the work of some of the most talented artists in the world, including a piece by Tracey Emin.

A special festival will also spark in to life between 28 October and 2 November, transforming the town centre with a series of spectacular light installations and live shows.

A troupe of resort ambassadors has again been recruited as part of LightPool. This year they have their own base – a pop-up information centre on the ground floor of Bickerstaffe Square (opposite Blackpool North railway station).

ILLUMINATIONS 2016

Visitors to this year's Blackpool Illuminations will be greeted with new arrival points at Starr Gate and Bispham.

The arrival points (*illustrated right*) will encourage visitors to contribute to the Illuminations fund by creating a much more ambient welcome.

A souvenir Blackpool Illuminations brochure has also been produced, which will be given away free to any visitors contributing £5 or more to the Illuminations fund.



A TASTE OF BLACKPOOL GOES TO CHINA

The first overseas Blackpool Dance Festival will be held in Shanghai, China next month.

The "Open To The World" festival will take place between August 19 and 23 in Shanghai's Indoor Stadium.

The event is intended to promote the Blackpool Dance Festival which is staged in the Empress Ballroom every May, attracting more than 20,000 competitors from all over the world. In 2017, the Blackpool event will be extended by two days.

Over the past few years, ballroom dancing has become one of China's fastest-growing leisure activities, with more than 50million registered dancers.

ABSENT UNCOVERED

Preparations are well underway for the opening of one of the most ambitious theatrical projects to be undertaken in Blackpool.

The production of Absent in Blackpool's Winter Gardens will take small groups of people on a unique journey through a maze of rooms and corridors.

Mixing film, architecture, vast model-making installations and a haunting soundtrack, the show is being produced by dreamthinkspeak in collaboration with Left Coast, Blackpool Grand Theatre and an Ambition For Excellence Award from Arts Council England.



The show will be staged over three periods – August 19-25, September 12-16 and September 25-29.

ZOO INVESTMENT

Blackpool Zoo has started work on one of its most ambitious projects to date, which will launch as part of next year's 45th anniversary celebrations.

The multi-million pound scheme, which has been dubbed Project Elephant, will see one of the UK's largest indoor elephant facilities being built on vacant land at the zoo, opening up an additional three acres to visitors.

Management and keepers are working closely with the Asian Elephant European Endangered Species Program (EEP) to secure the future of elephants at Blackpool Zoo.



The indoor facility, which has been specially designed around the complex welfare need of the mammoth species, will feature a raised viewing platform, meaning visitors can come face to face with the elephants.

Externally, the public will enjoy unobstructed views of the elephants in a huge paddock, which will include a sanded area complete with bathing pool and a landscaped grass field.

The entrance to the new elephant facility will be located next to the Dinosaur Safari, which is also being revamped as part of the project. In addition there will be a new Asian-themed food outlet.

Over the past decade, the zoo has made substantial capital investment, including Orangutan Outlook, the Active Oceans Arena, Children's Farm, Giraffe Heights and Wolf Ridge. During that period, visitor numbers have soared.

SANDCASTLE WORLD RECORD

Sandcastle Waterpark is the proud holder of a Guinness World Record after breaking the record for most number of people down a waterslide in an hour.

A total of 529 people took part in the attempt, easily beating the previous record which stood at 396 people.

The waterpark staged the attempt as part of the attraction's 30th birthday celebrations.



SHOW UPDATES

Pop star and former X-Factor finalist Amelia Lily is to complete the line-up of Mod Musical **SHOUT!** when it comes to Blackpool Opera House this autumn. She joins Suzanne Shaw, Liz McClarnon, Niki Evans and Helena Blackman who have all previously been announced.

A new production of **The Wedding Singer** is heading to the Winter Gardens for a week-long run from July 4-8 next year. The stage show, based on the hit film, will star Ray Quinn, Jon Robyns, Cassie Compton, Roxanne Pallett and Ruth Madoc (*pictured right*). Tickets are now on sale.



A mixture of stars from stage, screen and the world of pop will feature in the hit musical **Great Expectations** at the Opera House this Christmas. Veteran TV and stage actor Chris Ellison will play convict Magwitch in the adaptation of the Charles Dickens' classic while former soap and pop star Adam Rickitt will play Pip. They will be joined by musical theatre stars Maureen Nolan as Miss Havisham and Helena Blackman as Estelle. The show runs from December 10 to January 7.

AIR SHOW RETURNS

Blackpool's annual air show returns to the resort on Sunday 7 and Monday 8 August.

The free show, which takes place over the sea in front of the promenade between Central and North Piers, will include an extensive programme including displays by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a Typhoon, the Breitling Wingwalkers and various aerobatic displays.



The Sunday programme will be headlined by a display by the Red Arrows.

As well as the flying displays, there will be various stall, stands and attractions in the vicinity of the Tower Festival Headland.

2016 sees the 107th year of the Blackpool Air Show, making it one of the longest running in the world.

BEDFORD HOTEL SALE

The Bedford Hotel on Blackpool seafront is under new ownership after being run by a local family for 50 years.

The hotel, occupying 298-300 on the Promenade, was sold by property firm Fleurets to leisure operator Club 171 Ltd after being marketed with a guide price of £975k.

The business comprises 42 en-suite guest rooms, a 70-cover bar and lounge, a 100-cover dining room and an indoor swimming pool.

RAMSDEN OPENING

Harry Ramsden has opened its new £2.5 million restaurant in the former Tower Lounge.

The 200-cover restaurant – described by the company as a “next generation” offer - has created 100 new jobs and safeguarded 30 existing jobs.



“Harry Ramsden at the Tower” features a seaside-themed interior design specially created for Blackpool and its unique location beneath Blackpool Tower. The new outlet provides takeaway as well as sit-in facilities for over 200 diners.

It also includes gin and craft beer bars and a standalone cocktail bar, as well as smoothie and juicing stations.

The original Harry Ramsden’s, a short distance away on Blackpool Promenade, has now closed. That unit is now being marketed to other potential retailers.

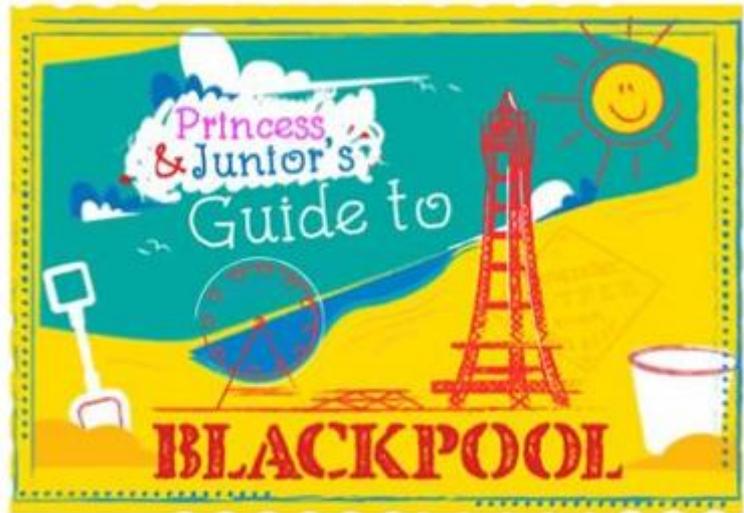
SAND, SEA AND SPRAY

Blackpool’s annual celebration of urban arts takes place over the weekend of July 29-31. Artists from all over Europe will be joining the programme. An information hub for the festival will be based at the Rock Factory, rear of Brighthouse on Abingdon Street, with a merchandise shop at 45 Talbot Road. Further information is available at www.sandseaandspray.co.uk or on the festival's Facebook page.

THE JUNIOR AND PRINCESS SHOW

The children of Peter Andre and Katie Price have secured their first presenting job – hosting a fun kids' guide to Blackpool.

Brother and sister duo, Junior and Princess Andre, have been signed up to front a series of videos for *Blackpool Has it All*, Blackpool's destination marketing campaign for 2016. The campaign, which includes extensive TV advertising, showcases the resort's unrivalled range of family attractions.



The three episode video series – called *Princess & Junior's Guide to Blackpool* - follows Junior and Princess as they visit various attractions including Blackpool Zoo, Sea Life, Blackpool Tower, Pleasure Beach and Sandcastle Waterpark. All three episodes along with a 'best bits' video will be hosted on the VisitBlackpool website.

SCENE EXHIBITION



A new exhibition comprising film sets has been showing at the Winter Gardens throughout July. The exhibition, called SCENE, comprises 20 different sets of fan-made replica props and costumes, along with cars that are instantly recognisable to film and TV fans. The exhibition closes on Saturday 30 July.

Note: There will be an opportunity for members of the BBLG to view the exhibition immediately after the July 29 meeting.

KLINGONS ON THE GOLDEN MILE

The 50th anniversary of the first broadcast of Star Trek is being celebrated in various ways in Blackpool. Over the week commencing July 25, the Winter Gardens has been hosting a special film festival in the Opera House, showing all 13 of the Star Trek films over the course of the week, including the new release Star Trek Beyond.

The festival complements the new Star Trek Exhibition which opened in early July on the Golden Mile. In a unique deal with Paramount and CBS, *Star Trek: The Exhibition* is now open for the summer and autumn seasons.

It includes 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. Star Trek will also be featured in a newly-designed section of the 2016 Illuminations display.

WORLD HOST

Blackpool has become the UK's biggest tourist resort to gain national recognition for its commitment to customer service after being awarded WorldHost status.



Blackpool received the destination recognition after it trained more than 2,500 front line staff using WorldHost training programmes over the last two years and signed a commitment to delivering outstanding customer service.

The ambition to achieve WorldHost destination status has been led by the Blackpool Tourism Academy, a consortium of key businesses in the visitor economy including Pleasure Beach, Merlin, Winter Gardens, Blackpool Zoo, Sandcastle Waterpark, Blackpool Transport and Family Entertainment Centres.

WorldHost is a suite of world-class customer service training programmes that have already been used to train over 200,000 people in the UK. Programmes include training on serving customers with disabilities, welcoming customers from other cultures, increasing sales through service and an introduction to the general principles of customer service.

Note: A presentation on the WorldHost Destination Award will be made at the BBLG meeting on July 29.

MISS INFORMATION

LeftCoast is delivering an innovative project in South Beach to promote the fascinating history of the area.

As part of a neighbourhoods programme, LeftCoast worked with community group South Beach Beacons to commission artist Jenny Wilson to develop a piece of street theatre that will take place during the summer season.

The project includes free 30-minute guided tours led by "Miss Inform", a colourful character who offers an alternative view of the area's local history, drawing attention to some of the South Beach's hidden gems.

Four tours will take place on each of the following days: August 7 and 8; September 3 and 4; and September 17 and 18. Tours are bookable at www.leftcoast.org.uk

Village fairs will also take place on the Waterloo Headland, on three of the dates, Monday, 8th August, Sunday 4th September and Sunday 18th September. These include free knitting and crochet tuition, children's games, stalls and afternoon teas.

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

TRAMWAY EXTENSION APPROVED



A £22m plan to extend Blackpool's tramway from the Promenade to a new transport interchange at Blackpool North Rail Station has been approved by councillors.

An application will now be made to the Secretary of State for Transport to authorise the scheme, which will see trams turn into Talbot Road opposite North Pier.

As part of the scheme, the existing Wilko building will eventually be demolished to make way for the tram terminus.

Options are also being considered to integrate residential, office and retail outlets, plus a new town centre hotel.

While detailed development plans are drawn up, the current occupiers of the building – Wilko, Age UK and APCOA car park - will continue to operate.

Wilko is planning to relocate to a new, purpose-built store at the HoundsHill Centre. The extension is planned to coincide with the completion of rail electrification between Blackpool and Preston in 2018.

TOWN CENTRE VACANCIES

A new survey has been carried out on vacant town centre units at the end of May.

There was a net decrease of five vacant units in the town centre compared to February 2016, bringing the overall total down to 115 and reducing the vacancy rate to 17.8%.

The Principal Retail Core (see chart for definition) has a vacancy rate of 11% - the lowest vacancy rate on record – which has reduced by a significant 3.1 percentage points since February. The Periphery Town Centre was the only area that did not experience a vacancy rate drop over the period.

The newly vacant units include: The Blue Room, The Vapour Salon, Ninety9, IT Components R Us (Church Street); Wah Wah's, Truffles Steakhouse, Galleon Café, Ambiance Tattoo Studio (Topping Street); Jaggy Thistle, Moo (Queen Street); Barnardo's, Daniel's Charms (Abingdon Street) and Affordable Signs (Cookson Street).

Since February a number of businesses have occupied previously vacant units. These include: Coffee Republic (No 1. Bickerstaffe Square); National Citizens' Service, Virgin Media (HoundsHill); Outlet Store, UIKO (Victoria Street); Santa Fashions (Bank Hey Street); West Coast Choc Café (Birley Street); Barnardo's (Abingdon Street); Nour Lebanese Restaurant, Anime & Manga Store (Topping Street); Home Again, Creation Express, Red Carpet Dresses, Black Bear Art Gallery (Church Street); Brookes Boutique (Cedar Square) and Tai Pan (Deansgate).

May 2016

Area	Total Units ¹	Total Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
Principle Retail Core (Local Plan boundary based around HoundsHill, Victoria Street, Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Corporation Street and Adelaide Street West)	163	18	11.0%
Core Retail Area (as above but also including Topping Street, Queen Street, Clifton Street, Birley Street, Market Street, Talbot Road, Abingdon Street and Cedar Square)	466	72	15.5%
Town Centre Boundary (as above but also including the Promenade, Springfield Road, Dickson Road, King Street, Cookson Street, Caunce Street and the new Talbot Gateway area)	647	115	17.8%
Periphery Town Centre Area (the Town Centre Boundary area excluding the units contained within the Core Retail Area)	181	43	23.8%

¹ Excluding the properties to the south of the Palatine Buildings; development sites (old Yates's site, Tower Street site, 35 Cookson Street site); units within Blackpool North Station; community sites (e.g. churches, libraries, schools etc.) and civic sites (e.g. Town Hall).

GRUNDY ART GALLERY

Two new exhibitions have opened at The Grundy Art Gallery in Blackpool town centre. *An Architecture of Joy* by Jenny Steele and Louise Giovanelli's *From Here to Here* will run in the gallery until August 13.

Jenny Steele's exhibition, showing in the Rotunda Gallery, looks into pieces of architecture from the inter-war years, with a particular focus on the "seaside moderne" period of architecture which resulted in the construction of buildings such as the Pleasure Beach Casino and the Midland Hotel in Morecambe.

The second exhibition by up-and-coming artist Louise Giovanelli is running in the side gallery. She has reworked new versions of a number of items from the Grundy's permanent collection of artworks, adapting them to her own style.

Both exhibitions are running at the same time as the main exhibition – *This Kolossal Kat, That Massive MOG* - by Turner Prize winner Mark Leckey, which also runs until August 13 prior to the launch of the new Neon exhibition which opens at the end of August.

Admission to all exhibitions is free, although donations to support the gallery are welcome.

FILM FESTIVAL 2017

Blackpool's home-grown film festival is set to grow next year with a new competition for talented amateur movie-makers.

Following the success of this year's event the Winter Gardens Film Festival returns to the venue from February 3-5 and will include a short film competition offering a first prize of £500 and a new award, The Golden Seagull.



Entries into the competition must be black and white, fitting in with the Festival's unique theme. The completed films should be no longer than 20 minutes and can be a narrative, documentary or music video on any theme or subject. The deadline for submissions to the competition is October 31 this year and the entry fee is £10 per film or £8 for entries from an FY1 to FY8 postcode.

Entries will be shortlisted and shown over the weekend to the paying audience and the judging panel in the Opera House, which was originally designed as a cine-variety theatre.

The festival is presented by the Winter Gardens Trust and Blackpool-based arts group Aunty Social supported by Blackpool Council and the Winter Gardens. The full programme of films and events will be announced over the coming months and will include exclusive and classic screenings, talks and social events.

Further Information and volunteering enquiries can be found at www.wintergardensfilm.co.uk or by searching for Winter Gardens Film Festival on Facebook.

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

SHALE GAS DECISIONS

Recommendations on whether fracking should be allowed in Lancashire have been submitted to the Government to make a final decision.

Energy firm Cuadrilla is appealing against Lancashire County Council's refusal to let it extract shale gas at Little Plumpton and Roseacre Wood. Planning inspector Wendy McKay, who presided over a lengthy hearing staged at Blackpool Football Club, has sent her report to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for scrutiny.

The Minister is to make the final decision, as opposed to the planning inspector, because the proposals were "of more than local significance". That decision is now expected on or around October 6.

In a separate decision, the Government's climate change advisors have given a cautious green light to fracking in the UK. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) says fracking can go ahead if three key tests are met relating to on methane leaks, gas consumption and carbon budgets.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The business support service, Business Boost Lancashire, is open for business again offering free support to start-ups and established businesses across the county, regardless of whether they have benefited from help in the past.

Between July 2013 and July 2015, Boost gave growth advice and support to over 2,400 local businesses, many benefiting from tailored programmes of consultancy, grants or mentoring.

Boost has so far helped to create over 1,200 jobs and new economic activity valued in excess of £50m. The business support programmes now available via Boost include:

- ✱ Growth Support Programme, provided by Winning Pitch and Enterprise4all: Practical advice, support and coaching for owners of high-growth start-ups and early-start businesses.
- ✱ Growth Mentoring, provided by Community & Business Partners and Orvia: Support for SME business owners from experienced mentors in areas such as business planning, finance, sales, marketing and HR.
- ✱ Innovation Clinic, provided by UCLan: Support in areas like product design, engineering, testing and prototype development to enable business owners to grow through innovation and development of new products and services.
- ✱ Access to Finance, provided by North West Access to Finance: Free finance consultancy support to help Lancashire SME businesses identify and apply for suitable forms of finance.

Boost also helps businesses access specialist private sector business support, as well as other nationally funded programmes, where relevant. Additional funded business support programmes are set to be announced later this year.

More information on Boost Business Lancashire is available from www.boostbusinesslancashire.co.uk or call 0800 488 0057.

Section 4: General News

£10m FUND FOR BLACKPOOL YOUNGSTERS

Every single one of Blackpool's 11,000 10-16 year olds is set to receive help thanks to a £10million boost from the Big Lottery Fund.

Blackpool Council has been successful in its bid to HeadStart, a programme designed to build the resilience of young residents to help prevent them from developing mental health problems as they get older.

In 2014 the council was granted £500,000 to trial a number of initiatives before submitting a bid for the full funding. Over the last 18 months more than 1,200 young people have benefited from schemes such as Walk and Talk where young people have had counselling sessions outside the normal setting of a meeting room.

HeadStart Blackpool is a partnership made up of Blackpool Council, health organisations, schools, police, voluntary sector and the young people themselves.

THE BIG REVEAL

A new respite centre for young carers in Blackpool has been handed over after it was converted by the BBC's DIY SOS team. Presenter Nick Knowles presented the keys of the newly-named Beaverbrooks House on Newton Drive to the Blackpool Carers charity.

The project involved hundreds of local contractors and volunteers, and also involved Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen who helped with the design and was in attendance for the big reveal.

The special edition will be broadcast in November in the run-up to the annual Children In Need Appeal.

PAUL MAYNARD APPOINTMENT

Blackpool North and Cleveleys MP Paul Maynard has been awarded a top ministerial position by new Prime Minister Theresa May. Mr Maynard will take on the role of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Transport, replacing MP Claire Perry.

JOB CENTRE MERGER PLAN

Two Jobcentre Plus branches in Blackpool could merge and move into Blackpool Council's offices in the town centre. If the move goes ahead, it would result in the existing branches in Queen Street and Tyldesley Road moving into the Municipal Buildings on Corporation Street. Job-seekers have been reassured that it is "business as usual" whilst the plans are discussed.

UK RECOVERY WALK

Blackpool has won the right to stage the UK Recovery Walk in September next year. The event, which is expected to attract around 6,000 people from across the UK, comprises an overnight conference and a one-mile procession through the streets. The UK Recovery Walk is intended to raise awareness of substance use disorders and recovery from addiction, as well as celebrate the achievements of individuals in recovery.

OLYMPIC TORCH

Blackpool-based wheelchair athlete and fundraiser Dave Burns has given away his prized Olympic torch to help inspire young people in the town to take up sport. Dave has given the torch that he received as part of the relay event that was held in the build-up to the 2012 London Olympics to Blackpool Sports Centre. It will take pride of place in the entranceway to the centre.

GREAT TOWN JUDGING

A judging panel from the Academy of Urbanism visited Blackpool on July 25 to carry out an assessment of the resort in the "Great Town" category of the European awards. Blackpool is one of three UK nominations for the award. The winner will be announced at an awards event in London in November.

Section 5: Requests for private sector support

ASPIRED FUTURES – REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Aspired Futures organisation is appealing for additional volunteers to work at their Kensington Lodge buildings in Blackpool during the day, evening or at weekends.

The charitable organisation offers long-term, bespoke therapeutic support to some of the most vulnerable children and young people across the Fylde Coast.

They are particularly keen to recruit mature volunteers to ensure they have a good representation across all generations. Further information from Carmen Conquer, email CarmenConquer@AspiredFutures.onmicrosoft.com

UR POTENTIAL FUND-RAISING EVENT – REMINDER

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. Businesses can also support the event by sponsoring a table and by donating raffle or auction prizes. For more information contact 01253344398 or fb@urpotential.co.uk.

**Philip Welsh,
Head of Visitor Economy**