

City Centre Director
January 2020
Update Report

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Happy New Year!

Welcome to a new decade and to the Chinese Zodiac Year of the Rat, a year expected to be about progression and starting new projects with great energy. This first report of 2020 is full of good news about progress being made in our great city.

Thank you for your kind comments about how useful you have found these reports. The circulation has grown tremendously, however, we have been told that some emails are going into the junk box. This is most likely because of the scale of the mailing, so if you are missing your monthly report, please check your junk box!

Please share this report with your colleagues and let them know that if they would like to be added to our mailing list to receive the report directly, then they should please contact gitte.magielse@leicester.gov.uk.

Also, don't forget to send us news about your organisation's achievements, awards, growth, future plans, etc. Please send your information to gitte.magielse@leicester.gov.uk.

Sarah Harrison, City Centre Director

Christmas

Christmas in Leicester attracted hundreds and thousands of visitors to the city centre to enjoy a great mix of experiences over the festive period.

Over 30,000 skaters took to the ice at Jubilee Square ice rink and thousands visited Santa in the Square and experienced the Lightweight globe supported by BID Leicester in new Market Square.



The Christmas Light Switch On and the Christmas tree at Clock Tower were sponsored by Octopus Energy and we would like to thank them very much for their continued support. Over 20,000 came into the city centre on November 21st for the light switch on in Humberstone Gate, Canteen in new Market Square and the tableau, Nativity scene, street artists and a brass band in Town Hall Square. Highcross staged an amazing Winter Galactical event starring Titan and Boogie Storm. This activity was set against the backdrop of more than 16,000 Christmas lights creating a wonderful festive atmosphere in the city centre.

Christmas in Leicester 2020 – Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities



Christmas In Leicester 2020 planning is already underway and there are some great opportunities for businesses to support the events and activities through sponsorship and advertising.

Financial support from businesses and BID Leicester means we can deliver and promote a fantastic Christmas visitor experience in the city centre to support businesses at this important trading period.



In addition to showing your support for the city, the number of visitors to the city centre during this important time provides an ideal opportunity to promote your company brand to your target audience.

Please contact us to discuss sponsorship and advertising opportunities for Christmas in Leicester 2020.

Sarah.m.harrison@leicester.gov.uk or

Gitte.Magielse@leicester.gov.uk.

Leicester Comedy Festival, 5-23 February

The Leicester Comedy Festival 2020 programme for all 800+ shows in 90+ venues are available by visiting: <https://comedy-festival.co.uk/>. Headline acts for 2020 include Jo Brand, Stewart Lee, Milton Jones, Shappi Khorsandi, Fascinating Aida, Paul Sinha, Josie Long, Jason Byrne, Tony Slattery, Angela Barnes, Griff Rhys Jones, Andy Parsons, John Shuttleworth, Dane Baptiste, Rhod Gilbert, Mark Steel, Flo & Joan, Arthur Smith and Reg D Hunter.



Leicester Comedy Festival is produced by registered charity Big Difference Company. Their aims are to support new & emerging talent, celebrate British comedy and support comedians, promoters and venues to put on the best shows and events.



We thought we would help you plan your Valentine's Day celebrations! Here are just a few ideas ...

Doughnuts, Silver Arcade



Flowers are so last year, say it with Doughnuts instead. 3 working days' notice required, for any questions or to order email info@doughnottsofficial.com.

Galentine's Day at Cosy Club, Highcross Street

Thursday 13th February, 10am – 10pm

Galentine's Day is a celebration of female friendship, the day before Valentine's Day popularised from the TV show Parks and Recreation. Guests can order any 6 tapas dishes from our tapas menu and any 4 cocktails from our drink's menu for £48. The offer will include Vegan and Gluten Free tapas dishes and will also include our classic cocktails which are not on the menu. For further information please visit: <https://cosyclub.co.uk/event/galentines-day/>

Cosmic Valentine, National Space Centre

Friday, February 14

Experience the ultimate Valentine's Day package at the National Space Centre. Arrive beneath giant rockets, sip an exclusive Valentine Space Cocktail, sit down in the heart of the galleries to a four-course meal including a romantic sharing dessert, then join scientists in the lab to discover the real chemistry of love! You will have the whole centre to explore as part of this out-of-this-world experience. Doors open 7pm. Tickets £98 per couple (or £134 for Prosecco and Privacy package). To visit the website please visit <https://spacecentre.co.uk/>.

Ghost 'Flashback' screening, Showcase Cinema De Lux, Highcross

Friday, February 14

The Highcross cinema is celebrating Valentine's Day with a 'Flashback' screening of Oscar-winning romantic supernatural thriller Ghost, starring Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore. The showing begins at 7pm, and tickets are priced at £10.30 each. For more details please visit

<https://www.showcasecinemas.co.uk/film-info/ghost-flashback>.

Pretty Woman, Showcase Cinema De Lux

Friday February 14

The Highcross cinema is celebrating Valentine's Day with a 'Flashback' screening of hugely popular 90s film, Pretty Woman, starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere. The showing begins at 7pm, and tickets are priced at £10.20 each. For more details please visit

<https://www.showcasecinemas.co.uk/film-info/flashback-pretty-woman-1990#iV9edO6tM70BOiri.97>.

Paul Sinha: Hazy Little Thing Called Love Leicester Comedy Festival Show (Y-Theatre)

Friday 14 February, 7.30pm

Thus far, Paul has lived his life content in the understanding that stability and emotional happiness were lovely ideas but not really for him. Nonetheless, several decades of cheerfully bearing boozy witness to the narratives of others can slowly change a man. And so, can a prosecco-fuelled Christmas.

Rose d'Or Award winner for radio comedy, Chortle Award winner and Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, Paul is a familiar voice on radio, appearing on Just A Minute, The News Quiz and Fighting Talk. On television, Paul has recently appeared on QI, Would I Lie to You? and Taskmaster.

A lifetime of curiosity and learning informs Paul's comedy, and this has led to another career, as a general knowledge expert on the ITV quiz show, The Chase.

To book visit, www.ytheatre.co.uk or call 0116 255 7055.

Make Your Black Iron, Winstanley House, Valentine's Day

If you're searching for a romantic way to celebrate Valentine's Day, we have just the treat: a five-course menu at Black Iron. Guests will dine from an exclusive menu and enjoy a romantic evening.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.resdiary.com/restaurant/blackironatwinstanleyhouse>

Valentine's Day menu at James' Cafe Bistro

Friday 14th February only

Tables from 6pm, £24.95 per person. Contact jamescafebistro@hotmail.co.uk or 0116 251 3323 to book.

Celebrate Valentines at Mercure

Treat the one you love to our Ready For Romance package for the ultimate getaway this Valentine's Day. Arrive to a box of chocolates in your room before enjoying a romantic three- course dinner paired with a glass of sparkling wine for you and your partner. Take advantage of a late check-out until 2pm and enjoy a leisurely morning with breakfast included. Book the Ready for Romance package before 16th February for stays between 7th to 17th February 2020.

For further information, please visit:

https://www.jupiterhotels.co.uk/special-offer/ready-for-romance/?utm_campaign=1820657_Ready%20for%20Romance%202020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Jupiter%20Hotels&utm_i=3T1U,130TT,389KPY,3S2KK,1

Veeno - Italian Wine Bar Valentines Special Menu Thursday 13th- Sunday 16th 12:30pm-10pm

Authentic Italian wine bar boasting quality wines and tempting spuntini. Couples are welcomed with a Fizzy Red, Bruschetta, Grande Board or Pizza and Tiramisu. Wash it all down with a bottle of our unique Wine of Love. £69 per couple.

For bookings contact us on 01162628719. Follow us/tag a friend on Instagram: @veeno_uk

Regeneration News

Work begins on final phase of major Belgrave Gate revamp

A final phase of work to transform the route between Leicester's Golden Mile and the city centre is underway. Leicester City Council is carrying out a major improvement scheme to create a safer and more attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists along Belgrave Road, from Haymarket Bus Station to Belgrave Circle. This will see improvements made to Burleys Way roundabout, where a new shared footpath and cycleway will run underneath the flyover to provide a safer and more direct route onto Belgrave Gate. A first phase of work, to create new cycle tracks and improve the route between Abbey Street and Burleys Way, has already been completed



A new segregated cycle track and improved footpath will be created along the central reservation linking Burleys Way roundabout with the improvements made to Belgrave Circle following the removal of the flyover. The Lotus Flowers sculptures currently located on Burleys Way roundabout have been removed for repairs and repainting. The artwork will then be relocated to the new open space on Archdeacon Lane, close to the Charter Street Bridge entrance to Abbey Park.

Construction of the new cycleways and footpath on Belgrave Gate is being carried out under off-peak lane restrictions to keep traffic disruption to a minimum. Work to create a new route across Burleys Way roundabout will begin in the summer. This will require road closures and overnight working. Full details will be publicised nearer the time. The scheme is expected to be complete by early autumn 2020.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “This latest phase of the Connecting Leicester programme is creating a safer and much more attractive route linking the city centre to the Golden Mile and Abbey Park. “These major local attractions are just a 15-minute walk from the Clock Tower, and we want to encourage more people to make that short journey by foot or bike. “This latest scheme will add to the growing network of new cycleways to and from the city centre that provide safe and appealing links with nearby neighbourhoods. “It is absolutely vital that we continue to invest in improving the public realm and provide the infrastructure needed to encourage more people to make the switch to healthier and more sustainable forms of transport.”

The overall Belgrave Gate improvement scheme will cost £2million. This second phase will be mostly funded with Government cash as part of the council’s successful bid for £7.8million from the Transforming Cities Fund.

Next £1.8m phase of Leicester Market revamp will see LED lighting and new canopy roof

Nearly £2 million is to be spent on a series of measures to revamp Leicester’s historic market. So far millions of pounds have been spent on renovating the area since the old indoor market was demolished. It has been replaced by a new hall for meat, fish and cheese traders next to the Corn Exchange and a new square has been established where it stood. A new connection from Town Hall Square to Dolphin Square in the market has been created.

The £1.8 million package of measures is expected to include a smart new canopy for the market’s perimeter, a coat of paint to freshen up the whole space, and brand-new LED lighting that will create a much brighter environment. Any stalls that are worn out or damaged will be refurbished or replaced.

The council said the work is expected to get under way in summer 2020 and to be complete in spring 2021.

Novotel and Adagio £50k complex opens in Waterside

Leicester hotels Novotel and Adagio and independent restaurant NineB opened their doors on 16 January following a vote of confidence in the future of the city from Leicester-based property developers Charles Street Buildings Group. The £50 million regeneration of the wider Great Central Square development area, for which planning began in 2013, comes off the back of the owner’s firm belief that Leicester is worth significant investment as a tourist destination. Designed to attract more visitors to the city, the development will also provide high quality leisure space for its residents.



James Conaghan, General Manager of the hotels, said: “These are exciting times for the city of Leicester. Its reputation as a national tourist destination is growing, which is creating a clear demand for more hotel rooms and eateries to cater for the influx of visitors, tourists and businesses. “We’re all thrilled with this development, and we hope the city and its residents will feel a sense of pride too.”

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “The investment from Novotel and Adagio is a ringing endorsement of Leicester as a place that is continuing to grow as a visitor destination, with record numbers of

people choosing to spend time in our city. “According to recent tourism figures, over 11 million people visited Leicester last year and, after six years of continued growth, tourism was worth more than £650 million to the local economy*. “These new, high quality hotels show that there is already a strong interest in Leicester as a destination and will help strengthen our ambitious tourism action plan. “It is clear to see that while a few years ago nobody deemed Leicester an attraction, people are now coming for business as well as pleasure and they want to stay.”

Augmented hospitality company, Accor, has named the development one of Europe’s flagship dual sites and one of Europe’s flagship Novotel hotels, a testament to the international brand’s confidence in positioning Leicester as a top tourist destination. James added: “This is not just another Novotel or Adagio hotel – the investment that has gone into the design and all of the extra details really show how much the owners want to bring something particularly unique to Leicester. The results are stunning and instill a certain confidence and trust in the future of the city. The hard work from everyone involved has really paid off.”

Local businesses and visiting companies can utilise the Novotel and Adagio’s 252 rooms that cater for over 500 guests, as well as bespoke meeting spaces and boardrooms. Strengthening the development’s corporate offering, Great Central Square also includes No.1 Great Central Square, comprising 33,000 square feet of Grade A office space. The building, which has five floors of rooms available to rent; will provide flexible spaces for creative, independent businesses, entrepreneurial SMEs and established brands.

The independent restaurant and bar NineB, located in the same building as the hotels, will provide hotel and apartment guests, local office workers, shoppers and residents with a stylish city centre space to eat, drink and socialise, offering modern British food with an international twist

To enquire about corporate bookings, please contact Nikki Wilson on: nikki.wilson@accor.com. To reserve a table in the NineB restaurant, please contact Manish Sharma on: ha9p4-fb@accor.com.

*Tourism figures quoted for Leicester are taken from the 2018 Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) survey.



Novotel Leicester – Presidential Suite – Photo Credit: Evoke Pictures

Source: East Midlands Business News

Giant leap for science as ground-breaking ceremony takes place at Space Park Leicester



A formal ceremony took place to mark construction getting underway on the city's £100 million-plus Space Park Leicester scheme. Guests including Government minister Chris Skidmore attended the ground-breaking ceremony on the site, which is next to the National Space Centre, to the north of the city. When finished, it is hoped Space Park Leicester could contribute in the region of £750 million a year to the economy, becoming a world leading manufacturer of satellites and a centre for processing the data they provide. It could lead to 2,500 jobs.

Aerospace and technology companies such as Hewlett Packard, Airbus and Amazon have already signed up, and lead partner the University of Leicester hopes it could become a catalyst for other multi-nationals to bring millions of pounds of investment to the city. The first stage will see an innovation, research and incubation facility for academics and private companies, mainly to make sense of the data sent down from satellites orbiting the earth. Work is yet to start on the second stage – state-of-the-art, robot and AI assisted laboratory facilities for research and development into low-cost satellite production.

Chris Skidmore, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, joined politicians, university leaders and business leaders at the launch event, including Leicester Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, and University of Leicester president and vice-chancellor Professor Nishan Canagarajah. Prof Canagarajah said: “This is a landmark achievement for the UK, for our city and our University. “I am delighted that work has started on the site and look forward to seeing Space Park Leicester flourish and come to life. “This extraordinary project will open a wealth of invaluable opportunities in the key space data and technology sector. “It is a real step into the future and will secure the University of Leicester’s spot as a world-leading centre for space research and development, building on our rich heritage as leaders in this field. “I’d like to extend my sincere thanks to all involved.”

Kevin Harris chairs the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, which allocated almost £8.2 million from its Local Growth Fund to support the development of phase one of the Space Park scheme. He said: “I’m very excited to see the launch of the next phase of Space Park Leicester. “The project is on the cusp of bringing huge economic benefits to our region, as Leicester becomes the centre of the space industry and its applications in the Midlands, complementing the other space clusters nationally. “The world-class facilities that will be on offer for start-ups and SMEs will make the site a hugely attractive destination for business, research and innovation. “Space Park Leicester is as pioneering as the research it will host.

“The vision for new R&D facilities, pop-up labs and business hosting is the result of a true collaboration between academia, business and government – both local and national. “The end goal at Space Park Leicester is to harness the space industry for the benefit of our region, and for the country as a whole. “I’m very proud that the LLEP has been involved from the start in supporting this fantastic project.” The longer-term plans include a third phase, called the Low-Cost Access to Space (LoCAS) satellite manufacturing facility for the manufacture of mid-range satellites.

Leicester West MP Liz Kendall, who was also among the attendees, said: “I am so proud to join the university, council and all the other partners who have made today possible. “I am a long-standing champion of the Space Park and its aim of bringing thousands of high skill, high wage jobs to our city. “There is huge potential to develop the role of space science in our economy even further. “I will continue to press the Government for the investment and research space science needs and to support our Space Park’s future stages of development. “I will also be working closely with the university and local employers to ensure my constituents benefit from the businesses and jobs the park will create in years ahead.”

King Street area set for massive boost as council plans to invest millions in business and office space

The city council has revealed innovative proposals to invest in the redevelopment of a former factory building to create much-needed office space and units for start-up and growing businesses. The council wants to transform Pilot House in King Street to create a new business community – providing high quality workspaces for companies who want to relocate to the city, creative agencies and new-talent start-ups. Currently comprising of five separate but inter-connected buildings, Pilot House also has the capacity to offer units for start-up businesses, and the potential to accommodate independent retail units.



Under the council’s proposals, Pilot House would be sensitively transformed to provide a central courtyard and atrium for shared use, a business zone for technical and digital businesses, and a co working lounge. Existing industrial features including parquet flooring and exposed brick and beams would be retained, and a new entrance into the courtyard would be created from King Street.

The council has submitted a planning application for the first stage of the redevelopment of the building. Further submissions will be made over next year. If approved, the council will be seeking opportunities for external funding for the project. The cost of the whole project will be subject to a procurement exercise but could be in the region of £9 million. Pilot House currently houses the city council’s post room, and a small number of organisations that the city council will work with to relocate. Subject to planning permission and funding being obtained, it is hoped that work will begin in the spring of 2021.

Business News

Local Growth Fund has helped generate £3.5 billion of growth in Leicestershire

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) is estimated to have helped generate £3.5 billion for the local economy via its distribution of the Local Growth Fund Programme. The LLEP said it had invested £126 million of growth fund money into the city and county economy since its launch less than a decade ago. And it said new research commissioned suggests the potential return on investment could be more than £28 for every £1 of that funding. The fund was created to kickstart new homes and space for businesses, support high quality skills and training, and deliver transport improvements.

The LLEP brought in East Midlands strategy and funding specialist Focus Consultants to look at the figures and draw up a “mid-term” evaluation of the Local Growth Fund. Helen Miller, head of programmes at the LLEP said: “The purpose of the Local Growth Fund is to drive growth across

Leicester and Leicestershire. “We have invested £126 million in 20 projects across four themes including enhancing transport connectivity, investing in skills infrastructure and business support, extending the availability of superfast broadband and investing in flood risk management. “The LGF evaluation is a valuable piece of work for the LLEP. “It enables us to understand the impacts that have already been realised by the programme and analyse the longer-term benefits we will see in the future. “This will help support the development of our strategic plans across the LLEP area.

Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership was set up to drive forward regeneration and growth of the local economy, working with private and public sector partners and central government. There are 38 LEPs in England, and each have played a part in redistributing more than £12 billion from the Local Growth Fund.

Leicestershire County Cricket Club launches new business group – the Foxes 50

Leicestershire County Cricket Club has launched a new networking venture called Foxes 50 offering a place where businesses can meet on a regular basis to build relationships, and find out more about the opportunities and facilities at the Grace Road club.

Tracey Branson, the club’s commercial manager said: “Through this new club, we are offering much more than the traditional corporate sponsorship packages. “We are creating a unique connected business and community hub for the people and businesses of Leicestershire, with cricket as the conduit. “Organisations who join the Foxes will be part of the club which has a rich history having been established for over 140 years. “Foxes 50 members have the opportunity to directly support some of the fantastic initiatives the club provides in the local community, including running cricket sessions in schools and community centres and the popular programme of female only fitness classes.

For more information contact lizziesmith@leicestershireccc.co.uk.

Gas, electricity and water firm Yü Energy creating 200 new jobs with new Leicester offices

Yü Energy said it is investing millions a new office complex in the city’s Waterside regeneration area which will create 200 new jobs. Construction will start on the A50, in Frog Island, in April and the building should be ready by next January. Yü supplies gas, electricity and water to businesses across the UK. It has around 45 people at its current Leicester office in St John’s House, near Leicester railway station. A spokesman said that team would relocate to the new office and recruitment for more Leicester staff would get underway next year.

While Nottingham will remain the company’s headquarters, the Leicester team will be made up of staff working in sales, marketing and product innovation. The new jobs would be created over the next couple of years. The new sales and innovation office is being built by Leicester firm Brackley Property Development. It will have room for up to 250 staff, eventually taking the total workforce across Nottingham and Leicester to 400.

Yü Energy chief executive Bobby Kalar said: “Investing further in Leicester has always been on the cards for us and the new Waterside development was the ideal location; it’s easily accessible by public transport and the perfect place to tap into the fantastic talent pool Leicester has to offer. “As a significant investment and a crucial part of our business strategy it was essential, we had an experienced solicitor working with us – we’ve been really pleased with the advice and service provided by Nelsons and look forward to developing an on-going relationship with the firm.”



Latest figures for Yü Group PLC show half year revenues of £56.5 million for the six months to June 30, 2019, compared to £33.2 million a year earlier. It made losses of £2.7 million for the same period but said it had cut overheads and reviewed its business plan.

How the Yu Energy office in Leicester will look (Image: Stephen George+Partners)

Leicester office buildings acquired for £21m

Maya Capital LLP, a specialist real estate investment firm, has acquired 1 and 2 Colton Square in Leicester for a total consideration of £21 million. 1 and 2 Colton Square consists of two office buildings totalling 107,100 sq. ft and are multi-let to eight tenants. The buildings were constructed in 2007 and are a 3-minute walk from Leicester train station. The acquisition forms part of Maya Capital's flagship regional UK office strategy, which targets office assets outside London. Maya is continuing to build a portfolio of medium-sized secondary office assets, with active management potential. Further transactions are anticipated in the coming months to reach a total deployment of up to £100m by the end of 2020.

David Pralong, Managing Partner of Maya Capital, said: "We are delighted to acquire this property, one of best assets in Leicester, for what we believe is a good price. This achievement is the result of our stock picking methodology, which rigorously selects the best assets to create value for our investors.

Business Growth Grants for SMEs

The Business Growth Grant is part of Business Gateway Growth Hub project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and run by Leicester City Council in partnership with East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire), Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). The project supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Leicester and Leicestershire who are looking to grow or develop their business.

Grants from £2,000 up to £25,000 are available providing 35% towards the cost of capital projects (e.g. new machinery, tools, premises improvement or expansion, computer hardware).

A business adviser will support you throughout the process.

Please note: only SMEs trading business-to-business (at least 90%) for at least 12 months and based in Leicester or Leicestershire are eligible.

An SME is defined as:

- employ fewer than 250 people or volunteers
- have a turnover of less than or equal to €50M and/or have a balance sheet of less than €43M
- have received less than €200k in public grants in the last 3 years

- do not have more than 25% of the organisation owned by an enterprise that in itself is not an SME.

To discuss your needs with one of the team to determine your next steps call 0116 366 8487 or visit: https://bizgateway.org.uk/business-growth-grant/?dm_i=36DV,ZKJ0,5N7FNP,3QP2M,1.

Meet the businesswomen joining the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership board

The LLEP has announced the appointment of Rani Mahal, Anne-Marie Hunt and Sonia Baigent to its board. LLEP chair Kevin Harris said: “That all three of the new board members are women underscores the LLEP’s commitment to equality of representation at all levels of our decision-making processes. “Rani, Anne-Marie and Sonia’s appointments double our number of female board members, joining Karen Smart, managing director of East Midlands Airport; Emma Anderson, director of Freeths Solicitors; and Verity Hancock, principal and CEO of Leicester College. “All six women are outstanding local business leaders, offering unique and valuable perspectives as we continue our work to improve the economy of our incredibly diverse region.”

Rani Mahal



Rani Mahal started out in advertising and telecommunications, moving into management in the textiles sector, and more recently in property development. Her family-run company, Midland Corsetry, supplies several high street retailers. She is vice president of the Leicestershire Asian Business Association (LABA), where she has championed the contribution of women, running business networking events and helping the local business community engage with national government.

Anne-Marie Hunt



Anne-Marie Hunt studied law and psychology at De Montfort University before joining NatWest Bank as a trainee in 2000. She has held many positions within the bank, both in Leicester and across the wider East Midlands. In 2018 she was appointed director of commercial banking in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland – a role which sees her heading up a team of commercial bankers who look after 500 SMEs across the region. Her team supports a local homeless charity through volunteering and fundraising, helps school pupils through the NatWest’s Moneysense programme, and young people through her work with The Prince’s Trust.

Sonia Baigent



Sonia Baigent is a qualified accountant and licenced insolvency practitioner who has provided business consultancy advice and support to SMEs for more than 15 years. She is experienced in advising businesses on all manner of challenges, and assisting with growth plans, strategic direction, and succession planning.

She also runs her own business and has experienced first-hand the opportunities and challenges they can face, giving her a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by SMEs in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Your invitation to develop your business with expert guidance from the Leading to Grow programme

With 80 per cent of all employing businesses being microbusinesses, employing between one and nine people, it is a sad fact that they are often overlooked. But all that is about to change thanks to a new national programme of support involving the University of Leicester. The Leading to Grow programme will invite microbusinesses to work with experts at the university to investigate how new technologies can work for them, improve productivity and efficiency, before helping them to get that technology up and running.

Dr Matthew Higgins from the School of Business is leading the programme for the University of Leicester, with the programme running at 15 other universities all over the country, offering specialist support to up to 800 microbusinesses. "Microbusinesses employ around 4.1m people in the UK," he said. "And they are a sector that is often overlooked. Often microbusinesses don't think universities can do anything for them and don't take up opportunities for leadership development. This can be because they are very focused on the day-to-day running of the business, of course!"

The University of Leicester will invite 50 microbusinesses to work alongside business school experts, with 25 of those businesses chosen to have specialist mentoring and coaching to help them adopt new technologies. "All the businesses will have a half day workshop, and a choice of several dates to attend the workshop, to explore the benefits of technology and give them the means to look at that technology," said Dr Higgins.

Businesses will be helped to analyse the costs and benefits of various technologies, be supported in using it and also in engaging employees with that technology. At the end of the process, the businesses will come back together for an evaluation session.

Eligible businesses must be a formally registered business, employ between one and nine people and not have participated in a programme delivered by the business school in the last 12 months. To find out if your business is eligible, or to apply for the process visit <https://le.ac.uk/school-of-business/services-for-business/consultancy-services/leading-to-grow-programme>.

Team Leicester gearing up to promote investment opportunities at MIPIM 2020 in Cannes

Around two dozen businesses have signed up to be part of a 2020 Team Leicester delegation to the MIPIM property and construction conference in Cannes this spring.

This year's global property conference is expected to attract around 27,000 attendees to four days of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and drinks receptions. Team Leicester was formed to bring together private and public sector organisations to champion the region. Its theme this year will be investment opportunities around "healthy growth, healthy people and healthy business" on the back of the city's successful football, rugby, cricket and basketball clubs, as well as Loughborough University's place as a global centre of sports excellence.

It also fits in with the city and county's strategy to be carbon neutral by 2050. This year's Team Leicester lead is city-based property developer Bradgate Estates, while the five main sponsors are utility contracts specialists BEC Consultants; Farrow Walsh structural and civil engineers; Loughborough University; financiers Maslow Capital; and the McLaren construction group. Other Team Leicester partners include Code Students, East Midlands Chamber, Excello Law, Farrow Walsh, Freeths, Harworth, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, MDA Consulting, Obstrat

and Student Zone. The group is also supported by the LLEP, the Leicester Business Festival and the Department for International Trade, with the Team Leicester programme co-ordinated by Associate Events in Leicester.

Team Leicester is led by Rob McGuinn, director of project management specialist MDA Consulting; Richard Osborn, regional director at Excello Law; Mukesh Patel, managing partner at Freeths law firm in Leicester; and Mark Oakley, director of inward investment and place marketing at Leicester City Council.

Transport

Work begins on new exit slip road at St Margaret's Bus Station

Work has begun on a project to cut journey times for buses using St Margaret's Bus Station by creating a new exit directly onto the city's inner ring road. Buses leaving the station currently have to travel on a route along New Road, Gravel Street and Abbey Street to get onto Burleys Way, which adds to the amount of traffic and increases passengers' journey times. The new scheme will see a new exit slip road built from the front of the bus station onto Burleys Way itself, shortening journeys by about six minutes on average. New traffic islands will also be built on Burleys Way, with new footpaths, crossing point and guard rails along the front of the bus station itself. There will also be some road widening on Burleys Way.

Work is expected to be complete in April. The bus station will remain open with bus services remaining unaffected, and a pedestrian crossing will be provided across Burleys Way. Some temporary road and lane closures will take place towards the end of the scheme, the exact timings for which are yet to be confirmed. The scheme is costing £750,000 and is funded from the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund under its Bus Pinch Points project.

Grants on offer to help local business vehicles go green

Businesses in Leicester can benefit from a generous grant scheme that aims to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles and help further improve air quality. Leicester City Council is making grants of up to £15,000 available to help local businesses replace polluting diesel vehicles with cleaner, greener ultra-low emission alternatives. The council hopes to award between 100 and 150 grants as part of the scheme, which is due to run until summer 2021.

Any local business – from taxi drivers or florists to estate agents or local bakeries – can apply for support through the scheme, if the vehicle is used as part of its day-to-day work. The grants are intended to cover up to 40 per cent of the difference in replacement costs between new diesel vehicles and more expensive ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). Grants will only be awarded where clear evidence can be provided to show that carbon savings will be achieved by changing to a new ULEV for business purposes. The value of the grants awarded will be linked to the expected carbon savings of the new vehicles.

The scheme is part-funded with £1.4million of cash from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), following a successful bid by the city council for over £6million to support a range of ambitious transport-related projects that aim to cut carbon emissions.

Cllr Adam Clarke, deputy city mayor and executive lead on environment and transportation, said: "Supporting businesses in Leicester to green-up their fleets and make to switch to ultra-low emission vehicles will help us continue to cut carbon emissions and further improve air quality across the city."

registered with a vet for all their needs," Katie added. "We only adopt cats out once they have had all their care and are neutered, injected and chipped as well as taken to full health."

Of the adoption process, she said: "We conduct home checks and match cats to families that suit their needs." At the company's existing locations, customers can choose from a menu featuring pizzas, jacket potatoes, paninis and wraps, plus deserts, high tea, milkshakes and mocktails.

Clarks, Highcross Shopping Centre

British shoe manufacturer and retailer Clarks is set to open a new Leicester branch, in the Highcross Shopping Centre. News of the new branch comes four months after the closure of the Clarks store in the city's Haymarket Shopping Centre.

The closure in September 2019 followed the news that Metro Bank had been granted permission to open a branch on the prominent corner site, occupied by both Clarks and The Body Shop. The bank said it planned to merge the two existing units.

Leicester Indian restaurant Lilu, Highcross St, reopens with a difference

Lilu, Indian fine dining restaurant has reopened with a new focus. Managing director Pratik Master, who runs the restaurant with wife Bee, has decided to give a percentage of restaurant takings to the Feed The Hungry charity in Hinckley. He said he is keen to do more for the community.

Kake Temptations, London Road

Kake Temptations is opening soon in London Road, and aims to provide an affordable yet upmarket cafe, serving a huge range of homemade treats including 14 different types of gourmet cupcakes, giant, chunky cookies and layered American cheesecake. Kake Temptations is owned and run by Sumaiya Patel, who launched the company eight years ago in her home town of Batley, West Yorkshire.

The bake house is expected to open in March, and staff are currently being sought. There are two roles for baristas available, and there is another potential job at the unit. If you'd like to apply for a job, you can email your CV to: kaketemptations@hotmail.com.

The Bagel Café, Belgrave Gate

The Bagel Cafe, in Belgrave Gate opened on Friday 31 January. The Bagel Café owner, Milan Sonigra, was wowed by the freshly baked bagels he ate when he was on holiday in Canada. With nowhere in Leicester selling bagels like them he decided to start making them himself.

Milan said: "As we will bake our own bagels, we will have specials from time to time and we will be able to change recipes to customer demands. We will also be able to do the same with our cream cheese mixes. "The cafe is open-plan and customers will be able to see us mixing the dough, making the bagels and baking them too. " Part of the ethos of The Bagel Cafe is to be as environmentally-sustainable as possible. With this in mind, all the food wrappers and drink cups will be compostable, most of the equipment is preowned and ingredients have been sourced from local suppliers.

Chloé Gourmet, Cank Street



Pastry shop, Chloé Gourmet has opened at 10 Cank Street. There is a good selection of individual pastries and whole cakes as well as croissants, pain au chocolat, sandwiches and salads. The owners hold great importance in retaining and following the traditions and techniques when baking, with a large proportion of the ingredients are imported from France.

Papa Frites, Granby Street

Papa Frites is opening on Saturday 1 February.

Closed

Haycock and Tailbar, Belvoir Street

Haycock and Tailbar, 40-42 Belvoir Street has closed.

The Body Shop

The Haymarket Shopping Centre store has closed, and a new branch of Metro Bank is planned to open in this space and the unit next door, previously occupied by Clarks. Body Shop has an existing store in Highcross.

Yellow Door, Belvoir Street

Leicester City Council revoked the licence in August and at the time, the licence holder appealed against this decision. They later withdrew the appeal before the hearing, so the bar is no longer able to trade.

Boots, Humberstone Gate

The Humberstone Gate store of Boots will close on Saturday 22 February. As well as the store at 30-36 Gallowtree Gate store, there's a Boots branch in the Highcross Shopping Centre and all staff from the Humberstone Gate store will be transferring to these stores.

Handmade Burger Co, Highcross

Handmade Burger Co, which has a branch in Leicester's Highcross, has gone into administration for the second time in three years. The business had been unable to compete in a tough marketplace and becomes the latest restaurant chain to go under. 18 branches closed on 23 January with the loss of 283 jobs.

Stonebaked Pizza Co, Highcross

Stonebaked Pizza Co in the Highcross shopping centre has closed after going into administration.

The Peri Experts, Granby Street

The Peri Experts, 15 Granby Street has closed the business until further notice.

Mothercare set to sell products in high street stores again after closures

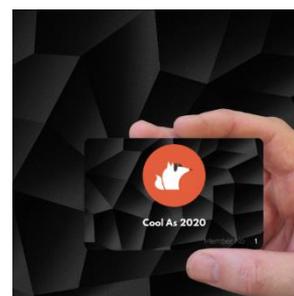
Mothercare stores across the country have closed but there is a way to continue to shop for some of the brand's products. The store has signed an exclusive deal with Boots to give shoppers the chance to buy Mothercare products once again.

Maternity and early childhood products will be sold in Boots stores from the end of next summer with Mothercare-branded clothing, home products, pushchairs and car seats all in line to be stocked. The two retailers have confirmed that a larger range will also be available on the Boots website from the middle of the year. It's still unclear of how many stores will sell the new range with plans not finalised, but with a budding Mothercare Mini Club range already available in larger outlets, it's certain the partnership will be a popular move for shoppers.

Other News

Cool as Leicester Black Card

Cool As Leicester (www.coolasleicester.co.uk) has become a key online hub for leisure and entertainment news in Leicestershire. This month they launched their first Black Card, offering discounts throughout the year as well as providing members with flash offers and event invitations. The cards sold out in just a couple of days with offers throughout the year including free dessert with any main at Knight & Garter, 20% off at Doughnotts, 15% off at The Exchange Bar, 50% off cocktails at the brand new NineB Restaurant and Bar, and many more. The card allows businesses to promote an exclusive ongoing offer or flash sale to a limited number of engaged consumers, whilst knowing that the discount will not become too widespread. It also means they're a Cool As Leicester recommended partner.



It's free for businesses to partner on the card, if you'd be interested in finding out more or providing an offer to cardholders please [email info@coolasleicester.co.uk](mailto:info@coolasleicester.co.uk) for more information.

Number of top-rated food outlets in city nearly doubles in five years

The number of food outlets in Leicester given the highest possible quality rating has nearly doubled in the last five years. Leicester City Council's Food Safety Team regularly inspects around 3,000 food establishments including cafes, bars, restaurants, pubs, hotels, supermarkets and takeaways across the city, giving them star ratings out of five according to how well they meet hygiene standards. Between 2014 and 2019, the number of five-star rated premises has almost doubled from 784 to 1,558.

The rise has been attributed to closer working between the council's Food Safety Team and the businesses themselves, offering advice and support to new businesses from the outset to point them in the right direction. The team has also better resourced and is able to carry out timely enforcement of establishments which aren't up to scratch. The ability for businesses to display star ratings has also acted as an incentive to many to get the best possible rating in order to attract and reassure customers. At the moment, food businesses do not by law have to display their food

hygiene rating, although new Food Standards Agency regulations are due to change this, meaning all businesses will have to display their score, however poor it may be.

Leicester deputy city mayor responsible for regulatory services, Cllr Piara Singh Clair, said: “These figures reflect the hard work of the Food Safety Team in ensuring that businesses such as restaurants, cafes and takeaways across the city are meeting the hygiene standards that customers rightly expect. “The fact that so many more are reaching the highest standard of five stars shows that businesses are on the whole keen to engage with us and want to be regarded as high-quality places in which to eat and drink. “Improving quality has the effect of raising standards of food outlets across the city, which benefits all consumers. “The Food Safety Team is also committed to working with businesses at the other end of the scale, to ensure action is taken where improvements are needed.”

Due to the natural turnover of businesses opening and closing throughout the year, the Food Safety Team is also reminding new businesses of the need to register with the council or notify them of any changes. To date in 2019, the Food Safety Team has carried out 1093 inspections, made 861 follow-up visits to businesses and awarded five-star ratings to 799 places. Across the city there are currently 1,558 five-star rated premises, 439 four-star rated establishments, 427 three-star places, 117 which are rated as two-star and 85 which received a one-star rating.

A rating of three or above means standards are at least broadly compliant, with no major concern. But at the opposite end of the scale, a zero-star rating means an establishment needs to make urgent improvements. The Food Safety Team also has the power to issue emergency prohibition notices to shut down establishments which present an immediate risk to the public. The ratings are based on issues such as handling, storage and preparation of food, cleanliness of facilities and how well food safety issues are managed. For more information, or to check the star rating of a food outlet, visit the Food Standards agency website:

https://ratings.food.gov.uk/?dm_i=4MPG,QGR2,29NELN,35G6K,1.

Global Kitchen Crowdfunder to Feed Leicester with Free Participatory Meals and Train Sanctuary Seeking Chefs!

With over 45% of funding already secured, ArtReach and Soft Touch Arts project #GlobalKitchenLeicester has resonated with the local area in its aim to host and train volunteer chefs from the refugee and asylum seeking community to share their home country recipes and cooking skills with their local community. In an effort to bring people together through sharing food and memories, Global Kitchen has built an excellent track record as part of Band 2 NPO ArtReach’s Journeys Festival International Leicester in 2018 and 2019 after 2017’s initial cookery demonstrations.

But now is the time to unite different backgrounds and cultures to create long-lasting friendships and a deeper appreciation of multicultural Leicester by raising the funds via Crowdfunder Leicester for regular bi-monthly sessions and a brand-new cook book! Sessions are run in collaboration with Soft Touch Arts, an award-winning Leicestershire charity, who use arts, media and music activities to make positive life changes for disadvantaged young people by supporting them to develop creative, social and employability skills. Soft Touch Arts has welcomed newcomers through its doors from the very first Global Kitchen session and is placed right in the heart of the communities the project is reaching out to.



Thanks to the support from the City Mayor of Leicester, Peter Soulsby and Business Improvement District (BID) Leicester, this project is on its way to providing various skills to all ages and backgrounds in the Leicester community, from socialising to cooking. Supporters can back this special project at <https://www.spacehive.com/global-kitchen>.

Leicestershire Cares Collect 4 Christmas

Leicestershire Cares is thrilled to announce that its Collect 4 Christmas campaign was hugely successful. Over a six-week period, 25 local business members donated items and money in the region of £30,000 to support vulnerable individuals and families affected by homelessness. All truck Plc collected 463 gifts for children across two sites in Croft and Loughborough.

Leicestershire Cares members pledged their support and collected over 1000 toys, everything from puzzles, dolls, and trucks for Gifts 4 Kids. There was something for all ages and parents, carers and agencies were invited to hand select a toy that they would pick for their child.

Funds raised through the campaign have been donated to the Making Moves project which provides one to one and group engagement with its participants on issues including benefit and debt advice, housing issues, education, employment and training. Neetu Squire, Project Development Officer of the Making Moves project said: “We address isolation, depression and mental health, which can be a barrier to the young people moving forward in their lives and breaking out of the cycle they find themselves in. The money donated will go a long way to improving confidence and giving the young people a chance to try new and exciting things.”

Leicester’s response to the climate emergency consultation closes 9 February

People are being asked to help shape a citywide vision on the changes needed for Leicester to become carbon neutral and play its part in tackling the global climate emergency. Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019.

Along with 1,180 other cities and jurisdictions around the world that have made this declaration, Leicester has signalled its commitment to taking the action needed to help prevent climate change becoming worse. The city council is developing an ambitious vision for how Leicester will need to respond to the climate emergency and become carbon neutral. This will be backed by a new action plan which people are being asked to help shape as part of a three-month consultation which launched on 19 November.

The draft vision identifies the following six key areas where changes will be needed:

- At home
- Our choices as consumers
- Travel and transport
- At work
- Land use, green space and development of the city
- Waste

Local employers have a big role to play in ensuring their buildings are energy efficient, promoting sustainable transport and ensuring the goods and services they produce and provide are climate

friendly. Financial support and expert advice for local businesses will need to continue. The city will also need to reduce its waste and further increase the amount that it recycles.

Deputy city mayor Adam Clarke, who leads on environment and transportation, said: “Leicester has already almost halved its carbon footprint against 1990 levels. The city council has reduced its own carbon emissions by over 45 per cent in a decade. This is a fantastic achievement, but we know now that more needs to be done. “Responding to the climate emergency will mean making big changes to the way we live and work. “It affects everyone and that’s why it’s so important that people can help shape how the city responds and meets its responsibilities to become carbon neutral. “We’ve launched a formal consultation but that will be just one element of Leicester’s climate emergency conversation.”

To take part in the online survey, which will run until Monday 10 Feb 2020, visit consultations.leicester.gov.uk. An online discussion forum has also been launched at dialogue.leicester.gov.uk/climate-emergency-conversation.

Bra companies welcome De Montfort University drive to create lingerie for women with breast cancer

Representatives of some of the biggest bra companies in Britain have welcomed a campaign to create lingerie designed for women being treated for breast cancer. A De Montfort University academic has set up a national research group called the DMU Medical Forum to develop more comfortable lingerie for women who have just had surgery. Professor Gillian Proctor – who has led the Leicester-based university’s contour fashion course for the past two decades – wanted to act after finding out two years ago that she needed surgery for stage two breast cancer.

Prof Proctor is now launching a group which will meet regularly to see how experts in industry and medicine can work with patients to drive the university’s research and meet demand from the 55,000 women diagnosed with breast cancer each year.

Leicestershire County Cricket Club secures £1.75m loan

Leicestershire County Cricket Club has secured a £1.75m loan from Leicester City Council. The loan, which is to support internal refinancing of the club and to improve facilities, is in addition to an existing loan of £700,000 from the City Council, bringing the total loan to £2.45m. Leicestershire County Cricket Club will repay the loan over the next ten years.

Ian Ilersic, a partner and banking expert at Howes Percival who acted for Leicestershire County Cricket Club in relation to the increased loan, said: “Leicestershire County Cricket Club is an important part of professional sport in the region. Sport and entertainment can deliver a wide range of benefits to a community including economic growth.

“This loan, which is a further demonstration of the Council’s support for successful sports clubs in the city, will enable the Club to further develop its facilities, grow cricket in the area at both a professional and recreational level and help raise the profile of the club nationally. Improving facilities will also help the Club meet its ambition to be an outdoor venue of choice for non-match day events such as music concerts.”

BID Leicester supports extra cleaning for city centre streets

A partnership between the city council and BID Leicester will mean that Leicester's streets can be washed more frequently - and more unsightly graffiti and chewing gum can be removed from the city centre. The Business Improvement District's support means the city council has been able to extend its cleaning programme and operate its street washing machines for an additional 18.5 hours per week. BID Leicester's contribution of £22,600 is also supporting the council's efforts to keep Leicester clean by funding graffiti removal on private premises and additional chewing gum removal on city centre streets.

Simon Jenner, director of BID Leicester, said: "BID Leicester is pleased to be able to build on the cleansing service provided by Leicester City Council by funding additional street washing and chewing gum removal, and paying for the extension of graffiti removal services to private premises. "Our support, which will fund more than 900 additional hours of cleaning, will make a noticeable difference to the city centre environment, helping to ensure the city is a clean and welcoming place for businesses, residents and visitors." The new arrangements will be reviewed each year to determine how BID Leicester can continue to support the enhanced cleaning regime.



Simon Jenner, director of BID Leicester (left) joins Cllr Adam Clarke, deputy city mayor for environment and transportation, with the two street washing machines

Leicester's Curve Theatre announces new productions for 2020

Curve's Chief Executive and Artistic Director have announced their plans for 2020 at a special season preview night. Using the backdrop of the hugely successful five star rated West Side the audience was treated to exclusive discussions and performances at the theatre. During the evening, a trio of new Made at Curve productions for 2020 was revealed, with an enchanting musical, classic drama and brand-new dance piece set to take the theatre's stages.

From July 15 to August 1, Curve will create a brand-new UK premiere production of musical Roman Holiday, based on the 1953 film starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck. This Made at Curve musical captures the golden age of Hollywood on stage, as the Princess and her not-so-Prince Charming experience la dolce vita in one magical and unforgettable day.

From September 11-26, Anthony Almeida, winner of the 2019 RTST Sir Peter Hall Director Award, will direct a production of Tennessee Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin Roof with set and costume design by Rosanna Vize. This bold new revival of Tennessee Williams's lyrical Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece is a blazing portrayal of what it takes to survive in a society where we're all desperate to feel free.

From October 20-21, Curve is also co-commissioning a new major dance collaboration from Curve Associate Artist Aakash Odedra and Hu Shenyuan. The international tour of Samsara from the

Aakash Odedra Company and Bagri Foundation, co-commissioned with Birmingham Hippodrome, begins in Melbourne, Australia this March, arriving at Curve in October. Enter the world of Samsara and journey through the vast histories, philosophies and cultures of China and India. Created and performed by Curve Associate Artist Aakash Odedra (UK/India) and Hu Shenyuan (China), Samsara merges mythological storytelling with personal anecdotes.



Chris Stafford and Nikolai Foster (Image: Ellie Kurttz)

Curve also announced that its popular Made at Curve production of Hairspray would return on 20-29 August to open a new UK tour. Tickets for all shows are on sale and for further information, contact Curve's Box Office on 0116 242 3595.

Applications for Severn Trent’s Community Fund are now open!

Applications are now open for our new Community Fund which will give away more than £10 million to charities and community groups over the next 5 years. Organisations, charities and communities from across our region can now apply for funding for their projects. The Fund will be looking to support projects that can demonstrate a clear link to one or more of our three elements of community wellbeing:

- People: Projects that help people to lead a healthier life and gain new skills;
- Place: Ideas that help create better places to live in and use; and
- Environment: Schemes that will help look after the natural environment, give people greater access to that environment or help look after water.

Projects are being encouraged that have a link to water in some way, such as river restoration, flood alleviation or sustainable drainage. An independent Community Fund Customer Panel, made up of Severn Trent customers, will review applications on a quarterly basis and decide where the money goes. The Panel will meet for the first time in March and from April 2020 the first grants will be awarded.

Applications are welcomed all-year round and capital and revenue projects will be considered, as long as the application shows how the project will be sustained beyond the investment. Help to promote the Fund with your contacts and via your channels using #STCommunityFund. To apply and to find out more, please visit www.stwater.co.uk/communityfund or to get in touch with the team please contact us at communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

Severn Trent's Community Fund

Are you part of a community group or Charity that is looking for some financial support for a project? Then our Community Fund could be perfect for you.

Our customers, and the communities we live and work in, are at the heart of everything we do. And that's why, from 2020, we're giving away more than **£10m** over the next **5 years** to help local projects, charities and groups in our region improve community wellbeing.

So why not check out the details and see if we can help make a difference.

Applications open January 2020.

Project themes:

- **People:** Projects that help people to lead a healthier life and gain new skills
- **Places:** Projects that help to create better places to live in and use
- **Environment:** Projects that will help look after our natural environment, give people greater access to that environment or help look after water

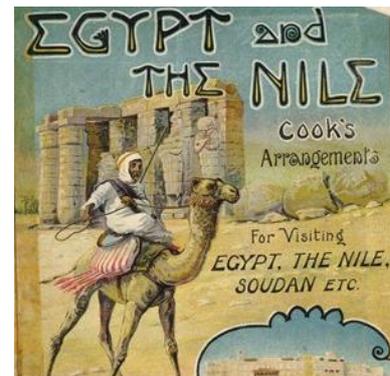
stwater.co.uk/communityfund
communityfund@severntrent.co.uk

WONDERFUL ON TAP SEVERN TRENT

Leicestershire Record Office to host national Thomas Cook archive

A major piece of travel history is to be preserved in the county, after the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland was selected as the new permanent home of the Thomas Cook archive. The record office, which is run by Leicestershire County Council in partnership with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council, was awarded the honor of housing the internationally significant collection following a bidding process. The entire Thomas Cook archive, which encompasses records from the earliest days of package travel right up to the modern day, is now being transferred to the record office in Wigston.

The huge collection is made up of thousands of individual items, including minute books and staff records, posters, travel guides and timetables. It also features 60,000 photographic images and souvenirs from Thomas Cook's 178-year history, including glass and china, uniforms through the ages and even a model of a Nile steamer. The archive will be the single largest collection at the record office, which has six miles of shelving representing 1,000 years of the history of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. The Thomas Cook collection will be thoroughly catalogued by record office staff, before being made available to the public.



Senior archivist at Leicestershire County Council, Robin Jenkins, said: "This is an internationally significant archive relating to a company which began in Leicester and was operated from there in its formative years. We already house an important Thomas Cook collection relating to both the man and his business. "We see the collection as 'coming home' to Leicestershire and we will be delighted to look after it here and promote its use."

Professor in History and Strategy at the University of Bristol, Stephanie Decker, said: "It's fantastic news that the Thomas Cook archive has been saved and will be housed in the region where the company began. The archive has local to global relevance and is highly important to anyone interested in the history of travel and leisure."

New Mobile App Set to revolutionise 'searches' for local businesses in Leicestershire

Spotted:App was the brainchild of local businessman, John Whitbread. John created the simple-to-use app to connect the buyer (the customer) with the seller (the service provider), whether they need help or recommendations with odd-jobs, or services such as dog walkers, solicitors or personal trainers. Spotted:App has been created so it's freely accessible to all Leicestershire residents. Anyone can download and use the app for free via the Google Play and App Store or visit www.spottedapp.com for more information.



Pictured: John Whitbread, Creator of Spotted:App

Phoenix celebrates Japanese cinema with season of films

Phoenix cinema in Leicester will be presenting a season of 10 Japanese films never previously screened in the UK throughout February and March. In partnership with the Japan Foundation's annual touring programme, Phoenix will showcase some of the best Japanese cinema has to offer, screening films which all follow the theme of happiness. The season features a live Q&A with director Masaya Ozaki after a screening of his film Her Sketchbook on Wed 5 Feb at 6.30pm. Standard tickets are priced £6 - £9.20 and are available at Phoenix's box office or online. MyPhoenix Members can enjoy any film from the season for just £5.

For more information, visit: phoenix.org.uk/event/japan-foundation-touring-film-programme-2020/.

Leicester Tigers launch Hall of Fame

All Leicester Tigers supporters have their own ideas of who the best player they've seen play for the club is or who's had the biggest impact. Now fans can play their part in Leicester Tigers history as the club launches a new annual Hall of Fame event. The club will come together at a special event on Tuesday 21 April to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of those outstanding individuals who have played for and served the club. You can be there too, alongside guests including past and present Tigers players.



From the most decorated to the cult hero, the clubman to life members, supporters can put forward their nominations for a shortlist with finalists eventually selected by a judging panel made up of past players alongside club and supporter representatives. The Hall of Fame launch event will be hosted by former Tigers forward Matt Poole when guests will be able to hear from players past and present as well as enjoying a three-course dinner in the stadium's Premiership Suite.

Nominations for the Hall of Fame are now open and will close at 12.00pm on Friday 7 February. Make your nomination via the Leicester Tigers website <https://www.leicestertigers.com/news/vote-for-your-hall-of-fame-tigers>. Tickets to the event are priced at £100 per person including a 3-course meal and drinks reception in the changing room with photo opportunities. Buy your tickets <https://www.leicestertigers.com/news/hall-of-fame>.

Awards and Accolades

Leicester named as best city for hiring in 2020

The latest report from CV-Library, the independent job board, reveals that job applications have increased by 6.3% in the last year. What's more, for many of the nation's major cities, it's the second year in a row that job applications have grown. The report from CV-Library analysed job market data throughout 2019 and compared it with statistics from 2018. The findings show that key cities witnessed an even bigger jump in applications last year, "making them the best locations for hiring in 2020":

Leicester – job applications up by 14.7%
Bristol – job applications up by 13%
Aberdeen – job applications up by 12.9%

London – job applications up by 11.2%
Brighton – job applications up by 10%
Portsmouth – job applications up by 9.1%
Southampton – job applications up by 8.7%
Edinburgh – job applications up by 8.5%
Nottingham – job applications up by 8.4%
Manchester – job applications up by 5.4%

A key driving factor behind the jump in applications may well be the fact that average pay jumped up by 3.7% in 2019. The biggest salary increases were seen in Edinburgh (up 8.1%), Leeds (up 6.7%) and Hull (up 5%). Lee Biggins, CEO and founder of CV-Library, said: “Despite severe political and economic uncertainty over the last year, it’s positive to see that the UK jobs market has continued to grow. The fact that this is an ongoing trend should instil confidence in employers who may have put their recruitment plans on pause in the run up to the election; especially as January is consistently one of the best times to hire.”

The report also shows that businesses were advertising more roles in 2019, with the number of job adverts increasing by 3.7% across the UK. In fact, competition might be tough for businesses looking to fill roles in Scotland, with the number of job postings growing by 25.7% in Glasgow and 20.5% in Edinburgh.

Top honours for Ben Chilwell and Emily Scarratt at the Leicester Mercury Sports Awards

Leicester City's Ben Chilwell and England centre Emily Scarratt have been named the Leicester Mercury's Sportsman and Sportswoman of 2019. The duo received their 'Sporting Oscars' during a star-studded presentation evening staged at Leicester Tigers Welford Road Stadium. Chilwell held off the challenge of Foxes' team-mate James Maddison, and Burbage's Matt Davis, who helped Warrington Wolves lift the coveted Rugby League Challenge Cup at Wembley in his first Super League season.

2019 was the year Chilwell established himself as England's best left-back . After making his Three Lions debut at the King Power Stadium at the end of 2018, Chilwell has become Gareth Southgate's go-to man on the left side of defence. For City, Chilwell's form has seen him rise to the ranks of the Premier League's leading left-backs, the 23-year-old academy graduate helping his club set up a 2020 in which trophies could be won and European qualification achieved.

Desford's Scarratt has become a stalwart of England women's rugby and has had an exceptional year even by her own high standards. The 29-year-old, who plays for Loughborough Lightning, was named World Rugby's Women's Player of the Year after making the transition back from Sevens rugby to the 15-a-side version, where she was outstanding throughout the year in midfield for Loughborough and England.

The Lifetime Achievement also went to the world of rugby with former Leicester Tigers back John Duggan taking the spotlight. Duggan made 302 appearances for Tigers between 1970-80, scoring 158 tries. He was a teacher throughout his playing career, well known for his work at Southfields College, Lancaster School and Ellesmere College and received the BEM award for services to disability school sport. For full list of winners please visit:

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/top-honours-ben-chilwell-emily-3746111>.

Festivals and Events

Leicester Innovation Week 2020 - 24th- 28th February 2020

Innovation Week kicks off on 24th February 2020 and there are a wide range of inspiring events taking place across Leicester and Leicestershire. Now in its third year Leicester Innovation Week 2020 offers a great opportunity for businesses, universities and business support organisations to work together to showcase Leicester and Leicestershire as a hub of innovation. During the week there will be a range of free innovation events taking place to inspire and catalyse the power and enthusiasm of local partners working together to promote a shared agenda focusing on innovation. Innovation is key to business growth and profitability, but businesses can find it difficult to understand the support available and how to access it. Innovation Week aims to address this, elevating the profile of the LLEP area and showcasing the exciting innovations that are taking place here.

Leicester Innovation Week 2020 will present businesses and innovators the opportunity to attend daily events, meet with university experts, discover funding and innovation support and learn from the innovation journeys of some of Leicestershire's most exciting top companies.

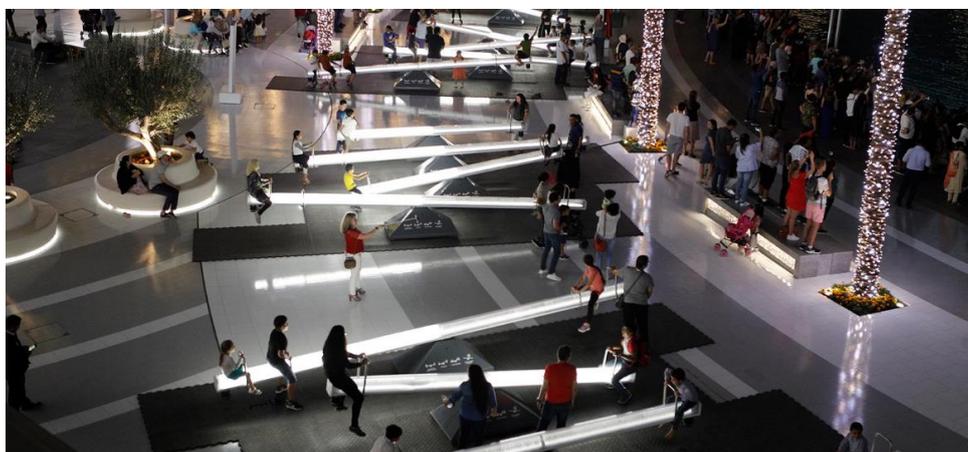
For further information please visit

https://bizgateway.org.uk/iw2020/?dm_i=36DV,ZKJ0,5N7FNP,3QP2M,1.

Light Up Leicester International Festival March 5 – March 8

The city centre will soon be lit up with some extraordinary illuminated artworks as part of a new international festival. The free Light Up Leicester festival will take place from Thursday, March 5, to Sunday, March 8, offering a digital take on traditional light festivals. Seven large-scale installations will interact with people through sound or sensors, reacting to light, temperature or humidity levels, or responding to data online. Most of the artworks that are coming to Leicester have already enjoyed success in the UK and elsewhere, but three new pieces have been specially commissioned for the festival and will be shown in Leicester for the first time.

Shadowdance - an interactive installation by Huddersfield-based Impossible - will transform people's shadows into gigantic colourful silhouettes. Unexpected Connection by Eccentric Events of Northampton will bring people together in an interactive LED tunnel. And Leicester-based Mateus Domingo has created Traces – a piece that captures visitors' 'traces', allowing them to leave their own mark on the illuminations.



Also confirmed for the Leicester festival is Wave-Field, which features eight illuminated see-saws that are activated when people play on them, and Youth Culture – a three-metre high sculpture of a youth that reflects audience interaction, thanks to in-built cameras, screens and technology. Together, the seven installations are set to create a stunning night-time spectacle in the city centre, free for everyone to enjoy.

Deputy city mayor Cllr Piara Singh Clair said: “Each of the pieces will encourage people to interact with them – and each of these illuminated works will help transform the night-time ambience in Leicester city centre during the four days of the festival. “We’re very grateful to Arts Council England and BID Leicester for supporting this event, and we look forward to working with our partners to deliver what should be a very special festival in Leicester in March.”

Sam Javid, executive producer at ArtReach - the Leicester-based arts organisation that’s working with the city council and partners to deliver the festival - said: "As producers, it’s our job to bring artists and organisations together to create memorable and magical experiences. "This new festival does just that – anyone in the city centre from 5-8 March will know something truly exceptional is happening."

Leicester celebrated Chinese New Year 2020

The Chinese New Year began on Saturday, January 25, and 2020. The celebrations began on January 26 with a procession and a grand finale performance featuring DJ GuoHan Zeng, plus a lion and dragon dance, mapped animation and fireworks. A special Last Friday event on the 31st at LCB Depot featured traditional workshops with music, comedy, art and street food.

A family celebration at New Walk Museum on 1 February included shadow puppet and storytelling workshops, martial arts displays and acrobatic performances from JiangXi Acrobats Troup. Highcross celebrated the Chinese New Year on the 1st and 2nd February with a packed programme of events.

Finale event - Humberstone Gate, Saturday 8 February

The Chinese New Year celebrations organised by Cosmopolitan Arts will be rounded off with this event. It will feature Chinese arts workshops throughout the day, lion and dragon dance, martial arts display, traditional live music from 'Euphoria' and 'Chinese Whispers', magician Zhu Hui Ling, Chinese singer from London Kong Fan Chang and traditional Chinese dancer Dudan. The day will end with a special lion dance with firecrackers. The event will run from 11am until 4.30pm.



Credit: Ranjit Chaggar

‘The Old Ones Are The Best’

Leicester Comedy Festival receives funding to work with older people

Producers of Leicester Comedy Festival, registered charity Big Difference Company, have received funding from The Baring Foundation to increase the work included in the festival aimed at older people. The funding, which will allow work to take place in Leicester Comedy Festival 2020 and 2021, will ultimately include setting up an “Older People’s Comedy Fringe” of the event. In addition, there will be some specific new activities targeted at older people, especially those in Leicester care homes. Full details about Leicester Comedy Festival can be found by visiting www.comedy-festival.co.uk

Founding Director of Leicester Comedy Festival, Geoff Rowe said “when we set up the festival in 1994, there seemed to be a general view that live comedy was for young people but we have always tried to be as inclusive as possible with the events and projects we work on each year. Over the years we have produced a range of activities targeted at older people and they have become really popular, so I’m delighted that this work has been supported by The Baring Foundation. The ultimate aim of this work is to set up an “Older People’s Comedy Fringe” as part of Leicester Comedy Festival.”

Comedian Lynn Ruth Miller, who started performing comedy aged 71 and is now 86 years old, said “I’ve been performing at Leicester Comedy Festival for many years and always look forward to taking part. It’s one of the premier comedy festivals in the world and the audiences are always fantastic. The development of a programme targeted at older people is really great and should make the festival even more welcoming to more people.”

Full details are available by visiting www.comedy-festival.co.uk

Leicester Comedy Festival receives funding to promote positive mental health

Producers of Leicester Comedy Festival, registered charity Big Difference Company, have received funding to promote positive mental health as part of the 2020 event, which will take place from 5-23 February. The grant has been received from Leicester City Council as part of the national Time To Change campaign, funded by Department of Health and Social Care, Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund. The Festival will feature specific performances, seminar events and a “mental health toolkit” designed to support the mental health of members of the public attending Festival events. The programme is supported by Leicestershire Action for Mental Health Project (LAMP), The Samaritans, Equity and #DMULocal programme. The toolkit for members of the public can be downloaded from here <https://comedy-festival.co.uk/mental-health/>.

Time to Change is a growing social movement, run by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness and the programme of work has already reached millions of people since beginning in 2007. Leicester Comedy Festival have also developed, with partners, a Mental Health Toolkit, which will be distributed to comedians performing at the festival, as well as venue staff and promoters. The Toolkit, which will aim to promote ways in which everyone involved in the event can improve their mental health whilst working at the festival, will be distributed to comedians and those involved in the festival.

The festival will be working with Harriet Dyer to promote a performance at the event. Harriet is the founder and compere of Manchester’s award-winning monthly Barking Tales comedy night, where she and fellow comedians often perform routines about their struggles with mental health. A

seminar discussion will also take place, focusing on comedy and mental health, and featuring speakers from a range of partner organisations and comedians.

Full details about the programme can be found by visiting www.comedy-festival.co.uk

An Evening of ABBA at the Fischer County Ground

Following the huge success of the evening of ABBA concert in summer 2018, the Stars of the West End Musical Mamma Mia! are heading to back to the Fischer County Ground in 2020. A dazzling collection of performers from London’s West End, including former stars from the smash hit musical ‘Mamma Mia!’, come together to present an incredible tribute to one of the world’s great pop bands at the Fischer County Ground on Saturday 13 June. Featuring dozens of hits from an astonishing back catalogue such as 'Mammia Mia', 'Dancing Queen', 'Super Trouper' & 'Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!' this is an amazing evening no ABBA fan should miss.

For further information, visit https://www.leicestershireccc.co.uk/news/2020/january/an-evening-of-abba-at-the-fischer-county-ground.html?utm_medium=pr&utm_source=coolasleicester&utm_campaign=aneveningofabba_301020.

February 2020 Festival and Event Listings

Wednesday 5 - Sunday 23 February	Leicester Comedy Festival	City Wide	Various
Monday 10 - Sunday 16 February	Spark Children's Festival	City Wide	Various
Friday 14 February	Riders v Newcastle Eagles	Morningside Arena	19:30 - 21:30
Saturday 15 February	Tigers v Wasps	Welford Road	15:00
Friday 21 - Sunday 23 February	Quad Nations	Morningside Arena	9:00 - 17:00
Saturday 22 February	Leicester City v Man City	Leicester City Football Club	15:00
Saturday 28 February	Riders v Sheffield Sharks	Morningside Arena	19:30-21:30
Saturday 29 February	Tigers v Worcester	Welford Road	15:00

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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