

City Centre Director
July and August
2019 Update Report

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Regeneration News

Lockheed Martin, Hewlett Packard, Airbus & Amazon sign up to £80m - plus Space Park Leicester

Multi-national companies such as Lockheed Martin, Thales Alenia Space, Hewlett Packard, Airbus and Amazon have signed up to the £80-£90 million Space Park Leicester. It comes as the Government revealed that it is putting £13.75 million into creating a research and development hub there which will work on the next generation of smaller, cheaper satellites. The partner businesses will all be involved in the practical applications of satellite technology and the data they can capture.

Amazon, for instance, will look into how its cloud infrastructure can meet the big data challenges of complex satellite data processing. The R&D centre will be the second phase of the new Space Park, set to be built near the National Space Centre just north of Leicester city centre. Work on the first phase is expected to get underway in September, with a planned opening of late 2020 or early 2021. That will be used to study the way satellite data can be used to improve sectors beyond space from mobile phone apps to studying global air pollution, looking at illegal logging to transport, logistics and financial services.

Phase two will help with designing new satellites to replace the kinds of big, bulky spacecraft currently orbiting the earth. It is hoped a third stage will eventually include a production line that will take the cost of satellites down from tens of millions of pounds to millions of pounds. Lead partner the University of Leicester is putting around £25 million into the Space Park, with Government and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) are contributing £25 million, with industry and other partners putting in around £40 million.

Prof Paul Monks, head of the University of Leicester's Science and Engineering College, said: "We are talking to Government about further funding for phase three, which is about £32 million, but the Space Park is going ahead. "All-being-well, work on the phase three satellite manufacturing facility could start in the next two years. "There is no-where in Europe like this and the UK has a particular appeal as a nexus between the US and Europe. US companies want to work in the UK rather than mainland Europe because of the special relationship we have with them."

Phase two of the Space Park is called METEOR – the Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Earth Observation Research Centre – with the £13.75 million funding coming from round 6 of Research England's flagship capital investment scheme, the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund. That money will help leverage a further £50 million of investments. As well as playing a part in delivering new industrial space technologies, the Space Park will also be an academic hub for the university which is already a leader in space science and satellite technology. The award is the biggest made to the university in its history and has leveraged co-investment from project partners including Airbus, Lockheed Martin and Thales Alenia Space.

Professor Edmund Burke, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, said: "We are so delighted to have been awarded the METEOR funding. "Leicester has a reputation for developing cutting-edge space technology, with University-built instruments in space every year since 1967. "For over 50 years we have played key roles in space missions including playing a significant role in the BepiColombo mission to Mercury, which launched just last year. "We look forward to Space Park Leicester being a catalyst for future space advancements and the University strengthening our expertise as we contribute towards the UK's ambition to be a world leader in space."

Leicester City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said: “This is exciting news for Space Park Leicester which recognises the university’s excellence and international profile in the field of satellite technology and Earth observation. “I look forward to continuing to support the development and growth of Space Park Leicester.”

LLEP chair Kevin Harris said: “Space Park Leicester is central to our long-term strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire. “The aim is to build a world-class centre of space research and innovation, which will be at the centre of the United Kingdom’s space technology industry for decades to come. “The LLEP has allocated £12.88 million from our Local Growth Fund to support the development of Space Park Leicester and the area is also one of the designated sites within the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone.

“The project is a true collaboration between academia, business and government – both local and national – as we harness the space industry to benefit our region and the wider UK. “As chair of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, I have seen first-hand what this kind of collaborative effort can achieve, and how significant investments in infrastructure and emerging technologies can grease the wheels of economic growth and prosperity.”



For a fly through of the artist impression, please visit: <https://www.business-live.co.uk/technology/lockheed-martin-hewlett-packard-airbus-16563805>.

Artist impression of Leicester Space Park

New look planned for National Space Centre and Abbey Pumping Station

Proposals for a scheme that would improve the links between the National Space Centre, Abbey Pumping Station and Leicester’s planned space and technology park have been drawn up by the city council. Artist’s impressions submitted as part of the planning application show a high-quality scheme that would create a new sense of arrival at two of Leicester’s most popular visitor attractions, while helping to improve connectivity across the wider Space Park Leicester development site at Ellis Meadows.

Under the proposals, the statue of the pioneer spaceman Ed White would be moved from its current location outside the space centre and become the centrepiece of the new public realm scheme. Granite and porphyry paving would be laid in a spiral form around the statue, with seating and new landscaping completing the scheme. A new, more inviting approach to the Abbey Pumping Station would also be created as part of the scheme, with new signage on the museum’s industrial buildings helping to give the popular attraction a more clearly defined entrance.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “This scheme will improve the approach to two of Leicester’s most popular attractions, helping to set the scene for a quality experience for visitors and creating a new sense of arrival. “Investment in the public realm is also part of the wider plans for the area, supporting the development of Space Park Leicester and helping to improve connectivity across the site.”

Chas Bishop, chief executive of the National Space Centre, said: “These are really exciting times for the National Space Centre, with huge public interest in the 50th anniversary of the Moon landings and the pending arrival of the brilliant University of Leicester team on the new Space Park Leicester site. “This scheme will give visitors to these sites, as well as the wonderfully atmospheric Abbey Pumping Station, a calm, relaxing place to take a breath and absorb the compelling story of the pioneer spaceman before heading off for a great day at their chosen venue in this ever-evolving part of town.”



Artist Impression

The £300,000 public realm scheme is part of the Space Park Leicester and Pioneer Park infrastructure project, part-funded by £5m from the Local Growth Fund allocated by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP). Subject to planning permission, work on the scheme could get under way early next year and would take around three months to complete.

New £2.3million office complex ready to open at Friars Mill

A landmark riverside development at the heart of Leicester’s Waterside regeneration area has been boosted by the completion of over 10,000 sq. ft of new, purpose-built office space. The £2.3million city council-led development has created two modern offices – the 5,500 sq. ft Riverside building and the 4,900 sq. ft Fabric building – in the grounds of the historic Friars Mill development on the banks of the River Soar. The development of the new offices was carried out by Leicester-based Brackley Property Developments, which appointed Andrew and Ashwell as marketing agents.



The design and materials of the two new buildings is sympathetic to the character and industrial heritage of the surrounding 18th century mill complex, which the city council painstakingly restored as part of an award-winning £7.1million redevelopment scheme. The new offices represent a second phase of the redevelopment of the historic grade-II listed complex and will significantly increase the amount of modern workspace available at Friars Mill. The original buildings are all now fully occupied.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “The transformation of Friars Mill is remarkable. In 2012, we were facing the loss of an important part of the city’s industrial heritage when the derelict Donisthorpe Factory was nearly destroyed in fire. “The council stepped in and bought the building, pledging to restore and redevelop Friars Mill as a beacon for the wider regeneration of the Waterside and to help kickstart development on the ‘other side’ of Vaughan Way. “These new offices are further evidence of how effective this has been. Friars Mill is at full occupancy and I am confident that these attractive new offices will be snapped up.

“I want to congratulate Brackley on a wonderful job, which has created new and much-needed modern office buildings that sit perfectly alongside some of the oldest factory buildings in the city. “Alongside the new developments taking place on Vaughan Way, these new offices represent a very important step forward for Waterside and its future as a great place to live and a thriving area for new business.”

Stephen Pedrick-Moyle, managing director of Brackley Property Developments, said: “We were thrilled to be given the opportunity to be involved in this development. “We’re proud to be able to report that we have already sold the Riverside building and that there is strong interest in the Fabric building. “We’re now looking forward to continuing this success with future office development in the Waterside area.”

The £2.3million scheme to build new offices at Friars Mill was supported by £1million of Government cash through the Local Growth Fund by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). Minister of State for Local Growth, the Rt Hon Jake Berry MP, said: “We’re committed to boosting economic growth across the whole of the Midlands Engine and ensuring every community has the support and investment it needs to flourish. “I am delighted this investment from the Government’s Local Growth Fund has enabled regeneration in the historic Friars Mill development. This new state-of-the-art office space will support local businesses while protecting the character and heritage of this iconic part of Leicester on the banks of the River Soar.”

Brackley Property Developments will now be working with the city council to develop the first of the new office developments promised as part of the first phase of the development of the Waterside area. This will involve the phased construction of 60,000 sq. ft of new purpose-built office on council-owned land at Northgate Street. Work is expected to get underway early in 2020.

St Margaret's underpass has been transformed by graffiti artists

A network of pedestrian subways in Leicester city centre has been transformed with colourful street art. St Margaret's Underpass has been brightened up with more than 20 new artworks by local and international artists. The three tunnels, ramps and staircases that link Church Gate with St Margaret’s Way are now part of a community painting zone. Over the next few months the walls will become a rolling canvas with new works appearing all the time, helping to create an ever-changing route for pedestrians and cyclists. The new zone has been created through a partnership between Leicester City Council and local arts company Graffwerk.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "We’ve worked with Graffwerk on a number of projects over the years, with events like Bring the Paint helping to create stunning artworks in the city centre. "This latest project shows how street art can transform an eyesore into a much more appealing



environment, giving St Margaret’s underpass a much-needed new look." A grant of £1,450 from the city council’s cultural ambition fund is supporting the underpass project, with established artists including MONO, WWF Crew and ZINER creating works to help launch the initiative. Graffwerk will monitor and manage the site, taking responsibility for the artworks and identifying an area where novice painters can improve their skills alongside more experienced artists.

St Margaret's Underpass community painting zone has been set up for graffiti artists to show off their skills. (Image: Leicester Mercury)

Business News

Leicester solicitor launches network to tackle issues regarding diversity and inequality in the workplace

A solicitor in Leicester has launched a not-for-profit organisation to encourage better diversity and inclusion policies within businesses in Leicester. Bushra Ali launched the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network (EDI) at an event held at New Walk Museum. Guests included Police and Crime Commissioner Lord (Willy) Bach, chairman of the county council Pam Posnett and Manjula Sood MBE, advisor to City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby on interfaith and community issues.

Ms Ali, director of Bushra Ali Solicitors is also the organiser behind existing networking events regularly held in the city such as Network2Kconnect and Empowered Women, Empowering Women. The past president of the Leicestershire Law Society decided to create the EDI Network to reach industries beyond her own. "Separate hubs all have separate policies, but the EDI principles are the same across all," she said. After speaking to business owners and employees about how well companies managed policies on equality and diversity, Ms Ali was concerned that many responses showed policies were being complied with on only a surface level. This is something the solicitor felt needed to change.

EDI Network will offer a range of courses and workshops to address related policies and help employers to properly apply them. It was important to Bushra that her new venture would be a not-for-profit organisation. She ensured that most of the sessions will be free and selected events will be at most £5 per person. Some of the first EDI Network sessions are titled: 'How not to be transphobic', 'Cultural competency training' and 'The unconscious bias.' More information and available courses can be found on the EDI Network available at <https://www.edinetwork.co.uk/>.

Nominations open for 2019 Leicester Mercury Business Executive of the Year Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2019 Leicester Mercury Business Executive of the Year Awards, seeking out the executives, managers, owners and leaders who have achieved something outstanding in their field of work. The winners will be announced at a black-tie evening at the King Power Stadium on Tuesday 12 November. Last year Sam Hagger, founder of the Beautiful Pubs Collective, was named 'overall executive of the year' after winning the small business category earlier on in the night.

Now in their eighth year, the awards have become an established part of the local business calendar, marking individual success and the contribution those individuals through their businesses and organisations make to life in our region. Nominations are open now until Wednesday 11 September.

Leicester Mercury editor George Oliver said it was a privilege to honour the best business leaders. He said: "This is one of my favourite events and always gets serious backing from the local business community. "That support means the Mercury can convene a judging panel which is both analytical and authoritative. "Thanks to them, these awards truly recognise the achievements of the individuals who have made the greatest contribution to the local economy in recent months and years."

For further information, please visit www.leicestershirelivebusinessexecawards.co.uk. You will be able to complete and submit the nomination form by clicking 'enter now'.

St Martin's Square, Old Town is being revived by Shearer Property Group

New owners Shearer Property Group bought the 28-unit shopping centre two years ago. Shearer has been involved in a number of inner city regeneration projects, including the 560,000 sq. ft City Centre South project in Coventry, Grand Arcade in Cambridge, the Southgate Centre in Bath, Parkway in Newbury and the former Dickins & Jones department store on London's Regent Street. Since coming on board in Leicester, the square has undergone a revamp, most recently seeing the low entrance facing Hotel Street raised.

New tenants are also moving in. Leicestershire delicatessen Just So Italian which also has stores in Market Harborough and Stamford is moving into a unit used by the Escape Asylum until it took bigger premises around the corner. The opening of Indian street food brand Mowgli is imminent, while Thai restaurant chain Giggling Squid is fitting out the former Grillstock unit for an early 2020 opening.

Simon Beattie, Centre Manager said: "It's a really exciting time for St Martins Square because there has been so much going on and the owners have been very proactive in bringing new things to the square and the city. "They want to bring the life and the vibrancy back to St Martins that was here five years ago so a huge focus of that has been getting the right kind of independents in.

Simon has been brought in to manage the square. He has also joined the board of BID Leicester, which is launching its own independents campaign shortly.

Boris Johnson urged to overhaul crippling business rates as more jobs disappear from the High Street

Boris Johnson has been urged to overhaul crippling business rates after another 72,000 jobs disappeared from the High Street. In a further sign of the crisis blighting town and city centres across the UK, there were 2.3 per cent fewer people working in retail at the end of June than there were a year earlier. The report, from the British Retail Consortium (BRC), said staffing has fallen for 14 quarters in a row, or three-and-a-half years. There are now just under 3.1m people employed in retail.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the BRC, said: 'Retail is undergoing a period of profound transformation. Such declines are likely to endure, hastened by Government policies that continue to add costs to an industry already under immense pressures. 'With a new Prime Minister and Cabinet in place, there is a clear opportunity to rethink the High Street strategy.'

Source: This is Money

Leicester Business Expo, 8th October

Leicester Business Expo is the city's number one small-business networking and growth show, and booking a stand gives you the opportunity to reach up to 1,000 potential customers at this single-day event at King Power Stadium.

For further information, please visit: <https://leicesterbusinessexpo.com/want-to-exhibit/>.

Leicester Business Festival event aims to support SMEs to employ ex-offenders: Unlocking Opportunities, do you have an opportunity for an ex-offender?

As a result of a working group including the Police and Crime Commissioners Office, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Cares, an event has been organised as part of Leicester business festival on Wednesday 30th October that will look at the benefits and social value of employing ex-offenders.

The start of the event is aimed at businesses that are looking at revitalising their recruitment strategy, with presentations on this avenue of recruitment and how it could benefit and drive their business forward. It will also focus on the launch of a new ex-offender website page, highlighting of the services that can support businesses in this new recruitment strategy and the Employment Hubs £3500 grant offer. This part of the event will be bookable through the Leicester Business Festival Website.

After the presentations the team are looking to run a mock interview fair, where businesses that already recruit ex-offenders will exhibit their live vacancies. The aim is for ex-offenders to showcase their CVs and skills to employers and for them to explore the opportunities available. From the event the ex-offenders will leave with a clear idea of the jobs available and the next steps on how they apply.

If you would like to get involved in the interview fair and have live vacancies or would like to know more about recruiting ex-offenders please get in touch with Shelley Stanhope shelley.stanhope@leicester.gov.uk.

Planning secured for new Jaguar Land Rover logistics centre in Leicestershire

IM Properties (IMP) has secured planning to create a new global parts logistics centre for Jaguar Land Rover and help retain the automotive company's aftermarket parts business in the UK. The proposed new 2.94 million sq. ft campus at junction 11, M42, will put North West Leicestershire at the heart of Jaguar Land Rover's global aftermarket business and enable it to evolve and grow the company, maintaining its competitiveness in a challenging global marketplace. The new facility, which will service 80 countries, will provide a major boost to the local economy, enabling Jaguar Land Rover to sustain and create jobs, both in its business and its supply chain, with 1200 positions required from day one and 3000 forecast by 2030.

David Smith, planning director from IM Properties said: "We are extremely pleased to have secured permission for such an important new global facility for Jaguar Land Rover, which will ensure the company's long-term commitment to the UK. It is the culmination of our team's considerable efforts to date".

Kevin Ashfield UK development director at IM Properties said: "Agreeing to a 20-year lease shows a huge commitment and the company's investment will contribute an additional £139 million GVA per year to the local economy." The site will allow Jaguar Land Rover to integrate its separate Jaguar and Land Rover operations into one single common logistics platform, which will in turn lead to a more efficient and sustainable supply chain.

Kevin added: "Jaguar Land Rover stated at committee that this is the only site that can do the job, due to the bespoke set of requirements and that the benefits that the planning application would be significant. "We are now focussed on delivering this facility and creating a high quality, sustainable scheme and great place to work, with long lasting socio-economic benefits for the local area,

drawing on our experience of designing, building and operating successful business parks across the Midlands, including continuing dialogue with our adjoining communities and the launch of our Community Fund.”

A transport strategy will also be introduced to minimise impact on local roads and improve accessibility to the site, with extensive landscaping including planting of over 30,000 trees, creating up to 30 acres of new woodland and recreational paths, cycleways and wetland feature. Jaguar Land Rover believes that once in operation the new facility, which consolidates 10 existing sites, will reduce freight movements on its network by 25% with linked reductions in HGV miles, energy, fuel and carbon emissions.

Source: Business Link

Transport

Council set to begin discussions about workplace parking levy

Discussions about the idea of a workplace parking levy in Leicester are to get underway. The city council intends to consult on a scheme that would charge organisations providing parking spaces for employees as a means of funding local transport improvements whilst helping cut congestion and traffic pollution. To date, Nottingham is the only UK city to have introduced a workplace parking levy. This has been in operation since 2012 and has brought in over £60million, which the council has invested in public transport including tram, bus and railway station improvements.

Other local authorities – including Birmingham, Oxford, Reading, Edinburgh, and several London boroughs – are also actively investigating the introduction of similar schemes. Leicester City Council is developing a new Local Transport Plan setting out the future transport vision for the city and how this could be funded, including potentially through a workplace parking levy. Initial consultation on this plan will be followed by a statutory public consultation on the workplace parking levy. This is likely to take around 18 months to two years.

Deputy city mayor Cllr Adam Clarke, who leads on environment and transportation, said: “Like many cities, Leicester faces real challenges to improve air quality, cut congestion and encourage more people to make the shift to sustainable, clean transport options. “It is essential that we continue to invest in transport improvements that encourage more people to walk, cycle and take the bus. “There is a lot of work that needs to be done before we can consult on our case for a workplace parking levy, including developing a new local transport plan that reflects the opportunities that this new funding would allow us to explore. “While that work is ongoing, we will be approaching businesses and other relevant organisations and aiming to start a discussion around the city’s transport challenges and how we can fund future improvements. We’re at a very early stage of a lengthy process.”

City Mayor Peter Soulsby added: “While we have been extremely successful in attracting major funding from Government and other sources, a workplace parking levy would provide a reliable and ongoing source of locally-controlled funding to help us commit to ambitious, long-term transport improvements. “These could for example include the electrification of the city’s bus fleet, a more comprehensive network of bus and cycle routes across the city, improvements to major transport hubs like the railway station and more work to reduce traffic pollution in the city. “No decisions have been made yet, but we do want to consult on the idea of the workplace parking levy as a means of a funding future transport improvements.”

To set the ball rolling, City Mayor Peter Soulsby and Cllr Adam Clarke are planning to host a Twitter question and answer session on Tuesday 10 September. The process for introducing a workplace parking levy is set out in the Transport Act 2000. Any proposed scheme will be subject to approval from the Secretary of State for Transport. All income raised from a workplace parking scheme in Leicester could only be spent on transport schemes included in the Local Transport Plan. The city's renewed transport plan is due to be consulted on in early 2020.

To find out more about how a workplace parking levy might work, the process for implementation and the forthcoming consultation, visit www.leicester.gov.uk/WorkplaceParkingLevy.

Bus lane enforcement cameras for London Road and Abbey Street

Bus lane enforcement cameras are to be brought in at two more sites in Leicester to deter drivers who flout the law by driving in areas designated for public transport and Hackney cabs. Cameras will be installed at the newly-created bus lane outside Leicester Station, and also at the junction of Abbey Street and Belgrave Gate to deter motorists from turning right there. The right turn from Abbey Street into Belgrave Gate has been restricted to buses, Hackney cabs and cycles since 1995 when the bus lane was installed, and in 2015 a further bus gate was added as part of road remodelling work linked to the development of the Haymarket Bus Station.

However, a survey in June 2019 revealed 3,345 vehicles illegally turning right there in just one week. The route is accessed by over 3,300 buses every hour – almost one every second entering or leaving the area around Haymarket Bus Station – which rely on the free flow of traffic along bus lanes. In London Road, a new camera will be installed covering the new section of bus lane being created right outside the station, to deter drivers trying to use it to avoid queueing at traffic lights on the main A6 which runs immediately adjacent.

An existing camera will continue covering the clearway section outside the Parcel Yard pub. At both locations, the cameras will operate around the clock, seven days a week. They will be clearly signposted to deter motorists from using them. Drivers who persist in driving in the bus gates will be fined £60, reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days. The cameras are expected to be in place and operational in October 2019. The move is designed to help cut bus journey times, reduce the amount of stopping and starting done by buses, thereby improving fuel efficiency and cutting carbon emissions and pollution.

In addition, the bus gate enforcement will also improve safety for cyclists, who along with Hackney cabs are also allowed to use the bus lanes, by removing additional traffic. The cost of the cameras, installation and associated equipment will be covered by income from other existing bus lane enforcement sites. The scheme will cost about £50,000 overall, which includes two years of maintenance and technical support for the two sites.

Openings and Closings

We wish all new businesses good trading and a warm welcome to Leicester City Centre!

Open & Opening

Merchant of Venice

Merchant of Venice has opened at 173-175 Granby Street, and boasts a quirky design inspired by the Shakespeare play of the same name. Located in the unit formerly occupied by Tex Mex restaurant Plan Burrito, the Italian coffee bar has been created during a seven month-long renovation project. The result is a beautifully decorated venue, with handmade furniture including swing seats in the windows, gold handmade wallpaper and impressive pictures on the wall, painted by a local artist.



(Image: Leicester Mercury)

The business has been launched by Jaimon Thomas - founder of Granby Street restaurants Kayal and Herb - and is run by manager Dionigi Riganello, who was previously manager of San Carlo restaurant in Leicester. Talking about the new venue, Dionigi said: "We don't just want this to be a business that sells coffee. We want to offer a nice, warm place where people come and relax. The team - which also includes Italian chef Salvatore and Italian barman Giorgio - are particularly keen to provide a haven for travellers heading to and from the nearby railway station.

Buddha Bay, King Street

Buddha Bay has launched in King Street. The team behind Buddha Bay aimed to breathe new life into the grand-looking and prominent building which was formerly occupied by XY Club. Guests will be able to enjoy a 'multicultural' dining menu and travel-inspired cocktails at the venue, which focuses on 'mindful' eating and drinking. The name is derived from Buddhism, and according to the owners, Buddha Bay will reflect the three qualities of awareness, kindness and wisdom which Buddhists aim to develop through practices such as meditation, leading to a state of lasting unconditional happiness known as enlightenment. Guests will be able to eat and drink in an atmosphere enhanced by mood lighting and soothing background music. Bosses say they believe that mindful eating is about the love and care involved in the eating process.

Regular opening hours will be: Monday to Wednesday 12pm – 11pm, Thursday 12pm – 1am, Friday and Saturday 12 – 2am and Sunday 12pm – 10pm.



Inside Buddha Bay (Image: Matt Short Photography)

Four Seasons Chinese Restaurant, Charles Street

Four Seasons Chinese Restaurant opened on Charles Street on Friday 16 August.



Four Seasons Chinese Restaurant (Image: Becky Jones)

The Tree, High Street



New city venue The Tree has opened. Fans of the Orange Tree will be glad to know that The Tree retains the pub's quirky charm, but following a make-over, the venue now looks brighter and fresher, and changes to the layout mean there's more space, too. Manager Ollie Worley said: "It's always been a living room in the centre of town, but now it's a living room in 2019 instead of a living room in 1997!"

There are new soft seating areas at the front and rear of the venue where you can relax with a drink, and there's new bench seating, along with tables and chairs, in the dining area. Guests will also be able to have fun playing on the newly installed bar games such as 'ringing the bull'. Much of the artwork on the wall has been retained from the Orange Tree, and a few new pieces have been added - all of which are by local artists. The much-loved beer garden has been spruced up, and is now all on one level, with more tables and chairs. Shelters have been added and will be decorated by local artists including Sam Grubb. A new space has also been created for live bands - which will be a regular feature at The Tree.



The venue's change of ownership came about last year, when the Leicester pub was sold by the Orange Tree Group to the Charles Wells group, along with sister pubs the Orange Tree and the Kelso in Loughborough, and the Orange Tree in Nottingham.

Matalan, Haymarket Shopping Centre

Matalan's new store in Leicester's Haymarket Shopping Centre opens on Saturday 7 September. Matalan was founded in 1985 in Preston, Lancashire, and now has 230 UK stores and 30 international franchise stores in Europe and the Middle East. In addition to the existing Church Gate store and soon-to-open Haymarket store, Matalan also has a branch at Beaumont Leys.



Italian pizzeria Fireaway, Belvoir Street

Pizza fans in Leicester will soon be able to enjoy authentic Italian pizzas cooked in just 180 seconds, when Fireaway opens an outlet on Belvoir Street in the former home of Ocean Blue Food Bar. Fireaway was launched in 2016 by Mario Aleppo, with the aim of bringing better pizza to the UK. Mario describes the company as an "authentic Italian pizzeria" which uses a traditional handmade dough recipe, brought over from Naples by his grandmother in the 1950s.



Since launching the company in 2016, Mario has opened sites in London, Surrey and Kent, and is now expanding the brand into the Midlands. Fireaway is due to open in September.

Inside an existing Fireaway branch (Image: Fireaway)

Tim Hortons, East Gates

Fast food giant Tim Hortons will be opening in East Gates opposite the Clock Tower. The Grade II listed building has a long history, and originally opened as Eastgates Coffee House in 1885 during the Temperance Movement.



Tim Hortons was founded by Canadian hockey player Tim Horton in 1949. More recently the chain expanded to the UK, where it now has 21 stores including in Birmingham and Manchester. The chain is popular for its 'signature' coffee and doughnuts

Tim Hortons in New Street, Birmingham (Image: Birmingham Mail)

Marston's, New Walk

Pub company Marston's is investing a six-figure sum on refurbishing the ex Brood Vin Quatre in King Street.

A Marston's spokesperson said: "This is one of our leased sites that Brood Vin Quatre originally ran its business from. "Since their closure, we have remained keen to stay in Leicester centre so are investing six figures into a complete refurbishment for the site. "We look forward to getting it back up and running with a new retailer in September." It is not yet known which retailer will be moving in, though Marston's has the venue on its list of locations as 'Vin Quatre'. Marston's has over 1,500 venues across the UK, ranging from country pubs to high street bars. Its city centre venues include the 'beautifully designed' Pitcher & Piano bars, which can be found in 18 cities including Derby and Nottingham.

Saturday Kitchen chef Cyrus Todiwala opening new restaurant, Tandem, Highcross

Award-winning chef Cyrus Todiwala OBE has announced plans to open his first restaurant outside London. The proprietor of Café Spice Namasté, in East London, which picked up a Time Out Love Award last year and holds a Michelin Bib Gourmand, is bringing his Indian cooking style to Leicester's Highcross shopping centre later this summer. The new restaurant will be called Tandem and is being described as a "celebration of authentic Indian cuisine and cocktail mixology".

It is going into a part Grade II listed corner of the city centre shopping complex which, until last year, was occupied by the Mem-Saab Indian restaurant. When it opens in September, Tandem will be his first outside the capital where he currently has Café Spice Namasté and Mr Todiwala's Kitchen restaurants which he runs with his wife Pervin. The venture will be a collaboration with Leicester based Raphael Hospitality. As well as running successful businesses, he is also a popular figure on the TV, in shows such as The Incredible Spice Men and BBC1's Saturday Kitchen.

He said the new restaurant will serve food made with traditional Indian cooking styles, based on sustainable and ethically-sourced produce, mainly from the UK. The new restaurant and bar will be refurbished with a Portuguese and Goan influenced decor, with space for 150 diners, spread around five distinct spaces, including a chef's table for private dining and a rooftop terrace. Mr Todiwala said, "I have always wanted to expand my restaurants outside of London with Tandem having been in the pipeline for a long time and I'm thrilled to bring the vision to life in Leicester. "The foodie



scene in Leicester is taking flight and we're excited to launch Tandem in such an exciting and vibrant city. "Tandem is an exciting concept which offers something different to my other restaurants but takes inspiration from what we know our customers love. "It was important to me to fully showcase the beauty of Indian cuisine by using traditional cooking techniques and influences from my personal experience."

Award-winning chef Cyrus Todiwala (Image: Matt Short Photography)

Sports Direct and USC Stores, Gallowtree Gate

The former BHS building in Gallowtree Gate has been transformed under a plan that had previously seen it dubbed the 'Selfridges of Sport'. A spokesperson for the national sportswear chain confirmed it will be a 'new elevated store concept', featuring both Sports Direct and USC stores and will open in early September. Spread over four floors, the unit will be around 38,000 sq. ft in total. Sports Direct first announced its plans for the huge store in 2017, after boss Mike Ashley took on the former BHS unit. At the time, he said he wanted to offer customers a new concept featuring a number of his retailers and a gym. Two stores - Flannels and Everlast Fitness Club - opened in the building's Halford Street side in 2018.



Michael Murray, head of elevation at Sports Direct International, said: "This is a major part of Sport Direct's brand elevation strategy that will see a huge investment in a number of new stores, while upgrading and improving existing ones across the UK. "This is the strategic vision of the business as it aims to meet the demands of an ever more sophisticated consumer who is increasingly looking for not only good value, but an enhanced shopping experience."

Sports Direct store in Gallowtree Gate (Image: Sports Direct International)

Oriental Supermarket, High Street

The Oriental Supermarket has opened on High Street in the former YMCA Charity shop unit.

Premium boutique bowling - East Street Lanes

East Street Lanes opened on Thursday 22 August. The huge venue has a stylish look and an elegant feel, to provide a "premium boutique bowling" experience

East Street Lanes features eight Brunswick lanes, available for teams of six per lane. There's a gaming arcade with lots of retro classics, such as Pac-Man Basketball and Space Invaders Frenzy, plus there's pool tables and air hockey. There's also a restaurant area and a sleek bar that wouldn't look out of place in a hotel. The food menu put together by the team behind the Steamin' Billy brand, features sharing platters, burgers, pizzas and salads.

Guests are welcome to pop in for food and drink, even if they're not planning to bowl as well. East Street Lanes is being launched by the team behind crazy golf bar Caddyshackers, which opened in November 2018. The venues are both located in the East Street unit formerly occupied by Dunelm, where there is also an event space, East Street Events.



This caters for up to 200 people, with a range of food and drinks options available, making it ideal for parties and corporate functions in the city centre. The regular opening hours will be Monday to Friday 12pm until midnight, and Saturday and Sunday 10am until midnight. Although East Street Lanes was originally billed as an over 18s venue, accompanied children will be allowed until 7pm.

East Street Lanes (Image: Leicestershire Live)

O2

O2 has revealed it is closing its two Leicester city centre branches. The store in Gallowtree Gate has already permanently shut, and the existing store in the Highcross shopping centre will close in around two months' time. However, a new larger store is being opened in the shopping centre in the unit formerly occupied by clothing brand USC.

Dhillon's Pub and Pizza, Millstone Lane

The Criterion multi CAMRA-award-winning pub, in Millstone Lane, will be re-opening - with a new look and a new name. It is owned by Dhillons Group, a London-based business run by a family who have an interest in brewing, pubs and the wholesale of beers in the Midlands. They say they are looking to expand the number of pubs they have in the Leicestershire area.

The Criterion is currently undergoing a refurbishment project, but real ale fans needn't worry, as there will still be a wide range of real ale available, along with a new eclectic choice of beers from around the world. The food offering will be focused on pizzas - something for which The Criterion had already become well known.

It is intended that the pub will be re-opened by the end of September.

Closed

Bombay Bites, Belvoir Street

Bombay Bites has permanently closed its Belvoir Street site which had been open since 2007. The family-run company - which also has branches in Evington Road and Braunstone Gate - is well known for its unique take on the traditional Indian takeaway, including the layered Bombay Boxes.

Owner Ahmed Wahid said the closure of the Belvoir Street branch was due to the culmination of many different factors. But it won't be the last we see of Bombay Bites in the city centre. "We're currently looking for a better location with a greater square footage and some seating in the city centre," he continued. "The Belvoir Street branch was always limited because of its small size. We look forward to re-opening a new city centre location of Bombay Bites as soon as the right opportunity presents itself."

The Last Plantagenet, Granby Street

National pub chain JD Wetherspoon have revealed that The Last Plantagenet will serve its final customers on Sunday 8 September. All staff working at the pub will be offered jobs at other Wetherspoon branches.



Wetherspoon spokesman Eddie Gershon said: "We would like to thank all of the customers who have frequented The Last Plantagenet over the years for their loyal custom. "We would also like to thank our staff for making the pub so welcoming and popular. "We can confirm that the pub's final trading day is September 8. "The pub has been sold to Friends Tavern Leicester Limited. "All staff working at the pub will remain with Wetherspoon."

Exterior view of The Last Plantagenet, Granby Street, (Image: Northcliffe Media Ltd.)

Tastebudz, Granby Street

Tastebudz, in Granby Street, has closed

Brewklopedia, Welford Road

Brewklopedia on Welford Road are now closed.

Aldo, Highcross

Footwear and accessories brand Aldo have closed its Leicester branch in Highcross Shopping Centre.

Knit One Wool Shop, Pocklington's Walk

Knit One is closing at the beginning of September 2019.

Croques, Loseby Lane

Long-standing independent Leicester sandwich shop Croques has closed. Croques originally opened 22 years ago and was taken over by current owners Neal and Poonam Parmar in 2008. The husband and wife duo ran the business, with help from family members including Neal's mother and the couple's children. The eatery's last day of business was Saturday, August 31.

Talking about the closure, Poonam said that it was "bittersweet", and that there had been a number of factors involved in the decision. "We loved what we were doing, it's a great business, but we compromised on our family life. "We've been working five days a week and we're tired. "We will be doing something in the future, but for now, we need time to recharge."

Refurbishments

McDonald's Refurbishment, Market Street

The Market Street restaurant was completely closed from August 19 until Tuesday 3 September to allow for refurbishment work to be carried out on all of the customer areas. A "significant investment" has been made by franchisee Angus Fraser, who also owns the Highcross and Netherhall Road branches of McDonald's, and employs more than 400 people. The new-look Market Street restaurant has had a top to toe refurbishment, with new ceilings, new floor tiles, and new tables and chairs. The Market Street restaurant boasts all of McDonald's latest innovations, with digital features including self-order kiosks, table service, and the 'click and collect' service via the My McDonald's app.

McDonald's McDelivery via Uber Eats is also available in the Market Street restaurant. The refurbishment has already created eight new roles, with a further 12 planned between now and the end of the month.



Image: Leicester Mercury

Franchisee Angus Fraser, who started his career with McDonald's three years ago, said: "We're thrilled to be bringing a new look to the Market Street restaurant in Leicester and hope the public love it as much as we do. "We're proud to be part of the local community and we are very excited to open our doors to customers and we look forward to seeing customers and staff embracing the new features in this busy part of the city".

Other News

Coming Home: 16th Century Portrait of King at New Walk Museum

An iconic 16th Century portrait of King Richard III by an unknown artist is on display at Leicester's New Walk Museum until 22 September as part of National Portrait Gallery in London's Coming Home Project.

The project is loaning 50 portraits of iconic individuals to the places they are most closely associated with the portrait, which measures around 25" x 18" – shows a head and shoulder view of the king, who appears to be placing a ring on the little finger of his right hand. Painted in oils on an oak panel, the painting is one of the primary portraits of King Richard III.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "Since the remains of the last Plantagenet king of England were discovered and reinterred in Leicester Cathedral, there's been huge interest in the story of King Richard III. "The COMING HOME project will now give people in Leicester the chance to see one of the finest portraits of the king for themselves – and it's a portrait that they will probably instantly recognise. "This is a great opportunity to see the real thing - here, in the city where he's buried – and we're very grateful to the National Portrait Gallery for making this loan possible."



Director of the National Portrait Gallery Dr Nicholas Cullinan said: "We are delighted to lend Richard III to Leicester's New Walk Museum as part of our exciting new COMING HOME initiative. "We hope that sending portraits 'home' in this way will foster a sense of pride and create a personal connection for local communities to a bigger national history; thus helping us to fulfil our aim of being truly a national gallery for everyone, in our role as the nation's family album."

The portrait will be supported by an exhibition created by members of the Roots Group, a group of volunteers formed with the support of the Journeys Festival international team. Made in partnership with the King Richard III Visitor Centre and Leicester Cathedral, the exhibition will also consider the king's legacy to the city of Leicester.

COMING HOME is supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, by generous contributions from The Thompson Family Charitable Trust, and by funds raised at the gallery's Portrait Gala in 2017. The King Richard III summer 2019 brochure is available by following the link: <https://www.visitleicester.info/dbimsg/Richard%20III%20-%20Summer%20events%202019.pdf>

Jamie Wilson and Whoopi Goldberg announce new production of Sister Act - opening at Curve April 2020

Producers Jamie Wilson and Whoopi Goldberg are delighted to announce a brand-new production of the smash hit musical Sister Act opening at Curve on 21 April 2020, where it will play until 2 May 2020, ahead of further UK venues and a London season. A hit musical on both sides of the Atlantic, this brand-new production of Sister Act will star Brenda Edwards in the specially rewritten role of Deloris Van Cartier.

Jamie Wilson said today “I am thrilled to be collaborating again with Alan Menken, Glenn Slater, Douglas Carter Beane and Whoopi Goldberg to create a new version of Sister Act, in particular reworking the part of Deloris for an older actor and I’m so pleased that the hugely talented Brenda Edwards will launch this production for us. I’m also delighted to be continuing our relationship with Curve in Leicester by developing this new production with them, and I’m equally pleased that this production will be visiting other regional theatres ahead of a London run next Summer. We will be announcing our full creative team, further casting and some more surprises this Autumn!”

Whoopi Goldberg said “Deloris is a big fun character with lots of personality! Brenda auditioned for this show when it first happened in the UK and didn’t get the part because she was too old, so we’ve rectified that! Previous versions have had Deloris as a 23-year-old – but there are different stakes when you’re older. You can be much more irreverent when you’re older than you can be when you’re in your twenties and thirties. Time makes you funnier! I really am so thrilled Sister Act is coming back to the UK in 2020 with this new version”.

Sister Act features original music by Tony® and 8-time Oscar® winner Alan Menken (Disney’s Aladdin, Enchanted), lyrics by Glenn Slater, book by Bill and Cheri Steinkellner with additional book material by Douglas Carter Beane. Sister Act is produced by Jamie Wilson and Whoopi Goldberg. Tom Leonardis, Head of Whoopi’s production company, will also be on the producing team.

Tickets for Sister Act at Curve will go on sale to Friends and Supporters 15 Jul, Members, 16 – 26 Members and Groups 17 Jul and on general sale 19 Jul, all at 12noon. Tickets can be purchased online on www.curveonline.co.uk, over the phone on 0116 242 3595 or in person at Curve’s Box Office.

ArtReach awarded €1.3 million and appointed Lead Agency for major Europe - wide arts project

ArtReach has been successful in the most recent bid for the latest European wide project funded by Creative Europe. ArtReach has been awarded €1.3 million by Creative Europe to deliver a €2.6 million Europe-wide arts project Liberty. ArtReach, the Lead Partner for the project, is the only UK organisation in this year’s results to receive funding on this scale. The project will work in partnership with eleven other arts organisations representing ten European countries, including partners from previous ArtReach led pan-European projects altonale GmbH in Hamburg, the Museo dei Bambini in Rome, CESIE in Palermo and Teatrul Național Radu Stanca in Sibiu.

Liberty aims to raise issues and provoke discussion around issues of community cohesion, migration, local identity and European cultural identity. The focus for Liberty will be on young artists and young people’s perceptions of the future of Europe. Young people will be involved at all levels of the project, from creative development to delivery to artist development and audience engagement, and the project will enable young artists, curators and audiences from different countries to meet, collaborate and share inspiration.

Each programme of work will bring together a range of artists drawn from the European-wide Portfolio, across theatre, music, visual arts and spoken word. Performances will take place both in site-specific street locations and inside cultural or non-traditional spaces. Liberty will be an exploration, through art, of the future for European collaboration and joined-up working, and of the meaning of democracy and freedom in the 21st century. There is a particular focus on the views and ideas of young artists and young audiences with 750 young artists targeted as commissioning beneficiaries.

In the UK, additional work will be commissioned to become new ingredients in ArtReach's Journeys Festival International and Night of Festivals events, with many international artists from each of the partner countries participating in the UK. ArtReach's own commissioning will result in UK work going to each of the 9 other partner countries. Liberty will run from September 2019 until December 2022 across ten European countries, culminating in a major pan-European Liberty season running from May to October 2022. The Liberty season will feature a focussed programme of events in Leicester with all 12 partners delivering programming, much of which will be streamed and digitally shared.

David Hill, Founding Director and Chairman of ArtReach said: "The team at ArtReach is delighted that our successful track record of artistic leadership in European collaboration will be enhanced with this major award. It is brilliant for the work in our base city, Leicester, supported by Leicester City Council, but also for the development of our Journeys Festival International events in Manchester and Portsmouth."

Peter Knott, Area Director at Arts Council England, said: "Congratulations to ArtReach as they embark on this Europe-wide project. Investing in opportunities for young people is a key part of what the Arts Council does to nurture the next generation of creative talent, and Liberty is a really exciting project, giving hundreds of young people and emerging artists a voice and the chance to create work and forge partnerships on a truly international scale."

Phoenix customers put names on expanded cinema

Leicester's Phoenix is encouraging its customers to put their names on its expanded cinema and art centre as part of a new charitable fundraising programme. The campaign - 2020 | BE PART OF IT – offers individuals and businesses a variety of levels of name recognition in return for donations towards its Phoenix 2020 plan to become a four-screen independent cinema and art centre by 2020. Donations from £10 will be recognised with the individual's name on screen before every film, whilst customers donating £40 will see their name on the cinema's brand-new front doors. For £120, customers can sponsor a seat in one of the two new auditoria – complete with a message, quote or dedication - and for donations of £500 or above, a limited number of donors will be recognised at the entrance to one of its new screens.



Donations can be made at the Phoenix box office or online at phoenix.org.uk/donate. Phoenix already has £5.5 million in place and needs to raise at least £500,000 more to start building in 2020. The expansion – which has received planning permission - will transform the city centre charitable venue into a four-screen independent cinema, with a new art gallery, a larger café, a green roof terrace, and more spaces for making and learning.

Leicester City FC announce 'sensory hour' for King Power visitors with autism and additional needs

Imagine not being able to go to your favourite store for fear of getting sensory overload, or just not being able to cope in an environment that has bright lights and noise. This is the reality for many people living with autism and sensory issues. A trip to the shop, no matter how much they want to go there, might be just too stressful to contemplate. In recognition of this, Leicester City Football Club is organising a 'sensory hour' in the Foxes Fanstore at the King Power Stadium.

The 'sensory hour' will run on the first Friday of every month. Changes made during the hour include the Foxes Fanstore lowering its music levels and other background noises and dimming the lights where it is safe to do so. In addition to these changes, all staff have taken part in autism awareness training to give all individuals the best possible customer experience. The hour will run from 10am to 11am and will be specially allocated for individuals with a diagnosis of autism, their family and carers. This initiative is supported by more than 8,000 UK retailers and service providers.

Joe Orton, Leicester playwright statue appeal

The campaign to raise £120,000 to create a statue of playwright Joe Orton in his home town has started strongly, according to the team behind the plan. The appeal aims to raise £120,000 and has already broken through the £33,000 barrier with approximately two months to its deadline. The appeal has been organised by a group of fans in the city, and is headed by Orton's family and Dr Emma Parker, a leading Orton expert at the University of Leicester. Dr Parker said: "The response to the launch of the Joe Orton Statue Appeal has been fantastic locally and nationally. "There's clearly a strong wish to see Orton celebrated in the city and people everywhere are behind this. It's very exciting." Find out more about the campaign and make a donation <https://www.spacehive.com/joe-orton-statue-appeal?searchText=joe+orton>.

Orton, who grew up on the city's Saffron Lane estate, became a figure of major standing in the theatre in the 1960s and beyond because of his dark, witty comedies, including Entertaining Mr Sloane, Loot and What the Butler Saw. He was murdered by his lover and early-days writing partner Kenneth Halliwell in 1967 at the age of 34. A number of artists have backed the appeal.

Stephen Fry said: "Joe Orton has always been a hero to me, both in his work and in the authenticity, wit and wonder of his life. A statue is a wonderful idea. "His career, although short lived, was incredibly significant, influencing future generations of writers, so much so that his unique style has given rise to the adjective 'Ortonesque' to describe work that blends the comic and the macabre." Sir Ian McKellen said: "The idea that in Orton Square there should be a statue, a memorial to Joe Orton is terrific." Civil rights campaigner and former MP Peter Tatchell is the latest public figure to speak out.

Mr Tatchell said: "A statue to memorialise Joe Orton's outstanding contribution to the theatre is long overdue. "I commend efforts to ensure that he receives this much deserved remembrance." The statue is to be placed in Orton Square, in front of the Curve theatre. A competition is to be staged to find the designer.

To donate please go to <https://www.spacehive.com/joe-orton-statue-appeal>.

Leicester ranked fourth for cheapest student living costs in the UK, according to new study

A study has revealed that Leicester has the fourth cheapest living costs for students in the UK. TotallyMoney looked at eight cost of living factors including halls rent, gym membership and the price of a pint in order to rank universities. The University of Leicester came out as the fourth cheapest behind Bangor University, University of Nottingham and University of Manchester. James

Why there is a white and gold postbox in the city centre

The postbox outside the Haymarket Shopping Centre has been given the new colour scheme by Royal Mail. The makeover has been carried out to celebrate the fantastic achievements of both the men's and the women's England cricket teams. The gesture is similar to when postboxes were painted gold in cities all over the country after the 2012 Olympics. England men's cricket team secured victory in the ICC World Cup - the first time they had won the competition in their history.

The women's squad became world champions in 2017 for the third time in their history. There are 15 of the special-edition postboxes in locations all over the country which hosted ICC World Cup events. Leicester's own Grace Road held fixtures from the ICC Women's World Cup in which England proudly claimed the title.

Tom Harrison, chief executive officer of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said: "It is a historic achievement for England cricket to be both the Men's and Women's ICC World Cup champions. "We are very grateful to Royal Mail for honouring our victorious teams and paying a special tribute to the captains Heather Knight and Eoin Morgan. "We would like to thank Royal Mail for their generosity."

A dedicated Royal Mail team is transforming the 15 specially-selected postboxes. The postboxes are painted white and feature stylised images of a gold cricket bat, ball and stumps. Decorated for a three-month period, the postboxes will be complemented by a permanent gold plaque. The plaque's inscription will celebrate England cricket's historic position as joint holder of both ICC Cricket World Cup titles.

Special-edition sheets of stamps will also be available to purchase displaying images of both squads. Each sheet will include two 1st Class stamps, and two £1.60 value stamps and retail at £4.60.



Step forward for King Power Stadium expansion plan

Leicester City Football Club has appointed Legends International to undertake crucial market research that will underpin plans for the proposed expansion of King Power Stadium. The research process is intended to establish a better understanding of supporters' matchday routines and preferences, which will in turn assist the Club in planning the development of fan-orientated facilities and services to best enhance the matchday experience.

The multi-staged study will include all current Season Ticket Holders, ensuring supporter input contributes to the formative stages of planning, combined with focused market testing to gauge interest in other prospective offerings. Leicester City Chief Executive Susan Whelan said: "Comprehensive market research is an essential element of any development of this scale to ensure all decisions are supported by robust feedback and analysis. We are delighted that process will now commence and will be led by the experience and expertise of Legends International. "Rather than simply increasing capacity, our aim is to transform King Power Stadium into a world class sporting and events destination, opening a range of options, now being explored as part of our longer-term development. Supporter and stakeholder insights will help us to sharpen our focus based on meaningful intelligence and will ensure that we deliver the best facilities for our fans, and for the city of Leicester."



Leicester City's owners, the Srivaddhanaprabha family, confirmed in 2018 the Club's intention to develop the King Power Stadium site, including increasing its capacity from its existing 32,243 seats. The venue has been home to the Foxes since the Club moved from nearby Filbert Street in 2002.

Credit: Business Link

Footballer sculpture is Kicking it to Plastics

There's a new addition to LCFC's squad this season – and he's made entirely out of plastic! A six-metre tall sculpture of a footballer, created from waste plastic found in Leicester's waterways, has been unveiled in Abbey Park. It's accompanied by a scoreboard – reading Leicester 1, Plastics 0 – which was created from more than 9,000 plastic bottle tops by students at Ellesmere College. It's the result of the Kicking it to Plastics project, run by environmental rangers in the city council's parks team, with support from Leicester City in the Community and Trent Rivers Trust. It follows the successful River Monster project last year, which saw a Loch Ness-style 'monster' sculpture created from waste plastic recovered from the city's waterways.



Education work delivered by Leicestershire Cares business volunteers

Leicestershire Cares is an award winning, creative, results-orientated charity that brokers partnerships between the business sector, schools and community groups in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Last year, business volunteers worked with 6,500 students in 67 primary and secondary schools across Leicester and Leicestershire, delivering mock interviews, career talks, employability workshops, job fairs, and one-to-one support with maths and English.



Leicestershire Cares latest annual reports will be released in the next couple of weeks on the news page: <https://www.leicestershirecares.co.uk/about-charity/news-events/>. To find out more or to get involved, please contact Helen Treadwell, Education Officer, at Helen@leicestershirecares.co.uk.

Funding is available for business grants up to £5,000 funded by the Joint Air Quality Unit

Department for Transport and Defra have established a new joint unit to deliver national plans to improve air quality and meet the EU limits. The Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) are offering business grants up to £5,000 until 2020 to implement changes at their premises which encourage staff and visitors to travel actively and sustainably by walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. If you are a business that would benefit in improving access to travel friendly facilities and infrastructure, you can make it easier for yourself and your employees by installing new bike racks, shower facilities or perhaps e-bikes for close to travel meetings. For an application form, please email nikita.kalyanji@leicester.gov.uk.

Free Opportunities with Visit Britain

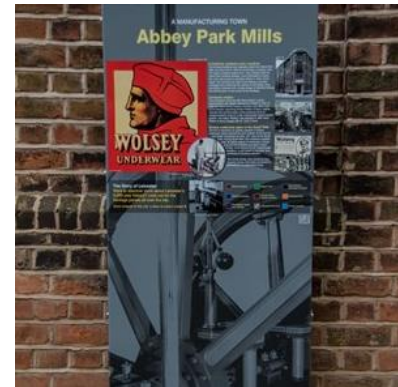
The Visit Britain Supplier Directory <https://trade.visitbritain.com/supplier-directory/> is a free of charge listing opportunity for UK suppliers, and Visit Britain's shop window for the travel trade. Businesses can register on the site and showcase their product or service.

Please help to improve the profile of Leicester & Leicestershire as a tourism destination by taking a few minutes to register your business. It would be great to see lots more attractions and accommodation providers featured. It can also help us all find out more about the other tourism businesses in our area. You can specify if you work with Free Independent Travellers (FIT) or groups.

Another opportunity for those businesses interested in working with the travel trade is a new toolkit for inbound tourism: <https://trade.visitbritain.com/research-and-training/training/uk-supplier-training/>. This is a free resource to help tourism businesses develop and promote themselves in international markets. It is available in an online version, and if businesses want a hard copy instead, this can be requested via the above link as well. There will be regional workshops to provide face to face training rolling out later this year.

New programme of heritage panels approved

The latest phase of heritage interpretation panels telling the story of Leicester's fascinating history have been given the go ahead. Leicester City Council has drawn up plans for 19 new interpretation panels to be located throughout the city, bringing to life key events and sites from the city's past. They will include a series of panels telling the story of the life and family of renowned furniture designer and architect Ernest Gimson, on the centenary of his death. The role of Raw Dykes will be also explored, focusing both on the Roman earthworks and later role in the English Civil War, along with panels telling the history of the Gas Cottages and Leicester Gasworks in Aylestone Road.



Sports heritage will also be showcased on panels telling the history of Leicester City Football Club, Leicester Fosse FC 1884, Leicester County Cricket Club and Welford Road rugby stadium. Leicester Royal Infirmary's history will also feature, as will heritage sites including the Victorian Asfordby Street Police Station in North Evington, and Winstanley House in Braunstone. This first phase of new panels follows the 112 already located across the city and neighboring historic villages, as part of work to support the city's tourism agenda and help both residents and visitors to understand and appreciate key sites across Leicester. The panels also work in conjunction with the historical information at the Story of Leicester website, on www.storyofleicester.info.

VAL Boosts Local Economy by £1.7m

The charity organisations recently released Annual Review highlights the fantastic work Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) and its partners have done throughout 2018-19 to change people's lives for the better. This year has been an extremely positive one at VAL, with key achievements including supporting 612 voluntary groups and facilitating £3.3m in funding for 37 of them through VAL's Voluntary Sector Support Service. The continuing success of VAL's employability projects, YES and GREAT, have seen over 170 people being helped into employment resulting in £1.7m being added to the economy through average wages. These projects have supported people in the region to overcome barriers and challenges that have prevented them from finding a job or seeking further education and training.

The impact they have had is huge, with people such as Eda, who was a GREAT Project Participant, commenting: "Before joining the GREAT Project, I didn't leave my house. Now, I have completed my time with the project and it's given me a new lease of life. I'm so grateful." VAL has been helping volunteer and community groups to thrive for over fifty years and across a range of services encompassing education, employment, support and funding for some of the hardest to reach and most marginalised people in society.



Anil Majithia, Chair of VAL Trustee Board, says: "VAL's fundamental aim is to change people's lives for the better, which we do directly and with the support of partners. Following a difficult year in 2017/18, it gives me great pleasure to be able to report a much improved financial and operational performance for 2018/19." Kevan Liles, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action LeicesterShire, continues: "Thanks to the hard work of our trustee board, our staff and our volunteers, we have

started this year in a better, more sustainable position. Despite the challenges, we are full of hope for the future and looking forward to seeing what the coming year brings.”

To find out how your business, charity or community group could benefit from talking to VAL contact them on 0116 257 5050 or visit <https://valonline.org.uk/>.

University of Leicester appoints Nishan Canagarajah as new vice-chancellor

The University of Leicester has appointed a new vice-chancellor. Professor Nishan Canagarajah is joining from the University of Bristol where he has been serving as research and enterprise pro-vice chancellor. He will take up the post in November. The role has been unfilled since March when Professor Paul Boyle announced he was leaving the job after five years to take up a post at Swansea University. Leicester University said Prof Canagarajah had been chosen from a field of strong candidates following a very competitive recruitment process. Sri Lankan-born Prof Canagarajah has worked at Bristol since 1993 becoming professor of multimedia signal processing in 2004.

Prof Canagarajah said: “I am both honoured and delighted to take up this role at the University of Leicester. “The university has a strong reputation for its international research, its commitment to widening participation and its pioneering approach to learning and teaching. “I am really looking forward to joining such a vibrant, diverse and inclusive university and city and working with colleagues to make Leicester a partner of choice for students and staff, to enhance our reputation across the world and to further build our strong research and civic partnerships.”

The President of the University of Leicester Students’ Union Oge Obioha said: “The Students’ Union are really looking forward to working with Professor Canagarajah to enhance the student academic experience and promote student wellbeing. “Huge congratulations to him on being our first BAME VC.”



Prof Nishan Canagarajah (Image: UoL)

University of Leicester council chairman Gary Dixon said: “I would like to take this opportunity to give mine and the council’s thanks for the contribution of Professor Edmund Burke, who in his role as acting vice-chancellor has worked hard to achieve significant progress in a number of key areas across the university. “His openness and transparency have been welcomed by colleagues and he has been instrumental in driving through a number of key initiatives to strengthen the university’s performance.”

Awards and Accolades

National award for Leicester's flagship museum

Leicester’s New Walk Museum has won a prestigious national award that recognises its contribution to heritage education. The city council’s flagship museum picked up a Sandford Award after impressing judges with its learning programme, which inspires visitors to explore the worlds of history, arts, natural history and paleontology. In their assessment of the museum, the judges noted that “a visit to one or all of the galleries will inspire awe and wonder and engage and inform learners of all ages.”

As part of their report, the judging team looked at the welcome given to schools, the facilities available at the museum, the quality of teaching, and the learning and engagement of participants.

They also carried out an assessment of the informal learning programme and visited the museum's two new Ancient Egypt galleries – which were specially designed to meet the needs of schools.

Cllr Piara Singh Clair, deputy city mayor for culture, said: “This Sandford Award is a welcome endorsement of the quality of New Walk Museum's education programmes. “We're proud that the museum is helping to improve people's understanding of their local and national heritage – and we're very proud to receive this prestigious national award.” All the winners of the 2019 Sandford Awards will receive their awards at a ceremony in the autumn. More information about the awards is available at sandfordaward.org.

City museum is second most visited free attraction in East Midlands

Leicester's flagship museum was the second most visited free attraction in the East Midlands last year, according to a survey carried out by Visit England. Thanks to a blockbuster exhibition, lots of popular events, new investment and some museum-friendly weather, visitor numbers to the museum were up by more than 27% last year - rising from 182,361 in 2017 to 232,342 visitors in 2018. Leicester City Council, which runs the museum, boosted visitor numbers by hosting a record-breaking exhibition in July 2018 - the Star Wars-inspired *May The Toys Be With You*.

Attracting more than 75,000 visitors in its three-month run, *May The Toys Be With You* was one of New Walk Museum's most successful ever exhibitions. The museum also hosted events marking the centenary of women's suffrage, with visitors flocking to see the Alice Hawkins and Votes for Women exhibition, while the opening of two brand new galleries dedicated to life and death in Ancient Egypt – funded by the Wolfson Foundation - have also proved popular with families and schools. Visitor numbers were also boosted by major events, such as the Leicester International Music Festival, while hundreds of people attended weddings at the museum – with even more people expected to tie the knot there, now that the iconic dinosaur gallery has been licensed as a wedding venue. The council has also invested in New Walk Museum, revamping the entrance area with a stunning feature staircase and installing a lift and new Changing Places toilet facilities to make the museum more accessible to more people.

Deputy city mayor Cllr Piara Singh Clair said: “It's obviously very pleasing that New Walk Museum was the second most visited free attraction in the whole of the East Midlands last year and we will keep striving to find new ways to attract, entertain and educate new audiences, while keeping our regular visitors coming back time and time again.” Three other city council-run museums made it into the top 20, with Leicester's Guildhall (8th), Abbey Pumping Station (12th) and Newarke Houses Museum (13th) all amongst the region's most visited free attractions.

Leicester Cathedral was the only place of worship to feature in the top 20, with its 135,678 visitors making it the fourth most visited free attraction in the East Midlands last year. Wollaton Hall & Park was the most visited free attraction in the East Midlands, with 318,387 visitors in 2018. The survey also shows that Tate Modern in London was the most visited free attraction in the country last year, with nearly six million (5,868,562) visitors in 2018. More information about the annual survey is available at www.visitbritain.org.

Festivals and Events

New regular food pop-up for St Martin's Square

You can now enjoy a pizza pop-up every other week from Martin Bros Pizza at Tonne Bar in St Martin's Square. Serving up neo-Neapolitan pizza from a wood fired oven using only the finest ingredients, Martin Bros have built up quite a name for themselves locally for the quality of their food, regularly selling out at their events.



Leicester's first ReVive Festival a big success, April – June

Over 3 weekends at the end of June, Leicester's first ReVive Festival captured the imagination of Leicester cultural organisations, venues and businesses who put on films, dance and music and embraced the 1960s with shop window displays, 1960s prices and themed food and drinks. Pulled together by the Mods: Shaping a generation team partner, Leicester charity Soft Touch Arts, the festival tied in with the hugely successful Mods Shaping a Generation and Modified exhibitions at New Walk Museum & Soft Touch Arts curated and organised by Soft Touch Arts, Shaun Knapp and Joe Nixon of Arch Creative.



The exhibition attracted 35,000 visitors over a 10-week period from April-June 2019 and the numbers were boosted significantly over the opening weekend of ReVive Festival. Leicester went well and truly went Mod, and it was heart-warming to see local businesses make such an effort and dress their shop windows with vintage scooters, clothes and create 1960s menus, cocktails and offer discounts to festival goers. The opening weekend had lots of different events taking place across the city, from the opening of Mods 1964 photographic exhibition at LCB Depot (a sister exhibition to the Shaping a Generation show), 60s fashion talks, DJs, bands, films at the Phoenix, Curve Young Dance Company performing their 'Mod inspired dance pieces' at LCB Depot, Soft Touch Arts and New Walk Museum Forecourt.

Sunday 16th June was the main festival day treating the public to the spectacle of 200 beautiful vintage scooters ride onto the new market square for Leicester's first on-street scooter exhibition, Scooterama. An accompanying vintage market with street food stalls tempted hundreds of shoppers and passers-by. The weekend was topped off with a free outdoor screening on the De Montfort University big screen of The Beatles 60s classic film A Hard Day's Night. This was kindly sponsored by Leicester Racecourse.

All the businesses involved reported a great atmosphere higher footfall in the city centre and increased takings during the festival. Revive Festival was sponsored by BID Leicester and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund East Midlands and Leicester City Council. For further information on ReVive festival contact Christina Wigmore – chris@soft-touch.org.uk.

Rathayatra Festival of Chariots, 14 July

Visitors to Leicester city centre were treated to one of the most eye-catching spectacles possible as they witnessed Hare Krishna devotees pull a giant, 40ft high chariot through the streets on Sunday 14 July. The annual Rathayatra Festival of Chariots is one of the most vibrant and colourful in the city's festival calendar – and the second largest of its kind to be staged anywhere in Europe. Thousands of people gathered in Granby Street to watch the start of today's procession, celebrating the 50 anniversary of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskon) which finished at Cossington Park.

Organised by the society's Leicester chapter, it honours the Hindu tradition when God goes out into the streets to share his joy with the people. The giant chariot carried the deities Lord Jagannatha (Krishna), his sister Subhadra and Lord Balarama – and was accompanied by music, singing, and dancing. The event began with an inauguration ceremony involving community leaders at the Hare Krishna Centre, in Granby Street. The procession then made its way along Gallowtree Gate, passing the Clock Tower and heading out along the Golden Mile.



The traditional Jagannatha Rathayatra is a celebration over 5000 years-old, observed in the ancient holy city of Jagannatha Puri in Orissa, India, making it the oldest street festival in the world. Devotees believe that if they get the honour of pulling the ropes of the giant chariot, carrying Lord Krishna, known as Jagannatha – Lord of the Universe, then at the end of this life, they will be granted a place in the spiritual world.

Rathayatra Festival of Chariots celebrates ISKCON's 50th anniversary in the UK (Image: Leicester Mercury)

Magic of Thailand Festival, Victoria Park, 20-21 July

A celebration of Thai food, dancing, sport and culture enthralled visitors to Leicester's Victoria Park on Saturday 20 – Sunday 21 July. Crowds descended on the park for its inaugural Magic of Thailand festival. Up to 2,000 people were treated to colourful performances on the main stage of traditional Thai music, dancing, wrestling and Muay Thai boxing, which included ladyboy shows featuring Brimey Spears, Rihanna and Beyoncé impersonators.

Organisers were keen to include Leicester in a series of 10 festivals taking place across the UK this summer. With the city's growing affection for Thailand through the football exploits of Leicester City and their King Power owners Aiyawatt 'Top' Srivaddhanaprabha and his late father, Vichai, the city proved a perfect choice.



Magic of Thailand Festival (Image: Leicestershire Live)

Leicester Caribbean Carnival 2019, 4 August

Leicester Caribbean Carnival returned to the city on Sunday 4 August. One of the city's most popular events, the Carnival attracts thousands of people annually both watching the parade through the city and joining in the celebrations on Victoria Park. This year the event had a Windrush theme and celebrated Caribbean migrants' contribution to the economic and cultural development of the United Kingdom.



Images: Fothergill Photography

Gigs in the Gardens, De Montfort Hall 15-26 August

De Montfort Hall opened up their gardens for a summer of large-scale outdoor events across the last two weekends of August. The line-up on Saturday 17th August included Busted, the band that broke into public consciousness in 2003 with a fistful of hook-laden pop songs. With 4 UK number one's, 2 Brits, 4 studio albums to their name and over 5 million records sold. Scouting for Girls also joined them on the day - the pop-centric London trio played a collection of new material and classic songs. To date, Scouting for Girls have sold over 2,000,000 records, and have been nominated for four Brits and one Ivor Novello Award.

Ending the first week were the Kaiser Chiefs, The Vaccines and The Twang. The Kaiser Chiefs are one of Britain's most treasured bands The Vaccines and Birmingham rockers The Twang, best known for songs including Twit Twoo, Elusive Soul and Put It On The Dancefloor also performed. Friday 23rd August saw Groove Armada and DJ's Pete Tong and Danny Howard take over the outdoor stage. Meanwhile, BBC Introducing East Midlands curated a day of local music with up and coming bands on Saturday 24th August.

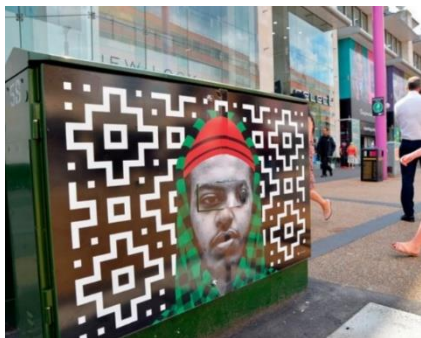
Years and Years whose single 'King' from their debut album reached number one in the UK singles and made top 10 charts around the world performed on Sunday 25th August. On the same day, Jax Jones entertained the crowds with his unique songs. The Gigs in the Gardens series concluded on Monday 26th August with the Bardi Symphony Orchestra, performing popular film and stage classics including John William's best-loved pieces from Star Wars, ET and Raiders of the Lost Ark – before a spectacular firework encore completed it.



Journeys Festival, 15-30 August

Leicester was turned into a giant art gallery overnight. A number of artworks were installed on green boxes and buildings across the city centre. The colourful portraits showed the faces of individuals - but what was the meaning behind them? It was all for a project called Portrait of a City, part of the annual Journeys Festival International in Leicester. The festival aimed to identify and exhibit the exceptional work and talents of refugee and asylum seeker artists living in the city. Portrait of a City saw large-scale images of people who work in the local community displayed in 17 locations across the city. They featured on prominent buildings Highcross, Curve Theatre, John Lewis and BBC Radio Leicester, and also on a number of Openreach telecoms exchange points, or green boxes, throughout the city centre.

The project was a combination of work from international artists, Farhad Berahman (Iran/UK) and Sibomana (Belgium/Italy). Farhad captured the portraits here in Leicester, before they crossed



borders to the waiting hands of Sibomana who digitally enhanced them. The project was produced by Leicester-based arts organisation ArtReach, and received funding from BID Leicester, The National Lottery Community Fund and support from Openreach. Simon Jenner BID Leicester Director said: "BID Leicester was delighted to sponsor Portrait of a City, part of the 2019 Journeys Festival International. "The incredibly talented artists turned the city's streets into an art gallery that is accessible to all. "The portraits on show emphasise diversity as one of Leicester's key strengths.

Portrait of a City turns Leicester into an outdoor gallery (Image: Leicester Mercury / Chris Gordon)

Leicester Belgrave Mela, 18 August

Leicester Belgrave Mela took place on Sunday 18 August. The city centre was taken over by a celebration of Indian culture that will spread across Humberstone Gate, the Market Place and High Street. Huge crowds came to the city centre to enjoy the day of Indian-inspired arts, music, food, fashion and entertainment. Leicester's local Sabras Radio hosted the main stage where a line-up of popular singers performed live. Headlining the musical acts was Canadian singer known as Roach Killa, who were joined by other well-known acts such as Jind Dhillon, Jay Kadn and Jay Singh.



The Market Place was transformed into a South Asian food and shopping bazaar where you could sample freshly prepared street food or treat yourself to colourful, Indian fashion. There was also an opportunity to discover an array of local talent being showcased on a smaller stage near High Street. One of the many highlights of the cultural celebration was an hour-long performance by the prestigious, Shiamak Midlands dance academy.

Also dazzling the streets of Leicester were the Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band and The Circus Raj who were part of the latest remake of Disney's Dumbo. The cast of dancers, puppeteers, aerialists, acrobats, rope walkers and more are known as some of India's most elite street circus performers.

City Festival, 19-25 August

The 2019 City Festival took place over seven fun-packed days in August. This year's theme was 'Out of this World', celebrating all things outer space. For the first time, the centrepiece of the festival was a huge purpose-built transparent venue known as The Dome in Jubilee Square, which was the focal point for a programme of daytime family-friendly activities throughout the week, before transforming into a stunning performance space for live concerts and shows in the evenings.



During the day Jubilee Square hosted free dazzling international street arts, dance performances, art exhibitions and interactive activities and games for the whole family. Visitors from other worlds included giant insects and robots. Evening music artists included BC Camplight, British Sea Power, Jaws, The Urban Voodoo Machine and a Bollywood Musical Evening. There was also be a variety of local and national comedy showcases featuring Carly Smallman, Robert White, Dane Baptiste, Dan Nightingale, and Lloyd Griffith - all alongside delicious street food from Canteen.

Leicester Pride 2019, 31 August

Rainbow flags were waving across Leicester as the annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) festival returned to the streets. More than 2,000 people were estimated to have taken part in a vibrant parade through Leicester city centre, which travelled up New Walk before ending at Victoria Park. Afterwards, around 10,000 people descended on the park for the Pride Festival, which featured two stages of live entertainment, a funfair, and food and drink stalls.

Community groups including the Leicester LGBT Centre, the 999 LGBT Network and Trade Sexual Health also featured at the park. Judy Fallon, manager of the Leicester LGBT Centre, said: "We're here today to celebrate inclusivity and acceptance for LGBT communities. "We're doing some fun stuff, we've got an affirmation board for people to put a message on, we've got a tombola and we're selling cards to raise funds for our organisation. "But we're also trying to promote the services that we offer - including counselling services, social and support groups, and LGBT awareness training. "Today we're also launching our LGBT inclusion award which organisations will be able to apply for."



Pride 2019 procession through city centre and carnival at Victoria Park, Image: Leicestershire Live

Near the festival village, Aylestone Athletic RFC hosted an inclusive rugby match against the Northampton Outlaws, an openly gay and bisexual rugby team. Following the game, the teams took part in social activities in nearby pub, The Old Horse. Across the city, the LCB Depot in Rutland Street hosted a Family Pride, with DJs, dance sessions, and storytelling for children. The creative hub changed its sign to the 'LGBT+ Depot' for the festival. The fun will continue well into the evening as after parties take place at venues including the Dover Castle, Rainbow and Dove and Helsinki.

Black History Month Leicester – October 2019

Black History Month 2019 explores the theme of Archiving the Past, Reflecting the Future. With events throughout the city, Black History Month will acknowledge and celebrate the cultural contribution that the African and African Caribbean community have made to the East Midlands through arts, culture and heritage. For further information, please visit: <https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/VCBDCw0Z1fL90VgTBL-2-?domain=serendipity-uk.us2.list-manage.com>.

Soft Touch Arts fundraising art auction and networking evening, 1 October

Soft Touch Arts is holding a fundraising art auction and networking evening on 1st October 2019, 6-9pm at the Mattioli Woods Leicester Office to raise funds to keep a special creative enterprise project running. The project offers opportunities for disadvantaged young people with creative talents to learn how to market and sell their art and craft work and gain transferrable employment skills. Well-known local artists such as Tim Fowler, Jonjo Elliott, Lucy Stevens and Loz Atkinson have donated art, alongside nationally acclaimed artists such as Scarlett Raven & Marc Marot. There will be something for every taste and pocket and you might just snap up a piece at a bargain price by a future art world star!

Tickets are priced at £20 each and include a welcome glass of fizz, delicious food from Chutney Ivy, a bar by Burleighs Gin, live piano music plus a free prize draw entry for a mystery piece of art with every ticket purchased. There will also be a raffle to win further art prizes. Tickets can be purchased via Eventbrite here <https://bit.ly/2LAZWqV> or by emailing holly@soft-touch.org.uk.



Plans for 2019 Leicester Design Season revealed, with exhibitions, events and workshops, 4-25 October

Organisers of the second annual Leicester Design Season are putting added emphasis on business involvement this year in their celebration of the local creative scene. Design Season 2 will take place this October, looking at what is going on locally – but with eyes also firmly on the national and international scene – in areas such as urban regeneration, illustration and new technologies. The month-long celebration revolves around the LCB Depot, which provides workspace for creative start-ups in the city's Cultural Quarter.

This year it will have a strong focus on architecture, with the Leicestershire & Rutland Society of Architects curating a series of events. LCB Depot will also host a LOOP exhibition for graphic designers, illustrators and artists. They will form part of a wider programme including industry talks, seminars and workshops, as well as city trails and other interactive experiences for people working in the industry and the wider community.

Other partners will include Create Leicester, Graffwerk, Creed Design, ESL games, Holland Alexander, Haley Sharpe Design, Parkside Tiles and others. James Burkmar, workspace manager at LCB Depot, is co-ordinating the month. For further information please visit:

<http://www.lcbdepot.co.uk/designseason>.

The Gin To My Tonic Festival - Athena, 19 October 2019

The Gin To My Tonic Festival brings together over 100 different gins from across the UK and beyond. Each gin stocked behind the bars has been selected based on outstanding craftsmanship, delightful flavour and the most enjoyable drinking experiences. The festival is here to take you on a journey of gin discovery! The Gin To My Tonic Festival will take place at Athena, adding a touch of Art Deco glamour to the event.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thegintomytonic/228783/>.

Tourism Growth Plan launch event

Tickets for the Leicester Business Festival Tourism Growth Plan launch event “Competing as a 21st Century Tourism Destination” on 31st October 1-5pm at St Martins House in Leicester (next to the Guildhall) are now available on the LBF website using the link here:

<https://lbf2019.ticketleap.com/competing-as-a-21st-century-tourism-destination/>

Plans take shape for Leicester's Christmas real ice rink in Jubilee Square

Leicester’s real ice rink will be back for Christmas 2019 – and this year there’ll be a brand new feature for skaters to enjoy. The city council plans to give the popular attraction an extra dimension this year by adding an outdoor section that will give people the chance to skate under the stars. The new trail will take skaters out of the marquee and into Jubilee Square, where the stunning Wheel of Light and dozens of twinkling Christmas trees will create a truly festive atmosphere. But if the December weather turns out to be more damp and drizzly than crisp and Christmassy, skaters will still be able to take cover under the marquee’s clear roof and enjoy their session on the ice, whatever the weather.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “Our real ice rink will be at the heart of Leicester’s Christmas programme once again, but this year we wanted to offer skaters something new to enjoy. “While the main rink will be just as big as last year, we’re creating some extra space this year by adding a new outdoor section. “This additional feature will give people the option of skating in the open air – and let those who aren’t skating share in the fun by watching their friends and family from Jubilee Square.”

Leicester’s Christmas ice rink will measure 40m x 17m – the same size as last year – with the new trail in the space facing the historic Wygston’s House. Subject to planning permission, the Jubilee



Square ice rink will open to the public on Thursday 5 December and close on Sunday 5 January 2020. It will be open every day, apart from Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Plans to bring the Wheel of Light back to Jubilee Square for Christmas have already been approved, with the popular big wheel due to open to the public on 15 November. A full programme of events taking place in Leicester this Christmas 2019 will be launched in the autumn.

Don't miss out on Christmas in Leicester sponsorship and advertising opportunities

There are some exciting sponsorship opportunities available for Christmas in Leicester for companies who wish to support the city in its efforts to deliver a brilliant programme of family activities this Christmas. To find out more about the benefits for sponsors please contact Maggie.Shutt@leicester.gov.uk. If you are interested in advertising on the ice rink then please contact Bally.Singh@leicester.gov.uk.

New show for children Giraffes Can't Dance announced for Christmas at Curve

Curve has announced its 2019 Christmas show for children and their families. The production is brand new and based on best-selling picture book Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andrae and Guy Parker-Rees. Giraffes Can't Dance was first published by Orchard Books in 1999 and has been translated into 34 languages. The stage adaptation of the book will open at Curve over Christmas and be staged at Rose Theatre Kingston during Easter 2020 before embarking on a national tour. The touching tale follows Gerald the Giraffe, who wants nothing more than to dance at the great Jungle Dance.

Giraffes Can't Dance is aimed at young children, and the run includes a relaxed performance for those with sensory issues. Speaking about the production, Curve's chief executive Chris Stafford and artistic director Nikolai Foster said in a joint statement: "Giraffes really can dance! Giles Andrae's world is richly imaginative and a beautifully colourful account of the giraffe who finds his dancing shoes and unique freedom of expression." The show is recommended for ages 3-6 years. Children will also be able to creatively explore the show through dancing and dramatic activities during a number of workshops.

Vivid Experience Presents Wonderland 2019, World Class Christmas Parties at Athena

Be part of the ultimate Christmas party experience this year. 'Wonderland' at Athena fuses incredible entertainment with a delicious festive feast and a spectacularly themed environment, to produce a range of Christmas parties recognised as the very best in Leicester. Experience an enchanting land where mysterious creatures roam and amazing sights take hold. Spectacular 'Wonderland' theming throughout the award-winning venue. World class traditional cirque style aerial and ground based entertainment such as tightrope walking, trapeze, flying hoop, contortion, fire and acro-balance.

For further information, please visit: <https://www.leicesterchristmasparties.co.uk/#>.

“Circuit Breakers” - Leicester Comedy Festival launch fund raising campaign to support emerging comedians

Organisers of the annual Leicester Comedy Festival have today launched a crowd funding campaign to raise £3,000 to continue their support of new and emerging comedians. The festival, which is produced by registered charity Big Difference Company, are appealing to comedy fans and members of the public to pledge money to enable the festival to develop their support for comedians breaking onto the UK comedy circuit. “Circuit Breakers” is a development programme which will benefit comedians who are just starting out and enable them to perform at the festival, which takes place again in February 2020.



The programme first took place as part of Leicester Comedy Festival 2018, and took place again in 2019, following successful crowd funding campaigns where members of the public donated money. Each year, producers of the festival have been inundated with applications from emerging comedians from across the UK so have decided to run the programme again but need financial support to enable this to happen. Members of the public who pledge money will receive a range of exclusive rewards, including discounts on festival tickets and invitations to private events.

Pledges can now be made via <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/circuit-breakers-2020>.

Applications from comedians who want to apply to benefit from Circuit Breakers 2020 will open later this year. Leicester Comedy Festival will run from 5-23rd February and the full programme will be announced at the end of October. Further information will be available from <https://comedy-festival.co.uk/>

September 2019 Festival and Event Listings

Saturday 7 September	Leicester Riders Pre-Season USA Select	Morningside Arena	7.30pm
Tuesday 10 September	Northamptonshire	Fischer County Ground, Grace Road	10.30am
Tuesday 10 September	Afternoon Racing	Leicester Racecourse	Gates Open - 12.20pm First Race - 2.20pm Last Race - 5.25pm
Saturday 14 September	De Montfort University open day	De Montfort University Campus	9.30am - 3pm
Saturday 14 September	Sonu Nigam Live	Morningside Arena	7 - 11.30pm
Thursday 19 - Saturday 22	Leicester International Music Festival	Various Indoor	Various
Friday 20 September	Leicester Riders Provisional	Morningside Arena	7.30-9.30pm
Saturday 21 September	Leicester City v Spurs	Leicester City Football Club	12.30pm
Saturday 17 September	Cosmopolitan Carnival	City centre various sites	2-9pm
Saturday & Sunday 21 & 22 September	Louie Spence	Morningside Arena	5-8pm
Monday 23 September	Lancashire	Fischer County Ground, Grace Road	10.30am
Monday 23 September	Afternoon Racing	Leicester Racecourse	Gates Open - 11.50am First Race - 1.50pm Last Race - 5.05pm
Friday 27 September	Leicester Riders Provisional	Morningside Arena	7.30-9.30pm
Saturday 28 September	Leicester City v Newcastle	Leicester City Football Club	5.30pm
Sunday 29 September	Colour Run	Victoria Park	10am - 1pm
Sunday 29 September	Greyfriars Open Streets	New Market Square / Greyfriars	1-4pm

For more information on Festivals and Events please visit: <http://www.visitleicester.info>

Get in Touch

If you know someone who would like to receive this report, please send contact details to gitte.magielse@leicester.gov.uk.

If you have news about your own business or industry for inclusion in these reports, would like further information or if I can help you in anyway, then please do get in touch. My contact details are as follows:

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