

Publicity

Business news from Preston City Council

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Welcome

Welcome to issue twelve of Publicity – the business newsletter from Preston City Council. Read about the exciting plans and new developments taking shape in the city.

Back to the Future for Preston Parks

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New Stores Breathe Life into City

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Supporting Preston Businesses

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Work Sets Sail on Brockholes

Work has started on the multi-million pound floating visitor centre at the former Brockholes Quarry, off junction 31 of the M6 at Preston.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust plans to transform the site into a 106 hectare wetland and woodland site, which it hopes will attract 250,000 visitors every year.

Brockholes Wetland and Woodland Reserve is a joint project between Lancashire Wildlife Trust, the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the Forestry Commission, as part of the Newlands land regeneration scheme.

Ian Selby, Project Manager at Lancashire Wildlife Trust said: "We're going to build the visitor centre right in the middle and it will be about half a football pitch in size. Then we'll put the water back in, it'll float up gently and then it'll be ready for the visitors."

The project will cost £10million and is expected to be open by Easter 2011.



Graduates Boost Preston's Economy

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has invested £50,000 into setting up 126 graduate companies in the last year, which in turn has contributed more than £17million to Preston's economy.

UCLan was named as the best in the North West for producing start-up businesses by the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey. It estimates each business set up turns over an average of £250,000, adding around £750,000 of value by getting goods and services from local firms.

Bede Mullen, Director of Knowledge Transfer at UCLan said: "Our students are very business savvy and entrepreneurial and we have to make sure we harness those abilities and keep them in Preston."

New Contracts Spark Growth for Forrest



Preston based support services company, Forrest, is set for further growth after being chosen to work on a major housing refurbishment programme across the West of the UK.

The four-year framework agreement with Places for People, worth around £40million to Forrest, will see the company working to refurbish properties stretching from the Scottish borders to the West Country.

In the last two years, the company has expanded outwards from its North West heartland, establishing itself in the North East, Yorkshire and the Midlands regions.

Lee McCarren, Chief Executive Officer of Forrest said: "This latest contract win is a massive boost for the company and advances our strategic objectives of widening our geographic reach and expanding our range of services."

Rail Link Set to Electrify

Faster journey times, quieter trains and fewer delays are just some of the benefits to be experienced with the introduction of an electrified railway line between Preston and Blackpool.

This comes after the Government announced plans to electrify lines from Preston to Manchester and Liverpool.

Rail campaigners welcomed the news as a 'win, win' proposition - saying journey times between Manchester and Blackpool could be slashed by up to 10 minutes. Electric trains are also cheaper to operate, require less maintenance, have lower energy costs and cause less damage to the track.

Back to the Future for Preston Parks

Work to restore Avenham and Miller Parks to their original Victorian designs got underway in November.

The £2.35million project, which attracted funding from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the Heritage Lottery Fund, will see the planting of almost 500 new trees and 32,000 new plants, in a bid to restore the parks to the original plans drawn up during the 1860's.

Councillor Ken Hudson, Leader of Preston Council said: "Avenham and Miller Parks are city gems and restoring them to the original vision of Edward Milner will ensure that the people of Preston are able to boast two of the most beautiful parks in the country for generations to come."

The work marks phase two of the multi-million pound restoration project, which is due for final completion in November 2010.



Avenham and Miller Parks in the 1930s

Creative Agencies Scoop Awards



Two of Preston's creative agencies have been recognised at a leading industry awards ceremony.

The inaugural How-Do Public Services Communication Awards saw The Write Angle PR and Marketing receive the 'Best Small PR Agency' accolade and The Hub scoop the 'Most Effective Use of Social Marketing' award.

Both agencies are based in Preston's creative centre, The Watermark, where The Write Angle's MD Angela Smith said: "This is a fantastic achievement for Preston which demonstrates the city's creative talent and proves that we really can compete with larger agencies across the North West."

Businessbriefs

■ Fresh Start for Marketing Consultancy

Marketing communications consultancy, Freshfield, has relocated to a new office base. The firm, which recently celebrated its fifth birthday, has moved across Winckley Square from number 25 to its new home at number 12. Managing Director Simon Turner said the move would double the size of the office, which employs 14 people.



■ New Home for Tile Firm

Tilemart, the family-run tile and flooring company, is progressing plans to relocate to new premises on Queen Street. The company has operated from Manchester Road premises for 15 years and has a number of other branches across the city, including Laurel Street and Brockholes View.

■ Repair Deal Boost for Builders

The Preston office of national construction firm, Seddon Property Services, has been boosted by a £2.5million repair deal. As part of the three-year deal more than 100 homes in East Lancashire will be maintained from the office located on Roman Way Industrial Estate.

■ Full Steam Ahead

Train manufacturer Alstom has secured an 18-year deal, worth £12million, which will see their 270-strong workforce provide an overhaul of hundreds of engines. Spokeswoman Helen Connelly said: "This work is obviously very positive for our Strand Road facility and comes alongside the range of other major contracts we are working on."

New Site for Dairy Depot

Lancashire's biggest dairy firm, Fylde Dairies Ltd, has relocated to a new 40,000 sq ft distribution centre located on Roman Way. Managing Director, Howey Hegarty, is hoping to take on 22 new staff and also plans to open new retail branches in Preston, Blackpool and Bolton. Business turnover is expected to reach £8million over the year.

Mr Hegarty says: "Three years ago I started out with three staff and two little vans, today we have 15 wagons, tankers and contracts with big supermarkets. We ran out of room at our other facility and now I want to keep on growing!"

Publicity Business and Growth

High Voltage Discussions

Westinghouse Electric Company is in advanced discussions with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) around a long-term lease of the Springfields nuclear fuel site, together with the permanent transfer of the site's workforce.

Westinghouse currently runs the Springfields site in Preston, where around 1,350 people are employed by Springfields Fuels Limited, on behalf of the NDA.

A new arrangement would allow Westinghouse to consider investing in new plant equipment to ensure the site can take advantage of any potential new business arising from the nuclear renaissance both in the UK and overseas.

Aris Candris, President and CEO of Westinghouse said: "This arrangement would give Westinghouse the opportunity to consider significant investment in the site as we continue to see strong signs of a nuclear renaissance, bringing with it increased demand for fuel supplies. It offers longer term security of employment to current employees, as well as the potential for new jobs in the future."



Homeserve Calls for New Staff

Fulwood based Homeserve, has announced it is taking on 50 new workers at its Caxton Road call centre.

The emergency insurance firm already employs 700 people at its Fulwood base, the biggest of its centres in the UK.

Chief Executive Richard Harpin said it is in the process of recruiting staff and expected to start training workers within the next few months. He said: "This year is going well and the growth we are seeing means there will be more repair jobs required by our customers and therefore more jobs for our centre in Preston."

All Eyes on Preston in Recovery

Research conducted by the Centre for Cities think tank indicates that the Preston area has been protected from the worst of the recession and is 'one to watch' as the economy recovers.

An assessment of the economic performance of 64 UK towns and cities found that the 'Preston urban area', which includes Chorley and South Ribble, has seen one of the smallest increases in those claiming jobless benefits since the start of the downturn. Figures show an increase of only 1.3%, equating to 2,882 people, claiming Jobseeker's Allowance between February 2008 and November 2009.

Work Continues on First Class Development

Work is continuing on the £23million hotel and restaurant complex at the former Fox Street car park on the corner of Corporation Street.



The development will include a 140-bedroom Premier Inn hotel, along with student accommodation comprising of 55 five-bed flats and is an important step towards the creation of a £315million Central Business District (CBD), off Ringway and between Corporation Street and Market Street West.

Preston based building and civil engineering firm Marcus Worthington & Co is a major partner in the project. Development Director, Russell Worthington said: "This project is fantastic news for Preston at a time when building work has been painfully slow across the country."

Booths Expand into 2010



Preston's long-established regional food and drink retailer, Booths, recently opened a new store in Garstang and has plans to open a further five across the region.

With 26 stores stretching from Keswick to Knutsford, Booths plan to open stores in Hesketh Bank, Barrowford, Salford's MediaCityUK, Penrith and Grange-over-Sands.

Room for Growth

Lund Street based Smart Storage is planning to expand its existing site to around 35,000 sq ft, to cope with growing demand from customers.

The company, which provides storage space for individuals and businesses, is proposing to add an extra 10,000 sq ft of space to its city centre site, and is awaiting approval on its plans.

Managing Director at Smart Storage Jon Wyles said: "We are particularly keen to grow the Preston operation as this is the latest in our portfolio of five sites and therefore we are keen to get it to full capacity as soon as possible."

Menzies sign Red Scar deal

Menzies Distribution Ltd is relocating from its former site off Wellfield Road, Ashton, having completed a lease on a 40,000 sq ft facility on Red Scar Business Park.

The distribution firm signed a deal for the former Now Kitchens unit with property group Tustin Developments, owners of the employment area.

New Stores Breathe Life into City

A host of new retailers have been welcomed to Fishergate following a surge of interest in vacant city centre units. Shoppers now have the choice of major brands including Bank and JD Sports, who have taken over the former George store and Fat Face, who have moved into the former Barratts store.

It is believed that clothing giant Next will soon be moving into the former Woolworths store, after reportedly signing a 15-year lease, and this will bring the retailers total number of stores in Preston to five. Designer clothing brand Henleys is also in advanced talks to fill the former Oasis womenswear shop.

After opening their store on the former Tradex site, discount retailer B&M Bargains now boast three branches and 80 employees in the city. Situated off Ringway, the new store spans over 25,000 sq ft and is the firm's largest store in the North West.

Additionally, 25 jobs are expected to be created following the acquisition of the former Kwik Save store in Miller Road, Ribbleton. It is reported that the site has been acquired by London businessman Azhar Hussain and will be open in the coming months.

Decision Helps Progress Tithebarn

The £700million Tithebarn proposals are steering in the right direction after the Government decided not to list Preston bus station as a building of significant architectural or historic interest.



The decision removes the potential obstacle to the proposed development, which will include a new bus station, revitalised markets, a cinema, cafés, bars and both private and commercial properties. Tithebarn will also have new John Lewis and Marks and Spencer anchor stores, as well as other improvements to shopping in the city.

Councillor Ken Hudson, Leader of Preston City Council commented: "We are delighted that common sense has prevailed and Preston bus station has not been listed. Now we can focus on securing planning permission for the Tithebarn development and proposals for a brand new bus station that is fitting for the city of Preston."

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Leading the Way for Central Lancashire Businesses

Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council have joined forces with Lancashire County Council and Business Link Northwest to create an event offering support and advice to local businesses.



From finance issues to marketing and skills training, the Find Your Way event will give businesses the opportunity to find out about a range of topics under one roof. It will also feature a business pitch opportunity, where companies can meet with a specialist panel to discuss their needs and ideas.

The Business Venture Group will be on hand to offer confidential and professional guidance on business start-up and Preston Employment Partnership will also be offering employment and careers advice to individuals.

To book a place at the event, please call 01772 532 431, or register online at www.findyourwaySRBC.eventbrite.com

Please state which event features are of interest and a time slot will be allocated. For more information please visit www.findyourway.org.uk

Making the Link

Business Link Northwest is urging Preston companies looking to the future to remember it is on-hand to offer support and guidance to help them achieve their ambitions.



Between April to December 2009 almost 2,000 businesses in Preston turned to Business Link, many for support to help them through the tough trading conditions. Almost half of the enquiries related to skills, while other popular topics included business growth and finance.

Peter Watson, Managing Director at Business Link Northwest said: "Times have been tough recently for some companies and Business Link has been on hand to help guide them through this difficult period. Now many local businesses are thinking about how they can build on the lessons they have learned from the downturn and grow their company or expand into a new direction, to ensure they are successful in 2010 and beyond."

Business Link Northwest is the gateway to business support in the region and can advise companies on issues ranging from accessing finance, cash flow and marketing to innovation, start-up advice, employment and training.

To find out more call 0845 00 66 888 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/northwest

Preston Joins the Net

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and Northern Way recently launched the NorthernNet project, which connects organisations and businesses from the digital and creative industries with a high-performance, secure and reliable network.

The network allows enormous files to be sent at speeds of up to 100mbs and is available to businesses as a direct pay-as-you-go connection via NorthernNet Media Access Bureaus (MABs), positioned across the three Northern regions.

In the Preston area, the project is already running at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), and Phil Holfield, Head of Enterprise at the university commented: "The NorthernNet project will link Preston's Media Factory and the Burnley campus with high speed networking to other sites in the North including Media City at Salford Quays."

Find out more by following it on twitter, twitter.com/northernnet

Supporting Preston Businesses

Business Venture Group (BVG) has been awarded a three-year contract to deliver the Intensive Business Start-Up Support programme across Central Lancashire - covering the Preston, Chorley and South Ribble areas.

The package of support consists of comprehensive training courses and unlimited one-to-one adviser time. Training courses range from a half day brief introduction to self employment, through to a four day intensive 'Start Your Business Step by Step' course.

As well as advice and assistance in starting a business six months before trading starts, support is also available up to three years after the business is up and running.

The programme can be accessed through Business Link Northwest or by attending a drop-in session, where BVG's team will be available to talk through any business ideas. Alternatively for more information call BVG on 01772 42242.

Drop in sessions are available at –

Savick Library on West Park Avenue from 10.00am – 12.00pm
St. Augustine's Avenham Centre from 2.00pm – 4.00pm

On the following dates: March 5th and 19th, April 2nd, 16th and 30th, May 14th and 28th and June 11th and 25th.

Jobcentre Plus on Ringway from 10.00am – 12.00pm
Gujarat Hindu Society on South Meadow Lane from 2.00pm – 4.00pm

On the following dates: On March 12th and 26th, April 9th and 23rd, May 7th and 21st and June 4th and 18th.

Publicity Recent Developments

Coastal Engineers Flock to Docks

Preston Docklands has recently welcomed civil engineers, Birse Coastal, to its office complex. The firm is now based at a 3,216 sq ft office at King Edward VII Quay and has relocated its 80-strong workforce.

Bryan Taylor, Head of Estates at parent company Balfour Beatty said: "These offices are fitted out with a high specification and offer spectacular views of the marina."

Two suites, one ground floor and one first floor, remain available and both offer 4,294 sq ft comprising open plan offices, a secure lobby entrance, air conditioning, a passenger lift and on-site parking.

For more information contact Steve Lamb at Lamb and Swift on 01204 522 275.

Landmark Council Building for Sale

Prominent City centre building, Guild House, is available for sale. Located on the corner of Cross Street and Winckley Square, the four-storey building spans over 29,000 sq ft and has 14 parking spaces.

For more information contact Parker and Company on 01772 823516.



IGEN Holding Court

National recruitment firm IGEN Future Pathways is the latest company to take prime office space at Norwest Court. The firm which specialises in careers advice and personal development, has signed a five-year lease on the first floor premises which fronts Guildhall Street and Cross Street.

A full refurbishment programme has taken place at the eight-floor building where on-site parking is available. Office space to let ranges from 1,596 sq ft to 24,358 sq ft.

For more information contact Richard Wharton at King Sturge on 0161 236 8793.

Free Property Search

For details of these and other recent developments contact Preston City Council on:

0800 389 8392



The Council operates a free sites and property register for Preston – covering all available industrial units, offices, shops and commercial development sites.

In addition, on-line details of Preston sites and property can be accessed through our website. There are also links to a database covering sites and property throughout Lancashire.

www.preston.gov.uk/prestoncity

Join the Royal Retail Revival

Space is available to rent at the newly refurbished city centre Victoria and Albert Buildings.

Wrapped around the corner of Fishergate and Corporation Street, a number of units are available and range from 140 sq ft up to 314 sq ft. Flexible leases are also available, which will appeal to start-up businesses who may not necessarily be in a position to make a long-term commitment.

For more information contact Tim Kenney at Kenneymoore on 01244 345600.



Drop Anchor at Riversway



Just two modern units remain available to lease at recently developed Anchorage Business Park, Riversway Docklands.

The two-storey 1,880 sq ft business units comprise ground floor warehouse / workshop accommodation, loading bay, first floor fully-fitted high specification offices, W.C facilities and allocated parking spaces. All units are monitored via a 24 hour CCTV system. For more information contact Robert Pinkus & Co on 01772 769 000.



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Apprenticeships at the Core of Business Success



Sharon Alexander, Managing Director of Rosy Apple Child Care, has been appointed as a founding member of the new North West Apprenticeship Ambassadors' Network.

The nursery, which has sites in Chatburn Road, Herschell Street and Bow Lane in Preston, looks after more than 300 children across Lancashire.

Rosy Apple Child Care was recently named in the top three best medium-sized businesses for employing apprentices in the country. Sharon commented: "I have always taken on apprentices because you get a loyalty from them that you just would not get any other way. They see you have put faith in them and they want to repay that."

"We have trained up 32 apprentices in the last two years and 90% of them are still with us. That underlines the loyalty you get."

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 600.

An Educational Return for the Harris Institute

Yousuf Bhailok, the new owner of the Avenham building, has confirmed he intends to use it as a study centre for training future Imams, offering graduate and postgraduate studies.



Founded by Edmund Harris, the building, which will retain its name, must be used for educational purposes and is expected to open in around 12 months.

Preston City Council Prepares Young People for the Future

Preston City Council, working with the neighbouring local authorities of Chorley, Lancaster, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Lancashire County Council is leading the way on developing a programme in response to the Government's new scheme, the Future Jobs Fund.

The fund aims to nationally create 170,000 additional jobs, primarily aimed at 18-24 year olds who have been out of work for up to a year.

Preston City Council has created 21 posts, funded by the scheme, which will run for 36 weeks and aims to help young people improve their skills and experience in sport development, leisure centres, tourist information, parks, cleansing and recycling sections of the Council. Once placed in the posts, the young people will also be offered training, help to build their CV, and support to gain full employment through the Preston Employment Partnership (PEP) team.

Essex Street based Recycling Lives is also working with partners, Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Development Ltd, to deliver a range of job opportunities from processing and manufacturing, to administration and shop floor work as part of the fund.

Places will be offered through Jobcentre Plus to young people, between 18 and 24, who have been on Jobs Seeker's Allowance for over six months.

GRAND Designs

Fulwood based Image Solutions (UK) Ltd has landed a £358,000 order to supply a high-resolution microscope suite for King Abdullah's University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia.

Ian Corles, Managing Director of Image Solutions (UK) Ltd said: "The deal came through a link we have with Cambridge University and we will now build the suite, train people how to use it and provide whatever support is required."

The news follows a recent Grant for Research and Development (GRAND) of £100,000 to design a 'smart glass' enclosure for microscopes for use in bioscience experiments.