



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – September 28, 2018

Section 1: Visitor Economy

WOW, WHAT A WEEKEND!



Blackpool enjoyed one of its most spectacular weekends in years when international singing star Alfie Boe switched on Blackpool Illuminations – and 24 hours later global pop icon Britney Spears graced the same stage on the Tower Festival Headland.

Alfie, born in Blackpool, raised in Fleetwood, came home to pull the switch to trigger 66 nights of Illuminations.

It was the highlight of a five-hour concert that included performances by Diversity, Ella Eyre, Rae Morris, HRVY and Jonas Blue. There was also an hour-long showcase of local Blackpool talent.

The following night, Britney performed the last concert of her European “Piece Of Me” tour in front of an adoring audience in the shadow of Blackpool Tower.



Picture: Dave Nelson

The two events were watched by an estimated 35,000 people and generated worldwide PR for the resort.

BLACKPOOL AIR SHOW



The Blackpool Air Show saved the best till last when the Red Arrows brought the two-day free event to a stunning finale.

The start of their routine, flying in sequence over The Blackpool Tower, created a stunning photographic image that was used by several national newspapers.

Over the two days, around 100,000 people enjoyed a programme that included the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Typhoon, and Aerosuperbatics team.

In order to alleviate some of the traffic congestion, Blackpool Transport successfully trialled a park-and-ride facility at Blackpool Airport over the weekend.

LET'S RIDE THE LIGHTS

The annual Ride the Lights event took place on August 25, attracting a record number of participants, all taking the unique opportunity to cycle under the Illuminations prior to the official Switch-On.

This year, the event was re-titled Let's Ride the Lights, marking a new partnership with British Cycling who deliver a range of "Let's Ride" events in major cities across the UK.



British Cycling added a new dimension to the evening event, bringing a variety of cycle-themed entertainment on to the Tower Festival Headland.

ILLUMINATIONS SEASON

Blackpool Illuminations has a circus theme for 2018, marking the resort's designation as one of six UK cities of circus. The designation is intended to mark 250 years since the first circus performance was played out on London's Embankment.

The Illuminations display includes a circus-themed "big top" on Gynn roundabout, new Promenade festoons and a specially-made 3D projection show that is being projected on to the front of the Blackpool Tower building to celebrate Blackpool's rich circus history. A second new projection show, marking Sooty's 70th birthday, will be launched on October 5.

WORLD FIREWORKS

The annual World Fireworks Championships is underway albeit with some disruption caused by stormy weather. The first two events, showcasing displays by France and Romania, took place on schedule, but the third, featuring a display by Canada was postponed. It will take place on Friday 28 September with the final showcase event moved to the following Friday.

An additional family fireworks event is being planned on Central Promenade for Saturday 13 October. The event will be funded by additional destination marketing monies that have been contributed by Arriva Northern as part-compensation for the ongoing rail disruption affecting services in and out of the resort (see **DESTINATION MARKETING** item below).

DESTINATION MARKETING

The 'Blackpool Has It All' destination marketing campaign has been running throughout the summer, with a mixture of TV advertising in Scotland and the North of England, and extensive digital and PR activity. By the end of July, the number of positive travel articles about Blackpool that had featured in British media totalled more than 100.

A radio campaign ran in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Yorkshire during August to mitigate against some of the potential damage caused to the resort's visitor economy by continuing disruption to inbound rail services. The activity was funded by Arriva Northern.

RETURN OF SLIMEFEST

In association with VisitBlackpool, Nickelodeon will bring its hugely popular Slimefest concerts back to the Pleasure Beach Arena on 20, 21 and 22 October. Talent already lined up includes Diversity, HRVY, Jonas Blue and America's You Tube phenomenon, Jo Jo Siwa. All six concerts sold out within weeks of going on sale.

NEW SHOWS FOR 2019

Two more musicals have been added to the 2019 programme at Blackpool Opera House. **Blood Brothers** will be staged from April 23-27, followed by Andrew Lloyd Webber's **Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat** from May 28 to June 1. The Opera House has already announced a number of shows for 2019 including Rock of Ages, Doctor Dolittle, Kinky Boots and Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

SOUTH BEACH ATTRACTION

A new family attraction has opened in South Beach. Luce Majicus is an immersive walk-through experience bringing together light technology and traditional Chinese lantern craft.

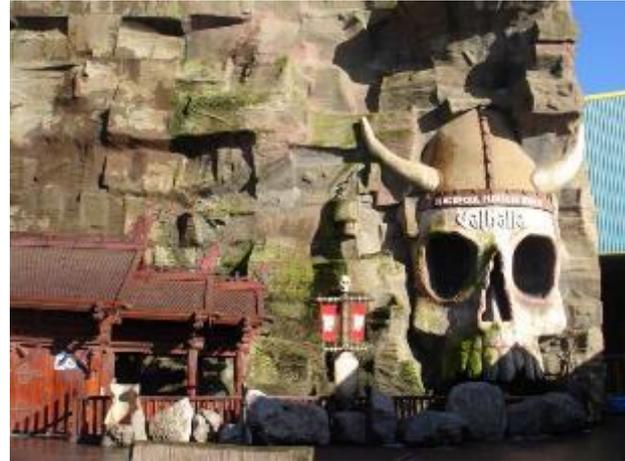
Located on Bond Street, it includes an illuminated garden, live reptiles, an aviary and an aquarium, as well as a Chinese-themed area. It also caters for educational tours and children's parties.

VICTORY FOR VALHALLA

Blackpool Pleasure Beach's Valhalla has been named World's Best Water Ride at the Golden Ticket Awards.

It won the title for the fourth year running at a ceremony held in Silver Dollar City, Missouri, attended by representatives from amusement and water parks from around the world.

Valhalla has been enticing visitors to Blackpool Pleasure Beach since it opened in 2000, offering a unique experience of special effects including ice, fire and snow.



LANCASHIRE TOURISM AWARDS

A number of Blackpool businesses have been nominated in the Lancashire Tourism Awards. They include:

New Business

Clip'n Climb Blackpool

Holiday Village Award

Pipers Height Caravan Park, Blackpool

Self-Catering Holiday

Newton Hall Holiday Apartments, Blackpool

Lancashire Large Hotel

Hotel Sheraton, Blackpool

Business Tourism

Winter Gardens Blackpool

Large Visitor Attraction

Ascent Trampoline Park, Blackpool

Blackpool Zoo

Madame Tussauds Blackpool

Visitor Experience

Blackpool Heritage Tram Tours

Cultural Venue/Organisation

Blackpool Heritage Tram Tours

Inclusive Tourism

Sandcastle Waterpark

Small Event

The Penny Farm Open Day, Blackpool

Winners will be announced at the awards dinner to be held in November (date and venue to be announced).

£1m GRANT FOR DISABILITY FIRST

A Blackpool-based disability charity has secured almost £1m from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund to help turn the Fylde Coast into a truly inclusive destination.

Disability First, which is 25 years old this year, has been awarded one of the biggest grants in the fifth round of the fund which encourages the economic development of UK coastal communities.

The £985,000 award-winning bid was put together by a strong business and community partnership that is committed to making the three boroughs of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre more accessible for all.

It is one of 16 fast track projects to receive a share of £6m funding nationwide under the latest CCF round which was announced by Coastal Communities Minister Jake Berry.

The Disability First-led Access Fylde Coast project will be funded from October through to June 2020 to improve the tourism offer and visitor experience for people with disabilities visiting the Fylde Coast.

Partners include Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils, Blackpool Transport, Marketing Lancashire, Lancaster University, the access information provider DisabledGo and the Volunteering Centre.

Projects include training courses for local businesses to support people with disabilities, new events, development of assistive technology and more trained volunteer access guides. As well as exploring new events to showcase disabled performers, the project will also seek to improve access at existing events such as the Blackpool Illuminations Switch-On and Lytham Festival.

The value of the so-called Purple Pound – the consumer spending power of 11m disabled people and their families – is said to be worth almost £250 billion in the UK.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS

Work is now underway on three new resort hotels, all of which are scheduled to open before the end of 2019.

The **Sands Venue** on Central Promenade is now closed while major works are undertaken to convert the building into Blackpool's first five-star hotel. Work on the Pleasure Beach's new hotel on Ocean Boulevard is well advanced with the steelwork in place and the hotel, which will have distinctive BLVD branding, is on schedule for an opening in the first half of 2019. Meanwhile, Barnfield Construction have now moved on to the former Yates's site at Talbot Square and started construction on the new **Premier Inn**.

NEW HOTEL PLAN

A "super-budget" hotel chain is exploring the development of a new 103-bedroom hotel on the Promenade at South Beach. The easyHotel company already owns 10 similar hotels, nine in the UK and one in Barcelona. Rooms are available from as little as £9.99 per night. Subject to planning permission, the £8m hotel could be open by 2021. The development is expected to include two ground floor units for restaurants or cafes, which will be sold on completion.

RETURN OF LIGHTPOOL FESTIVAL

Blackpool's award-winning Lightpool Festival is back for October half-term, with a spectacular launch event featuring the BBC Philharmonic, widely recognised as one of the best orchestras in Europe.



On Thursday 18 October, **Light Odyssey** will bring the iconic Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens to life with 2D and 3D light animation. Partnering with QED Productions, 16 top-of-the-range projectors and international teams of animators will transform the ballroom's interior into a giant canvas. The 90-minute ticketed concert will include around 90 musicians, with live performances of classical music favourites. Tickets are still available.

Over the following week from 25-27 October, there will be a **light-based art trail** along the promenade and through the town centre. There will also be live fire and light-related performances over the three nights including:

Thursday 25 October: The return of the illuminated tram parade as part of a spectacular **Carnival of Lights** along the Promenade which will also feature illuminated vehicles, costume characters, Lumidogs and the famous Spark! by Worldbeaters drummers.

Friday 26 October: **RUSH**, an epic dance and light production staged by Southpaw Dance and produced by LeftCoast. To be staged outdoors with a 100-strong cast on New Bonny Street Car Park (*pictured right*).



Saturday 27 October: Festival finale in St John's Square with a UK premiere of **Pyronix** – a spectacular Belgian pyrotechnic show combining fire, martial arts, dance and acrobatics.

The Lightpool Festival has been made possible with £85,000 of funding through Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants; other partners include VisitBlackpool, LeftCoast and the BBC Philharmonic. For updates go to www.visitblackpool.com/lightpoolfestival

A STAR IS BORN

Blackpool Zoo-keepers are heralding the birth of the UK's only current female Hartmann's mountain zebra foal in what has been described as "a miracle" for the vulnerable species.

The healthy foal was born at Blackpool Zoo earlier this month, making her the only surviving female born in the UK since 2002.



She is also the first surviving Hartmann's mountain zebra foal of any gender in the UK since her brother Jabali was born in 2015.

Her arrival is critical to the European Endangered Species breeding programme, with just 9,000 individuals left in the wild and 235 in 54 international institutions, including 11 animals across four UK zoos.

Mother, Helene, and father, Fernando, are the most established breeding pair in the country and have resided at Blackpool Zoo since 2008 and 2009 respectively.

In 2011 they became parents to Tebogo, who ended a nine-year absence of Hartmann's mountain zebra births in the UK.

Keepers have named the foal Wakanda, which is a fictional country located in sub-Saharan Africa and created by Marvel Comics. She can be seen, along with her parents and brother, in the zoo's zebra paddock.

ELEPHANT REUNION

Two Asian elephants have arrived at their new home in Blackpool Zoo after a meticulously-planned journey.

The mother and daughter were put in a crate on a transporter and driven up the motorway from Twycross Zoo to Blackpool.

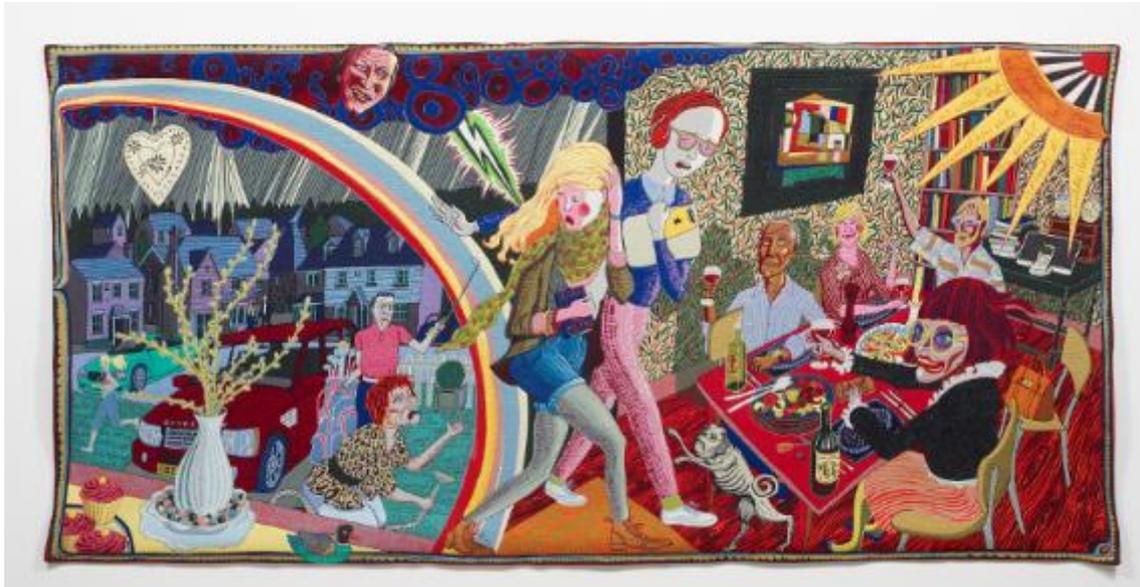
Noorjahan and Esha have been reunited with two other members of their herd at the zoo's new £5m elephant enclosure.

BLACKPOOL MUSIC RUN

The inaugural Blackpool Music Run took place on the Promenade on September 23 with a unique combination of runners and live music. There were around 20 live performances during the day culminating in a Finishers Festival featuring The Hoosiers on North Pier. A date has already been set for the next event – Sunday 16 June, 2019.

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

GRAYSON AT THE GRUNDY



Blackpool's Grundy Art Gallery has secured an exhibition by the Turner Prize-winning artist Grayson Perry. The Vanity Of Small Differences exhibition officially opens on September 27 and will run until December 15.

The exhibition, which comprises six large-scale tapestries, has toured the world over the past four years and Blackpool will be its final destination in its current form.

The Vanity Of Small Differences is inspired by William Hogarth's moral tale, A Rake's Progress. The tapestries are made up of characters, incidents and objects Perry encountered while gathering inspiration for the TV series, 'All in the Best Possible Taste with Grayson Perry' which first aired on Channel 4 in June 2012. A public programme of talks and events will accompany the exhibition.

Two further exhibitions will run at The Grundy over the same period: Northern Lights is a new film with original music produced by film-maker Chris Paul Daniels, which was shot on location at the Blackpool Illuminations depot. The other is Blackpool Illuminations Archive Exhibition which features a selection of objects, images and poster that celebrate the history of the Illuminations.

More details, www.grundyartgallery.com

LEONARD DEWS EXPANSION

The Blackpool-based luxury jeweller and watch retailer Leonard Dewes is set to almost double its retail space with an expansion into a neighbouring unit.

Building works and renovations are already underway at the family-owned and operated company on the junction of Church Street and Market Street. The new operation will feature a bridal boutique which is set to open in May next year.

AUGUST VACANT SHOPS UPDATE

There has been a net increase of 10 vacant units in the town centre compared to May 2018, bringing the overall total up to 141 and increasing the vacancy rate from 20.4% to 22%.

This worsening trend is again mainly due to a steep increase in the vacancy rates in the Core Retail Area (20.5%). Meanwhile the Principal Retail Core (up by one) and periphery town centre (up by one) areas also experienced a small net increase in the number of vacant units over the three-month period.

The newly-vacant units include: H&M, Shake Dog (Houndshill); Mobile Hub (Victoria Street); Perfect Home, Blackpool Exotics (Church Street); The Clifton Brunch, The Cake Diva (Clifton Street); Kev's Bargains, Advantage for Children, Books Arts & Learning (Talbot Road); Drizzy's Desserts, Loans 2go (Promenade); Age UK (Dickson Road); Cutting Room (Edward Street); Topping Bakery, Stock Xchange (Topping Street); Sauce (King Street) and Ackers Optometrists (Milbourne Street).

Since May a number of businesses have occupied previously vacant units. These include: Trinity Hospice Shop (Victoria Street); Hive, McCann's Convenience Stores (Church Street); Food Lounge (Market Street); Café Sunam (Birley Street); King Kebab (Dickson Road) and Void (King Street).

Area	Total Units ¹	Total Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
Principal Retail Core (Local Plan boundary based around Houndshill, Victoria Street, Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Corporation Street and Adelaide Street West)	162	26	16.0%
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)	463	95	20.5%
Town Centre Boundary – this relates to the Core Strategy found in the Local Plan (as above but also including the Promenade, Springfield Road, Dickson Road, King Street, Cookson Street, Caunce Street and the new Talbot Gateway area)	641	141	22.0%
Periphery Town Centre Area (the Town Centre Boundary area excluding the units contained within the Core Retail Area)	178	46	25.8%

SLATER GORDON MOVE

Automotive insurer Slater Gordon Motor has agreed a 15-year lease for the vacant first floor office space at Bickerstaffe Square, the home of Blackpool Council. Seventy new staff will be recruited following the move later this year, with plans to double the firm's workforce to 400 over the next 18 months.

FUNNY GIRLS SHOW GOES ON

The company behind the Funny Girls showbar has gone into administration.

Blackburn-based Thwaites Brewery has taken over the licence to enable the various venues on Dickson Road to continue trading and to protect the jobs of 100 employees. The venues include Funny Girls, Flamingo and The Flying Handbag.

£100m REGENERATION TIMELINE

The sequence of headline projects that will catalyse the £100m regeneration of Blackpool town centre has been confirmed.

With the traditional retail offer under threat on high streets throughout the UK, Blackpool Council has committed to focusing large-scale investment on a series of major schemes aimed at breathing new life into the town centre over the next three years, including:



- ❖ A £26m investment in a new, state-of-the-art conference centre next to the Winter Gardens which will open for business in August 2019
- ❖ Support for the extension of the Houndshell Shopping Centre to include a new wilko store, IMAX-style cinema and new restaurant
- ❖ A new £23m tram extension from the Promenade to Blackpool North Station, creating a seamless link to the newly-electrified rail line
- ❖ A new 144-bedroom, 4-star Holiday Inn and restaurant that will be sited at the North Station transport interchange on the site of the old wilko building
- ❖ A £7m Quality Corridors programme that will see the refurbishment of Deansgate, Edward Street, Topping Street, Cookson Street and Dickson Road
- ❖ Support for the development of Blackpool's first five-star hotel at Sands Venue on Central Promenade, due to open at the end of 2019
- ❖ Development of a museum celebrating Blackpool's unique place in popular culture and creating another year-round visitor attraction in the heart of the resort

The first of the projects, the new Winter Gardens Conference Centre, is now taking shape, with phases 1 and 2 of the structural steelwork in place. At the end of August, the Winter Gardens switched over to new electricity and gas supplies, increasing capacity and future-proofing the venue.

The tramway project will see all road closures completed before the end of February 2019 and the new station will then be built once the existing wilko store is demolished. The first passengers will be able to ride up to Talbot Gateway before the end of 2020. The new Holiday Inn and restaurant will also be built once wilko is demolished, opening pre-Christmas 2021 and employing more than 100 people.

The sign-off of various legal agreements in October will catalyse a sequence of projects that will see the new wilko store being completed on Tower Street in late autumn 2019 and opening shortly afterwards, safeguarding 60 jobs. That will be followed by the completion of the IMAX-style cinema in autumn of the following year, creating 20 new jobs.

WOK INN OPENS

Blackpool's first noodle bar has opened for business. Michael Wan's Wok Inn on the promenade close to Talbot Square is part of the same company that runs The Mandarin on nearby Clifton Street.



The noodle bar serves a range of street food including Chinese, Indonesian, Malaysian and Thai.

The unique interior design features original artwork created by Blackpool-based artist Robin Ross and a 1950s dragon from Manchester's Chinatown.

NEW OCCUPANTS FOR FORMER BHS STORE

Discount store B&M has completed its relocation from its Central Promenade site and is now trading from the former BHS store in the town centre. The move has created 20 new jobs, adding to the existing 34 people employed in the old store.

Visitors to the new store will be able to select from a wide range of branded and own label goods, including toys, groceries, health and beauty products and pet supplies.

As part of the opening celebrations, representatives from local charity Aspired Futures, were invited along as VIP guests for the day.

Meanwhile, developers have put forward proposals for a new family attraction in the basement of the former BHS building. The leisure centre would incorporate inflatables, tube slides and an electric karting area, as well as a café bar.

The developers say they want to open the attraction from 10am-midnight, year round. It would create 20 new jobs.

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

BLACKPOOL ENTERPRISE WEEK 2018

Blackpool Enterprise Week is taking place from November 12-16 at various locations.

The week provides free-to-attend, inspirational events designed to help businesses ranging from start-ups to established companies. Events are open to all, but some are targeted at businesses at different stages of development.

There are three strands of activity:

- ❖ Workshops for established businesses, designed to stimulate business growth. The Show Me The Money event on November 13, supported by the British Business Bank, showcases the many funding opportunities available for local businesses. The Google Digital Garage, on November 16, provides advice and information on creating an effective social media strategy.
- ❖ Get Started Boot Camp is for those about to start or just started with five workshops on key business topics to help give new businesses the best chance of success. Taken as a whole, the boot camp provides the essentials for starting and growing a business. Each workshop is also designed to stand on its own, so people can dip into as many of the sessions as they wish. Topics include 10 Steps to Starting Up; Marketing; Financial Management; Digital Accounting and the Google Digital Garage.
- ❖ Workshops for those thinking of starting up or being their own boss. There are 11 opportunities during the week to find out about starting a business and working for yourself; what it means for you and how to take the next steps. These highly interactive sessions provide an opportunity to both listen and ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere, so individuals can see the way forward from initial idea to new business.

Further information and booking details can be found at www.blackpoolunlimited.com/enterpriseweek

BAE DEAL

A £5bn deal for BAE Systems to supply the state of Qatar with Typhoon and Hawk aircraft has been agreed, with the contract set to support thousands of British manufacturing jobs, including at the defence company's site at Warton.

The company initially unveiled the package to supply 24 Typhoon aircraft in December last year. The contract was amended in June to include the supply of nine Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer aircraft along with an initial support package.

Deliveries of the first Typhoon and Hawk aircraft are expected to start in 2022. The aircraft will be assembled by BAE Systems, securing work at its Warton and Brough facilities.

SHALE CONSENT

Cuadrilla has received hydraulic fracturing consent from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for hydraulic fracturing at its second horizontal shale exploration well at its Preston New Road site near Blackpool. Consent was granted for the first horizontal well in July this year.

These are the first two horizontal shale exploration wells to be drilled onshore in the UK. Following hydraulic fracturing of these first two horizontal wells Cuadrilla will run an initial flow test of the gas produced from both wells for approximately six months.

HOME GROWN TALENT

Up-and-coming DJ and music producer Ollie Crowe is a rising talent in the entertainment industry with the help of Blackpool Council's business support service Get Started.

He is already creating music that could become anthems in clubs everywhere.

Ollie, 19, had an early start in the business, producing and DJ-ing from the early age of 15. After talking to the Get Started team Ollie has turned his passion into a career.

His achievements are already impressive with the amount of airplay he is currently receiving including BBC Radio Lancashire, with his tracks amassing millions of streams on Spotify, SoundCloud, YouTube and additional plays in clubs worldwide.



Ollie performed at the inaugural Blackpool Music Run on September 23 along with headline act The Hoosiers.

For the latest news on where to find him or where to hear his music, follow his social media on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram or his website www.ollicrowe.com

Get Started can be contacted on 01253 477147, www.blackpoolunlimited.com

Section 4: General News

IN SUPPORT OF LULU

Supermarket retailer Booths has joined forces with SEA LIFE Blackpool as part of its commitment to reduce food waste and promote ocean conservation.

The two businesses signed the deal to celebrate the 79th birthday of Lulu, a giant sea turtle, which is the subject of pioneering new research into the life expectancy of the endangered species.

As part of its campaign to help protect marine life and curb food waste, Booths is donating past-best lettuce and broccoli surplus supplies, as well as other green vegetables, which all form part of Lulu's diet.

Booths has already removed single use plastic cups from its cafés and restaurants, encouraging customers to bring in their own re-useable mugs and cups, as well as eliminating plastic spoons and removing single use carrier bags from their check-outs.

SEA LIFE Blackpool is working closely with its charity partner, the Sea Life Trust, as part of its "breed, rescue, protect" campaign, to develop and support ocean conservation projects.

CLIFTON MEATS' DEMISE

A long-standing meat business based in Blackpool has ceased trading.

Clifton Quality Meats, which supplied meat, poultry and game to the leisure, retail and education sectors, was a collaboration between two family businesses which can trace its roots back more than a century.

It evolved from a chain of traditional butchers shops to a network of purpose-built catering units. It was based in Blackpool, where it traded from three sites, as well as site in Wakefield.

The business, which had annual sales of £10m and employed about 80 people, blamed increased import costs and trading difficulties exacerbated by the extended spell of good weather earlier this year which impacted on lamb weights.

BIBA WINNERS

Congratulations to the Winter Gardens and FTS Merit for flying the flag for Blackpool at the annual Be Inspired Business Awards.

The Winter Gardens took the award for Leisure & Tourism Business Of The Year and FTS, the commercial electrical contractor based on Whitehills, won Employer Of The Year.

The event, staged in the Tower Ballroom, saw Tony Attard, the current High Sheriff of Lancashire and founder of Burnley-based textile firm, Panaz, receive the Lancastrian Of The Year lifetime achievement award.

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support

LAUNCH OF RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS NETWORK

Local businesses are invited to attend the launch of the Fylde Coast Responsible Business Network which will take place at the Pavilion Theatre within the Winter Gardens at 7.30am on Monday 8 October.

The network is a group of businesses committed to supporting the local community. It has been created, and is supported, by the Blackpool Pride of Place partnership, which is a flagship initiative of Business In The Community.

The launch will feature talks from local business leaders about how they have embraced responsible business and the difference it has made to both the community and their organisation. Guest speakers include Mark Adlestone, Chairman of Beaverbrooks, whose company has sponsored the Responsible Business Network for the first two years, and Steve Fogg, Managing Director of Shared Services at BAE Systems.

Business benefits include:

- Quarterly networking events to share success stories and promote best practice, alongside the opportunity to meet other businesses within the Responsible Business Network
- Helping your business achieve its social responsibility objectives and give something back to the local community
- A brokering service to match your business and staff with local opportunities
- Being part of a responsible business movement and make a tangible difference in the local area
- Positive PR including good news stories from members of the network that will be shared locally and nationally on social media

The group is also committed to campaigns to benefit the local community. Current campaigns include helping school children prepare for the world of work and helping unemployed people back into work.

To find out more about the network or to attend the launch breakfast meeting, contact: michelle.walker@bitc.org.uk

Alternatively, you can register at: <http://bit.ly/FCRBN>

CHRISTMAS TREE FAIR

The Winter Gardens Trust is holding its annual Christmas Tree Festival in the Derham Lounge at the Winter Gardens from November 22-25 and businesses are encouraged to participate.

It costs £10 to enter a tree which can be real, artificial or hand made. Entrants can also leave promotional literature at the base of their tree. For further details or to register your tree please contact elainemithmbe@outlook.com or betty.bradford@btinternet.com

Funds raised will go towards essential repairs and renovation to the building.

FYLDE COAST WOMEN'S AID ANNIVERSARY BALL

Fylde Coast Women's Aid is hosting a Silver Anniversary Ball at The Imperial Hotel on Saturday 6 October to mark its 25th anniversary.

The group, which has provided safe and secure accommodation to women and their children across the Fylde Coast since 1993, is asking local businesses to celebrate this achievement and the ongoing work by donating a raffle prize or purchasing tickets.

The money raised from the raffle on the evening will help Fylde Coast Women's Aid continue its work in supporting victims of domestic abuse across the Fylde Coast in years to come.

If you would like any further information on the event or information about Fylde Coast Women's Aid please contact the Assistant Manager, Glenda Smith, on 01253 752014, or by email on 25thanniversaryball@fcwa.co.uk. If you would like to attend on the evening, tickets are on sale at £45 or 10 for £400.

TOWER TO TOWER

Blackpool Carers Centre is organising a Blackpool Tower to Eiffel Tower Cycle Ride in September next year.

Entrants will pay a non-refundable deposit of £150 and then need to raise £2,000 over the next 12 months with proceeds going to the centre.

A team will be in place to support participants with dozens of tips and ideas on how to raise funds.

A special Q&A event will also be held with the organisers, Chapeau Events, at Beaverbrook's House on Newton Drive, Blackpool, between 12 noon and 2pm on Saturday 13 October.

Businesses are also encouraged to display posters in the workplace in order to recruit participants.

For details, email: terry.hodkinson@blackpoolcarers.org

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT...

Chris Curtis, the chair of the Swallows Head & Neck Cancer Support Charity, who presented at the last BBLG meeting in July, has asked to say "thank you" to the BBLG members for the help and support received on World Head & Neck Cancer Day. As part of the event, The Blackpool Tower was illuminated in burgundy lights.

He has sent the following message to the group: *"We achieved maximum awareness around the world with over 2million on Twitter and trending at number 2 over the 24 hours. It all started from Blackpool and The Tower shone bright around the world. We also had a live link from Blackpool to Australia showcasing our wonderful town. A massive thank you to everyone."*

Philip Welsh
Head of Tourism & Communications