

leisure opportunities

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Confidence 'on the up' among health club managers

More than a third (42 per cent) of all senior managers working in the UK health and fitness industry are confident that the performance of their business will improve over the next 12 months.

The figure – from the latest Fitness Industry Confidence Survey (FICS), compiled by customer insight specialist Leisure-net Solutions is considerably higher than two years ago, when only 17 per cent of managers were optimistic about their business future.

The industry's confidence in improving primary income streams is also up – the figure has risen to more than a third (39 per cent) this year, up from 23 per cent in 2010.

However, when asked about the state of the UK economy as a whole, 40 per cent expect things to get worse and only 13 per cent are optimistic about the next 12 months – the remaining 47 per cent expect the economy



More than a third of managers expect to increase the level of investment in clubs in 2013

to remain roughly the same. The uncertain economy and the rapid expansion of budget fitness chains has left its mark on the industry in 2012 – 59 per cent of health club managers said they had experienced increased competition for revenue in the past 12 months.

When asked about the one major challenge for 2013, 37 per cent saw the economy

in general as the main threat, followed by member retention (13 per cent), utility costs (9 per cent) and membership sales (6 per cent).

However, more than a third of managers (37 per cent) expect to increase the level of investment in their current facilities during 2013, while 45 per cent will keep capital expenditure at 2012 levels. Only 20 per cent are expecting to cut investment.

Mike Hill, managing director of Leisure-net Solutions, said: "The FICS provides a barometer for the past year, and gives the industry useful indicators for the year ahead.

"From the 2012 survey it seems that, while macro economic conditions continue to present problems, for the first time we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel, with most key indicators showing signs of improvement." Details: <http://lei.s7a=Rok3g>

UK Sport and Sport England merger 'off'

The planned merger of UK Sport and Sport England is "likely to be scrapped" according to the *Guardian*.

Following on from a previous, exclusive report in the newspaper in January, the *Guardian* claims that the plans have now been cancelled in the wake of Team GB's Olympic success in the summer. Both UK Sport and Sport England declined to comment.

When contacted by *Leisure Opportunities*, a spokesperson for the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) said the matter was as yet undecided.

"No final decision has been made," he said. "But we are looking at ways in which we can



Team GB's success may have affected merger plans

ensure the strongest approach to community and elite sport in this country on the back of a successful London 2012."

UK Sport is the country's elite sport funding body while Sport England distributes public and lottery money to NGBs as well as invests in grassroots sports infrastructure. Details: <http://lei.s7a=X7X5e>

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SPORT

London playing fields 'under threat'

The London Assembly has called on the government to better protect the capital's playing fields.

In a letter to culture secretary Hugh Robertson, the Assembly cites its concerns over "potentially serious gaps in information and strategies" that are designed to monitor and protect playing fields.

Local authorities are responsible for protecting playing fields under threat.

According to Sport England guidelines, each authority should have an up-to-date strategy setting out local need and site provision. The Assembly claims, however, that only a quarter of London boroughs have strategies less than three years old and a quarter don't have one or are not preparing one.

Murad Qureshi, chair of the Assembly's Health and Environment Committee (HEC) said: "It currently seems no body has the powers, remit or resources to monitor and protect



The London Assembly has called for 'coherence' in playing strategies

London's playing fields effectively. It's only a few months since the 2012 Games came to a close and people inspired by them look for opportunities to take part in various sports.

"But if we are to secure a sporting legacy, the ongoing availability of playing fields is vital. Playing fields are not only essential for the health and well-being of Londoners, but provide important green spaces within the urban environment." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r8F5s>

Coventry park secures funding for football fields

Coventry City Council has been given a £242,000 grant by the Football Foundation to improve football facilities at the city's Holbrooks Park. The grant will be used, in addition to other funding, to build a new

changing pavilion and a drainage system for the two existing senior and four junior grass pitches. The improvements will begin early next year and will take eight months to complete. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=i3R4A>

£9m revamp completed on Montrose centre

A new £9m integrated sports and leisure centre has been launched in the Scottish coastal town of Montrose.

Facilities at Montrose Sports Centre include a six-lane, 25m swimming pool, a viewing gallery, a studio pool with a floating floor, a 50-station health and fitness club, a number of indoor sports courts and a café.

The centre first opened in 1983 but has been completely redesigned. Angus Council invested £8m in the project, with sportsotland contributing £1m to the development. The complex was designed by Angus Council architect Dave Smith while Ogilvie Construction was responsible for the construction.

Angus council provost Helen Oswald said: "The quality of the new facilities is testament



Facilities at the centre include a 25m swimming pool with floating floor

to the creativity and commitment of our in-house design team and the professionalism of Ogilvie, the project contractors.

"We want to get 'more people more active more often', and the new Montrose Sports Centre will certainly encourage people to do just that." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q6y6B>

BAM chosen for Huddersfield project

Kirklees Council has appointed BAM Construction as the preferred contractor for the new multi-million pound Huddersfield Sports Centre which will be built on Spring Grove car park in Springwood, Huddersfield.

The new facility will replace the existing Southgate sports centre, which is coming to the end of its life and will close once the new centre is up and running. BAM has been successful in meeting stage one of a two-stage procurement process, utilising the Regional YORbuild Procurement Framework for construction projects.

The council will continue to work with BAM to meet stage 2 requirements, with a contract between BAM and the council intended to be signed later this year.

Construction is expected to start in 2013 and the new centre is to be opened to the public in 2015.



The new centre will replace the ageing Southgate sports centre

Facilities will include a 25m swimming pool; a teaching pool; two sports halls; climbing, squash and martial arts facilities; a large fitness suite; a café and a children's area. The new centre will also include a family water leisure facility including a beach, flume, sidewinder and several more water features.

The sports centre will be owned by the council and managed by Kirklees Active Leisure.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=xoV7h>

Weymouth FC's stadium plans back on track

Weymouth Football Club has reopened discussions about moving to a new stadium in the town. Wessex Delivery, which owns the land surrounding the Bob Lucas Stadium, is looking to build 200 houses on the site.

The club is in discussions to relocate to an area near Lodmoor tip, which was previously discussed in 2008.

The suggested plans for the 200-house development on the old site will be presented to the public as part of an early consultation project next month.

Chickerell Town councillors previously raised concerns about the loss of land designated for leisure, loss of a green gap between Southill and Chickerell and that the project would be isolated from Chickerell.



The club may look to move from its current Bob Lucas stadium

Weymouth FC spokesperson Paul Cocks said: "The discussions about a possible move are at a very early stage. Any move must provide the club with a better stadium than that which they currently occupy, and must provide guarantees as to land ownership."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f6x7V>

Stratton Leisure Centre in line for update

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has applied for a £1m loan from the secretary of state to update its 30-year-old leisure centre.

Stratton Leisure Centre has seen substantial increases in trade over the last two years, but is

starting to show signs of age. The loan would be used to make improvements, as well as add an all-weather grass pitch and potentially convert squash courts into a new health and fitness suite. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u8Boz>



The £150m deal includes naming rights until 2018

Arsenal signs new deal with Emirates

Arsenal Football Club has agreed a further sponsorship deal worth £150m with international airline Emirates.

This grants the airline a five-year extension to the shirt partnership until the end of the 2018/19 season and extends the naming rights to the Emirates stadium to 2028.

Emirates first signed its sponsorship agreement with Arsenal in 2004, providing naming rights to the new stadium until 2021 and shirt sponsorship began in the 2006 season.

"The original deal with Emirates was a key facilitator of our move from Highbury and this next phase of our relationship will be just as critical to keep us at the top of the game in England and Europe," said Arsenal chief executive, Ivan Gazidis.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M3w9h>

British Cycling launches online tool for clubs

British Cycling has launched a free online tool to help cycling clubs run their day-to-day activities and communications from one portal. Developed with the input of clubs, the Club Management Tool is free to all affiliated clubs and was released in beta version on 22 November.

Through an online dashboard, clubs will have access to their individual public profile on the British Cycling website, subscription collection, newsletters, free website design and hosting, and an interactive club calendar enabling riders to book onto club activities. Full instructions and support on how to use the tool is also offered by British Cycling.

Jonny Clay, British Cycling's cycle sport and membership director, said: "We hope the Club Management Tool will help to make life easier for cycling club secretaries and administrators."

"The aim is to provide a tool which, above all, is free of charge and brings the many elements of managing a club into one place." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y3u4l>



Facilities include a 25m pool with a leisure flume

Fraserburgh leisure centre ahead of schedule

Fraserburgh residents are to be given the chance to have their say in the running of a new £9m leisure centre, which is currently ahead of schedule and will be ready to open in February.

A public open day when will give members of the community the opportunity to express their views on the facilities and how the amenities can be used to help as many residents as possible.

Created as part of Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure Plan, the new centre will replace an existing pool and community centre.

The new facilities will include a 25m pool, learning pool, three court sports hall, gym, fitness studio, village changing area, sauna, steamroom, community centre and an NHS Healthpoint. Community fundraising group FISSH (Fraserburgh area Initiative for Swimming, Sport and Health) will pay for a 40m internal flume – the only one in Aberdeenshire – as well as other fun and sports equipment, if funds allow.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r1W3z>

Wellness watchdog to be set up in Derbyshire

A new health and social care watchdog is being set up to improve the quality of services in Derbyshire.

Healthwatch Derbyshire will operate as an independent organisation and is set to launch before April 2013. It will replace the existing Local Involvement Network (LINKs) and will gather views, information, concerns and experiences and feed them into the development and delivery of local health and social care services. The scheme aims to ensure that feedback on topics such as GP referrals is collected and relayed back into the development and delivery of local health services.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=03v7a>

NICE calls for more physical activity

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has called for more emphasis to be placed on promoting walking and cycling to tackle physical inactivity in the UK.

Cycle use is lower in Britain than it is in many other European countries, a statistic NICE wants to improve by coordinated action to identify and address the barriers that may be discouraging people from taking to their bikes.

As part of its recommendations, published today (28 November), NICE stated that town-wide programmes should be put in place to promote cycling for both transport and recreational purposes.

These could include cycle hire schemes, car-free events or days, providing information such as maps and route signing, activities and campaigns that emphasise the benefits of cycling, fun rides and others.

According to NICE, walking routes should also be integrated with accessible public transport links to support longer journeys. Signage should give details of the distance and/or walking time, in both directions, between public transport facilities and key destinations.



More emphasis should be placed on encouraging cycling and walking

Professor Mike Kelly, director of the Centre for Public Health Excellence at NICE, said: "As a nation, we are not physically active enough and this can contribute to a wide range of health problems.

"It is important that there is comprehensive, evidence-based guidance in place that can help address these issues. We want to encourage and enable people to walk and cycle more and weave these forms of travel into everyday life. This guidance will make it easier for people to do this, as well as helping to address some of the safety fears that people may have."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=S9p3q>

£7.8m leisure centre to open in Gosport

A new £7.8m leisure centre is set to open in Gosport in December. The centre will replace the Holbrook recreation Centre on Fareham Road and will be operated by DC Leisure.

The development, which is being carried out by Wilmott Dixon as contractors will feature a swimming pool and learner pool as well as a sauna and steamroom. The centre will also house a sports hall, a 70-station health and fitness studio, a dance studio and a soft play area. Outdoor facilities will include eight five-a-side pitches and two grass mini-soccer pitches.

The opening of the leisure centre on 31 December will complete the first phase of the project. The second phase, which includes a new restaurant and bar and a 60-bed Premier Inn hotel is set to be completed in summer 2013.



An artist's impression of the centre, which will be run by DC Leisure

Councillor Mark Hook, leader of Gosport Borough Council, said: "We're looking forward to the official opening and will continue to work closely with DC Leisure in providing the residents of Gosport with these new and exciting leisure facilities."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N9gS>

DLL to launch club in Worcester

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) is set to launch an £8m club in Worcester next month.

Located beside Worcester Warriors' Sixways Stadium, the club will feature three indoor and five outdoor tennis courts. The 5,600sq m (60,278sq ft) complex will also include a 25m indoor pool, a children's pool and a 20m outdoor pool. Two physiotherapy rooms and a wet spa area, including a spa pool, two saunas, a steamroom, heated beds and an ice machine will also be on offer.

The club's 900sq m (9,688sq ft) fitness space includes three exercise studios.

Gym equipment includes Power Plate machines, free weight stations, ViPR equipment and aerobic studios. There will also be Gravity personal and small group training on Total Gym equipment.



The 5,600sq m complex will include a 900sq m health and fitness space

The studios will host a range of group fitness classes including dance-fitness Bokwa.

DL Kids club will offer a dedicated activity programme that will be synchronised with adult programmes. Other facilities include a Delicious cafe/bar lounge, an outdoor play area and a crèche. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y0j4n>

Fit4Less to open two new clubs in London

Fit4Less, the budget club arm of health club operator énergie Group, is to further expand its portfolio in London with two new confirmed sites.

The group will open Fit4Less clubs in Kilburn and Enfield in January 2013. The new sites will join existing clubs in Tower Hill and Caspian Wharf.

Rangel Sehalic, operations manager for the Fit4Less brand, said: "London is an important area for us as the size of the gyms and the need for a concentrated population matches the Fit4Less concept."

The group has also confirmed a further site with the opening of Fit4Less in Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire in January 2013. Last month énergie Group open its 25th Fit4Less gym in



AS

Perth, Scotland. énergie Group also owns and operates the énergie Fitness For Women, énergie Fitness Clubs and SHOKKénergie brands. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x8n5C>

Stafford council seeks supermarket partner

Stafford Borough Council has said it will only be able to update the ageing facilities at Westbridge Park in Stone if a supermarket comes on board.

Speaking at a public meeting recently, council leader Mike Heenan said leisure and culture

must be improved for residents of Stone. "We are keen to secure facilities for future generations over the next 20 years. But the only way to build a large enough leisure centre would be to go in with a food operator," he said. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K7voU>

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A level playing field for hospitality SMEs



UFI IBRAHIM
is chief executive
officer of British
Hospitality Association

Outsourcing has come to the fore in the last month with a report by the BHA and the Food Service Consultants Society International* which encourages the government to enable companies in the food and service management sector to compete more easily on a level playing field for public service contracts.

According to the Cabinet Office, £70bn of government contracts across 13 different sectors will be put out to re-tender over the next five years. Food and service management and catering represent one of these sectors but one which faces considerable barriers – even though a report by the CBI suggests that outsourcing could save the government 10 per cent on its facilities budget.

The message of the report is simple: take advantage of the UK's world-class talent. The report recommends four actions:

1. Remove barriers to outsourcing so that SMEs can compete on a level playing field.
2. Improve the commissioning process so that the government's own procurement people and systems are up-skilled.
3. Set a clear overall vision for a more strategic outsourcing provision and make use of the world-class skills available in the UK.
4. Recognize the value of food.

The BHA's FSM members serve more than 600m meals per year to school children, hospital patients, prisoners, MOD staff and public sector workers, yet this is just a quarter of the total number of meals provided every year.

In 2010-11, the public sector spent over £2.1bn on food and catering. With a level playing field, the FSM's share of this sum could be vastly increased to the advantage of the government's finances and to the quality of the service provided.

Yet the barriers to outsourcing – cultural and ideological, the transfer of risk, the need for working capital and repayment terms, rigid pre-qualification questionnaires – all act as a deterrent.

The report sets out some clear recommendations for the government to recognise the value of this sector and also some firm commitments on behalf of our members.

HOTELS

£30m revamp for Belfry Hotel

The Belfry Hotel and Golf Resort in Warwickshire is set to undergo a £30m refurbishment.

The Belfry was bought in August by American investment firm KSL Capital Partners, which appointed The De Vere Group to manage the property. It is expected that work will begin on the resort early next year.

The renovations will include updating the guestrooms and function suites as well as a revamp of the restaurants and bars.

Lynn Hood has been appointed managing director of the hotel and will oversee the revamp.

Hood said: "The Belfry has the perfect partner in KSL which is experienced in taking over a number of established resorts and restoring them to their former glory."



Lynn Hood has been appointed managing director of the hotel

"We are currently working hard on finalising the redevelopment plans for Belfry and we will have detailed drawings and designs to show to our customer base quite soon." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t3Q2x>

Former BBC centre to re-open as luxury hotel

A former BBC broadcasting centre is to open as a luxury hotel following a £4m redevelopment. Located near Evesham and Stratford-upon-Avon in Worcestershire, the Grade II listed Wood Norton property will re-open as a boutique hotel at the end of December.

The hotel will feature 50 guestrooms including five suites. It will also house a restaurant, bar and al fresco dining terrace. Other facilities include boardroom and meeting space, formal gardens and a wedding venue for up to 250 guests. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D9x7q>

Starboard invests in upmarket hostels

Liverpool has been confirmed as the second site for Starboard Hotels' upscale hostel brand, Smart City.

Following the launch of a trailblazer site in Edinburgh, the company has said it will actively look for expansion opportunities in the luxury hostel market, as well as the entry-level hotel market.

The concept offers en suite dorms, high levels of guest amenities and fully licensed food and beverage operations. The Liverpool site will be in the seven-storey former Kansas Buildings in the Cavern Quarter, which were previously retail premises. Quintain, Davis Coffey Lyons and Ockleston Bailey completed the sale.

Associate director at Davis Coffey Lyons, Kate Taylor, says: "Starboard Hotels has already



The company is looking to expand its 'luxury hostel' portfolio in the UK

carved out a niche for purchasing distressed commercial assets and implementing a change of use development. This site has great positioning within Liverpool city centre, opposite the Met Quarter retail scheme and close to Liverpool One shopping centre."

Virgin Media Space for Science Museum

A 1,800sq m purpose-built venue will open at the Science Museum next June.

Showcasing the National Photography Collection from the National Media Museum, the Virgin Media Space will provide a forum to discuss works by contemporary artists across a variety of disciplines.

Each year it will present two major paid for exhibitions and a series of free installations.

Head of Media Space, Hannah Redler, says it will be the place where the two cultures of art and science collide: "Media Space offers an unprecedented opportunity for our audiences to encounter photographs and artists' own investigations into our collections."

The capital cost of the project is £4m. Funding has come from a variety of sources:



The new Media Space is due to open at the museum in June 2013

the principal founding sponsor is Virgin Media while the Dana and Albert R Broccoli Foundation the founding donor.

The first exhibition, Revelations: Experiments in Photography, will explore contemporary artists' responses to scientific photography from 1850 to 1920. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L5Nzn>

Rochdale Pioneers Museum opens after refit

The refurbished Rochdale Pioneers Museum, which celebrates the birth of the co-operative movement, has reopened its doors after a £2.3m refit. The improvements include a new tower offering lift access, additional multimedia displays and the resurrection of the original second floor reading room.

The museum, which has been in existence for 80 years, tells the story of how, in 1844, 28 Rochdale men, tired of being overcharged for poor quality goods, decided to contribute a pound a piece to start their own co-operatively run business.

"Our annual target is 9,000 visitors, but we received 1,400 visitors from 33 different countries in the first week," said museum manager,



The nationally important museum has received a £2.3m redevelopment

Jenny Broadbent. "That was partly because of a co-operative expo in Manchester, but we have continued to attract 300-400 visitors per week, including local people and coach parties from around the UK." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F3x7q>

Bradford Industrial Museum goes green

Bradford Industrial Museum is looking to reduce its carbon footprint with the installation of solar panels.

The £39,000 investment should produce enough power to pay for itself in eight years. They are expected to meet 10 per cent of the

museum's electricity needs, as well as generating an income of £3,050 a year from feed-in tariff payments. The council is attempting to provide 20 per cent of its energy requirements from renewable energy sources by 2020. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E3v9n>

Museums Galleries Scotland appoints new chair

Douglas Connell has been named as the new chair of Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS). A lawyer by trade, Connell is a former chair of Edinburgh Book Festival, of the Lottery Committee of the Scottish Arts Council and of the Recognition Scheme Committee – a scheme which invests in nationally significant collections held outside the nationally run museums.

He has also advised the National Gallery and the National Galleries of Scotland on high profile negotiations – such as the acquiring of two Titian paintings.

Lynne Halfpenny, chair of MGS's Board Appointments Committee, said: "Douglas will be responsible for leading MGS in its work to support the sector to achieve the vision and aims of its National Strategy." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A5Tol>



Gaelic will be introduced across all operations

Historic Scotland unveils its vision for Gaelic

Historic Scotland is to play a major role in the advancement of Gaelic after its plan to promote the language across the country was officially approved.

The agency's five-year Gaelic Language Plan has been accepted by Bord na Gaidhlig, the government body responsible for supporting Gaelic in Scotland.

The plan will support the use and learning of Gaelic within Historic Scotland and promote the language through the agency's interaction with other organisations, stakeholders and customers across the country, and where relevant, around the world.

Practical steps will include incorporating the language into its daily operations – including bilingual services, such as Gaelic signage at some properties and the production of bilingual publications.

Existing Interpretation at selected Historic Scotland sites, such as Carnasserie, Dunadd, Iona Abbey and Inverloch Castle, will be replaced with signage incorporating Gaelic, complementing those sites already offering the service. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=9Fouu>

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PROPERTY

BT secures contract for Olympic media centre

A new television channel will broadcast from London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park from next year, pending approval from the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).

BT Sport will become the main tenant of the International Broadcast Centre under the 10-year deal, which will see 7,000 sq m of space refurbished to comprise three television studios, a control centre, 20 editing suites and an audience-holding area.

Mayor Boris Johnson and the LLDC Board will consider BT's planning application this week. If the deal is approved BT Sport will move to the Stratford facilities in February next year and begin broadcasting from August. Johnson says he is looking forward to considering the "exciting proposal".



The media centre will be completely refurbished before BT moves in

BT chief executive Ian Livingston says the park will provide an iconic backdrop for BT Sport and will act as a reminder of the sporting feats achieved at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

BT currently has the television rights to screen 38 live Premier League matches and 69 live rugby union games each season. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E5Coy>

Bespoke Hotels acquires Oxford Hotels

Boutique hotel operator Bespoke Hotels has taken over Oxford Hotels and Inns, expanding its portfolio to 97 properties. Bespoke Hotels will manage 34 additional hotels across the UK, which include luxury, three- and four-star properties.

Flagship hotels that will join the group include Carnoustie Golf Hotel and Elemis Spa and The Lugger Hotel in Portloe, Cornwall. The new properties will join Bespoke's sub-brand Beloved.

Haydn Fentum, CEO of Bespoke Hotels, said: "We are delighted to welcome Oxford Hotels and Inns' fine collection of properties to the Bespoke Hotel Group in the UK."

From beautiful country pubs and inns to luxury hotels and character properties throughout England and Scotland, each has



The Lugger Hotel in Portloe – one of the properties Bespoke has acquired

its own story to tell and we will build on their individuality to deliver great value for money and service for our guests."

Bespoke Hotels currently operates 85 hotels across the UK and 97 worldwide. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C4u5R>

Belfast's £21m Skainos urban village project launched

The £21m Skainos project in east Belfast has been officially opened by First Minister Peter Robinson. Designed as a new shared 'urban village' space, the project will bring together a range of strategic partnerships which will contribute to the holistic regeneration of one of

the most economically and socially deprived communities in Northern Ireland.

The Skainos development will mix retail, leisure and education with office space, community areas and faith services. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Vou6P>

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Big Conversation – big ambitions



SAM COULSTOCK
is careers director of
The Springboard
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For a few years now we have been hearing lots about youth unemployment, the lack of apprenticeships and the need for work experience. The hospitality industry is leading the way in tackling these critical issues which face not only our industry but all of the UK PLC. To bring this to life and to make pledges for the future of our industry, a programme of events called the Big Conversations are happening all over the UK.

The Big Conversation in Hospitality is a joint initiative between Business in the Community, BHA and Springboard. It brings together influential industry leaders from top hospitality businesses and young people (who are or have been unemployed, on work experience or on an apprenticeship) to stimulate an important dialogue on employability skills, work experience and apprenticeships.

The purpose behind to understand the business case for each; the drivers for young people; the opportunities and barriers; how to make introductions to the workplace meaningful, relevant and inspiring; and, most importantly, prospects for employment. So why is this important?

Youth unemployment is at its highest for decades, yet there is a wealth of talent and potential waiting to be tapped; the government is looking to industry to drive economic recovery and the hospitality industry is in a position to be a key player to stimulate growth, but hitherto has not capitalised as much as it could on attracting domestic talent.

Work experience, apprenticeships and initiatives to support unemployed people into jobs are critical to cementing a talent pipeline but all three are often misunderstood or underrated. The Big Conversation is a tried and tested model and is an opportunity for industry leaders and young people to break down barriers and help supply to meet demand.

So it's now time to act. Join us at a Big Conversation near you and make a difference for the future of our industry.

TRAINING

RAPs pilot phase to launch in January

SkillsActive has launched the new Register of Aquatic Professionals (RAPs), an independent register for those employed in the aquatics sector.

RAPs will be operated by SkillsActive, with support provided by key partners from industry; the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), the Swimming Teachers Association (STA) and The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS). Building on the success of the existing Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs), the new register will initially be launched in England, followed by roll outs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The pilot phase will launch in January 2013 to test the new system, raise awareness across the industry and enable employers and individuals to engage in its development. The full register will be launched later in 2013.

RAPs has been developed to increase professionalism in the sector and support the general public. It will become the single qualification framework structure for the industry, which will provide assurance that registered



The pilot phase is set to launch across England in January 2013

individuals hold relevant qualifications required for the job they undertake.

For employers, RAPs will provide clarity, structure to training and Continued Professional Development, supporting their workforce to develop within the sector.

Ian Taylor, CEO of SkillsActive, said: "RAPs marks a significant development for the aquatic industry and supports employers, individuals and the general public.

• If you'd like to be involved in the RAPs pilot, visit www.aquaticregister.org to register.

Arts sector jobs 'going unclaimed'

Cultural and creative employers are finding it hard to recruit the employees they need – despite more than one million young people in the UK being currently unemployed.

According to Arts Council England (ACE), the worrying trend means that the sector is at risk of losing an entire generation of talent.

To tackle the issue, ACE has launched its Creative Employment Programme, designed to support up to 6,500 new apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and paid internships across the sector.

The scheme aims to provide young unemployed people (aged 16-24) with paid opportunities to gain access to on the job training, skills and experience, linking to one of the Arts Council goals of creating fairer entry routes into the arts and cultural sector and increasing workforce diversity.



Arts Council England has expressed concern about losing a generation

The Arts Council commissioned Skills Academy, with a grant of up to £15m, to deliver the programme, which will directly benefit unemployed young people.

The grant for the provision of this programme will run from December 2012 to March 2015. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E6m8c>

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Voluntary role – 2 days per month (on average).

Travel expenses payable.



The Angling Trust is the National Governing Body and unified representative organisation for coarse, game and sea angling in England. It is working for the future of angling through environmental, lobbying and education programmes, as well as delivering competitions, managing our national teams and developing commercial opportunities. The Trust and its sister organisation Fish Legal currently turn over about £2 million each year, which will increase due to our wide ranging initiatives over the next five years.

With the planned retirement of the current post holder, we are seeking to appoint a new Chair to lead the Trust through the next stage of expansion and development. The successful candidate will be a strategic leader and possess keen commercial acumen, excellent team building skills and be a capable networker to lead our work with political and business leaders. You will have experience at Board level in similar sized commercial or voluntary sector organisations and, ideally, be familiar with UK environmental regulation and related governmental organisations.

This is a volunteer role; directors are not remunerated and the Chair is expected to commit approximately 2 days per month and, when necessary, to meet in evenings and at weekends.

A job description can be downloaded from the Vacancies section of the Angling Trust website at www.anglingtrust.net. Further information can be obtained from the current Chair, Mike Heylin, on mike.heylin@anglingtrust.net.

Applicants should complete an application form and send it, along with a current CV, marked "Personal" to Stuart Sharp, Angling Trust, Strelley Hall, Strelley, Nottingham NG8 6PE.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 14 DECEMBER 2012

Westminster Lodge officially opens

The new £24.7m Westminster Lodge leisure centre in St Albans, Hertfordshire has been officially opened to the public. The facility, operated by Everyone Active in partnership with St Albans City and District Council, already has 4,400 members, 14,000 Everyone Active card holders and 1,055 children signed up for swimming lessons.

The centre, designed by S&P Architects, includes a 176-station fitness suite, boasting X Cube, Total Gym, Trixter bikes, Power Plate, Wattbike and Precor equipment and separate youth gym.

There is also a 25m, 10-lane swimming pool, a training pool, 12m climbing wall, four-court sports hall and a luxury day spa called



The £24.7m centre was designed by leisure specialists S&P Architects

Verulamium – the city's old Roman name.

The spa features wet and dry rooms, a tepidarium, laconium, relaxation room and a fully equipped beauty salon for massages, facials, manicures, pedicures and body treatments.

The Lightbox gallery given PM's Big Society Award

The Lightbox, a museum and gallery set up and run by a group of volunteers, has been given the Prime Minister's Big Society Award.

Located in Woking, Surrey, the £7m attraction is staffed by more than 150 volunteers and runs an education and outreach service

focused on history and the arts which sees community groups and schools work with professional artists in the centre's purpose-built Education Studio. In 2008, The Lightbox was awarded the prestigious Art Fund Prize. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=12f7E>

Hastings pier wins £11.4m lottery grant

The next chapter in the story of Hastings Pier – which was gutted by fire in 2010 – is underway, following the news of a successful Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant.

The £11.4m HLF grant will provide the lion's share of the £13.9m redevelopment costs.

Plans drawn up by architects deRijke Marsh Morgan (dRMM), include a traditional seaside promenade, farmers' markets, open air cinema, restaurant, bistro, bar, theatre, fairs and fetes. According to the chief executive of Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust, Simon Opie, it will be "a reinvention of Victorian tradition and a new source of pride for the town."

dRMM say they want the pier to remember the past, communicate the present and contribute to the future.

Given its recent history of struggling to be commercially viable prior to the fire, it is



Plans for the pier include a traditional promenade

important that it supports a range of activities which are financially sustainable.

It is hoped the pier will reopen for business in 2014. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H4goK>

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