



Blackpool Business Leadership Group

Business Partnerships Report – July 28, 2023

1. Visitor Economy Update

SWITCH-ON CELEBRATIONS

Blackpool is getting ready to throw the summer's biggest free family party to mark the start of this year's Illuminations.

On the evening of Friday 1 September, the stars of Nickelodeon, the world's favourite children's TV channel, will take over the Golden Mile in a spectacular float parade.

Starting from Central Pier, the parade will feature larger-than-life characters from SpongeBob SquarePants, PAW Patrol, Baby Shark, Monsters High and Transformers.

They will be joined by around 100 dancers, musicians and street performers as they make their way to the Tower Festival Headland for a free family party including live music and entertainment leading up to the special moment when a guest celebrity will switch on the famous lights, triggering the start of a four-month Illuminations season.

That will be followed by a specially-commissioned sound and light show on The Blackpool Tower that will be synchronised with LED wristbands to be given out to spectators, and then topped off with a fireworks finale over the seafront.

The whole event will be free to access with no tickets required. The build-up will commence from 7pm, with the float parade scheduled to start around 7.30pm. The main celebrations on the Tower Festival Headland will take place between approximately 8pm and 9.30pm (Note: Times could be subject to change so check for updates on the www.visitblackpool.com website).

Among the performers in the grand parade will be Lancashire's own 2nd Rossendale Scout Group Band, a hugely talented group of young musicians who have performed all over the UK, including an appearance at Windsor Castle in front of the Queen.

The identity of this year's Switch-On star will be announced shortly.

Earlier this year, it was announced that the Illuminations would once again be extended by two months, running nightly until January 1, 2024. Following the launch of the giant Odyssey installation during 2022, the Illuminations manufacturing team are working on three brand new light installations for the coming season.



HOLLYWOOD COMES TO BLACKPOOL!



A new nine-metre wide, Hollywood-inspired Blackpool sign, will light up Blackpool Promenade this autumn. The sign (*artist impression above*), is currently under construction at the Blackpool Illuminations Lightworks factory. Made with traditional Cabochon lamps, it will be unveiled in time for the launch of the Illuminations on Friday 1 September.

SPITFIRE ISLAND

A spectacular tribute to one of the world's most iconic fighter aircraft will be unveiled in this year's Blackpool Illuminations display.

The installation, which is a collaboration between the Blackpool Illuminations team and designer Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, will feature three replica Spitfires. It marks the first time that 3D printing technology has been used to create Illuminations features.



In a ground-breaking partnership with VisitBlackpool, the internationally-renowned model kit company, Airfix, is to sponsor the new installation as well as producing a limited-edition, scale model of a Spitfire with bespoke Blackpool livery on its fuselage. The new-look Spitfire Island, which will be unveiled when the Illuminations start on Friday 1 September, will be positioned on Gynn Roundabout.

It includes replicas of three Spitfires – Progress I, II and III – all based at Blackpool Airport during World War Two, and paid for at the time by local residents. The project has been assisted by the team at the Hangar 42 Spitfire Visitor Centre at Blackpool Airport who provided historical data.

A total of 4,000 of the limited-edition Airfix Spitfire kits will go on sale at VisitBlackpool's Tourist Information Centre (TIC) during the Illuminations. A range of different aircraft kits will also be available for purchase at the TIC during the summer and at Blackpool Air Show on August 12 and 13.

Spitfire Island is one of three brand new installations that will be unveiled in this year's Illuminations. Two more collaborations with international designers will be announced at a planned media launch of the Illuminations on August 10. The new features have been made possible thanks to Blackpool's Town Deal funding, part of which has been allocated to rejuvenating the Illuminations through new features and infrastructure.

RED DEVILS JOIN RED ARROWS



One of the world's most iconic parachute display teams will perform on both days of this summer's Blackpool Air Show.

VisitBlackpool has revealed that The Red Devils, an elite unit of the British Army Parachute Regiment, will put on a breath-taking display over the Blackpool shoreline on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 August.

The 15-strong team, whose motto is "Ready For Anything" will join a line-up that already includes the Red Arrows, a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and an RAF Typhoon across both days.

The Red Devils were formed in 1964 to boost public engagement and recruitment for the British Army. After training with the US Armed Forces' parachute display team, the Golden Knights, the first Red Devils team was formed.

They became the official parachute display team of the British Army in 1979.

The Air Show, which is free to attend, was one of the region's biggest events in 2022, attracting an estimated 250,000 people to the Promenade over the two days.

The Red Arrows, one of the world's foremost aerial aerobatic display teams will open the Air Show on both days, performing high above the seafront opposite The Blackpool Tower.

The RAF Typhoon will provide an extraordinary finale.

The weekend show will also feature a whole host of incredible flying machines with an array of civil and military aircraft, including a display by the AeroSuperBatics Wing Walkers. The full list of participating aircraft and display times can be viewed here: www.visitblackpool.com/airshow

To complement the aerial programme, there will be plenty to see and do on the ground with a wide range of stalls, attractions and food concessions in the Air Show Village on the Tower Festival Headland.

PLEASURE BEACH: BEST IN THE UK



The iconic Blackpool Pleasure Beach has been voted the best theme park in the UK in new global awards, which have also rated it better than all of Disney's worldwide locations.

The Pleasure Beach, which features the Big One, Valhalla, Icon and Infusion, has come out on top in the new TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards, which named it the eighth best amusement park or water park in the world.

TripAdvisor analyses 12 months of data to pick out the top attractions across the globe as decided by its users, which receive Travellers' Choice Awards. Pleasure Beach beat some notable theme parks across the world, including UK rivals Alton Towers which came 12th on the worldwide list, and Drayton Manor which came 20th.

First place in the global top 10 went to Siam Park in Tenerife, followed by Beto Carrero World and Beach Park, both in Brazil; Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi; Waterbom in Bali, Indonesia; Puy de Fou and Futuroscope, both in France; Pleasure Beach; Yas Waterworld in Abu Dhabi; and Milky Way Adventure Park in Devon. Universal Orlando was 16th, with Disneyland Paris in 19th place, and its Orlando site in 23rd.

- ❖ The Pleasure Beach has unveiled plans to transform a number of vacant retail units in the shadow of the Big One into holiday apartments. The company is looking to redevelop the units on Ocean Boulevard, many of which are vacant, into 18 self-catering apartments.

NATIONAL ACCOLADES FOR BLACKPOOL HOTELIERS

The Fossil Tree Hotel in Blackpool has been named the 'Best of the Best' small hotel by TripAdvisor for a second successive year. The award means the hotel on Queen's Promenade, Bispham, is ranked in the top 1% of accommodation providers worldwide and is rated as one of the best hotels in the UK. The hotel has previously been voted as the 'Best Seaview Hotel and Guesthouse in England' for three consecutive years.

Meanwhile, a family-run guest house in the heart of Blackpool has been named the friendliest in the UK. The Fylde International has been commended for offering a "genuine Blackpool welcome" to guests, scooping the AA Friendliest B&B of the Year Award. Mother and daughter Kate and Vicky Easley have run the hotel for the past 18 years, transforming the former back-packers hostel into contemporary four-star accommodation. The Bianca Guest House on Palatine Road, Blackpool, featured on the 15-strong shortlist.

STAYCATION CHART TOPPERS

Blackpool has been named this year's most underrated staycation destination in a new ranking. The resort was chosen by British holidaymakers in a survey carried out by car manufacturer, Dacia. Blackpool topped the list ahead of the likes of Cumbria, Eastbourne, Chester and Glasgow.

Meanwhile, in a survey carried out by Travelodge, Blackpool was named among the top five staycation destinations this summer. The resort was named alongside Cornwall, Devon, the Isle of Wight and Whitby. The findings were revealed in the latest Travelodge Travel Index in which 2,000 British adults were surveyed on their holiday plans for this summer.

BLACKPOOL ZOO UPDATES

New Tiger In Town

Rusty the male Amur tiger has become the latest resident of Big Cat Habitat at Blackpool Zoo after he arrived from Longleat Safari Park at the end of June.

His move to Blackpool comes after the zoo invested £1.5m in the new facility that has been designed and built to meet the needs of the magnificent animals that will call it home.

Rusty joins African lion, Khari, and his pride Narla, Emma and Hira, as well as Alyona the Amur Tiger.



Big Cat Habitat, officially opened at the end of May, combines increased indoor space and a larger off-show management area with extended external paddocks and improved keeper facilities.

Birth Of Baby Orangutan

Blackpool Zoo has welcomed its first critically-endangered Bornean orangutan baby for more than two decades after first-time mother, Jingga, gave birth in June.

Visitors were able to see the infant male when the orangutan house reopened at the start of July following a short period of closure to allow mother and son to bond.

Jingga, who is 13, came to Blackpool in 2017 from her birthplace in Barcelona and the baby's father, Kawan, joined her, along with Blackpool born Cherie and Summer, in 2022.



The newest addition to the group is very special indeed as the species is in real danger of becoming extinct in the wild and Blackpool's group of orangutans are part of the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP).

The group of five live in Blackpool Zoo's £1million Orangutan Outlook facility, which has been specially designed to meet the complicated needs of the magnificent species.

BLACKPOOL DANCE FESTIVAL



More than 2,000 couples travelled from over 50 countries during May to take part in the world's largest and longest-running event in Blackpool's Empress Ballroom at the Winter Gardens.

Almost every room was utilised to make the dance event the biggest yet. Some bar areas were turned into boutiques as dress, jewellery and shoe designers showcased their merchandise to competitors.

For the first time, a full-size dance floor was commissioned by the organisers and laid in the new £30m conference centre so that couples could put in some final practice.

The 13-day event attracted around 13,000 spectators, delivering an estimated economic benefit to Blackpool of more than £6m.

COASTAL DEFENCES

The Environment Agency has awarded Blackpool Council £118m of funding for two large-scale coastal defence projects.

A total of £61m will go towards building up sea defences between Little Bispham, Bispham, Gynn Square, and Cocker Square.

The remaining £57m is meant for the council's Blackpool Central Area Beach Nourishment Scheme, which will see the replacement of sand that had previously been lost to the sea. This nourishment scheme has seen a significant increase in funding, having originally been set at £12m.

Both coastal defence projects are to be delivered between now and 2027.

TOP OF THE LEAGUE

The annual Blackpool Cup youth football tournaments have been rated number one out of 65 similar events staged across Europe.

The sporting event, which was held over the Easter and May Day Bank Holiday weekends, attracted 350 teams and more than 12,000 attendees.

Organised by Dutch-based Euro-Sporting in association with Blackpool Council and VisitBlackpool, the tournaments were given an unprecedented 97% satisfaction rating based on accommodation, venues, travel, format, value for money and resort facilities.



The tournaments saw more than 400 games played with teams coming from seven countries across Europe, including Netherlands, Poland, Ireland and the four home nations, together with more than 70 local teams. Many of the games were played on Blackpool Council's new sporting facilities at Common Edge Road, close to Blackpool Airport.

Among the glowing testimonials to the Blackpool tournaments was one from the Arklow United club in Ireland, where a spokesperson said: "The tournament, the opening ceremony and the pitches were fantastic and we are looking at a trip for next year. The Blackpool Cup has made memories for our children that they will never forget."

This year, the Blackpool Cup supported two local charities, the NHS Blue Skies Hospital Funds and Blackpool Carers along with the Butterfly Tree Charity in Zambia. Donation stations were set up for people to bring along any old kit and boots, to be sent out to Zambia after the competitions along with the tournament match balls.

The tournaments will return to Blackpool in 2024.

HOLIDAY PARK INVESTMENT

A Fylde Coast-based leisure company has secured a seven-figure funding package from HSBC UK to invest in several of its holiday parks.

The Partington Group, which operates six holiday parks across the North West, will utilise a £5m funding package from HSBC UK to support the development of new facilities and services.



The Newton Hall Holiday Park in Blackpool with over 400 holiday homes, has seen the launch of Walterz, a new themed family entertainment centre with 10-pin bowling, bar, café, interactive games and karaoke booths open to both residents and non-residents throughout the year.

As part of the HSBC UK funding package, Partington also has plans to invest in several other holiday parks, including new and upgraded facilities at Tarn House near Skipton, Black Beck in the Lake District, and Broadwater and Windy Harbour Holiday Parks located near Blackpool.

The Partington Group is a family-owned business based at Thornton. Established in 1944, it has successfully developed its six holiday parks, with a range of used and brand new holiday homes for sale or hire.

NEW HOTEL PLAN FOR ST CHADS SITE



Singapore-based developer, The Fragrance Group, has submitted plans for a new £30m hotel to replace the now-demolished St Chads Hotel, Lyric Hotel and Regency Apartments.

The group has submitted plans (*artist impression shown above*) to Blackpool Council for a four-star hotel with 184 bedrooms.

The hotel group already owns The Imperial Hotel and the Lyndene Hotel in Blackpool, and operates across three continents.

Prior to its demolition in May this year, St Chads Hotel had been in situ since 1893, with the other buildings being added in stages up to 1912.

Fragrance bought the 90-bedroom hotel in 2018 for an undisclosed sum, its third acquisition in Blackpool. It did not reopen post-pandemic because it was in a poor state of repair.

BUCKET & SPADE LIST: VOTE BLACKPOOL TOWER!

The Blackpool Tower has been nominated as a finalist in the Seaside Heritage Network's Bucket & Spade List for 2023. The list recognises the best-loved heritage in Britain's seaside resorts.

There are 20 places or experiences on the list including Bournemouth's Beach Huts; Llandudno Pier; Papa's Fish & Chips Restaurant in Cleethorpes; Morecambe Winter Gardens; Volks Electric Railway in Brighton; Dreamland Margate; and Silcock's Carousel, Southport.

The top 10 will be announced at a special event at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, on Monday 11 September, with designer and seaside regeneration expert, Wayne Hemingway, as a special guest.

That list of 10 will be determined by the number of votes received for those on the short list. You can still vote (ideally for Blackpool Tower!) here: <https://sway.office.com/IQLnyWDdCjin0C4I?ref=Link>

Please share on social or in newsletters and encourage your staff and visitors to vote.



LYTHAM FESTIVAL ATTRACTS RECORD CROWDS



Lytham Festival saw its biggest ever crowd of 22,500 for the final night featuring international rock groups, Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe.

Overall, the five-day festival attracted almost 100,000 people to watch headline sets featuring Jamiroquai, George Ezra, Sting and Lionel Richie.

The festival will return to Lytham Green from Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7 July next year. The line-up for 2024 will be announced over the coming months.

CREAM OF THE CROP

Blackpool's famous Notarianni's has been placed in the UK's top five most popular places for ice cream. The family-run business on Waterloo Road, has been serving freshly-made vanilla ice cream for almost a century.

It uses the same secret recipe that has been passed down through four generations, using locally-sourced dairy products.



The survey, produced to mark National Ice Cream Day, measured popularity with a unique index score – generated by the number of hashtags each location has racked up on Instagram, as well as Google and TripAdvisor reviews.

HOT ICE

Pleasure Beach's spectacular new ice show officially opened at the start of July. Amore Amor Amour, which features some of the world's top skaters, has nightly performances, Monday to Saturday, (with matinee performances on selected dates) until September 9.

CLUB 3000

A new £5m Club 3000 bingo entertainment centre has opened at Festival Park on Rigby Road. The purpose-built centre is on the site of the former Swift Hound pub. Club 3000 operates 24 centres around the UK.

ALISON PREPARING TO SEE DOUBLE!

TV presenter Alison Hammond has attended her first sitting with artists at Madame Tussauds Blackpool, as they start work on her new wax figure.

Alison, who recently confirmed that she will be the new co-host of The Great British Bake Off, provided the talented team of sculptors and hairstylists at Madame Tussauds, with hundreds of precise measurements and hair and skin colour references, to ensure that her final figure, once unveiled, is an accurate likeness.

In a first for the promenade-based attraction, the This Morning presenter was asked live on air by Kyle Woodcock, Head of Operations at Madame Tussauds Blackpool, if she would like to be immortalised in wax and she agreed!

When Alison's wax figure is finally unveiled, it will join more than 80 famous faces, including Lewis Capaldi, Ariana Grande, and Marvel Super Heroes at the Blackpool attraction.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY SOOTY!

One of Blackpool's most celebrated showbiz personalities is celebrating his 75th birthday!

Sooty, the glove puppet that features in the longest-running children's TV show in the world, started out in Paul Clive's joke shop on Blackpool North Pier.

He was bought on 19 July 1948 for 7 shillings and sixpence by Harry Corbett to amuse his sons during a rainy holiday.

He began performing with Harry on the BBC from 1952 before being passed down to his son, Matthew, during the 70s, 80s and 90s. For the past 25 years, he has been partnering with entertainer, Richard Cadell on both TV and film.



2. Town Centre Update

CIVIL SERVICE HUB ON THE HORIZON

Blackpool's new £100m Civil Service Hub is taking shape in the heart of the town centre.

The seven-storey building, which will accommodate more than 3,000 public servants, is the latest phase of the £350m Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme.

It is expected to be finished by the first quarter of 2025.

The new offices will generate significant new footfall to the area, boosting trade to local businesses, retailers, restaurants, cafes and leisure facilities, alongside a wealth of new job opportunities for local people, along with excellent sustainable transport connectivity through train, bus and tram.

The new building has been designed by renowned architects, Make, to BREEAM "Excellent" standard, which means it will operate on low energy and promote both sustainable development and wellbeing.



An inclusive approach to sustainability was taken from the outset to make sure the building will be as energy-efficient as possible, with high levels of insulation and air source heat pumps to provide low-carbon heating and cooling. Demand-driven ventilation will improve indoor air quality, while at the same time allowing energy savings during times when the building is not occupied.

The site, which will include a new town centre square with cycle and pedestrian routes, is within walking distance of the new tram interchange at Blackpool North Station.

The interchange forms part of phase two of Talbot Gateway along with a new 144-bedroom Holiday Inn hotel, which will open in time for Easter next year, creating 50 new full-time jobs.

The long-standing partnership between Muse and Blackpool Council has already delivered the 125,000 sq ft Number One Bickerstaffe Square council offices, a Sainsbury's supermarket and a refurbished 650-space multi-storey car park, alongside extensive public spaces for the community to enjoy.

- The ongoing construction work on the new Civil Service Hub has resulted in traffic restrictions around Talbot multi-storey car park. From Monday 10 July, there is no access to Deansgate from Cookson Street. Deansgate will remain open one-way from Topping Street, allowing access to the car park. The work is expected to last around 19 weeks.

RE-DEVELOPMENT OF STANLEY BUILDINGS



Revised plans for the redevelopment of the art deco Stanley Buildings in Blackpool town centre have been agreed.

The £6m project, which is being part-funded through Blackpool's Town Deal, will see the locally-listed buildings, which are bound by Church Street, Counce Street and Cookson Street, converted into a business start-up hub.

Designed by Cassidy & Ashton, the scheme will see a reconfiguration of the three floors to include a store, café and office space. The project will also result in repairs to the building facades, replacement of windows, removal of canopies, and installation of additional lighting.

Stanley Buildings date back to 1935.

ST JOHN'S SQUARE TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Part of Blackpool town centre is to become a pedestrian and cycle zone in response to road safety concerns.

Only buses, taxis and authorised vehicles are now allowed in the St John's Square area as part of the new 18-month trial. Other restrictions include no loading between 10.30am and 6pm, and no waiting at any time.

The restrictions also apply to the roads surrounding St John's Square including Cedar Square, Birley Street, Adelphi Street, Carter Street, part of Church Street and part of Abingdon Street.

Members of the public and businesses have been invited to give feedback as the scheme will be reviewed after the first six months.

LITTER COLLECTION ON WHEELS!

Tricycles are being used to tidy up rubbish in Blackpool as part of a fresh approach to street cleaning.

The three-wheeled transport has been added to the resort's fleet to help street cleaners easily access high footfall areas such as the Promenade and main shopping areas in a bid to keep the resort litter free.

The initiative is a partnership between Envenco, Blackpool Council's waste and environmental services company, and Europe's leading tricycle manufacturer, Jorvik.

NEW TOWN CENTRE BARS & RESTAURANTS

BAR PLAN FOR FORMER BANK

A former town centre bank is poised for a new lease of life as a bar.

Lancashire businessman Mark Eggar plans to invest around £100,000 in converting the ground floor of the former Royal Bank of Scotland in Talbot Square which closed in 2018.

The bar will be called H2O after a series of venues Mark and his wife, Carrie, previously operated in East Lancashire. The new venture is set to open in September.

Licence conditions include use of plastic glasses after 11pm, last orders at 1am with the bar closed by 1.30pm, and that 75 per cent of seating must be fixed.

WINE BAR OPENS IN CEDAR SQUARE

A London-style wine bar has opened in Cedar Square.

Le Plonk will serve a wide range of wine by the glass and bottle, as well as a selection of sharing boards.

It has opened almost directly opposite the newly-renovated Abingdon Street Market which reopened at the end of May, and is now trading with a range of independent food concessions.



MARVIN'S NUMBER FOUR

A new Marvin's Bar has opened in Blackpool town centre – the fourth in a chain established by local entrepreneurs.

It is located in the former Co-operative Bank in Clifton Street and will offer a similar experience to existing Marvin's bars in Lytham, Poulton and South Shore.

The bar will follow the model with Motown and Soul music, targeting the over-25s market.

The chain was set up by Alex Huckerby with partners, Adrian Reed and Graham Barr. They hope to eventually expand the chain's presence on the Fylde Coast to 10 venues over the next five years.

TURTLE BAY OPENS ITS DOORS

Caribbean restaurant and bar, Turtle Bay, officially opened its doors at the end of June.

Situated in the newly-restored Forshaws Hotel on Talbot Square, the bar and restaurant, themed as a Barbadian beach shack, offers a range of small and large plates, and rum-based cocktails. Its famous bottomless brunch is served daily.

TOAST OF THE TOWN

Stefani's Pizzeria based in Blackpool's Cedar Square have been honoured at a regional awards night.

They won the Food & Drink Establishments category in the North West Family Business Awards.

The event, which was held at the Concorde Conference Centre at Manchester Airport in front of an audience of 500 people, recognises the achievements of the region's most innovative and successful family businesses.

WORLD-CLASS EXHIBITION AT GRUNDY

The Grundy Art Gallery and ARTIST ROOMS has brought the work of internationally-acclaimed French-American artist Louise Bourgeois to Blackpool for the very first time.

The exhibition focuses on works produced during the last 20 years of her life, a period of extraordinary creativity.

Bourgeois is perhaps best-known for her large-scale spider sculptures including *Maman* 1999, which was created for the opening of Tate Modern in London in 2000.



Visitors to the Grundy exhibition will be able to see one of these monumental spider sculptures for themselves with *Spider* 1994 occupying one of Grundy's side galleries (*pictured above*).

The exhibition runs throughout the summer, closing on September 9.

ARTIST ROOMS presents the work of international artists in solo exhibitions drawn from a national touring collection jointly owned by Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland. Its programme reaches audiences across the UK and is developed through local partnerships.

IMAGE CREDITS

Image Copyright: Louise Bourgeois *Spider* 1994
ARTIST ROOMS Tate and National Galleries of Scotland. Lent by The Easton Foundation 2013
© The Easton Foundation/VAGA at ARS, NY and DACS, London 2023. Photo © Tate

EV CHARGING POINTS

More electric vehicle charging points have been installed in the town centre as Blackpool Council continues towards its target of 210 new chargers by 2028.

Since the development of the council's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy and the Government's plans to end the sale of non-electric vehicles by 2030, Blackpool has been making steady developments in increasing the number of EV chargers around the town.

New Larkhill Street, next to Sainsbury's on Talbot Road, has recently had a 50KW rapid charger installed. This rapid charger, enables customers to charge their vehicles for up to half an hour at a charge of 55p per KW hour via the Blink Charging App. There is no additional charge to park whilst using the charging station, although the time is limited to 30 minutes to allow for the demand of top-up charging.

The New Larkhill Street charger is one of 13 new chargers recently installed, with the others being situated at:

- Bispham Village 2 x 22KW
- The Grange 2 x 22KW
- Banks Street car park 6 x 22KW
- South King Street car park 2 x 22KW
- Alfred Street car park, 4 x 22KW (soon to be installed)

3. General News

PLANS FOR NEW BLACKPOOL COURTHOUSE



Consultation is underway for plans to relocate Blackpool's courthouse to enable delivery of the £300m Blackpool Central development.

In November last year, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities pledged £40m to move the magistrates and civil courts from the current site on Central Promenade to a new purpose-built facility.

A 3.7 acre plot has been identified on the former hospital site at the junction of Devonshire Road and Talbot Road.

The new court building will be three-storeys high and comprise magistrates, civil and family courts, judicial offices, custody facilities and secure parking.

The process of preparing the selection of a construction partner is now underway.

Subject to planning approval, construction work will commence next year.

Full details of the consultation can be viewed here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/02fe49ddb92b463fb724169e31c7ee7e>

The relocation of the courts will facilitate the assembly of the Blackpool Central development site. The first phase of the project, a new multi-storey car park is nearing completion at the south end of the site. Once completed, the leisure phases of the scheme will be developed on the existing Central surface car park.

The Blackpool Central scheme will include family entertainment centres, hotel, heritage quarter and a new public plaza.

PARTNERS LINING UP FOR ELMER PARADE

Two Blackpool-based companies have signed up as Presenting Partners of Elmer's Big Parade Blackpool, which comes to town next year.

Thompsons Contracts and Ameen have each invested significant sponsorship into the town's first ever large-scale public art trail, which will see at least 30 large Elmer sculptures in key locations across Blackpool.

The family-friendly art trail is being organised by, and will raise vital funds for, Brian House Children's Hospice. The dates for the trail are yet to be announced.



Elmer, the Patchwork Elephant, is a much-celebrated children's book character created by children's author and illustrator David McKee.

Marton-based Thompsons Contracts are new supporters to Brian House and were keen to get involved in Elmer's Big Parade Blackpool.

Building services engineering company Ameen, which has its headquarters in Whitehills Business Park, Blackpool, has been a dedicated supporter of Brian House for many years.

As Presenting Partners, Thompsons Contracts and Ameen will each sponsor two Elmer sculptures, which will be decorated by independent artists and illustrators. As the highest level sponsors, they will also have their logo on all material associated with Elmer's Big Parade Blackpool.

For more information about Elmer's Big Parade Blackpool and how your businesses can get involved, visit www.elmerblackpool.co.uk

WORK ON FOXHALL VILLAGE RESUMES

Work has started on the final phase of the Foxhall Village West housing scheme.

The project was halted four years ago when the developers, Hollinwood Homes, went into administration having completed less than half of the 400 homes planned for the village.

Blackpool Council took control of the site in 2021 after reaching an agreement with administrator PwC, and has since worked with Great Places Housing Group to restart the project.

Great Places is now planning to deliver 88 homes with Tyson Construction recently starting work on site.

Located on the 19-acre site bounded by Blundell Street, Tyldesley Road, Rigby Road, and Princess Street, all properties will be designated as affordable homes.

LAUNCH OF FAMILY HUBS

Blackpool Council's children's centres have now grown into Family Hubs – a one-stop shop for a variety of services for children, young people and families.

Located in the north, central and south areas of the town, the three Family Hubs offer support, activities and sessions to local families with children aged 0-19, or up to 25 for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Each hub has a varied timetable of classes, events and activities on offer and will provide families with the support they need, at the time they need it, from pregnancy through to adulthood.

Family Hubs are also the home for the Start For Life offer. This is a range of services which support expectant parents, children and families in the first 1,001 days of a child's life – from conception right through to age two.

The Central Family Hub (formerly known as Talbot and Brunswick Children's Centre) is located on Gorton Street, the North Family Hub (formerly known as Grange Park Children's Centre) is located at 31 Dingle Avenue, and the South Family Hub is now inside Palatine Leisure Centre on St Anne's Road.

Family Hubs are for all children and their families in Blackpool. Residents are welcome to access any of the three hubs even if it isn't the one closest to their home or in the area that they live.

The three hubs offer a wide variety of activities including stay-and-play sessions for under-fives, wider health services such as midwifery and health visiting, and help for new and expectant parents to develop their practical parenting skills.

Families can also visit a hub for advice and support around mental health, relationship support, cost of living tips, training and job opportunities and help to access specialist support if they need it.

Funding for the new services comes from the Government's £300m investment to establish a national Family Hubs and Start For Life programme. Blackpool is also one of 14 trailblazer areas chosen to receive additional funding from the Government's programme, to fast-track delivery of these new services.

LANCASHIRE DEVOLUTION DEAL MOVES AHEAD

A devolution deal for Lancashire has moved a step closer after the Government's Levelling Up Minister Dehenna Davison signalled her in principle support.

Last month, representatives from Lancashire County Council, Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council and Blackpool Council met with Government officials to discuss the possibility of a deal and the creation of a combined county authority, which would build on the collaborative work that has already been happening through the Lancashire 2050 framework, which all 15 Lancashire councils are signed up to.

Now Ms Davison has written to the three top tier councils to say she is supportive of a deal for Lancashire, officials will continue talks with a view to potentially concluding a deal later this year.

If approved, the deal will transfer new money and powers from central Government to a newly created Combined County Authority allowing them to tackle key local priorities. The deal would not require a change to the established democratic structures across the county or the need for an elected Mayor.

Local partners are working together to prepare a final business case to present to Government for approval. The final deal would require local consent with the full agreement of the three constituent councils as well as Parliamentary approval.

NEW INVESTMENT IN BLACKPOOL SPORTS FACILITIES

Common Edge Community Sports Village

A new £6m sports village has opened in Blackpool, completing the first phase of development at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

The Common Edge Community Sports Village includes 14 new grass football pitches along with a full-size 3G football pitch, sports pavilion with changing rooms and community space, plus a grass rugby pitch and training area.

The new facilities were officially opened by Manchester United Women's player, Jess Simpson.

The seven 11 v 11 football pitches are complemented by five seven-a-side and two nine-a-side pitches. Grass for a new floodlit rugby pitch and training area will be ready for use later in the year.

The new sports pavilion also includes six changing rooms, two officials' rooms, two kitchens and a large community room. A 194-space car park with sustainable drainage and new access road to the sports village has also been completed.

Work to build a new road connecting Common Edge Road to Amy Johnson Way is expected to start later this year, creating access to around 235,000sq ft of development plots for businesses.

Funding to support the building of the new access roads to the sports village and Amy Johnson Way has been provided through a £7.5m grant from the Government's Towns Fund, and a further £250,000 was granted by the Football Foundation for the construction of the sports pavilion.

Tennis Courts Refurbishment

Blackpool's tennis-playing community can now enjoy newly-enhanced facilities across the town which have reopened after a programme of improvement works.

Stanley Park, Cavendish Road, Claremont Community and Anchorsholme Park have all benefited from the funding from the Lawn Tennis Association. Three of the facilities are now open again with Anchorsholme set to reopen in the following weeks.



Improvements include a mix of new surfaces, nets and line markings; four hard-standing courts at Stanley Park brought back into use; introduction of new booking technology; and the future launch of coaching sessions across all sites.

Stanley Park Athletics Track

The facility has been reopened following a £320k investment, including a new synthetic track and a refurbished Throwing Cage. Prior to the refurbishment, the cage no longer met the required safety standards meaning that Stanley Park could no longer host athletic competitions.

The renovations were planned in partnership with Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Athletics Club which has been using the track for over 25 years.

An estimated 10,000 people use the track each year in events ranging from school sports days, national and local track meets, disability awareness events, festivals and community sessions organised through Blackpool Council's Development Team.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Young Blackpool residents are benefiting from the construction work currently under way on Grange Park.

Blackpool-based RP Tyson Construction is the main contractor delivering 131 new homes on the Grange Park estate.

As part of their commitment to giving back to the local community, they have been offering young residents a chance to experience the building trade at first hand.

Young people from The Boathouse Youth charity were invited along to a session where they started with a health and safety briefing before getting kitted out in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Some of the young people were then introduced to the craft of bricklaying.



The first new properties are reaching completion with the first tenants due to move in this summer.

VOTE FOR LOCAL TALENT!

A Blackpool-based agency is appealing to businesses and residents to back their local acting talent by voting in this year's Inside Soap Awards.

Scream Management has three nominations in this year's prestigious TV industry awards including Jayden Fox and Jon-Paul Bell (both Hollyoaks) and Jodie Prenger (Coronation Street).

Jayden, aged 14, is a pupil at Baines High School and attends Scream Theatre Schools in Blackpool. He has been nominated for "Best Young Performer" in this year's awards.

Jon-Paul Bell, a former student at Blackpool Sixth, is nominated in the "Best Newcomer" category. He has performed in stage, film and television.

You can vote for the Blackpool nominations using this link:
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/insidesoapawards2023/>
Votes close on August 25.

Scream Management specialises in the development of young artists. It was established in 1998 in Blackpool and has since opened bases in MediaCity and Covent Garden, London, representing talent including soap award-winners BAFTA Award-winners and featured artists.

Scream Theatre School, based off Mowbray Drive, trains children in TV, theatre and performing arts. Over the years, it has seen its students featuring on national and international productions including Netflix, Disney and Amazon.

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY CONFERENCE: SAVE THE DATE

The next International Men's Day Conference for the Fylde Coast will be held on November 17, venue to be confirmed. There will be opportunities for businesses to support the event through funding, meeting venue and corporate volunteering. Any business interested in participating and/or supporting, please contact Deborah Terras. Email: deborah.terras@twguk.org

BLACKPOOL FC TRAINING GROUND

Blackpool Football Club has submitted plans for its new training complex on an 87-acre site off Garstang Road between Blackpool and Poulton-le-Fylde.

The facility would feature eight full-size pitches – including a floodlit exhibition pitch – an indoor pitch, a welcome building, and two small ancillary buildings.

Once complete, the club will relocate from its existing site at Squires Gate, where it has been based for the last 50 years.



More than 30 sites were considered before the Garstang Road plot was chosen. The club completed the acquisition of the site in May 2022.

NEW M55 JUNCTION OPENS

A major new road scheme linking parts of Preston and the Fylde Coast to the M55 has opened after a four-year construction project.

Built at a cost of more than £200m, Edith Rigby Way links the A583 Blackpool Road and Riversway with Junction 2 on the M55 near Bartle.

It is named after the Preston suffragette, who dedicated most of her life to fighting for women's rights.



Funding for the new road came from the Department for Transport and the Lancashire Growth Deal with further funding coming from Lancashire County Council, National Highways and Lancashire City Deal.

SKOOL OF STREET: APPEAL FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Blackpool-based House Of Wingz, home of the charity Skool Of Street, is in the final stages of refurbishment of its base.

Due to officially open in the first week of August, the centre on Back Read's Road (close to the town centre), incorporates two dance studios, recording studio and indoor skate park. It will be fully accessible to the whole community.

It is now looking for a sponsor to help fund the centre, as well as provide washing machine and dryer facilities that participants can use free of charge. Any business able to support, email:

skoolofstreet@live.com

Skool Of Street delivers a range of projects including dance, music, art, fashion, climate emergency, creative writing, skateboarding and wellness workshops for young people and adults. Members of the team will be presenting an update at the BBLG meeting on July 28.

And finally....

BEST WISHES, BEV – AND THANKS!

Bev Robinson, CBE, one of Blackpool's most passionate and influential ambassadors over the past decade is retiring from her role as Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Blackpool & the Fylde College on August 1.

During her tenure, Bev, who has been a long-time supporter of the BBLG, has led the College to a string of successes. These are just some of the highlights:

2015 - B&FC won the Queen's Anniversary Award for Further and Higher Education.

2016 - B&FC became a founding member of the Chartered Institute for Further Education and it was granted Foundation Degree Awarding Powers by the Privy Council.

2017 - B&FC was the only college in Lancashire to be awarded TEF Gold, which is the highest rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework – one of only 14 colleges nationally.

2018 - Bev was awarded an OBE for services to education.

2022 - B&FC was granted indefinite Foundation Degree Awarding Powers and became one of only three FE colleges to be granted Bachelor Degree Awarding Powers.

2022 - Bev was awarded a CBE for services to education.

Under the leadership of Bev and her team, B&FC students across the curriculum have enjoyed some resounding successes:

- ❖ 100% pass rate for the first cohort of T-Level students
- ❖ 38% of B&FC's graduates are in highly skilled employment earning £33k or more, compared with 16% nationally.

B&FC has also helped raise Blackpool's profile by hosting six Government Ministers, five Secretaries of State and two Prime Ministers.

Together with Blackpool Council, B&FC has secured investment for the new Multiversity for the town centre with the support of the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

On behalf of the BBLG, we wish Bev every happiness in the next chapter of her life and look forward to welcoming the new Principal and CEO, Alun Francis, to the BBLG. He starts on August 2.

Philip Welsh
Head of Tourism & Communications