

# leisureopportunities

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## Major leisure projects approved

PETE HAYMAN

A £30.6m wellbeing centre in Leeds and a £15m leisure, health and social care facility in Sandwell are among four schemes to be given the green light by the government.

Plans for Holt Park Active Living Centre are being overseen by Leeds City Council through the local education partnership and contractor Interserve Project Services.

Mentor – a partnership between GHM Rock Townsend and FaulknerBrowns – are behind the designs of the facility, which will boast a 25m swimming pool and teaching pool; a hydrotherapy pool; and a Bodyline gym.

In Sandwell, the £15m Portway Lifestyle Centre will be built on the site of Oldbury Leisure Centre and is to be a centre of excellence for disabled and able-bodied people.



Holt Park Active Living Centre is among the four approved schemes

Due to open in early 2013, the complex will include a four-court sports hall; a hydrotherapy pool; a café; a sensory garden; a climbing wall; a dance studio; and a fitness suite.



IMAGE: R. BRYANT/ARCAIDMAGES.COM

David Chipperfield designed the new attraction

### Turner Contemporary opens in Margate

PETE HAYMAN

Turner Contemporary, a new £17.4m gallery dedicated to the life of 19th century artist JMW Turner, has officially opened its doors to the public in Margate, Kent.

David Chipperfield Architects are behind the design of the attraction, which was built by R Durnell and Sons and incorporates 750sq m (8,072sq ft) of gallery space.

The opening exhibition – Revealed: Turner Contemporary Opens – will examine the themes of the creative spirit, centred on one of Turner's lesser-known works.

### Concerns over Olympic transport demand

PETE HAYMAN

A report by the London Assembly's transport committee has raised fears that 'extreme' demand poses a risk to the running of the 2012 Games.

*Clearing the hurdles* acknowledges that extensive plans are already being drawn up by organisers, but raises concerns regarding the extra capacity that will be required.

It is thought that 5.3 million people will be attending the Games next summer, with the nine busiest days set to see up to 650,000 tickets available at venues across the capital.

### Virgin Active to acquire Esporta

PETE HAYMAN

Virgin Active is to expand its portfolio after agreeing a deal to acquire rival health and racquet club operator Esporta for £77.6m.

The purchase of Esporta Racquets and Non-Racquets Holdings will see 55 locations rebranded and added to Virgin's existing estate. Societe Generale is to retain ownership of New Esporta Holding (NEH), which is chaired by Richard Segal and owns 17 freehold or long leasehold racquet clubs. Virgin Active will take on a 25-year lease of the NEH assets, with an annual rent of £13.1m a year.

Esporta CEO John Cleland, who joined in December 2009 as part of Societe Generale's



Virgin Active is set to acquire Esporta's UK business

efforts to strengthen the management team, will now join Virgin. The deal is subject to the approval of the Office of Fair Trading, although Segal told *Leisure Opportunities* it is hoped that it would be finalised within 2-3 months.

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## SPORT

# BOA resolves LOCOG cash row

PETE HAYMAN

A funding dispute between the British Olympic Association (BOA) and the London Organising Committee of the 2012 Games (LOCOG) has been resolved.

Both organisations have now come to an agreement that will see the BOA terminate its claim filed with the Court of Arbitration for Sport over the contractual row.

The new deal brings with it a confirmation that cash due to both the BOA and British Paralympic Association will be prioritised if LOCOG generates a 'sufficient surplus' from the Games.

LOCOG will also support the BOA's attempts to secure commercial partners for Team GB between 2013-2016, and plans for the marketing of Team GB merchandise. Other terms will see BOA given a chance to buy additional tickets



IMAGE: OPA

The funding dispute between the two organisations has been resolved

to 2012 events and a joint effort to expand the association's education programme.

Andy Hunt, chief executive officer at the BOA, said: "With this matter now resolved, the BOA will be able to keep its attention focused entirely on our preparations to support Team GB at the Games."

## Basildon Sporting Village opens its doors

PETE HAYMAN

A special opening event on 30 April has helped mark the launch of the new £38m Basildon Sporting Village in Essex.

Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) has been appointed to operate the facility under its

Everyone Active brand – part of a wider leisure management deal with Basildon Council.

The new complex boasts the county's first Olympic-sized swimming pool and a 24.2m x 10m (79.4ft x 32.8ft) climbing wall, as well as a 100-station fitness suite.

## Sport England unveils asset transfer toolkit

PETE HAYMAN

Sport England has launched its new asset transfer toolkit in a bid to make it easier for community clubs to acquire ownership of land or buildings from the government.

The online *Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit* is a bespoke facility that offers a step-by-step guide through the asset transfer process for community groups.

It is designed to support established community sports organisations and new groups which believe they can make better use out of unused or under-utilised public sports facilities. Sport England worked with Locality, the UK network for community-led groups, to develop the toolkit, which offers information and resources.



The new toolkit aims to help sports clubs in taking control of facilities

Sports minister Hugh Robertson said: "I want as many community sports clubs as possible to have control of their own assets. This updated guide will help them achieve this."



## November finish for Fife revamp

PETE HAYMAN

Fife Council has announced that work on the £17m overhaul of Carnegie Leisure Centre in Dunfermline will be completed in November – 10 months later than planned.

Internal and external renovations to the building have formed part of the scheme, which will see the facility boast a 25m, six-lane deck-level swimming pool with moveable floor.

A purpose-built play centre and party room; refurbished pool areas and changing facilities; and a new health suite with steamroom, sauna and spa bath will be among the facilities, as well as a new 80-station fitness suite; three purpose-built aerobic studios; and a sports hall with a new timber sprung floor.

Fife Sports and Leisure Trust operates Carnegie Leisure Centre, which closed in



The £17m revamp was initially due for completion in January this year

December 2008 to enable work to commence on the refurbishment. Paisley-based Barr is the main contractor on the scheme.

Fife Council's Asset and Facilities Management Services provided architectural services for the scheme, with Turner Townsend Project Management co-ordinating work.

## New proposals for Bath Rugby expansion

PETE HAYMAN

Bath Recreation Ground Trust has unveiled a new public consultation into fresh proposals that could enable Bath Rugby to enhance and expand its current stadium facilities.

The trust manages the Recreation Ground site and Bath Rugby has confirmed that the fresh plans would see it hand back some land at its Lambridge Training Ground site to the city. In return, the Aviva Premiership side would be able to occupy more space at the Recreation Ground for the development of a "slightly bigger but significantly better" stadium.

Bath Rugby said its consultation was 'in principle', although it hopes that it will end a long-running bid to build new facilities.



Bath Rugby hopes the latest plans will enable it to redevelop its ground

A deal to buy land at Lambridge has been agreed in principle between Bath Rugby and Bath Football Club trustees, which will then be gifted once the purchase is complete.

## FA launches new Women's Super League

PETE HAYMAN

The Football Association (FA) has launched a new semi-professional competition for women – the Women's Super League (WSL).

Chelsea Ladies played Arsenal Ladies in the inaugural game of the league, which took place

at Tooting and Mitcham United's ground and was also screened live on ESPN television.

In addition to Chelsea and Arsenal, six other teams will compete in 14 rounds of matches in the WSL – Birmingham; Bristol; Doncaster; Everton; Liverpool; and Lincoln.

## ICC to 'revisit' 2015 World Cup format decision

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for a 10-team Cricket World Cup in 2015 – comprising the Full Member nations – are to be "revisited" by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

ICC president Sharad Pawar called on the executive board to re-examine the issue when it meets in June, following protests from associate and affiliate nations.

Under the new format for the 2015 tournament, teams including Ireland will not be able to compete despite having done so in the previous two events.



IMAGE: LEE VALLEY RPA

Members of the public can now use the complex

## 2012 white water venue opens to public users

PETE HAYMAN

Lee Valley White Water Centre near Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, has become the first London 2012 venue to open its doors for use by members of the public.

The facility, which was officially unveiled by HRH The Princess Royal last December, is set to host the Olympic canoe slalom competition next summer.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority will own and operate the centre before and after the Games, with facilities including a 300m competition course.

## New £2.2m tennis centre opens in Telford

PETE HAYMAN

A new £2.2m pay and play community tennis centre has opened in Telford – the first phase of the new Oakengates Sports and Learning Community development.

The facility boasts eight indoor and outdoor courts and will work along with local schools and parks to deliver a family tennis programme for all ages and abilities.

Telford and Wrekin Council has appointed FirstPoint Tennis Coaching to provide a programme of coaching sessions and competitions at the venue.

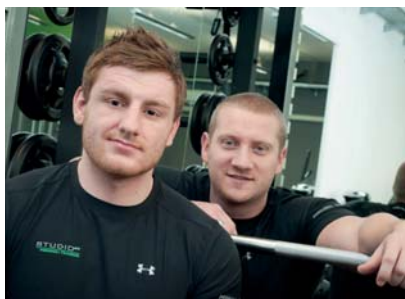
### Premier Training appoints operations director

TOM WALKER

Health and fitness training provider Premier Training International has promoted Dave Christophi to the Board of Directors, as operations director.

In his new role, he will work with the regional sales managers and oversee the operations within its London Academy.

Christophi qualified with Premier in 1999 and went on to complete a Sports Science degree before returning to Premier as a careers advisor, where he then progressed to regional business manager.



The new studio features York Barbell equipment

### Personal trainers open new Oxford fitness studio

PETE HAYMAN

Two Oxford-based personal trainers, James Shields and Sam Bennett, have teamed up to open their own personal training centre.

StudioPT has a fully fitted functional gym along with a selection of cardio equipment, power-bags and medicine balls supplied by Davenport-based York Barbell.

Shields, a former British Army soldier, has worked in fitness for six years while Bennett turned to a career in personal training following an injury that ended his aspirations of becoming a professional rugby player.

### Evolution Fitness secures truGym deal

PETE HAYMAN

Equipment supplier Evolution Fitness has completed a multi-site deal to supply the growing club estate of truGym.

Parm Singh, director of truGym, told *Leisure Opportunities* that Evolution will also assist with gym design and fit out and work with the group going forward.

"The quality of the product far outperforms others we have seen and the design doesn't look intimidating, which is important seeing as up to 40 per cent of members have never been to a gym before," he said.

## Trust unveils new Swansea club

TOM WALKER

A new budget health club called Simply Gym is to open in the Llansamlet district of Swansea in June.

The club, touted as the city's first no-frills fitness club, will offer memberships from just £9.99 a month and is to boast 100 pieces of cardiovascular and resistance equipment supplied by Technogym.

Equipment at Simply Gym will include the new Arke functional training line, Excite Bikes and Run equipment with Visio entertainment and Group Cycle bikes.

The gym will also benefit from a full range of accessible equipment catering for disabled users and a 'Ladies Only' private workout area, as well as showers and changing rooms.

Simply Gym will be operated by the Swansea-based independent, not-for-profit



The Bay Life-operated Simply Gym will launch in Llansamlet this June

trust, Bay Leisure, which also operates Wales' most visited leisure attraction – the LC – in the centre of the South Wales city.

Richard Proctor, chief executive of Bay Leisure, said: "Our research has revealed that there is a significant demand for a low-cost gym offering in the east of the city."

## Fusion to reopen High Wycombe pool

PETE HAYMAN

Fusion Lifestyle has revealed that the open air swimming pool at Holywell Mead leisure complex in High Wycombe is to reopen on 27 May.

The operator – selected by Wycombe District Council to operate the facility as part of a 50-year lease – has carried out work to bring the Grade II-listed pool back into use.

Fusion will invest more than £1m in revamping the complex, with the first phase to see the pool reopen for the summer. The second stage will

see the pool building and adjacent Rye Centre revamped to house a new 40-station gym.

Work is due to begin on stage two of Fusion's investment plans this autumn, with facilities to be completed by spring 2012.



The reopening of the pool is the first phase of Fusion's investment plans

Fusion chief executive officer Peter Kay said: "The team has put an enormous amount of effort into getting the pool ready in a short space of time and we're looking forward to welcoming swimmers back over the summer."

## Pulse secures Bury Council supplier deal

PETE HAYMAN

Pulse has secured a contract that will see it provide more than 150 pieces of equipment across three facilities owned by Bury Council.

Castle Leisure Centre; Ramsbottom Pool; and Fitness Centre and Radcliffe Pool and

Fitness Centre will all be kitted out by Pulse as part of the company's latest contract.

Pulse has confirmed that it will also provide marketing and sales solutions and a five-year service and warranty package as part of its agreement with the local authority.





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# Kiss Gyms to pursue UK expansion

PETE HAYMAN

Privately-owned health club group Kiss Gyms has announced that it has appointed Sports Solutions to identify and acquire new sites to push forward its “aggressive” expansion strategy.

Kiss Gyms – led by CEO Rupert McKenzie-Hill – launched its first 15,600sq ft (1,449sq m) site in Milton Keynes earlier this year.

McKenzie-Hill has already revealed the company’s plans to expand its business across the UK, backed by a combination of private, bank and venture capital funding. Sports Solutions has now been named as the chain’s property advisor and tasked with sourcing suitable locations for an additional 20 health clubs for Kiss Gyms by 2012.

McKenzie-Hill said: “Sports Solutions’ experience in securing sites throughout the



West Sussex is one of the areas to be selected as an ‘early implementer’

UK will enable us to achieve our ambition to open good quality, low cost gyms.”

Chris Bevan, the managing director at Sports Solutions added: “We have been appointed to assist [Kiss Gyms] in finding suitable sites in key areas in the UK and to help them achieve their exciting expansions plans.”

## New fitness facilities for Redhill complex

PETE HAYMAN

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) has opened a new fitness suite at Donyngs Recreation Centre in Redhill – part of its wider £3.4m refurbishment at the venue.

The gym has been supplied with 100 pieces of Life Fitness equipment, which includes cv, resistance and free weights stations. An audio-visual system has also been installed.

Some stations feature removable seating to cater for wheelchairs and ensure the centre can work towards the Inclusive Fitness Initiative’s (IFI) standard.

Meanwhile, a youth gym has also been created for 11-16 year olds, boasting dance mats and a target board, along with three new treatment rooms offering physiotherapy.



Life Fitness has supplied 100 pieces of equipment as part of the project

RBBC executive member for leisure and wellbeing Adam De Save said: “One of the aims of the refurbishment is to reach out to all members of the community including children, older people and families.”

## Bridgwater swimming pool plans move forward

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for a new swimming pool in Bridgwater have received a boost after Somerset County Council approved detailed plans.

The complex – green lighted by the council’s regulation committee – will be sited at the new

Chilton Trinity School being built under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Proposals for the Scott Brownrigg Architects-designed facility include a 25m x 13m pool; a 13m x 7m training pool; changing rooms; and a 25-station fitness suite.

## Fergus Kee to join Fitbug Holdings as executive chair

TOM WALKER

Fitbug Holdings, the AIM-listed online personal health company, has announced the appointment of Fergus Kee as executive chair with immediate effect.

He replaces Allan Fisher who is to step down from the role to pursue other business interests – although he will remain with the company as a non-executive director.

Kee has spent most of his career within the health and retail sectors, which has included 18 years with the international healthcare company, Bupa.



Keiser is one of the members of the partnership

## Equipment suppliers launch The FIT Group

TOM WALKER

A new partnership has been launched, bringing together equipment firms within the fitness industry to offer operators choice and best value.

The founder members of The FIT Group include: gym8o, Trixter, Keiser, BodyCore, Harlands Group, GymKit UK, Freedom Climber and Talk Twenty 1.

Each member of The FIT Group pays a small monthly fee, which will collectively give the group a greater budget to spend on marketing, PR and lead generation.

## Gwynedd moves forward with leisure review

PETE HAYMAN

Gwynedd Council’s care scrutiny committee has backed plans to embark on the next phase of a strategic review into local sports and leisure services provision, as well as a number of “high-level outcomes” that the local authority will aim to achieve.

Gwynedd Council corporate director Dafydd Lewis said: “These priorities include ensuring that residents have access to a range of opportunities to undertake physical activities where everyone will buy into an active healthy lifestyle.”

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## ATTRACTIONS & MUSEUMS

### Twelve London museums named 'green attractions'

TOM WALKER

A dozen London museums have been accredited with green tourism awards for making their buildings more sustainable and setting up educational programmes on environmental issues.

The attractions received support from Renaissance London to take part in the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Two museums – Whitehall Museum and The Horniman – received Gold Awards, while a further eight institutions were given silver and two others a bronze award.



M Shed is to open its doors to the public in June

### £1.39m HLF grant for Bristol's new M Shed

PETE HAYMAN

Bristol's M Shed has been awarded a £1.39m grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to cover 'unforeseen costs' incurred as part of the £26.6m museum development.

The funding will also be used towards fundraising targets and the completion of a learning studio at the new attraction, which is due to open on 17 June.

M Shed, which has been built by BAM Construction, has already received £10.2m from the HLF and will house working exhibitions such as boats, trains and cranes.

### Thinktank secures funding for science project

TOM WALKER

Wellcome Trust has awarded Birmingham-based science centre and museum Thinktank a £500,000 grant to help create one of the UK's first science gardens.

Due to open in June 2012, the 2,750sq m (29,600sq ft) outdoor exhibition will chart the scientific, manufacturing and transport heritage of the West Midlands.

Visitors will be able to fuel an 8m high 'Terminus' machine to set off whistles and smoke in 'The Factory'; and explore efficient vehicle design in 'The Street'.

## Clevedon Pier scheme approved

PETE HAYMAN

North Somerset Council (NSC) has approved plans for the development of new visitor facilities at the Grade I-listed Clevedon Pier.

Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust's (CPHT) scheme – designed by Bristol-based O'Leary Goss Architects – was given the go-ahead by NSC's north area committee.

Under the trust's plans for the historic pier, a new visitor centre would house purpose-built education, exhibition and refreshment areas in a bid to enhance the experience.

It is hoped that the additional facilities will raise sufficient income to enable CPHT to cover all long-term maintenance costs at the pier, which is currently supported by NSC.

CPHT chair Simon Talbot-Ponsonby said: "This is a major project for the trust for which



IMAGE: O'LEARY GOSS ARCHITECTS

The visitor centre was given the green light by North Somerset Council

we will be applying for grants. In addition we will be launching an appeal to the public who love and greatly appreciate the pier."

Part of the cost of the scheme is to be met by Freemantle Developments, which is involved with plans to transform the former Royal Pier Hotel into apartments.

## MLA chief executive set for Auckland move

PETE HAYMAN

Roy Clare, chief executive at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), is to be the new director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum in New Zealand.

Clare is set to step down from his role at the end of May, with the announcement coming as the MLA finalises plans to transfer key responsibilities to Arts Council England on 1 October.

The MLA has confirmed that Clare will remain with the organisation until the end of May – when a period of consultation with staff ends. A new chief executive will not be appointed to replace Clare, with corporate services director Paul Lander to oversee the MLA as it moves towards closure later this year.



Clare is to step down from his role at the MLA at the end of the month

Clare said: "The MLA board and I accept the rationale for the reduction in NDPBs generally. We foresee potential benefits for museums, libraries and collections to be a part of a holistic model within Arts Council England."

## New-look Merthyr Tydfil attraction opens

PETE HAYMAN

Cyfartha Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Merthyr Tydfil has reopened, following the completion of a £320,000 refurbishment.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council led the five-month overhaul, which has included

new case displays, new interpretations, repairs and improved audio guides.

Museum curator Scott Reid said: "This grant has enabled us to enhance the exhibitions housed within the Museum and carry out some much-needed repairs to the structure."

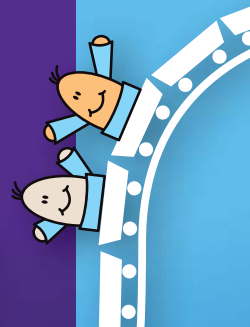


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## RGF funding decision is a lost opportunity



**UFI IBRAHIM**  
is chief executive officer of the British Hospitality Association

One thing is clear: the Regional Growth Fund's (RGF) failure to support tourism in England in its first round of grants worth £440m is a lost chance for the industry.

After all the personal support that the Prime Minister has given to tourism since being elected – and the publication of the government's tourism strategy – the Fund's refusal to accept any tourism bid, including VisitEngland's £29m bid for domestic promotion in the UK, is very disappointing.

It appears to ignore the Prime Minister's promise in the government's strategy to take tourism to a 'whole new level' and 'harness the huge potential that this area holds for our economy'. Unfortunately, the RGF decision takes tourism nowhere. It's well known that research by the BHA shows that hospitality has the potential to create 236,000 new and additional jobs by 2015. Further BHA research to be released shortly will indicate the major contribution that hospitality makes to the economy and job creation in every local authority area.

Tourism can deliver growth, create jobs, support regeneration, and has a proven track record in skills – delivering excellent vocational training. But without adequate support, this potential is at risk. Support for VisitEngland's bid would help boost demand for hospitality and tourism services and create new jobs in areas of the country where they are most badly needed.

The fact that the RGF ignored this argument is made worse by the removal of £60m of annual funding which has been lost with the abolition of Regional Development Agencies. This is further compounded by local authority cuts and reductions in both the VisitBritain and VisitEngland budgets. So little surprise, therefore, that the industry believes that the RGF's decision is a totally lost opportunity.

We've written to the Prime Minister and tourism minister John Penrose to protest at the lack of interest which the Fund has shown in tourism. The next round of bids has to be submitted by July, with a decision made in September. That means that the 2011 season will be largely over. We must hope for better news for 2012.

## HOTELS

# Von Essen enters administration

TOM WALKER

The von Essen Hotels group, which runs some of the most luxurious hotels in the UK and Europe, has announced that it is in administration.

It is understood that insolvency practitioners Ernst and Young have been called in to oversee the operation of the hotel group, which is believed to have struggled with managing its debts.

Tim Smith, director of hotel consultancy HVS London, said von Essen's failure could be down to its ambitious programme of acquiring properties. He said: "The von Essen group has long been the subject of informal speculation largely due to the large number of hotels acquired in a relatively short space of time, the reliance on up-market guests wanting to stay in provincial UK locations, and the reported prices paid for the hotels."



The von Essen Hotels group operates a number of luxury UK properties

"It further proves that the provincial UK hotel market is still very tough and price sensitive and whilst there remains demand for such properties, perhaps not to the level to cover the substantial costs of running such high quality hotels and the upkeep of such historic buildings."

## Gerald Lawless to join Travelodge board

PETE HAYMAN

Travelodge has appointed Gerald Lawless, executive chair of Dubai-based Jumeirah Group, to its board with effect from 3 May.

Lawless is poised to join the budget hotel operator as non-executive director, having

worked for the Dubai Holding-owned hotel management company since 1997.

Further to his current role, he is also a member of the Dubai Holding Executive Committee and the Emirates National Development Programme board of trustees.

## Hotel Indigo opens new Glasgow property

PETE HAYMAN

InterContinental Hotels Group's (IHG) boutique brand – Hotel Indigo – has unveiled its third UK property on Waterloo Street, Glasgow.

The 95-bedroom Hotel Indigo Glasgow will be owned by Chardon Management and boasts one restaurant – the Limelight Bar and Grill – and a range of business facilities.

Housed in a former industrial building, the new hotel joins existing sites at London Paddington and London Tower Hill operating under the Hotel Indigo brand.

A 151-bedroom Hotel Indigo is scheduled to open in Liverpool this summer, with three additional sites to launch in Edinburgh, Birmingham and Newcastle in 2012.



Hotel Indigo Glasgow is the brand's third UK site, with more to follow

Chardon Group chief executive Maurice Taylor said: "The building has retained its original character while the design and artwork inside adds a contemporary twist."



# £110m revamp for English rivers

PETE HAYMAN

Environment secretary Caroline Spelman has revealed that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is to invest £110m in overhauling England's rivers.

The funding is to be used to launch restoration schemes worth £600m across the country in a bid to improve the health of more than 800 lakes, streams and other waterways.

A total of £92m is planned over the coming four years in order to remove non-native invasive weeds and animals, as well as to clean up pollution and to remove redundant dams, weirs and landings.

Cash will be shared by the Environment Agency, Natural England and organisations such as the Association of Rivers Trust in order to build on existing projects.



The Defra funding will be used to launch restoration schemes on rivers

A further £18m is to go towards helping farmers put in place measures such as buffer strips and fences to protect water courses and to prevent agricultural pollution.

Spelman said: "With this funding, we'll help our waterways thrive by tackling problems that have been sitting in the 'too hard' basket."

# Coed Cadw Cymru launches manifesto

PETE HAYMAN

Coed Cadw Cymru (The Woodland Trust) has announced the launch of its new manifesto – *Growing Wales' future* – ahead of the National Assembly elections, which take place on 5 May.

The document calls on residents across Wales to ask their local candidates about their plans to promote the creation and protection of the country's native woodland.

Among the main plans set out in the manifesto is the adoption of a target to double the cover of native woodland in Wales over the next 50 years. The trust also calls for the creation of a National Forest Park in the South Wales valleys and the protection of ancient woods and trees.



The manifesto aims to safeguard the future of native Welsh woodlands

The president of the Woodland Trust, Clive Anderson, said: "Wales will be missing a trick if it fails to make the most of the many benefits native woodland and trees have to offer."

# Councillors back Telford country park expansion

PETE HAYMAN

Telford and Wrekin Council has approved in principle plans for the extension of Granville Country Park, Shropshire.

Proposals to incorporate a wider area of green space into the boundaries of the park

were given the backing of cabinet members after considering a report, which will include a current landfill site that is due to close.

Restoration plans for the site have already been approved and include the creation of a new area of green space with woodland.

# Council reopens Neath's Victoria Gardens

PETE HAYMAN

Neath's historic Victoria Gardens have reopened to the public, following the completion of a £1.4m renovation programme carried out by the local authority.

Cadw and the Heritage Lottery Fund contributed towards the project, which was undertaken by Gee Construction on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council.

A new visitor centre and a facility for park staff have been created, with the latter available for use as a community meeting room or a training venue.



Little will join the OPLC from events agency Cake

# New events director for legacy company

PETE HAYMAN

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) has appointed Clive Little as its new director of events and programming.

Little – who will report to executive marketing and communications director Karen Webb – will be responsible for the activities to be held at the Olympic Park from 2013.

He has joined the OPLC from his role as global events director at Cake, an ideas and experiential events agency that is part of the Havas Sports and Entertainment Group.

# BiketraX opens at Highland Safaris in Perthshire

TOM WALKER

Highland Safaris, the Perthshire-based leisure tour operator, has announced that it will be launching the region's first purpose built mountain bike skills loop this year.

BiketraX will include a warm-up area with ramps, see-saws and rock-runs and a main route for bikers of all skill levels.

The track was designed with help from Pete Laing, who also helped design MTB courses such as Glentress in the Borders.



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# UK agencies unveil green scheme

TOM WALKER

Four of the five main tourism agencies of the British Isles have joined forces to promote green tourism and unify the way sustainable tourism initiatives are certified.

Visit England, Visit Wales, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Fáilte Ireland have developed a single system to endorse the quality of operations and criteria of sustainable tourism certification programmes operating in and across the countries.

The new endorsement process, undertaken by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism based at Leeds Metropolitan University on behalf of the national boards, will provide independent assurance of which certification programmes are fit for purpose, and in turn will support all sustainable tourism certification programmes



IMAGE: GAIL JOHNSON/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The four agencies have signed up to promote green tourism in the UK

in these areas to improve their systems and criteria to achieve international standards.

It is the first time national authorities have come together to develop any such scheme. A spokesperson described the development as a sign of "how seriously the sustainability agenda is being taken in each country".

## Tourism industry 'worth £317m' to Swansea Bay

PETE HAYMAN

New figures published by Swansea Council have found that visitor spending in the Swansea Bay area increased by 3 per cent last year.

According to the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM), the

tourism sector helped to contribute an additional £317m for the region.

Council strategic manager for tourism, marketing and events Frances Jenkins said: "2010 was another very positive year for all sectors involved in tourism across Swansea Bay."

## Mayor announces cable car contractors

PETE HAYMAN

London mayor Boris Johnson has revealed that Mace will lead a consortium of contractors that will be responsible for delivering a new cable car link across the Thames.

Work is due to commence on the scheme this summer, which will connect Greenwich with the Royal Docks and is due to be completed ahead of the London 2012 Games.

Dopplemayr; Watson Steel; URS Scott Wilson; and Buro Happold are the other firms to comprise the consortium that will build the Wilkinson Eyre-designed link.

Meanwhile, Transport for London (TfL) has launched a process to find commercial partners prepared to invest in the project.



IMAGE: WILKINSON EYRE ARCHITECTS

The new cable car service will link the ExCeL centre with the O2 Arena

TfL has confirmed that a winning bidder is expected to be named later this year, although it would provide upfront funding to ensure the cable car scheme can get underway.



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### Linlithgow's new-look Burgh Halls reopen

PETE HAYMAN

West Lothian Council has announced the full reopening of the historic Burgh Halls in Linlithgow, following a £5.2m revamp.

The property benefited from an extensive overhaul and restoration of its features, with a new interactive display exploring its history available in the reception.

Burgh Halls also features a gallery and the Glasshouse Café, while local community groups will also make use of the building. Malcolm Fraser Architects were behind the design of the redevelopment.



Long is the new director of the V&A at Dundee

### Long appointed director of V&A at Dundee museum

PETE HAYMAN

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art senior curator Philip Long has been named director of the V&A at Dundee.

Long, who also leads the National Galleries of Scotland's Artist Rooms project, will take on the responsibility for establishing the waterfront museum as an international centre for design.

In addition to his role at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art since 1998, Long has also served on the Scottish Arts Lottery Committee between 2003-10.

### Swansea moves to secure Dylan Thomas legacy

PETE HAYMAN

Swansea Council and the University of Wales are in the final stage of talks over a new deal that could preserve the city's long-term legacy of Dylan Thomas.

It is hoped that an agreement will be struck that will see the Dylan Thomas Centre retain its name and becoming home to an exhibition dedicated to the poet.

The new deal will also see the attraction housing one of the world's highest cash prizes for young writers – the University of Wales Dylan Thomas Prize.

## July launch for Welsh museum

PETE HAYMAN

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales has revealed that the country's new National Museum of Art is scheduled to open its doors to the public on 21 July.

Located at National Museum Cardiff, the attraction will allow Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales to exhibit its collection of artworks across a series of integrated galleries.

The museum's West Wing will boast six new contemporary art galleries following the £6.5m scheme, having previously only had one gallery in which to display its collection.

Work at the attraction will provide nearly 800sq m (8,611sq ft) of space in which to exhibit Welsh art, with the opening exhibition earmarked to feature artists such as Josef Herman and Shani Rhys James.



The new National Museum of Art is located at National Museum Cardiff

Alwyn Jones Penseiri Architects are behind the design of the scheme, which has been delivered by OPCO Construction.

Faithful and Gould, Davis Langdon and Arup have also comprised the project team that has been involved with the new National Museum of Art development.

### LED lighting for London's National Gallery

PETE HAYMAN

London's National Gallery has confirmed that it is to install new light emitting diode (LED) lighting over the next two years.

The attraction will become one of the first in the world to use the system, which will work in

conjunction with another that adjusts external roof light blinds according to sunlight.

LED lighting will then be used to augment the natural light where necessary, compared with the current system that is more abrupt and distracting to visitors.

### Summer reopening for Theatr Colwyn

PETE HAYMAN

Colwyn Bay's Theatr Colwyn – one of the oldest operating venues of its kind in Wales – is to reopen this summer, following a redevelopment.

Last September, the Welsh Assembly Government approved £500,000 of funding towards the venue's restoration as part of the North Wales Strategic Regeneration Area Programme.

Conwy Council also contributed £238,000 as part of its Bay Life+ initiative to help fund the work, which has included a complete overhaul of the front-of-house areas.

The upstairs bar has been relocated to the foyer and a new box office has been created. Disabled access has also been improved.



Theatr Colwyn is one of the oldest operating venues of its kind in Wales

General manager Sarah Ecob said: "In addition to all the issues raised by the long history of the building, this is an intricate project in a small building with limited access."



## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



# Management of Sports and Leisure Facilities

**Cornwall Council** is considering options for managing, operating and developing its community leisure function and fifteen sports and leisure facilities throughout the County. Information about these facilities together with the scope, length, estimated value and details of the proposed contract can be found at [www.tendersincornwall.co.uk](http://www.tendersincornwall.co.uk) from 6th May 2011

The Council has a preference for a non-profit distributing organisation and invites expressions of interest from any organisation with suitable qualifications or experience. Pre-qualification questionnaires and information will be provided on the above website.

The Council's existing sport and leisure team is considering the possibility of establishing a locally-based and owned charitable trust.

**The deadline for submission of pre-qualification questionnaires is 27th May 2011.**

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST SOUGHT



**Wellesbourne Parish Council** has recently acquired this local sports club building adjoining our sports fields. There is approximately 500 sq.m. of space over two floors and a large car park.

We are looking to modernise it sustainably, and to convert it to self-funding community use including some or all of these facilities:-

- Gym or fitness suite
- Changing rooms and showers
- Exercise/dance space/meeting rooms
- Cafe/occasional bar
- Youth facilities/club

We hope there will be a second stage of development involving a sports hall, muga, skate park etc

It will probably be structured as a Social Enterprise, and while some Parish funds are available, it is likely that more capital will need to be raised through grants, and perhaps from operating partners.

Any organisation or individual who might be interested in helping this project forward whether as a potential operating partner, consultant, contractor, or supplier is invited to contact :

**Tony Copeland on 01789 840345 or email [copeland1@talk21.com](mailto:copeland1@talk21.com)**  
Or write to Wellesbourne Parish Council at 2, School Rd, Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9NH.



### WELLESBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Wellesbourne is one of the largest rural settlements in Warwickshire located about 5 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon and 7 from Warwick/Leamington Spa. The Parish has a population of about 6000 with the same number again in smaller villages nearby.

## Sustainability needn't be just a cost

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In this seminar we will look at the financial, social and environmental impact of sustainable restaurants.

Through utilising real-life case studies from across the leisure sector, we'll also be looking at how leisure property owners can incorporate sustainable design into their new projects in order to maximise their tax savings from their property investment.

### Programme

6.15pm - Registration  
6.30pm - Introductions  
6.30pm - Speakers  
7.30pm - Q&As  
7.45pm - Refreshments and networking  
8.30pm - Close

### Fee

£45 + VAT LPF Members  
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### Speakers

**Mark Linehan**, Managing Director of The Sustainable Restaurants Association  
**Alun Oliver**, Managing Director of E3 Consulting

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## Crawley Borough Council

# Tender for 3G pitch and pavilion concession

Crawley Borough Council is inviting tenders from suitably qualified suppliers to manage the Broadfield 3G pitch and pavilion under a concession contract for a period of up to seven years, likely to commence in July 2011.

The contract involves management of the 3G pitch and pavilion including responsibilities for bookings, repairs and maintenance, marketing etc.

**For more details and tender documentation contact Paul Baker on 01293 438659 or [paul.baker@crawley.gov.uk](mailto:paul.baker@crawley.gov.uk)**

Closing date for return of completed tenders is Friday May 13.



[www.crawley.gov.uk](http://www.crawley.gov.uk)



Mumbles Pier is set to undergo restoration work

## Mumbles Pier restoration plans approved

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for the restoration of Mumbles Pier, together with the construction of an RNLI lifeboat station, have been given the green light by Swansea Council.

The scheme is linked to another application for a leisure-led redevelopment of the headland and foreshore and will see the current pier deck and railings refurbished.

It is hoped that work will start in spring 2012 and will take around 20 months to complete, with the pier works to be carried out between April and September 2013.

## Design competition for Aberdeen garden project

PETE HAYMAN

A new two-stage design competition has started for the City Garden Project in Aberdeen, which aims to transform an area of the city centre into a new open space.

Malcolm Reading Consulting is managing the contest for Aberdeen City Gardens Trust Enterprises, with the first stage inviting design teams to submit proposals.

It is hoped that a shortlist of up to seven proposals for the £140m scheme will be unveiled in July, with a winning entry to be announced in mid-December.

## Society criticises Hanover Square courtyard scheme

PETE HAYMAN

Plans to demolish part of a Grade II\*-listed building to make way for a new public courtyard in Hanover Square, London, have been criticised by the Victorian Society.

Great Portland Estates is behind the proposals as part of the Crossrail Masterplan, which is to see a new railway station built on the site of 18 and 19 Hanover Square.

The scheme will see 20 Hanover Square become a restaurant, although a 1910 auction room to the rear is to be demolished and replaced with the courtyard.

## WNC unveils £24m redevelopment plans

PETE HAYMAN

West Nottinghamshire College (WNC) has announced "once-in-a-generation" plans for a £24m overhaul of its Derby Road campus in Mansfield.

A sports hall with badminton and basketball courts; a sports science lab; and changing facilities form part of the extensive proposals.

The Taylor Young-designed project will also include a two/three-storey building to house 4,000sq m (43,056sq ft) of additional teaching space, plus a health spa and a training hair and beauty salon.

Improvements to an existing three-storey block will enable the college's visual arts to move from the Chesterfield Road site, while an enclosed courtyard is also proposed.



A new sports hall with badminton and basketball courts is earmarked

WNC confirmed that it is looking to submit a planning application in June ahead of further consultation, with work scheduled to start on the sports hall in September.

## £45m development for Edinburgh

PETE HAYMAN

Construction work is to begin on a major £45m hotel-led development in Edinburgh's Old Town, which is to be led by property developer Chris Stewart Group (CSG).

Located on the edge of the Royal Mile, the mixed-use scheme will comprise a 140,000sq ft (13,006sq m) site acquired by the Edinburgh-based company.

CSG has agreed terms with Germany-based hotel operator Motel One, which is to launch a £25m property as the cornerstone of the development – its first UK hotel. The plans also include two restaurants; 30,000sq ft (2,787sq m) of residential space; and six office premises – each offering 10,000sq ft (929sq m) of floorspace.

CSG chief executive officer Chris Stewart said: "Bringing Motel One in to anchor the



Motel One will open its first UK property as part of the £45m proposals

whole development kick starts the regeneration of a key part of the Old Town.

"Motel One were introduced to me by Scottish Development International at the annual International Investment Hotel Forum in Berlin and it was clear that they were actively looking at the UK."

## London's Leamouth Peninsula development backed

PETE HAYMAN

Ballymore's plans for the redevelopment of the 10-acre (4-hectare) Leamouth Peninsula site in London's Docklands have been approved.

The group has secured consent from the London Thames Gateway Development

Corporation for the scheme, which will include leisure facilities and a public park.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill has drawn up the project's masterplan, with architects such as Glenn Howells Architects, John Pardey Architects and Jestico+Whiles also involved.



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For 21 years, Springboard has been helping young, unemployed and disadvantaged people into careers in hospitality, leisure and tourism, as well as being the industry's natural partner in improving its image, attracting new talent and addressing skills shortages.

Springboard was born out of a real skills crisis in terms of recruiting enough home grown talent to meet the needs of the vibrant hospitality, leisure, and tourism industries. Every year, Springboard manages to deliver a full range of programmes that reach out to millions of people of all ages and backgrounds across the UK.

The work is vital, as the industry's recruitment and skills challenges remain, due to a combination of welcome growth; demographic impact; a highly competitive labour market; issues around poor image; and – most recently – changes in visa regulations. Our emphasis on attracting home grown talent becomes even more important.

In reaching this milestone, Springboard will celebrate by holding a 21st Anniversary Fundraiser on 17 June in the Great Room at the Grosvenor House, A JW Marriott Hotel on London's Park Lane. The celebration evening will be in appreciation of the 21 years Springboard has delivered its activities and programmes. The event will hopefully raise funds for Springboard and help us continue our life changing work.

Our 21st Anniversary Fundraiser is guaranteed to be a night to remember, with the party including a sparkling reception, sumptuous gala dinner, surprise guests, entertainment, amazing prizes to bid for in the silent and main auctions, a dramatic torch relay and much more.

Springboard's vision is to be the UK's leading provider of specialist careers and vocational education and employment services relating to hospitality, leisure and tourism – thereby supporting young, unemployed, disadvantaged and other job seekers as well as being the industry's natural partner in improving its image, attracting new talent and addressing its skills shortages.

## TRAINING

### SkillsActive unveils officiating standards

PETE HAYMAN

SkillsActive, the sector skills council for sport and active leisure, has teamed up with Sports Officials UK to launch a new set of occupational standards for officiating.

The National Standards for Officiating have been drawn up to help boost umpiring and refereeing excellence across sports at every level.

It is hoped that the occupational standards from SkillsActive and Sports Officials UK are to assist with the design of officials' courses and other activities.

SkillsActive chief executive officer Stephen Studd said: "SkillsActive recognises the importance of sports officials and how vital it is to retain and attract the highest calibre individuals



IMAGE: NAGY MELINDA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The new occupational standards will apply to a wide number of sports

to officiating roles. The new National Standards will help to achieve a level of expertise in officiating, which is so important to the future of UK sport."

### Earth Centre to become activity centre

PETE HAYMAN

Doncaster Council has sold off the former Earth Centre attraction site in Conisbrough, to the educational services provider, Kingswood.

The company is now planning a multi-million pound transformation of the site, which will lead to the creation of a flagship activity centre.

The sale of the site is subject to planning permission, although it is anticipated that the new facility will also offer dedicated apprenticeship schemes for local colleges.

Kingswood is also planning to provide a "substantial subsidy" for local schools in a bid to make the site more accessible to children and young people from Doncaster.

Doncaster mayor Peter Davies said: "[Kingswood's] winning bid represents a unique and natural continuation of the site's



IMAGE: FLICKR/COOLINNY

The Earth Centre closed in 2004 after running into financial difficulties

heritage as a centre for learning, focused on environmental sustainability and targeting young people."

Jonathan Wood, cabinet member for business and regeneration, said: "[Kingswood] will run the 50-acre site as a wholly private business, creating jobs and opportunities."

### National Lottery grant for Clydebank's Titan Crane

PETE HAYMAN

A £120,000 scheme to develop a new visitor and education centre at Clydebank's Titan Crane has secured National Lottery support.

The building will provide classroom and workshop facilities for schoolchildren, local

community groups and families, and is to be ready to open at the end of May.

Eleanor McAllister, managing director of Clydebank Re-built and Titan Clydebank Trust, said: "This will be a great asset to our programme at the Titan."



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Trust Thamesmead is committed to Equal Opportunities and Investors in People. For an informal chat please contact **Richard Fishlock** on **020 8320 4470**.

Application pack available on **020 8320 4496** or email **fjones@trust-thamesmead.co.uk**.

Closing date 18th May 2011.  
Interviews on 25th-26th May 2011.

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For further details please contact  
**Ashley Watts** on **01629 761367** or at  
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## Project Officers

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The Officers will also be tasked with increasing community engagement on these sites.

#### Requirements:

- Degree or equivalent level education
- Experience in the sport and leisure industry, public sector or a not-for-profit organisation
- Excellent communication skills
- Experience of building effective working relationships with external organisations
- Ability to travel

For further information on the role and details of how to apply please visit **www.qe2fields.com/vacancies** or contact **Lawrence Welsby**, Project Assistant at **lawrence.welsby@fieldsintrust.org**

**Closing date is 18th May 2011**

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Assistant Spa Manager, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Epsom and Ewell, UK

Full-Time Duty Manager/Fitness Manager, Forest School, London, UK

Health Co-ordinator - Try Swimming, London Borough of Camden, London, UK

Beauty Therapist, Virgin Active, Manchester - Didsbury, UK

Lifeguard, Virgin Active, Solihull, UK

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Gym Manager, The Gym Group, Leicester, UK

Club Manager - , Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Competitive Salary and Benefits, UK

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Active University Sports Project Activator, Bucks New University, High Wycombe (and Uxbridge) Campus

Recreation Assistant, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Queen Mother Sports Centre, City of Westminster, London, UK

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Active University Sports Project Coordinator, Bucks New University, High Wycombe (and Uxbridge) Campus, UK

Events and Marketing Manager, Anglian Water, Oakham, UK

Retail and Front of House Manager, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Kent, UK

Golf Club Sales and Membership Manager, Mohawaren Golf Services, Saudi Arabia

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Assistant General Manager, Renard Resources, London, UK

Leisure Club Manager, Renard Resources, London, UK

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## NEC leisure venue plans unveiled

PETE HAYMAN

A new leisure and entertainment complex is to be developed on the outskirts of Birmingham under new plans unveiled by Genting Casinos UK and the NEC Group.

Resorts World at The NEC is to be situated on a site between the LG Arena and the Crowne Plaza Hotel, although the project is dependent on Genting securing a large casino licence. A decision on the licence is expected from Solihull Council in late May, with plans to be submitted for the scheme this summer.

The 55,000sq m (592,015sq ft) complex is set to feature a hotel; a spa; a casino; a banqueting and conference centre; a multi-screen cinema; and food and beverage outlets.



The new complex is set to feature a spa, a conference centre and a casino

It is hoped that Resorts World at The NEC will be launched in late 2013/early 2014, and is the result of more than three years planning by Genting Casinos UK and the NEC Group.

## Mecca Bingo drives Rank Group growth

PETE HAYMAN

Rank Group has posted a 2 per cent growth in revenue for the first 15 weeks of the year, compared with the same period in 2010.

The growth was driven in part by strong trading in its Mecca Bingo division, which

reported a 4 per cent increase in revenue – boosted by spend per visit.

Rank Interactive revenue was up by nearly a quarter for the period, but Rank Group said that Grosvenor Casinos was “constrained” by a low win margin in its London casinos.

## Travelodge teams up with pub groups

PETE HAYMAN

Budget hotel operator Travelodge has announced that it has joined forces with a number of UK pub groups as part of a £100m expansion drive across the country.

Travelodge has already joined forces with pub companies on 15 sites, but will now work with Greene King; JW Lees; Marston's; Mitchells and Butlers; and JD Wetherspoon in its bid to develop 36 new locations by 2015.

It has revealed that it has drawn up a bespoke development strategy as part of the partnership with pub companies, which are also embarking on expansion plans.

According to the hotel group, the proposed co-location offers benefits in terms of providing guests with a food and drink offer, as well as making schemes easier to develop and more affordable compared to individual projects.



Travelodge already sits alongside pubs at 15 UK sites

Paul Harvey, managing director for development at Travelodge, said: “The pub companies have noticeably stepped up their development plans over recent months and in many parts of the country their target locations correspond with ours.”

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[www.playing-fields.com](http://www.playing-fields.com)
- People 1st +44 (0)870 060 2550  
[www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk)
- REPs +44 (0)20 8686 6464  
[www.exerciseregister.org](http://www.exerciseregister.org)
- SAPCA +44 (0)24 7641 6316  
[www.sapca.org.uk](http://www.sapca.org.uk)
- Sports Aid +44 (0)20 7273 1975  
[www.sportsaid.org.uk](http://www.sportsaid.org.uk)
- Sport England +44 (0)8458 508 508  
[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)
- Springboard +44 (0)20 7497 8654  
[www.springboarduk.org.uk](http://www.springboarduk.org.uk)
- SkillsActive +44 (0)20 7632 2000  
[www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)
- Tourism Management Institute +44 (0)1926 641506  
[www.tmi.org.uk](http://www.tmi.org.uk)
- Tourism Society +44 (0)20 8661 4636  
[www.tourismsociety.org](http://www.tourismsociety.org)
- VisitBritain +44 (0)20 7578 1000  
[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)
- World Leisure +1 250 497 6578  
[www.worldleisure.org](http://www.worldleisure.org)