

# leisure opportunities

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## Football Association plans £150m facility strategy

The Football Association (FA) has announced a three-year, £150m facility strategy which aims to improve 3,000 existing natural pitches across England – as well as create 100 new artificial pitches and refurbish 150 existing all-weather sites.

The National Facilities Strategy 2013-15, published last week (26 February), outlines how the FA intends to invest around £50m each year between now and 2015.

According to the FA, the strategy – developed in consultation with the Premier League, Sport England and the Football Foundation – will ensure the game works together to improve football facilities across the country and to deliver a “coordinated approach to investment”.

Figures from the Football Foundation show that 84 per cent of people cite ‘poor facilities’



More than 80 per cent of people cite poor facilities as a concern in sport organisations

as their most pressing issue preventing them from taking part in organised football – an issue the strategy looks to correct.

Roger Burden, chair of The FA National Game Board, said: “Football has enjoyed a remarkable period of investment since the

formation of the Football Foundation in 2000 with more than £780m invested into facilities across the country with thousands of clubs and teams having benefited from this investment.

“However, it is clear that there is still a huge amount of work to be done. Many of our top professional footballers started their careers playing on park pitches for local clubs within local leagues.

“Whether used by a young person taking those first steps in football or as a veteran player or as a coach, facilities have a lasting and continuing influence on our experience of the game. For this reason, investment in facilities will continue to be a key priority for The Football Association.”

The full strategy document is available on the FA website. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W1A3o>

### lastminute.com and VisitEngland join forces

Travel and hotel website lastminute.com has joined forces with VisitEngland to promote last minute short stays across the country.

A two-week campaign will target commuters in London and Birmingham, with advertising on the Tube and at key rail hubs promoting 11 easily accessible destinations across England, from York to Bristol. A 24-hour sale on 7 March will include reduced hotel rates (up to 50 per cent) and promotions on shopping breaks, weekends of culture and coastal get-aways. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P6b2k>

### Health exhibition for Eureka! museum

Eureka!, the national children's museum in Halifax, Yorkshire, is to unveil a new £2.9m health and body-themed gallery on 29 March 2013. Entitled All About Me, the educational experience is the largest gallery redevelopment in the museum's 21-year history.

It will use play, role playing and interactive displays to help children learn about their bodies and how to make positive lifestyle choices that will help them look after themselves.

Featuring more than 100 interactive stations, the exhibition has been developed with the support of a £1.45m grant from the charitable foundation Wellcome Trust. Gallery content and interpretation was designed by At Large



Eureka! will educate kids about healthy lifestyles

and was guided by a team of expert advisors from academia, the medical profession, education and local government.

It will open at a time when even greater focus is being placed on the well-being of families. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n5P3Y>

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# SPORT

## Land deal for Spurs' new stadium

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) has continued to move closer to transforming its White Hart Lane ground, as Haringey Council has approved a land deal for the club's new stadium.

The 56,250-capacity stadium is being built as part of the wider regeneration of Tottenham, North London, following a pledge by THFC and Haringey Council.

Under the deal the Council will acquire land for the development to remove the risk of owners of neighbouring properties seeking an injunction to prevent construction of the development. The Council will then grant a 999-year lease of the land to THFC.

The Northumberland Development Project's (NPD) proposal for the stadium covers a 20-acre area, which includes the site of the current ground and the industrial land to the



The new stadium covers a 20-acre area and includes plans for a hotel

north, to create a larger area in which the new stadium can be built.

It also includes plans for a hotel, 200 new homes, shops and leisure facilities

The design will feature using flowing lines of external cladding, an undulating roof and the club colours to create a visually striking building. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E3q4a>

## S&P Architects set to design £10.1m leisure centre

Wyre Forest District Council has appointed S&P Architects to draw up outline plans for a new £10.1m leisure centre in the Worcestershire district, which will provide a cost-effective alternative to existing facilities. A council review into leisure provision in the region

determined a new centre would save the council around £7.5m in maintenance costs over 30 years. Council cabinet member Ian Hardiman said: "The district deserves a modern, energy efficient building offering first class facilities." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G1y1D>

## New £7m Sports Domes officially open in Hartlepool

The new multi-million pound Sports Domes at Seaton Carew, Hartlepool has officially launched, which includes two inflatable domes with football and golf facilities.

The large, bright dome structures, which can be adapted to suit many sports and leisure pursuits, have been initially set up with a range of popular sports that include; indoor golf and football, as well as a fully equipped gym housing over 100 workstations.

The domes have been shipped in from the US and aim to cater for people of all fitness levels as well as family groups.

Facilities include four golf simulators that allow golfers to experience over 70 of the world's top courses with interactive graphic



The Sports Domes have been set up with football and golf facilities

images. Alan Cruickshank, marketing director, The Sports Domes said: "The facility will allow the local community an alternative means of enjoying year round sport. Golfers can now continue to develop their game throughout the winter months." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x1d9s>

## Aberdeen complex to open in 2014

Construction work on the £22m Aquatics Centre at the Aberdeen Sports Village has reached another landmark and is on track to open in early 2014 – in time for the Commonwealth Games.

Graham Construction, which is building the facility, has taken delivery of the centre's Olympic standard diving boards. The installation of the three, five, 7.5 and 10-metre boards is the last major structure to go in before the centre is made wind and water tight.

Designed by Faulkner Browns Architects, the Aberdeen Aquatics Centre will comprise a 10-lane, 50m swimming pool with a diving boom and a part-floating floor.

A 25m x 16.5m diving pool, fitted with water cushioning systems and an adjustable floor, will also feature, along with a timing and video



The Aberdeen facility has been designed by Faulkner Browns Architects

analysis lab, a health suite and spectator seating. Davis Langdon is project managing the scheme, which is designed to build on the success of the £28m regional sports centre opened at the site in 2009. Aberdeen Sports Village welcomed its 2 millionth visitor at the end of 2012. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T7P3X>

## NI Windsor stadium receives green light

Planning permission has been granted for an 18,000-capacity stadium at Windsor Park in Northern Ireland, in the fastest turnaround ever for a major planning application.

The Irish Football Association (IFA) submitted the application for two new stands and an extension of the north and west stands in early December, and permission was granted in 11 weeks.

The project is part of a £110m pledge by Northern Ireland sports minister Carol



Plans include two new stands and an extension to the other stands

who granted permission, said his officials worked with the project team and key consultants for months before the application was submitted to clear any hurdles or obstacles and ensure a speedy planning application."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L4X30>

## Olympic white water legacy project underway

Work has started on a £6.3m development project at Lee Valley White Water Centre in London 2012 as part of legacy plans for the London 2012 Olympic venue.

Scheduled to be completed by early 2014, the works on the site will include improving the

international competition-standard facilities with the creation of a new gym and physiotherapy suite housed in an extension to the existing centre. There will also be a training facility for use by the British Canoe Union (BCU).

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A0q3W>

## Bidders are revealed for Scottish sports centre

Sport Scotland received six bids for the development of a National Performance Centre, by its deadline on 22 February.

A preferred bidder for the multi-sport centre, to receive up to £25m of government support, will be announced in summer with the facilities expected to be complete by early 2016. Stewart Harris, chief executive of Sport Scotland, said: "We are pleased with the number and quality of bids, which reflect the significance and importance of the National Performance Centre for Sport in Scotland." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x6z0c>



Andy Hunt led Team GB at the London Olympics

## BOA chief executive Andy Hunt steps down

Andy Hunt, CEO of the British Olympic Association (BOA) and chief de mission for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympic Games, decided to step down at the end of February to pursue "other opportunities".

The announcement comes less than a year after he helped deliver Team GB's most successful Olympic Games in 104 years.

Hunt said: "It's been an amazing four years. I'll always be proud to have led Team GB at a home games and of the fantastic performance of the team this summer and the way in which the BOA supported the athletes." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w7U9P>

## Former Commonwealth weightlifter opens gym

A former Commonwealth weightlifting champion has opened a new gym in Aberdare, which includes the biggest free weights area in Wales.

Breeze's Gym, opened by Michaela Breeze and Sinead Kelly, includes a full exercise class programme, fully equipped gym, online personal support programme and women's only weights resistance area.

Breeze retired from her 18-year weightlifting career in 2010 and was awarded an MBE in 2011 for her sporting achievements. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h8f4Z>

### Work completed on Soar Valley centre

Fusion Lifestyle has completed a £350,000 redevelopment of Soar Valley Leisure Centre in Mountsorrel, Leicestershire.

A brand new fitness studio and health suite has been added while the reception and pool viewing areas have also been refurbished. It is the second of two centres operated by Fusion on behalf of Charnwood Borough Council that have received upgrades in the past six months. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z4A8Z>



The app allows members book and cancel classes

### Pure Gym launches iPhone app with booking function

Affordable fitness provider Pure Gym has launched an iPhone app, with an Android version set to follow later this year.

The free app, available at the Apple online store, enables users to locate the nearest Pure Gym, book and cancel classes, refer friends and access fitness tips from personal trainers. Instruction videos filmed with Pure Gym's equipment provider Matrix explain how to use each piece of kit and QR codes on individual machines link users to this information easily. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=jzX2q>

### Children's fitness club aims to encourage exercise

Stafford Borough Council will launch a new fitness club in March at Alleyne's Sports Centre that aims to get young people exercising. The weekly Tri-Active evenings will showcase triathlon-themed activities and equipment to children aged eight to 14.

The council backed the scheme following the success of an Olympic-themed triathlon taster last year. Thirty spaces will be available on a first come first served basis and will cost £4 per week. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P6W5g>

## Total Fitness appoints new CEO

Total Fitness Health Clubs has appointed Richard Millman as its new chief executive officer, effective 25 February.

The move follows the recent board appointments of Brian Davidson and Warwick Ley (December 2012).

Ley, group director, said: "Since our arrival in December, it was always our plan to further strengthen management by introducing a first class CEO to the team. Richard has tremendous experience both in and outside the industry with an impressive track record to match. Brian, I and the wider team are really looking forward to working with Richard."

Millman is an leisure and retail industry veteran. He recently led the successful turnaround of Leisure Connection as CEO and has held senior positions in companies such as Dixons Retail and Coca Cola.

His arrival at Total Fitness coincides with a strong start to the year for the business, with January membership levels growing by 4 per cent, a like-for-like improvement of over 35 per cent on the same period last year.



Millman previously worked for Leisure Connection

Millman said: "I was attracted to Total Fitness by its latent potential and support of its funders. It is a business which has existed largely 'under the radar' in the industry but has some fantastic points of differentiation for its members." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=05b8x>

## énergie will open eight clubs in Scotland

The énergie Group Scotland is to become Scotland's biggest fitness operator as it prepares for eight new club openings in the country during 2013.

The group's portfolio includes 14 clubs and gyms from the Fit4less, Fitness for Women and Fitness Clubs brands. Recent openings include the new Fit4less in East Kilbride, which was formally a Fitness First as well as a Fitness for Women club.

The Fit4less that opened in East Kilbride in December is an 18,000sq ft (1,672sq m) space that includes the latest Precor and TKO equipment, extensive cardio, free weights, resistance and freestyle area and over 55 group exercise classes per week. Elsewhere, the new Fitness for Women club in Galashiels consists of a



énergie's Scottish openings include a Fit4Less club in East Kilbride

3,000sq ft (279sq m) space and includes the hydraulic weight loss circuit and a fitness studio for daily classes. The next openings under the énergie Group Scotland management will be Glasgow South and the Scottish Borders in May. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K3l8K>

## Durham community backs new green leisure centre

A Durham community has voted for £500,000 of capital funding to go towards an eco-friendly fitness and wellness centre, to replace the closure of Glenholme Leisure Centre in 2012.

The vote, open to anyone who lives, works or volunteers in the Crooks community,

took place on 23 February. Other organisations campaigning for the money included a mobile arts facility, an equine centre and several community centres. The centre will include fitness facilities for adults and children. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a4e9U>

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\* In 2012 over 400 clubs took part with an average membership of 2,500 per site



# Walthamstow facility reopens

The former Kelmscott Leisure Centre has officially reopened as Walthamstow Leisure Centre this week as part of the council's £24m investment across five leisure facilities.

Refurbishments to the centre include a revamped sports hall with new flooring, an expanded gym, a resurfaced outdoor pitch, refurbished squash courts and new reception and changing rooms.

Leader of Waltham Forest Council Chris Robbins said: "It's been refreshed inside and out, with the upgraded flooring helping to make it a first rate facility.

We're investing in all of the borough's leisure centres to encourage more residents to get fitter and healthier."

Last month the Leyton Gym reopened following refurbishment and Leyton Leisure



Councillor Chris Robbins (right) with Mark Sesnan and Neale Coleman

Lagoon is currently closed for renovations. The council investment in leisure facilities complements wider works to regenerate the borough, including a £1.3m investment in local parks. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=s6b9y>

## Group workout makes members 'happiest'

A survey of 3,000 members of an Australian YMCA has found 85 per cent of respondents felt happy or elated after exercise, and group fitness was the activity that made people the happiest. The YMCA Victoria survey questioned people about their mood before and after exercise.

Before physical activity, 78.7 per cent of people felt 'normal' but afterwards 75 per cent reported feeling happy and 10.7 per cent felt elated.

Group fitness made people the happiest, followed by gym workouts and running. Women aged 35-39 enjoyed group exercise the most, reporting it made them feel part of a community.

YMCA Derrimut Health and Aquatic Centre group fitness expert, Leigh-Jay Ascension



YMCA Victoria reports women aged 35-39 enjoy group fitness the most

said: "Men are missing out on the benefits of group fitness classes. When everyone is doing the same thing and they're working towards the same goals it builds a real camaraderie." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K3T8o>

## US-based Snap Fitness expands number of UK gyms

Twenty-four hour gym franchise Snap Fitness has lodged an application with the Harborough District Council to open a gym in the town centre, as it expands its franchise in the UK.

The US-based company, founded in 2003, established its first UK gym in Sittingbourne

last June, followed by a second facility in Milton Keynes the following month.

Further locations are planned for London, Leicester, Swanley, Corby and Edgware. Snap Fitness has 2,200 locations worldwide. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=pom4S>

## Matrix's contract with The Gym Group extended

Budget gym operator The Gym Group and Johnson Health Tech (JHT) have signed a three-year extension that will see Matrix Fitness equipment installed in all of The Gym Group's new UK clubs.

The partnership will include 16 Gym Group sites set to open this year. Matrix has already kitted out the company's 32 existing sites. The Gym Group also said it had seen a record intake of new members at the start of 2013 - an increase of 15 per cent in total membership in clubs nationwide during the first two weeks of January. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V3x8p>



Mixed Martial Arts is 'exploding' in popularity

## Mixed Martial Arts gym opens in Swansea, Wales

Wales' biggest Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) gym has opened in Swansea this month, with a facility that can cater for up to 100 users at any one time.

Classes at the facility will be run by the Chris Rees Academy, which already has clubs in Swansea, Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Bridgend and more than 1,000 members.

An online MMA TV channel was also launched at the opening and is backed by entrepreneur Kevin Green - one of the UK's largest residential property landlords. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q7S4A>

## UKFN experiences highest membership in its history

Membership of the UK Fitness Network (UKFN) has reached 15,500 members, the highest since the scheme's formation in 2008. The initiative allows members of health clubs and leisure centres that are operated by leisure trusts to make use of facilities run by other trusts.

UKFN now covers almost 100 centres across the country in 26 local authority areas. The initiative was first launched as the London Fitness Network in 2004. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y7G3B>

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## ATTRACTIONS & MUSEUMS

### British Museum to feature its first Pompeii exhibition

The British Museum will present a major exhibition on the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum this spring, sponsored by investment bank Goldman Sachs.

It is the first ever exhibition held on the two cities at the British Museum, and the first such major exhibition in London for almost 40 years. Featuring more than 250 objects, it will have a unique focus, looking at the Roman home and the people who lived in these ill-fated cities. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=08z3x>



Eight galleries chronicle the town's history

### Medieval Irish castle opens following refurbishment

Ireland's 13th-century Athlone castle in West Meath, has undergone a €4.3m (£3.7m) renovation to become a leading tourist attraction. Funded by Fáilte Ireland and Athlone Town Council, the castle has recently reopened with eight galleries chronicling the history of the town.

Exhibits let visitors build a castle, try out medieval weapons, see what generals would have worn and experience a 360-degree projection of the Siege of Athlone. The centre was developed by Event Communications. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R8R9O>

### Mary Rose Trust secures final funds for museum

Public donations of £35,000 raised in just over a week mark the end of a £35m appeal to fund a new home for Tudor warship the Mary Rose in Portsmouth.

The museum was scheduled to open in autumn 2012 but a final fit out of interiors was to take longer than expected, and the attraction is now expected to open late spring. In addition to the restored ship, the boat-shaped museum will also showcase 19,000 artefacts associated with it. The museum is set to open late spring 2013. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G9OIS>

## £10m investment in Castle Hill

Dudley Council has shared its plans for the three attractions at Castle Hill with the public, following its submission of planning permission in January for the major redevelopment.

The £10m proposal for the Dudley Zoological Gardens, the Black Country Living Museum and the Dudley Canal Trust include a shared arrival point for visitors, a new entrance for each attraction and 600 new parking spaces and an upgraded car park.

During February's half term school holidays displays and dedicated staff were on hand at each venue to explain the proposed changes.

Council cabinet member for regeneration Shaukat Ali said the redevelopment would create jobs, stimulate tourism and bring more visitors to the area.



Dudley Zoo would get a new piazza entrance as part of the upgrade

"The three visitor attractions on Castle Hill all offer a distinct day out and what we as the council and the visitor attractions want to do is redevelop Castle Hill into a regional leisure and cultural destination that will collectively offer even more than it already does," Ali said. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=0joD>

## Duxford war museum plans £15m revamp

The Imperial War Museum Duxford, Cambridgeshire, has revealed details of £15m worth of investment to improve its visitor facilities, as it prepares for the 2018 centenary of the airfield it occupies.

The museum - home to aircraft, tanks, military vehicles and boats - attracts around 400,000 visitors annually and features the Battle of Britain exhibition, the American Air Museum, and AirSpace, which tells the history of aviation in Britain and the Commonwealth.

Plans for the museum include a £2.5m revamp of the American Air Museum in 2015-16, a new hangar where visitors can see aircraft conservation in action, the transformation of the unused officers' mess into offices and



A permanent exhibition about RAF Duxford's history opens this month

a £650,000 scheme to resurface the airfield's runway that hosts the museum's air shows. A spokesperson said many of the plans are long term and details are still being determined. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W3G1D>

## Oakwood reveals plans for magical-themed area

Wales' Oakwood Theme Park has revealed the first details of its new £4m family-themed attraction, which opens later this year.

The Pembrokeshire park is creating a magical-themed area with seven new rides and attractions; including a water slide, a series

of children's play areas, a pirate-themed water ride, a junior coaster, a mini galleon, a London taxi ride and an interactive walkthrough experience. Oakwood is Wales' biggest family adventure with more than 30 rides and experiences. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J8x7w>



## Scheme to boost cultural tourism

Arts Council England and VisitEngland have joined forces in order to boost cultural tourism across the country. As part of the new partnership, the two bodies have earmarked £3m worth of Arts Council Lottery funding, to be invested in supporting destinations that have "real potential to grow" and improve cultural tourism.

There will be a number of coordinated to encourage the development of arts and cultural experiences and targeted holiday packages for visitors that include cultural aspects as well as more traditional accommodation and transport elements.

Describing the partnership, culture secretary Maria Miller said: "Our country is renowned around the world as a top cultural tourist destination - with iconic heritage sites, museums



A total of £3m will be invested in supporting destinations across the UK

and theatres; the industry has a strong role to play in our economic growth.

"It makes sense that our cultural and tourist industries join forces, as in many cases they are two sides of the same coin."

To download the partnership statement (in PDF) form, visit <http://lei.sr?a=v8Ugi>

## Art exhibition opens at Scotland's Mining Museum

A new art exhibition has been opened at Scotland's National Mining Museum in Dalkeith, Midlothian.

Seams in the Dark was created by Scottish Bafta-nominated artist-in-residence Claire Lamond, in collaboration with young people

from around the Museum's home community of Newtongrange, Europe's biggest purpose-built 19th century pit village.

The exhibition portrays local life and is built around the exhibition's centrepiece - an animated film. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v7r1s>

## Visits to Scottish galleries increase 25%

National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) has experienced a 25 per cent increase of visitors during 2012 with three sites in Edinburgh attracting more than 1.6m people.

The highest previous figure for all three sites was recorded in 2006 with 1.56m. The results are, in part, due to the success of the opening of the refurbished Scottish National Portrait Gallery in December 2011.

Both of NGS's other sites in Edinburgh, the Scottish National Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art also saw a rise of 3.9 percent and 4.5 per cent respectively on the previous year.

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery saw 327,980 visitors in 2012, which was its first full year of opening after the renovation. This is a 39 per cent increase on the last full calendar year of figures in 2008 before it closed for the refurbishment in early 2009.

Highlights of the 2012 programme included the Van Gogh to Kandinsky exhibition at the



Three sites in Edinburgh alone attracted 1.6m visitors

Scottish National Gallery and the Picasso & Modern Britain show at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

John Leighton, director-general of NGS said: "Art and culture are becoming increasingly important for attracting visitors to Scotland." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Pov3l>

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## SPA

# UK's first Guerlain Spa unveiled

The UK's first Guerlain Spa has made its debut at The Caledonian, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Edinburgh.

The spa has three spacious treatment rooms offering treatments such as intensive, complete and radiance facials, body sublimation and harmonising massages.

A range of personalised treatments will be available using the Orchidée Impériale skin care range – a product line inspired by the longevity of the orchid.

Among the signature treatments is the 150-minute Orchidée Impériale Prestige, which includes a firming massage, repeated three times by alternating deep massage sequences with softer relaxing ones. This is followed by three different masks using products from the Orchidée Impériale range including the new Longevity



Facilities at the new Guerlain spa includes a luxury relaxation lounge

Concentrate. There will also be a range of spa treatments including facials to energizing the skin tailored to men.

Spa facilities include saunas, a steamroom, spa pools and a swimming pool. There will also be a gym with television equipped exercise machines. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z3ZoK>

## Mandarin to expand wellness facilities

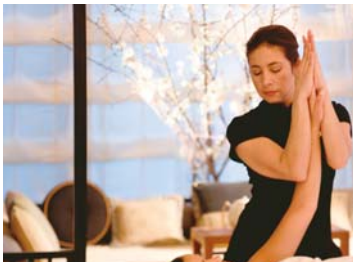
Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London is to unveil its new wellbeing and fitness facilities this summer with the opening of a swimming pool and fitness centre.

The new wellbeing and fitness space, designed by leading hospitality designer Adam D. Tihany, will include a 17m indoor swimming pool, internet stations and a modern fireplace.

The changing areas are set to house saunas, steamrooms, experience showers and a relaxation area.

Elsewhere, the fitness centre will feature Technogym wellness equipment along with Corian screens to create privacy.

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park has teamed up with the health and fitness consultancy,



Mandarin will team up with Sculpt to offer a range of wellness services

Sculpt, to offer visitors a full menu of wellness services. Sculpt's team of experts include personal trainers, nutritionists and a physio-therapist, who will look at lifestyle, nutrition and work life. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h5y3M>

## Wahanda reveals mobile booking site for spa goers

Online spa marketplace Wahanda has launched a new mobile booking site to allow 'on-the-go' customers to book health and beauty treatments easily and quickly.

The mobile-optimised site was launched in response to 43 per cent of Wahanda customers

using their mobile phone to search, view and book appointments. It allows the customer to log on to wahanda.com, select the preferred service and then takes the user through the site to search the desired location, date and time. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=lm1P>



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## Join us for The Big Conversation



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

In my first comment piece for this year I talked about the need for our industry to join together to invest in our best resource – our young people. Youth employment is one of the BHAs central campaign areas and our research shows that the industry has the potential to create over 200,000 jobs in the UK by 2015.

This is why I want to share some news about what The Big Conversation – an events-led initiative between senior leaders and young people. The concept was started by Business in the Community – one of the Prince of Wales's charities and it's aimed at promoting talent and skills leadership across every industry sector and every region of the UK. Together with the BHA, Patrick Dempsey, managing director of Whitbread's hotels and restaurants, is taking this initiative to our own industry and helping to lead the Big Conversation for hospitality jobs.

Patrick and I are challenging hospitality businesses to pledge to employ more young people aged between 18-24 years old. The Big Conversation for Hospitality Jobs provides a unique forum for industry leaders to meet directly with a group of young people to talk about tackling youth unemployment, the importance of work experience and apprenticeships.

Coupled with the Big Conversation, the recently signed agreement between the BHA, the Minister of State for Employment and the Department of Work & Pensions to 'better serve the needs of the hospitality sector while giving those people who wish to pursue a career in hospitality a recognized route into work' will be an important step in ensuring the industry receives the support needed from government to realise its full job creating potential.

By joining together, we can pledge thousands of new jobs for young people. The first of our Big Conversations is being held in London on 8th February. There are events being planned all around the UK between now and June. If your business can find just one or more work experience places, internships, apprenticeships or a new job for someone under the age of 25, please join the campaign and let us know: [pr@bha.org.uk](mailto:pr@bha.org.uk)

## HOTELS

### Sluggish start to 2013...

Poor weather and the timing of the New Year bank holiday have contributed to a sluggish January for the UK's hotels.

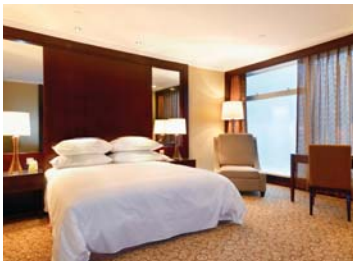
Preliminary figures reveal room yields in London fell by 5.6 per cent to £76.31, compared with £80.87 in January 2012. Occupancy also dropped from 72.0 per cent to 67.8 per cent.

In this period room rates only rose £112.27 to £112.49.

Outside the capital a 1.7 per cent drop in occupancy from 57.1 per cent to 56.2 per cent just outweighed a 1.7 per cent increase in room rate from £52.44 to £53.33.

Room yields declined only slightly from £29.99 a year ago to £29.96.

Partner for Hotel Consultancy Services at PKF, Robert Barnard, said: "The poor weather that much of the country experienced in January appears to have hit occupancy, and



Poor weather and ongoing economic uncertainties have hit the sector

there's very little that operators can do in the circumstances.

"The timing of the New Year bank holiday didn't help either, and effectively meant that the corporate market didn't restart until the second week of January." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m9L3p>

### ...but UK still most 'liquid hotel market' in Europe

The UK remains the most liquid hotel investment market in Western Europe, according to property adviser BNP Paribas Real Estate.

With 6bn euro (£5.2bn) invested during 2012, the hotel investment volume in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK suffered a

combined 5 per cent drop compared to the previous year. Looking ahead, Paribas predicts 2013 to see a similar reduction in overall volume. In a declining market, the UK continued to dominate the hotel investment market at 41 per cent of overall investment.

### Andy Murray buys luxury Scottish hotel

US Open and Olympic tennis champion Andy Murray has bought Cromlix House Hotel, near Dunblane, with plans to transform the Victorian mansion into a 15-room five star destination.

The hotel, which sits on 50-acres of woodland and garden, is scheduled to reopen next spring, in time for the 2014 Ryder Cup which is being staged a short drive away at Gleneagles.

Murray said: "By re-establishing Cromlix as a leading luxury hotel at the heart of the Dunblane community we will be able to attract new visitors to the area, create a number of new jobs and focus on supporting other businesses. I'm pleased to give something back to the community I grew up in."



The Victorian mansion is not far from Murray's hometown of Dunblane

The hotel will be managed by Inverloch Castle Management International, which is headed by entrepreneur Dr Sin Chai. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n6XoT>

## TOURISM

# Tourists spend £4.5bn on retail

Britain has been named as one of the most sought after destinations for international shoppers, with figures showing last year's 18m visitors spent £4.5bn on retail therapy during their stay.

The majority of the shopping spend was on clothes with £2.3bn spent on fashion, while souvenirs, gifts and household goods accounted for around £1.6bn.

Australians were the most likely to go shopping during their visit, while the biggest spenders were from the Gulf States (£442 per head), Nigeria (£432) and China (\$405).

Nearly 70 per cent of all female visitors and 50 per cent of inbound male tourists made sure they included shopping on their itinerary during a trip to the UK.

Britain ranked favourably against France and on par with Italy for value for money.

Chief executive of VisitBritain Sandie Dawe said: "It's not just purchasing designer goods



London has been recognised as one of the world's top shopping spots

at Harrods, or rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous on Chelsea's King's Road that lure visitors to the UK – a huge number also make the trip to seek out bargains."

A survey of respondents from 19 countries revealed a fifth rated shopping at Harrods as one of their top three 'only in Britain' dream holiday activities. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z8Y4b>

## Seaside towns get £16m cash boost

Seaside towns around the UK are to receive a cash boost for projects that bring new leisure and business opportunities to coastal communities.

Twenty seaside projects have been given grants of up to £2.6m each from the Coastal Communities Fund. The money will support projects such as rejuvenating old heritage and leisure facilities, schemes to provide skills training and advice to help businesses embrace digital technology. The £16m fund is raised from the Crown Estate's marine assets and reinvested in coastal areas. Communities secretary Eric Pickles said: "It's a missed opportunity if we don't tap into the huge potential our coastal towns have to welcome new industries and to diversify their economies so they can become year-round success stories."

"We've seen enormous enthusiasm for this government fund and had to make some difficult choices but the projects we've chosen will create thousands of jobs and help many start-up businesses."



The money will go towards projects to diversify coastal economies

Projects that will receive the funding include £500,000 for the Morecambe Bay Partnership, Morecambe Bay Partnership, Cumbria County Council to enhancing the area as a tourism destination.

Cable and Wireless Porthcurno and Collections Trust, Cornwall will receive £149,587 to develop the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum/Porthcurno Telegraph Museum to include a learning centre and new galleries. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M1FiO>

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The council will consider the Mulberry Place plans

## Daventry town centre to receive £50m revamp

Plans for a new £50m leisure and retail development – designed by architects Marchini Curran Associates (MCA) – are to be considered by Daventry District Council (DDC).

Developer Henry Boot said the Mulberry Place development in Daventry town centre would include 100,000sq ft of town centre retail and leisure space, a six-screen cinema, together with an 80,000 sq ft food store and 40,000 sq ft of bulky goods on an edge of town centre site.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q5h1S>

## Nottingham applies to demolish turkish baths

Nottingham City Council has granted permission for the demolition of the city's former Turkish Baths, built in 1928, to make way for a new link road.

The application for demolition has now been referred to the secretary of state for a decision, with work to start in summer if it is given the go ahead. The baths are currently vacant but had been part of the Victoria Leisure Centre before its £9m refurbishment completed in 2012 as part of a wider investment in local facilities.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V4b00>

## Populous wins contract for French rugby stadium

UK-based Olympic stadium designers Populous have been selected to design the new French national stadium of rugby by the French Rugby Federation (FFR).

Grand Stade FFR stadium, which is being developed by Paris-based architects Ateliers 2/3/4, will have a capacity of 82,000.

Construction work will commence in 2015 with the project expected to be complete by the end of 2017. The FFR plans for the venue to host 17-20 events a year, including five to six games of the French national rugby team.

## Loudoun's £300m conversion to golf resort

Plans have been unveiled to turn the former Loudoun Castle theme park site in East Ayrshire, Scotland, into an environmentally-friendly, £300m golf resort.

Project management company Vicon UK has joined forces with investor FML to launch the ambitious master-plan, which proposes a world class championship standard 18-hole golf course, club house and educational golf academy as well as a new whisky distillery, homes, retail and a food and drink 'centre of excellence' for the site. The 19th-century Loudon Castle itself is set to be redeveloped as a luxury hotel.

Kilmarnock-based Thomson Architects have been appointed to create the blueprint for the site. It is anticipated the development will be powered by clean renewable energy. As



Thomson Architects will help redevelop the castle as a luxury hotel

part of the planning application, a renewable energy plant is proposed for the site, which will take the form of a district heating system incorporating PV solar systems and, potentially, a biomass plant.

Loudoun Castle theme park, which first opened in 1995, closed its doors at the end of the summer season in 2010.

## Tonbridge project moves forward

Tonbridge is one step closer to getting a new leisure and community centre, shops and a cinema for its town centre, with the council signing a legal agreement with Sainsbury's for the redevelopment.

The purpose of the regeneration is to stimulate the town's economic vitality, attracting new retailers to the area and shoppers back to the city centre, creating new jobs in the process. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Sainsbury's will develop and submit detailed designs by summer.

The council is currently undertaking a survey of leisure activities available in the town to determine what else the town needs, with core elements in the new centre expected to include gym and fitness facilities and a multi-use space for dance, meetings and events.



Sainsbury's will provide an upgraded supermarket and more shops

Pending planning approval construction will begin on the leisure centre at the end of the year and take about 18 months to complete.

The council said the location of the leisure and community centre will be in close proximity to the town centre and transport links.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z8T8I>

## Berwick Rangers FC consider building new stadium

Scottish Football League team Berwick Rangers FC has commissioned a feasibility study into building a new stadium, which would see the club move from its existing venue in Northumberland, located by the English-Scottish border.

The club is said to be negotiating the possible purchase of land nearby, also in Tweedmouth, which architecture and design firm Frank Whittle Partnership (FWP) has been commissioned to complete a stadium feasibility study for. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=BoEii>

## The Leisure Property Forum



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## Lease Opportunity for Saltdean Lido

**Brighton & Hove City Council** is offering an exciting and truly unique opportunity to lease one of the most iconic lidos in the country.

The Grade II\* listed property, located on the outskirts of the vibrant seaside city of Brighton & Hove is considered to be one of the finest examples of modernist architecture and currently consists of an outdoor pool, library and large community facilities.

The council wish to adopt a flexible approach to securing a new leaseholder and are keen to discuss with interested parties proposals that seek to secure the future of this important community facility. The council is open to considering alternative uses of the existing building to ensure long-term viability.

**For more information please register on the South East Business Portal [www.businessportal.southeastiep.gov.uk](http://www.businessportal.southeastiep.gov.uk) after which you will be able to express interest in this opportunity.**

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## Safety qualification for wellness industry

Sector skills body Habia has developed a new qualification in health and safety to help spa operators and salon owners, managers and industry professionals stay on top of UK and EU law. The Level 2 Award in Health and Safety for the Salon Environment, developed in partnership with Awarding Organisation VTCT, is aimed at anyone working in a spa or salon environment.

The qualification can be delivered in just one day and three courses have so far been arranged for April, May and June at Habia's offices in Yorkshire.

Habia plans to take it on the road with courses across the UK by offering employers – or groups of employers – who can gather at least 12 delegates the chance to have Habia deliver the qualification on their own premises. Habia is the government approved standards setting body for spa, hair, beauty and nails, and creates the standards that form the basis of all qualifications.



The award is for anyone working in the spa sector

The not-for-profit Habia is part of the sector skills council for leisure, SkillsActive Group, which is licensed by the UK government. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r7e2X>

## The Big Conversation



**SAM COULSTOCK** is careers director of The Springboard Charity and Springboard UK

The Big Hospitality Conversation is a joint initiative between Springboard, The Prince of Wales's Charity Business in the Community and the British Hospitality Association (BHA). It brings together influential industry leaders from the top hospitality businesses with young people to stimulate an important dialogue on employability skills, work experience and apprenticeships. The purpose is to understand the business case for each as well as the drivers for young people; to identify opportunities and barriers; to make introductions to the workplace meaningful, relevant and inspiring; and, most importantly, to explore prospects for employment.

So why is this important? Youth unemployment is at a high level, yet there is a wealth of talent and potential waiting to be tapped; the UK 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. 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. Springboard's latest research *Young People's Perceptions to Hospitality as a Career Choice and the Factors Affecting Career Choice* showed that work experience remained the single most important factor influencing career choice – but that not all work experience was good.

It is vital that the industry offers more and better quality work experience opportunities to convert this potential. This is why Springboard developed the INSPIRE Quality Standard to help businesses create and deliver the best work experiences which nurture young people into employment.

The Big Conversation road shows are taking place across the country. Find out more at [www.springboarduk.net](http://www.springboarduk.net)

## ASA to improve management software

Representatives from five leisure organisations have met with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and technology firm Cap2 as part of plans to improve the ASA approved learn to swim programme management software, CoursePro.

CoursePro, developed by Cap2, is a software programme designed initially for swimming pool management, enabling pool-side administration using an iPod as well as course co-ordination, reporting and parental interaction via a 'HomePortal'.

Each of the five operators who took part in the consultation – DC Leisure, SLM, Leisure Connection, Fusion Lifestyle and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham – use the software. Ross McCaw, founder of Cap2 Solutions, said: "It was a really useful



The software is initially programmed for swimming pool management

think tank session. The operators are all using CoursePro, through a range of providers, and so were able to give valuable feedback.

"We want to work on all of their suggestions, but have taken the top 10 for now, for further investigation and progression," added McCaw. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=xoF4Y>

## Premier Training launches its first international venue

UK-based health and fitness education provider, Premier Training International, has announced plans to open its first international venue in Dubai next month.

The Fidelity Fitness Club at Al Fatten Tower, which launched in 2011, will now

offer Premier Training's Level 2 Certificate in Fitness Instructing, with courses starting from 15 March. The course aims to provide learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully instruct and manage safe exercise. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f9D2l>

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Director of Sport and Physical Activity, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland  
Leisure Account Manager, Brenntag UK and Ireland, Home Based - Covering London / South, UK  
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General Manager, Openwide International, Norfolk, UK  
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Director - Experience Oxfordshire, Experience Oxfordshire, Oxford, UK  
Deputy Manager, Chichester Racquets and Fitness Club, Chichester, UK  
Membership Sales Advisor, *energie group*, Harrow, UK  
Spa Manager, Renfrewshire Leisure Limited, Paisley, UK  
Sports Centre Manager (Maternity Cover), The Oratory School, Reading, UK  
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Fitness Manager, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland, UK  
Duty Manager Dry Side Activities, Purbeck District Council, Dorset, UK  
Duty Manager (x2), Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK  
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Membership Sales Manager, Fusion, Braintree / Witham / Halstead, UK  
Senior Activity Instructors x2, Finesse Leisure Partnership, Welwyn Garden City, UK  
General Manager, Finesse Leisure Partnership, Welwyn Garden City, UK  
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As Spa Manager you will have a proven track record in the recruitment, training and development of a team of therapists. You will be able to motivate team members and colleagues, maintaining agreed standards of product delivery and constantly exceeding customer expectations. You will also be experienced in managing Spa finances and other performance targets and be able to work to agreed revenue targets and deadlines; maximising sales opportunities and managing stock levels.

The Spa Manager must be able to demonstrate effective organisational and communication skills and be able to deal effectively and professionally with guests and colleagues at every level. As Spa Manager you must be prepared to drive the business forward. You will be a proactive member of the management team and assist in developing and promoting events and activities to generate revenue and promote retention.

You must have a Beauty/Spa Therapy qualification to NVQ Level 3 or equivalent, have proven experience of working in a similar environment; supervising and leading operational teams; have a First Aid qualification and working knowledge of health and safety.

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Please apply via e-mail to Diane Kay, Director of Sales & Marketing at [diane.kay@reebokclub.co.uk](mailto:diane.kay@reebokclub.co.uk) with an up to date CV and cover letter



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Over the past 11 years we have experienced significant growth. IL now has 160 staff and a turnover of £5.5m.

The portfolio of facilities managed by IL include 3 swimming pools, 1 leisure complex including ice rink, 5 fitness gyms, 3 sports centres, indoor bowling centre, outdoor pitches, 3 town halls and 15 community facilities with attendances of over 1.2m per annum.

Our Chief Executive is retiring shortly and we are now looking for a suitably qualified individual with an appropriate mix of skills, experience and commitment to lead IL through the next stage of our development.

As our Chief Executive you will already be an inspirational leader, used to guiding and influencing a business. You will bring strategic, strong and clear leadership, defined by taking action, accepting responsibility, making decisions, advancing agendas, empowering and motivating our employees. You will continue to improve and develop our services over the coming decade, working closely with our partners and stakeholders.

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For further information and to apply for this position please visit our jobs page at [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/inverclyde](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/inverclyde) you are now looking to apply using this website or require further assistance please contact 01475 712740

Closing date for applications: Monday 11th March 2013.

Interviews currently scheduled for Monday 18th March 2013.

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The Celtic Manor Resort are looking for passionate, enthusiastic, experienced and ambitious Spa Therapists/Senior Therapists who are looking for their ultimate challenge.

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**Visit [celtic-manor.com](http://celtic-manor.com) for more information**





## Sixth Center Parcs to open in 2014

Construction work of Center Parcs' new £250m village in Bedfordshire is on schedule for a spring 2014 opening.

The company has now revealed the artist's impressions and a 3D 'fly through' video of the Woburn Forest site, which will be Center Parcs' fifth UK village.

The holiday village will comprise 625 forest lodges, a 75 bedroom hotel and an Aqua Sana-branded spa with six associated spa suites and two leisure buildings including indoor sports facilities, a "subtropical swimming paradise", restaurants and retail outlets.

It will also include outdoor sports and leisure facilities and a lake. Bookings for the new site open this summer. Martin Dalby, CEO of



A 75-room hotel and an Aqua Sana spa with six suites will also feature

Center Parcs UK, said: "Despite bad weather conditions, the team has worked hard to ensure we're on track to open to guests in spring 2014. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y9n5Y>

## Sheffield's Motorpoint Arena set for major revamp

Plans for a multi-million pound refurbishment of Sheffield's Motorpoint Arena have been unveiled. Work has already begun on the first stage of the project, which will see the installation of a new roof for the first time since the venue opened in 1991.

The second phase is expected to begin later this year and will include the removal of the arena's 12,500 seats, which will be replaced with more modern seating. There will also be an increased focus on making the venue more sustainable. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r3y3R>

## Eventbrite partners with Facebook

Ticketing website Eventbrite has announced it has partnered with Facebook following the social network's introduction of a "Buy Tickets" button on its event pages.

Previously event organisers creating a Facebook event could only provide a URL to their preferred ticketing provider, but the new button provides this link instead, giving it more prominence on the event page.

The button does not yet allow transactions to happen direct through the event page but takes users to a third party website.

Eventbrite stated via its blog it has long regarded Facebook as a powerful way for event organisers to promote their events and sell a large number of tickets.

Event organisers can create a Facebook event themselves and direct users to Eventbrite to purchase tickets, or create an event via



The new service aims to make buying tickets easier

Eventbrite and publish it to Facebook with the "Buy Tickets" button in a one-click process.

The ticket-purchasing feature is currently only available to events that have been created by a Facebook Page rather than by individual users. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L7Q8o>

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■ Institute of Hospitality +44 (0)20 8661 4900

[www.instituteofhospitality.org.uk](http://www.instituteofhospitality.org.uk)

■ LPF +44 (0)1462 471932

[www.leisurepropertyforum.org](http://www.leisurepropertyforum.org)

■ Natural England +44 (0)845 600 3078

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

■ 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 and Recreation Alliance

+44 (0)20 7976 3900

[www.sportandrecreation.org.uk](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk)

■ Sport England +44 (0)8458 508 508

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

■ Springboard +44 (0)20 7529 8610

[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)

■ ukactive +44 (0)20 7420 8560

[www.ukactive.org.uk](http://www.ukactive.org.uk)

■ 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)