

**City Centre Director
February 2020
Update Report**

Contents

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)	4
Sending the City Centre Directors Report	4
Light up Leicester	5
Interactive Artworks 'Light Up Leicester' 5-8 March	5
Regeneration News	6
Everards Brewery reveals plans to build hotel	6
Work starts to convert Leicester's abandoned International Hotel into student flats and more	6
Business News	7-11
Ian Mattioli on why Leicester is best place in Britain to do business	7
£40 million unlocked for Midlands' businesses	7-8
Leicestershire Law Society hosts its annual civic dinner	8
New look Nelsons law firm office	8-9
New management team announced at law firm Freeths	9
New Prosper support programme launched	9-10
Business Growth Grant	10
Green grants to improve energy efficiency	10
Pukka Pies announce £5m investment as sales rising	11
MIPIM: City delegation maintaining "positive outlook" for rescheduled Cannes property conference	11
Openings and Closings	11-16
Open & Opening	11-14
Giggling Squid	11-12
Sophy, King Street	12
Dama Rose, Granby Street	12
Brun Bun, Granby Street	12
Martin Bros Pizza	12
Turkish bakery chain Tegtat	13
Kitty Café, Highcross	13
Bodycare, Highcross	14
Argento, Highcross	14
Yamas, Highcross	14
Closed & Closing	14-15
White Stuff, Market Street	14
Quest Gaming, Belvoir Street	14
Company behind Leicester pub King Richard III reveals it is leaving 'with a heavy heart'	14
Future Cycles, Market Street	14
Select, Humberstone Gate	14

GAME, Gallowtree Gate	15
Refurbishments	15-16
Subway, Cheapside	15
Doughnotts, Silver Arcade	15
Revolution, New Walk	15
The Turkey Café, Granby St under new ownership	16
Cultural Quarters the Exchange Bar	16
Retail News	16-17
Losses widen at Laura Ashley - but emergency funding deal is agreed	16
Shoe Zone: Retailer warns 100 shops could close	17
Transport	17-18
Overnight lane closures as part of improvement work at St Margaret's Bus Station	17
Connecting Leicester Plans announced for £4million revamp of city centre streets	17-18
Longer trains and more seats to benefit Midlands commuters	18
Other News	19-26
Dedicated and popular Labour Leicester councillor Jean Khote dies	19
His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visit Leicester Market and unveil plaque for Green Dragon Square	19-20
Leicester one of 105 cities globally to score an 'A' rating for leading climate action	20-21
£1m funding boost to help promote cycling and walking	22
Global Kitchen, multi-cultural kitchen for the refugees and asylum seekers secures vital funding to continue	22-23
The Future's Bright for Leicestershire Charities Following Partnership Between VAL and BHIB	23
New £47,000 play area to open in Jubilee Square	23
The Leicester city centre car park that's become a tourist attraction	24
Blue Badge Tourist Guide Training in the East Midlands	24
Alex's Wish	24
The inspiring project helping women and girls avoid period poverty in Leicester	25
VisitBritain helping make tourism venues and experiences more accessible	26
Culture and Arts	26-28
First ever UK tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Love Never Dies to open at Curve	26
Museum exhibition is inspired by German Expressionist collection	26
The Wizard of Oz announced as this year's Made at Curve Christmas musical	26-27
New exhibition celebrates grassroots football in Leicester at Newarke Houses Museum	27
Britain's best drawings on display at Leicester Gallery until April 18	27
Search for Orton Statue Artist Following Campaign Success	28
Awards and Accolades	29-31
Leicester awarded Purple Flag status	29
Winners of the 2020 LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards	30-31

Festivals and Events	31-33
Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience	31
'We had all the eyes of the world on us' - events mark five years on from reinterment of King Richard III	32-33
The Brickman Experience, Friday 13th March – Monday 20th April 2020	33
Get in Touch	34

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Get the latest updates by following the links to gov.uk, nhs.uk and leicester.gov.uk below: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/information-about-the-coronavirus>

How can I prevent the spread of viruses?

- Wash your hands often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Cover your cough: cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeves. If you cough into your hands, ensure you wash them as soon as possible.
- Use disposable tissues and put them in the bin immediately afterwards.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

What are the common symptoms of coronavirus?

The common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

If you are suffering with any of the above symptoms it does not necessarily mean you have the illness. It could be related to other illnesses, such as a cold and flu.

Please follow the advice provided by NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Sending the City Centre Directors Report in the future

Please note we are changing the way we are sending the report. In future, it will be sent through dot mailer, the email address will be leicester.city.council2@r1.dotmailer-email.com. Please let us know if you have any difficulties receiving reports.

Light up Leicester

Interactive Artworks 'Light Up Leicester' 5-8 March

Over 200,000 people attended the four-day LIGHT UP LEICESTER festival, an extravaganza of seven artworks creating a trail around the city centre. While four of the artworks had enjoyed success elsewhere in the UK and abroad, ArtReach commissioned three special new artworks. Light Up Leicester was delivered through a partnership between ArtReach, BID Leicester and Leicester City Council.



Image of Wave by Squidsoup at Highcross Leicester Chris Patrick Photography



Bijash Chauhan Photography



Bijash Chauhan Photography



Matt Short Photography



Bijash Chauhan Photography



Matt Short Photography

Regeneration News

Everards Brewery reveals plans to build hotel

Everards Brewery is considering the potential of building a hotel next to the new headquarters and are expected to put planning permission for a 50-80 room hotel later this year. It would cost around £3.5 million to build. Aimed at the leisure market they hope it would complement the brewery, offices, beer hall and shop currently being built, which will be finished this autumn. A cafe and Rutland Cycling store have already opened on the 70-acre greenfield site which backs on to the River Soar.

The new brewery will have capacity to make around 16,000 barrels of beer a year for Everards' 173 pubs and its partners such as Leicester Tigers, the Morningside basketball arena and Curve theatre. Previous plans for a distillery next to the brewery have been dropped in favour of a small, pilot brewery which would allow members of the public to brew small batches of beer. It comes as the brewery announced a turnover of £30.5 million in the year to 30 September – about £1 million up on the previous year.

The new 200 capacity beer hall, brewery, offices and shop would open around October/November and would create around 35 jobs.

Work starts to convert Leicester's abandoned International Hotel into student flats and more

Work has started on transforming Leicester's former International Hotel into a block of student flats with shops and leisure facilities on the ground floor. The derelict building on the corner of Humberstone Road and Rutland Street, in the city centre, was once the place to be seen in its 1970s heyday of cocktail bars and banqueting halls

The building, owned by Land Invest Ltd, is now encased in scaffolding and notices have gone up announcing plans to convert it into a block of student flats. The project is being led by student accommodation provider True Student Ltd, which boasts similar developments in other British cities such as Glasgow, Birmingham, Newcastle and Salford.

A spokeswoman for parent company Bricks Capital said: "True Leicester will be one of the company's biggest developments to date, bringing around 470 fantastic new student bedrooms, serving the city's two universities.

Ben Morley, managing director of True Student Ltd, believes the redevelopment will bring vibrancy to the area and provide "high-end" student accommodation. "We're very excited to be bringing our award-winning offer to Leicester," he said. "Our new scheme is located in the heart of the city and will live up to the industry-leading standards we've established."

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby has welcomed the scheme. He said: "It's good news that this landmark building – which has stood empty and derelict for far too long – is set to be redeveloped and brought back into use. "The site has been an eyesore for many years and its planned conversion into new student flats will make a valuable contribution to the ongoing regeneration of this important part of the city centre."

Business News

Ian Mattioli on why Leicester is best place in Britain to do business

The founder of a finance firm that looks after £9.4 billion of clients' money has sung the praises of his home city – and urged other businesses to join them there. Ian Mattioli relocated Mattioli Woods from out-of-town offices in Grove Park, five miles south of Leicester, to a purpose-built £15 million block in the city centre just over a year ago. He said the move had not only provided space to grow but put them back into the heart of the city's business district. Other professional firms that have opened big offices in the city in recent years include Hastings Direct, IBM and PPL PRS.

New office space is also being added to the city's property market. Leicester's newest 33,000 sq. ft Grade A office building at Great Central Square is looking for tenants through property consultants JLL and APB, while Leicester City Council is looking to invest £9 million transforming a former factory block in King Street, close to the Mattioli Woods offices, into glass-fronted offices for small companies to use.

Mr Mattioli spoke as new figures show turnover at the wealth management and employee benefits business he launched with Bob Woods, was up almost 4 per cent to £30.3 million last year while pre-tax profits were up 7.1 per cent to £6 million. He said the business had increased margins following a restructuring, while recent acquisitions were performing and integrating well. Mr Mattioli said the move back into Leicester was helping the business with its growth.

He said: "I think Leicester is one of the best places to work and there has been a huge uplift in the area that we are based in. "Without a doubt we made the right decision to move back here and Leicester is one of the few places that you can operate high quality administrative systems from. "People that we train, and mentor here spend five, 10 or 15 years with the business, whereas in other places you might spend time on training and mentoring only for those people to leave. It pays off in Leicester. "I think the Labour council headed by Sir Peter Soulsby has helped – they are very much friends of industry and are investing in infrastructure sensibly. "There is also an integrated population in the city, who are respectful of each other and able to do business together with gusto and energy and passion."

In particular he praised the £250 million transformation of the city's Waterside area – a former industrial zone on the western side of the city alongside the River Soar and Grand Union Canal. Parts of the land were semi-derelict for decades but are now being brought back to life with new homes and apartments, offices, hotels, student accommodation and leisure facilities. The city council and its elected mayor have been central to that regeneration.

£40 million unlocked for Midlands' businesses

The Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) has appointed a new fund manager and made £40 million available to invest in the region's small businesses. Appointed to address regional demand for alternative debt finance options, The FSE Group will manage the £40 million debt fund, with the capability to invest between £100k and £1.5 million in businesses based in the West Midlands and East & South East Midlands. Forming the latest phase of investment released by the MEIF, the £40 million of debt finance brings the number of MEIF funds to eight, with the FSE Group set to work alongside six existing fund managers. This announcement follows a successful period for the MEIF including hitting its £50 million invested mark. The FSE Group is set to build on this and invest in a range of businesses, adding to the portfolio of over 225 SMEs already receiving finance from the British Business Bank's MEIF Fund.

Jon Corbett, Chair of the Midlands Engine Investment Fund’s Strategic Oversight Board, said: “Collaboration between our fund managers, Local Enterprise Partnerships and intermediaries has played a key part in the success of the MEIF so far. As a board, we believe that The FSE Group will be a valuable addition to the team, boosting investment and business growth across the Midlands.” The Midlands Engine Investment Fund project is supported financially by the European Union using funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 and the European Investment Bank.

Leicestershire Law Society hosts its annual civic dinner

Glynis Wright, president of the Leicestershire Law Society, hosted the body’s annual civic dinner in the grand hall of St Martins House on the 24th January. Among her guests were Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Mike Kapur Esq OBE, Leicester Lord Mayor Cllr Annette Byrne, chairman of Leicestershire County Council Pam Posnett MBE, Lord Willy Bach and members of the judiciary. Around 100 guests were welcomed with opening words from the president who celebrated the community and diversity within Leicester.

It was followed by honourable guest and keynote speaker for the evening, Simon Davis, national president for the Law Society of England and Wales. There was then entertainment from Indian classical dancers from Nupur Arts, plus a performance of Indian dance fusion from Rina and Priya. A spokeswoman for the society said: “Each year, the annual civic dinner is an opportunity for Leicestershire Law Society to thank its supporters, patrons and sponsors, whilst bringing together the people who have helped to build Leicester’s community. “In addition to presenting an excellent networking opportunity, great food and wonderful company, the dinner also highlights some of the brilliant creative talent we have locally.”



Leicestershire Law Society civic dinner

New look Nelsons law firm office

The New Walk office has been updated with an “airy and spacious” open plan social space – which includes the pool table, banquette-style booth seating and a bar – to bring employees together away from their traditional desks. The firm said it had been designed for “modern, agile working” and reflects its values and identity as a modern company. It comes after Nelsons, which also has offices in Nottingham and Derby, announced it had hit the first milestone of its three-year financial target – growing its after-tax profits by 27 per cent to £3.6 million and boosting turnover by eight per cent to £17.2 million for the year ending May 2019. It was also Nelsons’ strongest year in Leicester since it opened its office in the city – with solid financial growth in the private client, real estate, corporate and dispute resolution departments.

Stewart Vandermark, who became chief executive of Nelsons in June 2017 – the firm’s first leadership change since it was established in 1983 – said they were expecting another strong year of growth in the 2019/20 financial year after a successful first few months. He said: “The refurbishment

is part of our ongoing growth strategy in Leicester and it demonstrates our commitment to and investment in the city and local community. “We strive to provide a workplace culture that attracts top lawyers in the region to work for us so we can deliver the best client experience.”

The top 200 law firm has been providing support and advice to businesses, individuals and families with their legal and investment needs in the Leicester and Leicestershire area for almost 20 years.



New management team announced at law firm Freeths

National law firm Freeths has revealed details of the new management team that will take over when chief executive Peter Smith retires on 1 April. Karl Jansen, current national head of corporate, becomes the national managing partner while Philippa Dempster, managing partner of the London office, will be appointed senior partner. Julian Middleton, currently national head of employment, will become Freeths’ deputy chairman.

Chairman Colin Flanagan said: “This is another significant step in our growth as a top 50 UK law firm. “The firm continues to go from strength or strength – in large part driven by the clarity of our vision, consistency of approach and the quality of our people. “Building a new management team from within our own ranks is a clear demonstration of the strength of the firm and will ensure a smooth transition and strong leadership for the firm for the next stage of our growth.”

The business has almost 1,000 members of staff and 13 offices around the UK, including Leicester, Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester. The most recent office is in Bristol, and Freeths is ranked in the top tier in legal directories for 21 legal categories. Karl Jansen said: “We are all immensely proud to be part of the new management team. “As a group, we have long-standing, deep ties built over working together for nearly 30 years. “We believe that our culture is a crucial ingredient in our success, and this shared view about what makes us different will be invaluable in our ongoing dynamic development, as we continue to attract and develop the best talent and put our clients at the centre of everything we do.” Having set itself a goal to double in size in 2014, Freeths is on track to do that with revenues expected to top £100 million by mid-2020.

New Prosper support programme launched

The iNet has announced a new package of support for businesses seeking to develop new products, services and processes. PROMoting SME Product Enhancement and Research (PROSPER) will also help small and medium-sized businesses work with Loughborough University academics. The programme will operate from now until December 2022.

The support includes a mixture of:

- Financial Support: part-funding (grant) towards external costs of innovation and product development projects
- Non-financial support: fully funded access to expertise at Loughborough University

For more information visit: <https://www.the-inet.org.uk/projects/PROSPER/>

Business Growth Grant

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 (LEEP). 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). A business adviser will support you throughout the process. Please note only SMEs trading business-to-business for at least 24 months and based in Leicester or Leicestershire are eligible.

An SME is defined as:

- Employ fewer than 250 people or volunteer.
- 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.

Discuss your needs with one of the team to determine your next steps on 0116 366 8487 or visit: <https://bizgateway.org.uk/business-growth-grant/>.

Green grants to improve energy efficiency

Green BELLE supports small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Leicester and Leicestershire to increase their energy efficiency, reduce their energy costs and lower their carbon emissions. Round two has opened making grants of £1,000 to £7,000 available to support the installation of low carbon and energy-efficient technologies in local SMEs.

Project examples:

- Energy-efficient heating systems and controls, e.g. boiler replacements and heat pumps.
- Low energy lighting replacements (LEDs) and controls.
- Renewable energy systems – e.g. biomass, solar panels.
- Innovative low carbon measures, such as heat recovery systems.
- Replacement Energy Efficient Machinery – e.g. Air Compressors.
- Insulation.
- Building Energy Management Systems.

For more details and how to apply please visit <https://www.greenbelle.org.uk/>.

Pukka Pies announce £5m investment as sales rising

One of the UK's biggest pie makers has announced plans to invest £5 million ramping up production at its Leicestershire bakery. Pukka Pies revealed the investment as new figures showed annual sales rose from almost 7 per cent to £52.7 million in the year to last May. Pre-tax profits for the last financial year were up almost £1 million to £3.6 million. The business, based in the village of Syston, just north of Leicester, said the investment and ongoing growth would cement its position as "the nation's favourite hot pie brand".

Pukka's chief executive Deborah Ewan said: "The last year has marked a significant step-change for the business, including the launch of a successful and bold new marketing and TV campaign, as well as investment in a new look and more environmentally friendly packaging. "So, it is very exciting to reinforce our growth and development with the announcement of further investment in our bakery."

MIPIM: City delegation maintaining "positive outlook" for rescheduled Cannes property conference

Organisers of a city delegation to the MIPIM property conference remain confident the rescheduled event will go ahead in June, despite the global spread of coronavirus. But they are also geared up to push their plans forward to 2021 – should the global health crisis put paid to the event. The Team Leicester group had been due to join some 27,000 business and political leaders at the annual property expo in Cannes from 10-13 March.

The Team Leicester partnership, which is made up of public and private sector organisations with an interest in property development and construction, has made arrangements to transfer its programme to the new dates of June 2-5.

Openings and Closings

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

Open & Opening

Giggling Squid

Giggling Squid opened on Monday 10 February. The new city restaurant brings tasty Thai flavours, fresh ingredients and a lively dining experience to St Martin's Square. The 100 cover Leicester restaurant, which is the chain's 35th branch, features Giggling Squid's colourful, floral-focused interior. This includes framed paintings of flowers on the walls, flowers painted on the ceiling, colourful floral wallpaper and potted orchids dotted around the restaurant.



Giggling Squid (Image: Leicestershire Live)

Giggling Squid is all about how people eat their meals in Thailand, sharing and celebrating an abundance of flavours and fresh ingredients, whether you have more adventurous tastes or prefer simple and satisfying. Thai-born Pranee Laurillard and her husband Andrew founded Giggling Squid, the nickname of one of their children, with the aim of bringing the real Thai dining experience to the UK.

The popular lunchtime tapas menu includes the tapas sets such as the Starving Squid (Chicken Red Curry, Pork Dumplings, Thai Spring Rolls, Jasmine Rice). Vegetarian options and separate vegan menus are available and there's also a dedicated 'little tapas for little people' menu for children. You'll find Giggling Squid at 3-5 St Martin's Square. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 12pm-10pm, Friday-Saturday 12pm-10.30pm, and Sunday 12pm-9.30pm.

Sophy, King Street

Sophy on King Street has opened. The venue, at 8-10 King Street, housed nightclub Sub8ten until it closed in 2018. The name Sophy is a nod to the nightclub Sophbeck, which was located in the building prior to Sub8ten. It also reflects the bar's feminine look.

The team behind the new venue have been working closely with Leicester company Agency Four on the design of the bar and the logo, which is a butterfly. Sophy will initially focus on cocktails, but it is planned that food will be introduced in the near future.

Sophy will then be open from Tuesday to Sunday each week. Opening hours will be: Tuesday 3pm - midnight, Wednesday 3pm - midnight, Thursday 3pm - 2am, Friday 3pm - late, Saturday 3pm - late and Sunday 6pm - midnight.



Dama Rose, Granby Street

Dama Rose (Arabic coffee house) will open soon at 26 Granby Street. To be kept up to date visit: <https://www.dama-rose.co.uk/>.

Brun Bun, Granby Street

Brun Bun is soon to open in Granby Street.

Martin Bros Pizza

Martin Bros Pizza have announced that they now have a permanent residency at Two Tailed Lion. For further information visit: <http://martinbrospizza.co.uk/>.

Turkish bakery chain Tegtat

Tegtat claims it is one of the fastest growing companies in Turkey, with nearly 100 bakery-café's across the country and surrounding nations. Now, the chain has opened its first UK store in the former Schoolwear Centre on the corner of Charles Street and Humberstone Gate.

Customers can look forward to buying freshly baked bread, pastries and cakes. There will also be a café serving traditional Turkish coffee and tea. It is being launched by franchisee Yaseen Patel, who has worked in the food industry for more than 15 years, and says he has 'taken the next step' by bringing the Tegtat franchise to the UK. You'll find Tegtat at 32 Charles Street.



Inside an existing branch of Tegtat (Image: Tegtat)

Kitty Café, Highcross

Kitty Café will open on Monday 1 June and will have 30 felines for visitors to fuss. It will be the fourth branch of Kitty Café, with the first being set up in Nottingham in 2015. There are also cafés in Leeds and Birmingham. Kitty Café's aim is that every cat, regardless of the situation, finds a loving home and has a long and healthy life.

The majority of the 30 cats will be rescues, which will be rehabilitated and rehomed through the café. As with the other locations, the Leicester branch will have large, quirky spaces, lots of colour and a bespoke-built cat playground. There will be a custom-built clinical cattery at the site, which will be under 24-hour observation, and security will be on site at all times. The cats will be cared for by qualified members of staff and registered with a vet for all their needs. They can only be adopted once they are neutered, injected and chipped as well as taken to full health.

Customers visiting the café can expect to find pizzas, jacket potatoes, paninis and wraps on the menu, plus desserts, high tea, milkshakes and mocktails. Entry will cost £6 for adults and £4 per child per hour. Alternatively, you can become a member, which will give you free entry. All ages are allowed, however those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.



Katie Charles-Richards set up the first Kitty Cafe in Nottingham in 2015. (Image: Kitty Cafe)

Bodycare, Highcross

Bodycare are upsizing their unit in Highcross.

Argento, Highcross

Argento has opened in Highcross.

Yamas, Highcross

Yamas Greek food kiosk has opened.

Closed & Closing

White Stuff, Market Street

High street fashion and lifestyle brand White Stuff will close on Saturday 11 April. White Stuff can still be bought from the concession at John Lewis or online.

Quest Gaming, Belvoir Street

Owners of Quest, in Belvoir Street have announced that the business is to close permanently. Quest was launched in October 2018 by gaming fan Mitz Cubley and his wife Katriona. Mitz and Katriona were keen to provide a great experience for all gamers, ensuring that there were facilities for new parents, children and disabled customers. The couple decided to launch the business following the birth of their daughter in 2017, with the aim that they could work together and blend in family life. However, they have now decided to close the business as they felt it was taking too much time away from their family life.

Company behind Leicester pub King Richard III reveals it is leaving 'with a heavy heart'

The Beautiful Pubs Collective re-opened the Highcross Street venue in June 2019 after a £110k refurbishment. It relaunched as a pub and chophouse. Despite the pub gaining a reputation for good quality food, directors of The Beautiful Pubs Collective have decided that the venue's restaurant area isn't big enough. The decision follows a full appraisal of the business and its future goals by the board of directors of the independent pub company.

The pub's freehold owner, Everards of Leicestershire, is now looking for someone to take on the venue. Matt Crehan, business relationship manager for Everards, said: "Sam and his team have done a fantastic job of bringing something fresh and exciting to Leicester city centre and unfortunately King Richard III hasn't been the right venue for their ambitious business goals. "We are confident we will get a lot of interested in this opportunity. "Until a new business owner is found we're delighted that the team at The Beautiful Pubs Collective will continue to run King Richard III."

Future Cycles, Market Street

Future Cycles, 21 Market Street is now closed.

Select, Humberstone Gate

Select store closed on the 11 March a year after going into administration.

GAME, Gallowtree Gate

Video game specialist GAME is closing its Gallowtree Gate store on the 18 April. According to staff at the store, it is 'merging' with the branch on the ground floor of the Highcross shopping centre. The closure of the Gallowtree Gate branch of GAME follows the news in January that the retailer would be closing 40 stores across the UK as part of "rationalisation programme". At the time of the announcement, 13 of its shops already had a noticed served, with Leicester being one of these locations.

Refurbishments

Subway, Cheapside

A spokesperson for Subway said: "We are pleased to confirm that the Subway store in Cheapside, Leicester will reopen as a Fresh Forward store after an extensive remodel. According to Subway, the 'Fresh Forward' stores feature new decor, a new logo design and updated interiors.



The new 'Fresh Forward' design (Image: Subway)

Doughnotts, Silver Arcade

Doughnotts in Silver Arcade have undergone a refurbishment.

Revolution, New Walk

Leicester bar Revolution has re-opened following a £170,000 refurbishment. Aiming to provide customers with a more luxurious experience, Revolution has been given a chic makeover, with new furniture, new lighting and new decor across the two floors.



Revolution in New Walk (Image: Will Johnston Photography)

The Turkey Café, Granby St under new ownership

Leicester bar 1901 - The Turkey Cafe is now under new ownership after the family behind the venue have decided to move on after six years in business. The Granby Street bar - based in a Grade II Listed building - was launched in 2014 by mother and son duo Wendy and Ryan Biddles.

Now, after six successful years, Wendy and Ryan have decided that the time is right to move on. Having become a father in 2018, Ryan is keen to spend more time with his daughter and fiancé. He and Wendy won't be leaving the food and drink industry behind though - as they are set to launch another business later this year. In The Wild Trailer Co will supply events with horse trailers featuring mobile bars, and providing street food and desserts.

Cultural Quarters the Exchange Bar

Following new ownership, the Exchange has launched new food and drink menus. Now part of MVR Exchange Limited, sitting alongside the neighbouring Manhattan 34, The Exchange Bar will undergo a light refresh but continue to create the unique ambience and friendly atmosphere that it was known for before. By popular demand, customers will be pleased to know the kitchen will be reopening and offering all-time American brunch classics including American style bagels and pancake stackers as well as staples such as a soup of the day and toasties on the lunch menu with a range of vegan and vegetarian options.

Marc Van Rooyen, owner of The Exchange Bar and Manhattan 34 said; "We're excited to welcome both new and old customers to The Exchange Bar. We're already planning an extensive and varied programme of events including beer and wine masterclasses, poetry nights and open mic nights, speciality cuisine nights – to name just a few. "The Cultural Quarter is a great hub for the city and to be at the heart of that, is an honour. We're working with businesses in the area to create bespoke offers and there are already plans for a Cultural Quarter loyalty card." For more information visit www.theexchangebar.co.uk.

Retail News

Losses widen at Laura Ashley - but emergency funding deal is agreed

Losses at struggling high street retailer Laura Ashley have ballooned after a tough year, the business said, just days after warning that revenue would also tumble as it sought emergency funding. Loss before tax hit £4 million in 2019, increasing from the £1.5 million loss the year before. Sales fell nearly 11% to £109.6 million. Chairman Andrew Khoo said: "There have been market challenges for our business which have impacted these results during the current financial year. The decline in total revenue was due to the market headwinds and weaker consumer spending during the period, which led to a decline in sales of bigger ticket items.

"The group should be able to utilise requisite funds from its working capital facility with Wells Fargo to meet its immediate funding "Whilst these results are disappointing, we believe that, with the right focus and support, Laura Ashley has a strong future and can be successful again. "In the autumn of 2019, we carried out a strategic review of the business to set the future direction of the company and return Laura Ashley to the great British brand that is known and cherished around the world. This includes reconnecting with our traditional values and our strong British heritage."

Source: Business Live

Shoe Zone: Retailer warns 100 shops could close

Shoe Zone has warned that it could be forced to close a fifth of its stores if business rates do not change. The retailer will close 100 of its UK stores unless the property tax is overhauled. Boss Anthony Smith told the BBC: "If people want vibrant High Streets, they really do need retailers like us to keep our shops open in smaller towns." Retailers have called on HM Treasury to reform business rates in the Budget scheduled for next month.

Mr Smith said: "There is a lot of talk about the regeneration and repurposing of town centres, which we are all up for. But whatever goes into those shops, the rateable value is still simply too high." The rateable value is set by the government's Valuation Office Agency. It determines how much a firm has to pay in business rates, based on the value of the property.

Source: BBC News

Transport

Overnight lane closures as part of improvement work at St Margaret's Bus Station

The latest phase of a project to cut journey times for buses using St Margaret's Bus Station has begun. Changes are being made to the bus station to create a new exit directly onto the city's inner ring road, which will shorten journeys by around six minutes. The design means buses will no longer have to travel on a lengthier route along New Road, Gravel Street and Abbey Street to get onto Burley's Way, which adds to the amount of traffic and increases passengers' journey times. Taking place from February 17 to April 17, the next phase will involve overnight work to make alterations to lanes on Burleys Way and Vaughan Way.

Various lane closures will only take place between 7.30pm and 6am when there is less traffic using the inner ring road, with all noisy work ending by 11pm. When completed the scheme will also feature new traffic islands on Burleys Way, new footpaths, and a crossing point and guard rails along the front of the bus station itself. The bus station will remain open with bus services remaining unaffected. A series of temporary night-time closures for resurfacing Burleys Way at the end of this phase of work will take from March 23 to 27.

The scheme is costing £750,000 and is funded from the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund under its Bus Pinch Points project.

Connecting Leicester Plans announced for £4million revamp of city centre streets

Leicester City Council is planning a major £4million improvements to Horsefair Street, Pocklington's Walk nearby Market Place South (and a small linking section of Millstone Lane) as part of the Connecting Leicester project, which is improving routes through the city centre while making it more attractive to investors and developers. On Horsefair Street, footpaths will be reconstructed with high-quality block paving and the realigned carriageway will be resurfaced. A new contraflow cycle track will be created to extend the network of safe cycle routes across the city centre.

As part of the revamp, a new footpath will be created into Town Hall Square. This will link directly to Dolphin Square, with a raised area across the carriageway to link the two areas of public realm. These improvements will extend onto Pocklington's Walk, where footpaths will be improved, and the carriageway realigned and resurfaced. A contraflow cycle track will provide a direct link from

Horsefair Street to the new cycle lanes created on Welford Road, Newarke Street and Belvoir Street. A small number of Pay and Display parking bays will be introduced on Chancery Street to offset removal of parking on Pocklington's Walk.



Nearby Market Place South will also be reconstructed and resurfaced, extending the improvements recently completed in Market Place. Work to improve the pedestrian link at Dolphin Square will also be completed, with a high-quality resin-bonded gravel finish. The improvements will be part financed with up to £1.85 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), following the city council's successful bid for over £6 million of funding to support a range of ambitious transport related projects that aim to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "It is vital that we continue to invest in the regeneration of this high-profile part of the city centre and continue to provide safe and attractive routes for cyclists and pedestrians. "This major scheme will transform the look and feel of this part of the city centre, providing much improved facilities for all road users and creating a new direct link between Leicester's popular market and the historic Town Hall Square. "The award of almost £2million of ERDF support is a tremendous endorsement of what this scheme will help achieve."

The overall improvement scheme will be carried out in phases to minimise disruption, but some road closures will be required. To view plans and further details, visit the 'ongoing projects' section at www.leicester.gov.uk/connectingleicester.

Longer trains and more seats to benefit Midlands commuters

Thousands of passengers will benefit from improvements on Cross Country trains including over 20,000 extra seats a week, funded by a £2.5 million government investment announced by the Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris. Passengers travelling from Birmingham to Nottingham, Leicester and Cardiff will start to see longer trains on some services from May 2020 delivering more than 5,000 more seats each week. The £2.5 million new government funding was agreed by the DfT and Cross Country to help tackle overcrowding. Work is underway on further improvements in the years to come when more rolling stock will be available, especially for longer distance routes that Cross Country serves.

Other News

Dedicated and popular Labour Leicester councillor Jean Khote dies

Tributes have been paid to a popular city councillor who has died. Jean Khote has passed away after a short illness. The 76-year-old was the Labour councillor for North Evington and had represented the area on the city council since 2015. Councillor Khote's friend and colleague, Diane Cank, said: "Jean was a lovely lady – extremely generous – and one of the hardest working councillors around. "She was warm and funny, but she never stood for any silly stuff. "She came to Leicester from Hackney and immediately became a huge part of our community and made a lot of friends. "She was kind and would donate to the food share in North Evington every fortnight."

Coun Khote leaves a husband, a son, daughter and grandchildren. The Leicester-based Federation of Muslim Organisations said: "Her selfless contribution for the community was immense." City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said he was shocked and saddened by Coun Khote's death. "Jean was a very remarkable woman – a good friend and a powerful servant of her ward and our city of Leicester She will be much missed and long remembered with gratitude," he said.



Jean Khote

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visit Leicester Market and unveil plaque for Green Dragon Square

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has thanked the people of Leicester for their warm welcome on a freezing day. The heir to the throne and the Duchess of Cornwall arrived at the city's market at lunchtime on Tuesday 11 February as the snow and sleet blew in. The unpleasant weather, however, did not deter hundreds of people from lining the streets to greet the royal couple. No sooner had Prince Charles and Camilla stepped out of the royal limousine than they were offered a stiff espresso by Geoff Rossa of the market's Cafe Bocca.

Geoff, whose grandfather Raphael set up stall in Leicester in 1986, said: "They'd ordered ahead so we were ready with the refreshments. I think they liked it." "That's serious coffee," declared the prince after just a sip before he and Camilla ventured into the market to meet traders. City mayor, Peter Soulsby guided the couple through the stalls, explaining that the family of one of Leicester's favourite sons, Gary Lineker, once had a fruit and veg business there. The stalls were decorated with Union flags as the couple passed through. Camilla took time to stop and speak with members of the Shama Women's Centre, in Highfields, which works to help women develop their skills and to prevent domestic violence, and view artwork created by the group.

Trader Tim Pole chatted briefly with the Prince as he passed through the market's indoor food hall. He said: "He was really interested in our British cheeses. I might send him some. It was great to meet him for me personally and great for the city. It lifted the place." The centrepiece of the market visit was for Prince Charles to unveil a plaque to mark the renaming of the 'New Market Square' behind

the Corn Exchange as Green Dragon Square – a nod to the 15th Century Green Dragon Tavern which once stood roughly where the statue of suffragette Alice Hawkins is now placed.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “The names of two of these medieval inns live on in the market area today, with Dolphin Square and Angel Gateway reminding us of the area’s history. “By naming our new market square after the Green Dragon inn, we’ll create another link with Leicester’s past and ensure that the Green Dragon’s fascinating story is shared with a new generation of visitors to Leicester’s historic marketplace.” New heritage panels that tell the story of the Green Dragon inn and the death of John Fenton will be installed in the square later this year.

They were welcomed by 90 Leicester primary school children from Folville Junior School, Avenue Primary School and St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy. Lord Mayor Annette Byrne presented Camilla with a small bronze statuette of Alice Hawkins, the former Leicester factory worker who fought for votes for women. Addressing the crowd in Green Dragon Square, Prince Charles said: “May I just say what an enormous pleasure it is for my wife and myself to be here today. “We apologise for keeping you all waiting in the middle of hailstorms and also for preventing so many of you from shopping in the splendid market which we so enjoyed seeing.”

He said he hoped the new square would make an enormous difference to the city, adding: “Thank you for your incredibly kind welcome that really has made a whole difference to us.” The Duchess then travelled to Leicester General Hospital while The Prince of Wales visited The City Rooms for the launch of the East Midlands chapter of the British Asian Trust charity, of which he is royal patron. Among the people he met was City Rooms owner Naresh Parmar.



Camilla Duchess of Cornwall during a visit to Leicester Market (Image, Leicestershire Live)



Prince Charles is greeted by members of the public outside City Rooms (Image, Leicestershire Live)

Leicester one of 105 cities globally to score an ‘A’ rating for leading climate action

Leicester has been recognised as a global leader on climate action and transparency, achieving a place on Carbon Disclosure Project’s (CDP) ‘Cities A List’. Last year, 43 cities were recognised for their climate leadership and transparency, compared to 105 this year, 65% of which are new arrivals.

To score an A, a city must have a city-wide emissions inventory, have set an emissions reduction target, published a climate action plan and have completed a climate adaptation plan to demonstrate how it will tackle climate hazards now and in the future among other actions. Analysis has shown that on average cities on the A List are taking over three times as many climate actions as non-A List cities. This represents five times as many actions to cut emissions and curb future warming, and twice as many to adapt to current climate hazards, from flooding to extreme heatwaves.

Kyra Appleby, Global Director for Cities, States and Regions at CDP said: “In the year of COP 26, the world’s attention is turned to state governments to ratchet up their carbon reduction commitments. Cities, however, are uniquely placed to deliver urgent action. These 105 – including Leicester – demonstrate how, setting an example for others to follow, and we congratulate them for their leadership.”

Leicester has been recognised for its actions in the last reporting year to develop robust climate change strategies, track and act to limit and reduce emissions, assess and mitigate climate risks and transparently report this information in its 2019 disclosure to CDP. Leicester has already almost halved its carbon footprint compared to 1990 levels. The city council has also managed to reduce its own carbon emissions by over 45% in a decade.

Just some of the actions taken to achieve this include:

- The ongoing, multimillion-pound investment in the Connecting Leicester scheme to provide safe and attractive routes for more people to commute by foot or bike.
- Replacing all of streetlights with white LEDs, reducing their carbon footprint by almost 60%.
- Being one of the first UK authorities to install a district heating system that supplies low cost, low-carbon energy to 3,000 homes, the University of Leicester, and 20 council buildings.
- Constructing the city’s first carbon neutral classroom block, which will provide space for 120 primary school children.
- Work with the Environment Agency on a major programme of flood risk management work that is helping to protect thousands of homes across the city. This includes the creation of Ellis Meadows – an award-winning 20-acre park and nature reserve.

Leicester City Council also formally declared a climate emergency in February 2019. It is now preparing to launch a new action plan following Leicester’s Climate Conversation, a major consultation to help shape how the city responds to the climate emergency and becomes carbon neutral.

Deputy city mayor Cllr Adam Clarke, who leads on environment and transportation, said: “We’re very proud to be recognised by CDP for our work on tackling the climate crisis and reducing our carbon footprint. “As a council, we are already working hard to cut our own emissions and to support local people, schools and business to make the changes needed to help reduce the city’s overall carbon footprint. “We’ve made excellent progress, but we know more needs to be done. Responding to the climate emergency will mean making big changes to the way we all live and work. We need to increase our actions and aim to become a carbon neutral city as quickly as possible.”

The science tells us that global emissions must be halved by 2030 to have a one in two chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The full A List of cities is published by visiting <https://www.cdp.net/en/cities/cities-scores>.

£1m funding boost to help promote cycling and walking

More than £1million of Government funding has been secured to help further work to promote walking and cycling in Leicester and Leicestershire. The money from the Department for Transport's Access Fund totals £1.065m and has been given to Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to extend a four-year programme of partnership work between the two councils, encouraging walking and cycling in the west of the city and surrounding area. The programme has already led to notable increases in people walking and cycling. So far, it has provided information to more than 250,000 employees in the area, giving them advice and access to training and facilities to allow them to travel to work more sustainably.

More than 1,000 employees' bikes have been serviced for free; hundreds have been taught how to maintain their own bikes; and 40 businesses have successfully applied for travel grants totalling more than £120,000, helping them to provide items such as lockers, showers, secure cycle parking, electric bike fleets and minibuses for staff. And more than 90 new employees and apprentices have been helped to travel to work through the Wheels 2 Work programme, where they can hire a low-cost bike, electric bike or electric scooter from the city council.

In local schools, more than 30,000 schoolchildren have taken part in activities to encourage walking and cycling to school. Partnering with Sustrans, the cycling charity, more than 25 'Bike It' crews have been established. The programme has also delivered Bikeability training to more than 10,000 pupils, and has worked with the walking charity Living Streets, resulting in nearly 70% of schoolchildren walking to school in Leicester, which is way above the national average of 49%.

The money will be used next year to deliver 20 travel roadshows and engage with up to 100,000 people, so that they know what options are available to them for sustainable transport. £30,000 will be made available as grants for businesses to help them make active travel easier for their employees, and 2,500 children will be receiving Bikeability training. Some of the funding will also be used to hold the third annual Walk Leicester festival, which has already attracted more than 7,000 participants in its first two years. To find out more about active travel in Leicester and Leicestershire, visit www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk.

Global Kitchen, multi-cultural kitchen for the refugees and asylum seekers secures vital funding to continue

A community kitchen that changed the life of a man who was seeking asylum in Leicester for 20 years will continue to run after a successful crowdfunding campaign. Global Kitchen, a collaborative project founded by ArtReach and Soft Touch Arts that provides a sociable and creative environment for refugees and asylum seekers, has secured more than £9,000 surpassing their target of £7,788. Without funding, the project would stop due to the costs of running it and keeping it free to the people it supports - including Linton Magume who found his calling as the head chef after fleeing persecution in his home country, Zimbabwe.

Linton spent two decades seeking asylum in Leicester until he gained refugee status in 2019 and got a job as a chef at the age of 37 after volunteering at Global Kitchen. Director of Soft Touch Arts Christina Wigmore worked with Nicola Middler, a senior producer for ArtReach, to develop the idea. "It's incredible to see the generosity of people around the city. Settling into a new place can always be tough but particularly if English is your second language," Christina said.

Thanks to the generous donations by members of the public as well as significant pledges from city Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby and BID Leicester, plans for the next year of the Global Kitchen are in

progress. With the funding provided, the founders are hoping to produce a book from the array of recipes created from all different parts of the world and even hope to invite a few celebrity chefs along to the sessions.

The Future's Bright for Leicestershire Charities Following Partnership Between VAL and BHIB

Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) has announced that it is working with BHIB Charities Insurance – a sub-brand of BHIB Insurance Brokers – to offer wider support and assistance to thousands of local charities and community groups across Leicester and Leicestershire. VAL has been helping voluntary and community groups, who provide a range of services for some of the hardest to reach and most marginalised in society, to thrive for over fifty years. By engaging with the BHIB Charities Insurance team, it will be providing another element of support for thousands of charity groups of all sizes throughout the region.

BHIB will be offering advice across a wide range of topics as part of the partnership, including legal and HR guidance, risk management, health and safety policies, insurance insights, trustee protection support, and even social media and cyber best practice guidance. On top of this, and unique to the VAL offering, the BHIB team will be providing free health checks on any charity insurance needs, making sure that they are receiving the correct advice while allowing them to both understand and identify any potential risk they may face.

To find out more about VAL, please visit <https://valonline.org.uk/> or call 0116 2575050. To find out more about BHIB, please visit <https://www.bhibcharities.co.uk/> or call 0330 013 0036

New £47,000 play area to open in Jubilee Square

A new £47,000 children's play area is being built in Leicester city centre. Workmen are currently installing the equipment designed with younger visitors, aged three to eight, on a lawned corner of Jubilee Square by the Wygston's House pub. It will feature a balance trail, seesaw, bowl roundabout and a small slide.

City mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said: "We want to enhance the opportunities for children's play across the city centre, building on the investment we've made in recent years to create people friendly streets and spaces. "This latest project will help turn a relatively small part of Jubilee Square into an attractive new play area that families with young children can enjoy together. I am sure it will be a welcome addition to this popular part of the city centre."

The project is being funded from Leicester City Council's capital programme and will be the first phase of new investment in city centre play equipment. Other planned schemes include a children's play bus close to Haymarket Bus Station and a new balance trail on Gallowtree Gate.



The Leicester city centre car park that's become a tourist attraction

The 1961 concrete multi-storey at Lee Circle has plenty of history, and even its own fanbase. While to some people the car park is simply the place to leave your vehicle, for others it's the reason to visit in the first place. Brian Devonshire, head of operations for NCP in the Midlands and East region, revealed the site was an unusual attraction in an interview with Birmingham Live about the future of Brum's own NCP car parks.

He said: "Lee Circle was opened by comedian Sid James and has its own fans." It was indeed the first automated multi-storey car park in Europe, boasting coin-operated barriers. When it was opened the ground floor housed the first Tesco store outside London and heralded the emergence of the supermarket era. Carry on Star Sid James opened the £750,000 car park and the Tesco on the same December day.

A crowd of more than 2,000 gathered to see the celeb and be among the first inside the store and the six-tier "Multi-Dek" above it. An ad for the opening promised a family range of clothing, fresh meat, groceries, provisions, electrical and household good, linens and toys for Christmas. All with the slogan: 'Park your car and walk in'.



The Tesco store at the bottom of the new six-tier "Multi-Dek" car park at Lee Circle, Leicester



The advert for the opening

Blue Badge Tourist Guide Training in the East Midlands

Train to be a professional Blue Badge Tourist Guide in the East Midlands. Turn your love of the East Midlands into a career. Share knowledge of local culture and heritage. Guide visitors in towns, countryside, stately homes, gardens, castles & cathedrals. Training course details and Application forms for the 2020-21 course covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland are available from: www.guidetrainingeastmids.com.

Alex's Wish

Glynis Wright, President of Leicestershire Law Society and 30 superheroes look part in a campaign to raise money for Alex's Wish – Cure Duchenne by taking part in Zip World UK. So far, they have raised a staggering £9,000 and the money is still coming in. Well done to everyone who took part! To find out more about Alex's Wish please visit: <https://alexswish.co.uk/>.



The inspiring project helping women and girls avoid period poverty in Leicester

A Leicester charity has launched a campaign to eradicate Period Poverty with the introduction of a P – Card enabling women to purchase discounted sanitary products. The Zinithiya Ganeshpanchan Trust, which runs The Community Shop in Bishop Street, a low-cost food and goods outlet for public use, wants to see an end to women and girls struggling to buy expensive hygiene products. Zinithiya Ganeshpanchan – founder of the Zinithiya trust said: “We are launching the P card, a little pink card which we would give to women and girls who are struggling to meet their sanitary needs, they can come and use it even if they are not Community Shop members and get a discount on their sanitary products”.

The charity is also looking for other retailers and businesses to participate in the scheme, offering discounts of 10-25 per cent to cardholders. The Community Shop, located next to Town Hall Square, has been operating since December 2016 providing cheap food, household items and everyday essentials for those who may be struggling financially but may not qualify for food banks or other means of support. The charity was set up in 2009 to support disadvantaged women, those fleeing violence, ex-offenders, and long term unemployed.

Councillor Sarah Russell recently paid a visit to the shop to find out more about the work they do and how the set-up works. Cllr Russell said: “We are developing an anti-poverty strategy for the city; we are looking at what is already out there. What we don’t want to do is duplicate fantastic work that is already happening, but we also want people to know about what is out there. “The reason we have come here is that it is quite different, that chance for a mix of people being able to use the shop because they want to help support Zinithiya, and people who are using the shop because they need to be able to get lower-priced goods or to get the voucher to be able to get the goods for free. “There is something about the dignity of it, being able to come in, choose the products you need and be shopping alongside other people who aren’t necessarily there because they can’t afford to shop somewhere else. There’s something really powerful about that for people”.

And as for the P – Card Cllr Russell was very supportive: “It’s a massive issue for women, in terms of dignity, and being able to come here and access those products. Cllr Russell said that the council would look at ways that they could support the project, potentially purchasing from the Community Shop to also ensure that they meet their commitments to have sanitary products in all of the council buildings.

The P – Card is now available from the Zinithiya Trust who can also help families and individuals who are struggling with finances, energy and welfare, school uniforms and women’s issues, www.zinthyatrust.org/ or tel: [0116 254 5168](tel:01162545168).



(Image: Leicester Mercury / Chris Gordon)

VisitBritain helping make tourism venues and experiences more accessible

There is a compelling business case for making tourism venues and experiences inclusive. People with health conditions and impairments and their travelling companions spend around £12 billion on trips in England each year, but an additional £117 million could be generated from additional trips if accessibility was improved.

People from this market are more likely to take longer trips and are anecdotally very loyal to places that meet their requirements.

Further guidance, tools and resources to help you provide access for all can be found here <https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible>.

Culture and Arts

First ever UK tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Love Never Dies to open at Curve

The first ever UK tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Love Never Dies is set to open at Curve theatre. Following on from the sell-out North American tour, the sequel to The Phantom of the Opera will open at Curve on Saturday 26 September where it will play until Saturday 10 October. The production is set in 1907. It is 10 years after the Phantom's disappearance from the Paris Opera House and he has escaped to a new life in New York where he lives amongst the screaming joy rides and freak shows of Coney Island.

For more information, visit the website: <https://www.curveonline.co.uk/whats-on/>

Museum exhibition is inspired by German Expressionist collection

A new exhibition inspired by Leicester's renowned German Expressionist collection at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery is open now until 19 April, the exhibition – entitled Dissent and Displacement – explores storytelling and the ways it reflects on people's lives. Leicester's German Expressionist collection, the largest in the UK, proved to be an inspiration for the work, which explores themes of opposition, persecution and persistence, and led to New Walk Museum being chosen as the venue to premiere the exhibition.

It features work by German/Jewish artist Monica Petzal, alongside pieces by the late German sculptor Margarete Klopffleisch (1911-1982). Monica's work is depicted on a series of large panels, using a mixture of monoprint and photo lithography to create the finished works. It is displayed alongside a selection of sculptures by Margarete Klopffleisch, whose work in wood and clay focus on the female and the bond between mother and child. Her work 'Mother and Children' (1963) sculpted from wood was recently acquired by Leicester Museums with the help of the City of Leicester Museum Trust and is one of 16 works on display in the exhibition. Go to www.visitleicester.info

The Wizard of Oz announced as this year's Made at Curve Christmas musical

Curve has announced its Made at Curve 2020 Christmas musical, the regional premiere production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Wizard of Oz. Based on the classic 1939 MGM film, The Wizard of Oz includes the iconic songs Somewhere Over The Rainbow, If I Only Had A Brain and Follow The Yellow Brick Road, as well as new music and songs from Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Running 28 November 2020 – 16 January 2021 at Curve this Christmas, the magical family musical will be directed by Curve's Artistic Director, Nikolai Foster, whose previous productions include West Side

Story, White Christmas – which ran at Curve and in London’s West End – and Scrooge the Musical. To book tickets and for further information visit www.curveonline.co.uk.

New exhibition celebrates grassroots football in Leicester at Newarke Houses Museum

The pride and passion of grassroots football is celebrated in a new exhibition at Leicester’s Newarke Houses Museum until 31 May. Archive photographs, newspaper cuttings, artefacts and video footage tell the stories of local grassroots teams - and help demonstrate the importance of football to social cohesion and community development in the city over the past 50 years or so. The rise of the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Football Club (GNG FC), from a park-based team to the thriving community football club it is today, is one of the stories featured in the exhibition.

Founded in 1969, when a group of young Asian men playing football in Spinney Hill Park formed a club with the help of their local gurdwara, GNG FC celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. From developing its own Riverside grounds to becoming Asian Football Club of the Year, many of the club’s challenges and successes over the past five decades are included in the new exhibition. Other local clubs featured in the exhibition include Oadby Town FC, Community Football Academy, St Patrick’s AFC and Highfields Rangers. Like GNG FC, each club was set up by young people with a shared sense of heritage and identity - and their stories illustrate the importance of community football to life in the city today.

Admission to Breaking Ground: Race and Grassroots Community Football at Newarke Houses Museum is free of charge. More information about the exhibition is available at www.visitleicester.info. Breaking Ground is part of the Football in Leicester: Heritage and Diversity Project, which is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Researchers working on the project are keen to hear from anyone with stories or artefacts relating to GNG FC over its 50-year history. More information can be found at www.gngfc.com.

Britain's best drawings on display at Leicester Gallery until April 18

Leicester Gallery – a public art gallery inside DMU’s Vijay Patel building – has been chosen to host the touring exhibition of the Trinity Buoy Drawing Prize, the UK’s leading award for contemporary drawing.

Hugo Worthy, Leicester Gallery curator, said: “The work on display in the Trinity Buoy Wharf Prize shows the incredible variety of approaches and vitality of contemporary drawing. It is wonderfully complemented by the work of the young children whom have entered the Little Drawing Exhibition an it is a treat to see the exuberance and joy in their artworks.”



The Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize, formerly Jerwood Drawing Prize, is the largest and longest-running annual open exhibition for drawing in the UK. Selected from original drawings, the exhibition has established a reputation for its commitment to championing excellence and promoting, celebrating and challenging contemporary drawing practice.

Search for Orton Statue Artist Following Campaign Success

The search for an artist to design and produce a statue of the legendary Leicester playwright, Joe Orton, in his hometown has been launched with the issue of an artist's design brief.

The Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC (Community Interest Company) are inviting an artist to develop a permanent work of three-dimensional public art to memorialise Joe Orton in Orton Square, Cultural Quarter. The desire is to make the 'Joe Orton Statue' a destination artwork and one which enhances the local resident and visitor experience of Orton Square. It is envisaged that the artwork will be thought provoking, outward looking and make a major contribution to the community, enhancing the lives of passers-by.

Leonie Orton, sister of the late playwright and administrator of the Joe Orton Estate said: "I hope that the statue will become a memorable and exciting addition to Leicester's cultural landscape that raises awareness whilst celebrating his life, work and legacy. It is not a 'statue' that people should be in awe of, rather something they want to interact with and associate with."

Artists are asked to submit 'Expressions of Interest' by the 31st May 2020 which includes their CV and examples of their previous work, a covering letter stating why they are interested in the commission, information on how their design fulfils the Brief along with a visual interpretation of their proposed design. Submissions will be reviewed and longlisted by an Advisory Group made up of local people who work in the arts and culture industries, the Orton family, members of the Saffron Lane estate and the Leicester LGBTQ community before being displayed at a public exhibition this Summer.

Public opinion and general feedback from the exhibition will be carefully considered before a Selection Panel that includes representatives of Leicester City Council, Curve, The Orton Estate, University of Leicester, Public Monuments and Statues Association as well as Orton enthusiast, the artist, author and singer songwriter, Holly Johnson. From this, three artists will be invited to submit detailed proposals including maquettes that will be exhibited at New Walk Museum this Autumn before the final design is chosen.

A copy of the full Design Brief can be downloaded by following the link <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nFCcEm09zru5xOjeHXIVhC7hGXu-qwZq>.



Award and Accolades

Leicester awarded Purple Flag status



Leicester city centre has been awarded the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation for its evening and night-time economy (ENTE). The award by the Association of Town and City Management (ACTM), recognizes the city as a vibrant destination for dining, entertainment and culture between the hours of 5pm and 5am, while promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and residents. The accreditation process has been led by a partnership of organisations including BID Leicester, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Police and the Safer Leicester Partnership.

Together they steered Leicester through a rigorous application process to show how the city met five key standards, including demonstrating a strong multi-sector partnership managing the night time economy; being easy to move around and offering a safe journey home; having a diverse offer for the public; offering activities which encourage people to stay from day to evening; and being safe and welcoming, as well as delivering high standards of customer care. The process also included an overnight assessment by the ACTM.

Simon Jenner, director of BID Leicester, said: “We are delighted that Leicester has achieved Purple Flag status, and particularly pleased that the city was judged to be outstanding in 25 of the 31 judging criteria.”

BID Leicester has committed to continued support of the night-time economy sector through several initiatives taking place this year. Among them is a series of promotional videos to showcase the very best of Leicester at night and the establishment of a Best Bar None accreditation scheme and Restaurant Week event in the city – all of which aim to boost business flow. BID Leicester is also committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of customers at night. Financial support has already been given to Leicester’s Street Pastor scheme.

The Safer Leicester Partnership is providing a City Bus in Leicester city centre on evenings when footfall is high to help safeguard members of the public. As well as achieving Purple Flag status, the city has been praised for its strong partnership work and nominated as a finalist for the ACTM’s Policy Envelope Award at the Purple Flag Awards. The award recognizes places that show a clear strategy in managing the night-time economy, based on integrated public policy and multi-agency collaboration.

The Purple Flag criteria has been used to create a new action plan for the Night-Time Economy Strategic Group. Sarah Harrison, City Centre Director and chair of the group said: “Aligning the work of the group to the Purple Flag criteria supports the accreditation and will put the city in a strong position for future assessments.”

Inspector Adam Archer, Central Leicester Neighbourhood Policing Commander for Leicestershire Police, said: “We are pleased that the city has achieved Purple Flag and, in doing so, has highlighted our successful partnership approach to making Leicester a safe and vibrant place to be at night. The

outstanding collaborative work carried out by key partners ensures that the business community can thrive and the public feel safe.”

Sam Hagger, BID Leicester Board member and Director of the Beautiful Pubs Collective – who operate three city centre venues – said, “This is great news for the city and for businesses who operate in the night-time. Purple Flag sends out a strong message that we have a safe and vibrant city centre, catering for thousands of people every week.”

Find out more at bidleicester.co.uk/purpleflag.

Winners of the 2020 LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards

The people, businesses and organisations behind the brightest ideas and best new technologies in Britain have been honoured at the second annual LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards held at the Morningside Arena.

Headline sponsors of the event were Morningside Pharmaceuticals, De Montfort University and the University of Leicester. The headline speaker was space industry entrepreneur and pioneer Will Whitehorn, while poet Jamie Thrasivoulou gave a rousing reading of his poem "Heart of the Midlands". The overall innovation of the year award went to Previsico – picked by the judges because of the important role it has the potential to play in so many people’s lives.

It seemed apt that in the midst of the current levels of unprecedented rain that have affected so many parts of the UK, the award should go to a business set up to help people prepare for flooding. Based in Loughborough, its FloodMap Live technology can give risk predictions right down to street level, and has been praised by local authorities, insurance companies and even humanitarian organisations. A lifetime achievement award went to Les Zellan, the chairman of Leicester based Cooke Optics, for his contribution to Hollywood, Bollywood and beyond.

Summing up the awards, LeicestershireLive editor George Oliver said “The businesses and universities of Leicester and Leicestershire are leading the way when it comes to science and innovation. “In a world where technology plays a huge part in pretty much everything that we do, it seems only right to recognise that with these awards.”

The 2020 LeicestershireLive Innovation Award Winners are:

Digital Innovation of the Year - **Previsico**
DS2 Award For Innovation in Design - **Haley Sharpe Design**
Innovation in Construction - **Structural Adhesives**
Innovation in Education & Training - **Willow Books**
Innovation in Manufacturing & Engineering - **Micro-Fresh**
Innovation in Schools - **ALP Leicester**
Innovation in Services - **Reflex Vehicle Hire**
Innovation in Technology - **Previsico**
Medical & Health Innovator of the Year - **ParentMonitor**
Space Innovation - **Professor Richard Ambrosi**
University Student Innovation - **ExpHand Prosthetics**
Innovator of the Year - **Previsico**
Lifetime Achievement Award - **Les Zellan - Cooke Optics**



Image: Leicester Mercury - LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards 2020 at The Morningside Arena, Leicester

Festivals and events

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience

This innovative new experience gives visitors the chance to step inside the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh. Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience is set in the ancient and beautiful setting of All Saints Church in Highcross Street. Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience has come to Leicester following successful runs in Brussels, Naples and York. It will be in the city until May 3.

The multimedia experience tells the story of the 19th century impressionist painter's life and work. Projections, recreations and interactive elements of the artworks fill the Grade I-listed exhibition space. More than 200 of Van Gogh's works are featured, but rather than remaining static, the huge projections of paintings come alive with digital animation and an emotive soundtrack.

Visitors can see through the eyes of Vincent Van Gogh during the 35-minute-long, 360-degree experience. This colourful and engaging insight into Van Gogh's life and artistic perspective uses cutting-edge technology and world-class digital animation and is suitable for all ages. The immersive experience is designed to appeal to a wide range of people including residents and school groups, tourists and art societies.

Visitors do not need any previous knowledge of the artist or his works to enjoy the experience in full. Admission prices are £13 for adults, £11 for concessions and students and £9 for children (aged 3+). Family tickets are available for £38 (two adults and two children). Discounted rates are available for school or community groups and quiet sessions will be held throughout the run to encourage visits from people with special educational needs. For tickets go to: www.vangoghexpo.co.uk/leicester



Immersive Van Gogh art experience at All Saints' Church (Image: Leicestershire Live)

'We had all the eyes of the world on us' - events mark five years on from reinterment of King Richard III

It was a pivotal moment for Leicester and the county, a historic ceremony watched by millions across the globe. March marks the fifth anniversary of the reinterment of the remains of Richard III, who was laid to rest in a special tomb at Leicester Cathedral after his bones were recovered from beneath a city car park. Ceremonies for the occasion included a dignified funeral at the Bosworth Battlefield where the last Plantagenet monarch died, a cortege which processed through crowds gathered by the county's roadsides and into the city, while the service of reburial was attended by famous faces including the Duke of Gloucester, a title the former king held.

"Leicester was a city that minded its own business and quietly got on with things, the cathedral was the same. Then we had all the eyes of the world on us", said Reverend Alison Adams, sub-dean at the cathedral. She was closely involved in organising legacy events across the county around the reinterment. She said: "These bones were discovered in 2012, by the time of March 2015 we had reorganised the building and created the tomb - that's not a long time. "The physical changed, but there was also a whole shift in the cathedral community. The city and the county had a shift in self-awareness and history. "People want to come and visit us, in a way they didn't before."

Anniversary events

A series of events are going on at Leicester Cathedral to celebrate the fifth anniversary. All events are free unless otherwise stated:

March 26

- 5.30pm - Choral Evensong on the Anniversary

March 27

- 6pm - Family tour - Tickets are £5 per family, from cathedral
- 6.30pm - Looking forward, looking back - A talk on Richard III and how the reburial has affected the city
- 7pm - Monuments of the House of York - Tickets are £5, from kriii.com
- 8pm and 9pm - King Richard III tour - Tickets are £3.50 per person, from cathedral
- 10pm - Compline by candlelight

March 28

- 11am - Talk with Professor Turi King - A geneticist who helped identify the remains of Richard III. Book places on Eventbrite
- 1pm - The improbability of finding King Richard III
- 3pm - You are what you eat: Richard III's diet
- 7pm - Concert: The York Waits - A wide variety of 16th century European music. Tickets are £6 to £12, from Eventbrite

For more information and to book tickets, contact the cathedral on 0116 261 5200 or email leicestercathedral@leccofe.org.

DNA tests confirmed that the bones belonged to the king, after they were found in the Greyfriars area near the cathedral, where the King Richard III Visitor Centre has since been built. Sally Henshaw, secretary of the Leicestershire branch of the Richard III society, carried a banner with Richard III's badge, a white boar, during the service when the tomb was finally revealed. She said it was one of the proudest moments of her life.



Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, oversees the lowering of the coffin into the King's tomb (Image: Ian Davis)

The Brickman Experience, Friday 13th March – Monday 20th April 2020

Ryan McNaught's Brickman Experience, one of the largest touring exhibitions of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, is arriving in the UK. The interactive exhibition, suitable for little kids and big kids (LEGO® code for adults!) will be at Highcross Leicester from Friday 13th March – Monday 20th April 2020. The exhibition features sixty original works along with their own unique behind-the-scenes story, including original drawings and sketches. Made from over five million LEGO® bricks, this epic exhibition showcases some of the world's largest and most detailed LEGO® models including a huge LEGO® Star Wars X-Wing, Airbus A380, a quarter scale LEGO® Ferrari and the world's largest LEGO® flower. You'll also have the chance to get a photograph with all the James Bonds made in LEGO® bricks.

Leicester's budding brickies will also have the opportunity to build their own LEGO® creations in the interactive master builder zones. The exhibition is suitable for all ages, under 14's must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information and FAQs please visit <https://www.highcrossleicester.com/events/the-brickman-experience-lego-exhibition>.



Get in Touch

If you know someone who would like to receive this report, please send contact details to sarah.m.harrison@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:

Sarah Harrison
City Centre Director
City Hall
115 Charles Street
Leicester City Council LE1 1FZ

DD: 0116 454 2481

M: 0785 432 1925

Email: Sarah.M.Harrison@leicester.gov.uk

If you would no longer like to receive the monthly City Centre Directors Report, please contact sarah.m.harrison@leicester.gov.uk