After two years’ construction and 10 years’ conception, the UK’s fifth Center Parcs resort will open at Woburn Forest on Friday 6 June.

The Blackstone Group-owned resort operator has confirmed the launch date for the £250m complex, which will feature 625 lodges, a 75-bedroom hotel, Center Parcs’ largest Subtropical Swimming Paradise and an Aqua Sana spa. As at other Center Parcs sites, the new resort will feature a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities and a broad selection of sports.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=M8J5V

Woburn Center Parcs opening date revealed

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Paramount’s £2bn Kent theme park moves forward

A major £2bn theme park development near Ebbsfleet in Kent, has been deemed a project of national significance by the government, clearing a pathway for faster development of the scheme.

Paramount Pictures theme park is the first leisure development to be considered under the scheme, which has typically been used for power regeneration projects, plus major transport and infrastructure upgrades.

Dartford and Gravesham borough councils have already voiced support for the project, which could create up to 27,000 jobs.

“The Secretary of State considers this proposal would be likely to have significant economic impact, be important in driving growth in the economy, and that it would also have an impact on an area wider than a single local authority area,” said a statement from the Department of Communities and Local Government. “The Secretary of State also considers that the substantial physical size of the proposal is relevant to his decision that this project is of national and substantial significance.”

Planned for 2018, the Paramount Pictures-branded resort will be at the heart of the 872 acre (1.3sq m, 3.5sq km) site – to be built on what is currently a brownfield site in the Swanscombe Peninsula. It will be one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe and among the four largest theme parks anywhere in the world.

Plans include an indoor water park, as well as theatres, music venues, attractions, restaurants, and hotel developments. London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) – the company behind the proposed development – has signed an agreement with Paramount Pictures, to give exclusive UK licensing for a Paramount entertainment resort at the heart of the site. Details: http://lei.sr?a=M3T4W

Sports Direct in gym market negotiations

Sports Direct International – the company founded by Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley – is considering a high-profile arrival in the health clubs sector with the acquisition of up to 33 LA fitness sites, according to reports.

Sports Direct confirmed it was in talks over the move, which if successful, would see it follow retail rivals JD Sports into the gym market. The latter launched its first club at a former Fitness First site in Hull earlier this year.

Leases for the 33 sites were put up for sale by LA fitness in March as part of a restructuring plan to reduce debt. It is not yet known how the sites would be branded or operated under any deal with Sports Direct.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=D7M3k
Small increase in number of female leaders

There has been a small increase in the percentage of women occupying roles on England’s sports governing bodies (NGB), according to the latest Trophy Women report published by the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF).

Last year, Sport England introduced new governance guidelines for NGBs, stating that boards should comprise at least 25 per cent women by the year 2017.

The report shows 23 of the 45 NGBs surveyed for the report currently meet the target. Despite the increase, Ruth Holdaway, CEO of WSFF, said there’s a long way to go to ensure women are fairly represented at the top level.

“I find it shocking that in 2014, we still have so few women in leadership positions in sport,” she said. “Reaching a 30 per cent diversity threshold for NGB boards by 2017 is still entirely possible. There is a wide and varied pool of talented women out there who are actively seeking these sorts of roles.

“NoGBs have no excuse, and are missing out by being so male dominated at the highest levels. We want to see this change, and fast – and we will continue through the Women’s Sport Network and other means to support NGBs and the women who serve on their Boards.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=a3C2G

English Heritage rejects stadium plea

An application to list Bristol Rovers’ stadium as a war memorial has been rejected by English Heritage.

The club is planning to sell off the stadium, which will be turned into a supermarket, to finance the £40m purchase of a new home ground.

There has been significant opposition to the proposed ground switch by a small group of protesters, with a legal battle over Sainsbury’s plans to redevelop Horfield, allowing Bristol Rovers to build a new 21,700 seat stadium in nearby Frenchay.

The large gates to the stadium, which date to 1921, are currently listed by English Heritage. They include inscriptions which pay tribute to the rugby and football players of Bristol who served during both World Wars and say the ground is a memorial to them.

Campaigners argue the entire ground should be officially recognised as a war memorial but English Heritage has advised the ground does not have the architectural or historic interest to merit listing it.

A Bristol Rovers fans’ petition in support of a Sainsbury’s supermarket at the Memorial Stadium in Horfield has now topped the 12,000 mark, while a legal challenge against the supermarket from the pressure group TRASHorfield is proving a stumbling block for the proposed development.

Bristol Rovers has already been given planning permission by South Gloucestershire Council to proceed with its new stadium development, designed by Arturus Architects, in Frenchay.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Z8D9k

The club already has planning permission for the proposed new stadium

Female sporting success is still lagging at NGB board level

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Details: http://lei.sr?a=a3C2G
Man City’s stadium plans revealed

New images have been released to show how Manchester City’s Etihad Stadium will look once the 6,000-seat stadium expansion is fully completed.

City gained planning permission in February to extend the stadium capacity, with engineering firm Laing O’Rourke overseeing the construction project.

An integrated Laing O’Rourke Group team is carrying out the expansion – work began at the start of April. Interesting aspects of the new pictures include versatile signage on the stadium facades and some interior shots.

The extension works, designed by architects Populous, are expected to cost £50m and will be undertaken in two phases. The work will result in the venue having a capacity of 60,000 (up from the current 48,000) - making it the second largest in the English Premier League. The first phase of construction, which will be completed in time for the 2015-16 season, will see the South Stand expanded by around 6,000 seats. The second and final phase, features development of the North Stand.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H8Y5B

Derelict Welsh lido gets £6.3m revival

Work has started on the £6.3m transformation of a derelict lido in Pontypridd, Wales, which will be transformed into a state-of-the-art swimming facility.

The Grade-II listed lido was originally built in 1927 and was forced to close in 1991 after it fell into a state of disrepair. Now, more than 20 years later, it will be reborn, attracting a forecasted tens of thousands of people every year.

The new outdoor facility would be open around four to five months of the year and would include three heated pools, changing blocks and a new café.

“The refurbished lido will create a regional tourist attraction bringing tens of thousands of visitors to Pontypridd,” said Rhondda Cynon Taf council leader Anthony Christopher. “It will also create jobs directly in the lido itself, and have economic benefits for local businesses.” The complex was originally the training pool for Jenny James, the first woman to swim the English Channel in 1951.

The project is receiving £3m in Welsh government funding, £2.3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £900,000 from Rhondda Cynon Taf council, and £100,000 from Welsh heritage body Cadw. Work is due to be completed in summer 2015. Details: http://lei.sr?a=S5f2v

£4m Active Clubs grant scheme launched for Northern Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland has launched a new £4m funding programme aimed at increasing membership numbers at sports clubs.

Clubs, organisations and governing bodies will be able to apply for grants from the National Lottery-funded Active Clubs initiative, which will run for the next four years (until 2018). The scheme will provide support, development courses and capacity building to sports clubs and assist with developing new and innovative initiatives aimed at increasing membership numbers. Details: http://lei.sr?a=j759k

Outdoor activity tourism accounts for 10% of Welsh tourism

Outdoor activity tourism accounts for 10 per cent, or £481m, of Wales’ tourism economy, according to Welsh government figures.

Outdoor activity tourism also supports 8,243 jobs, with the survey including outdoor activity businesses as well as those which take part in Welsh outdoor sports such as climbing, watersports, airsports and rambling. The findings suggested that 54 per cent of businesses surveyed thought awareness of outdoor activities in Wales has increased over the past three years, with new high profile activities such as Surf Snowdonia and new mountain biking facilities getting large media exposure.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=V5G7

£60m Queen’s Park project gains planning permission

Westminster Council has granted planning permission for Willmott Dixon to build a £60m mixed-use development, with £20m of the funds going towards new leisure facilities in west London’s Queen’s Park.

Under the deal, the construction firm will demolish two existing sites – Moberly and Jubilee sports centres – to make way for a new centre, expected to reduce annual operating costs by around £600,000 a year.

It will feature a 25m six-lane swimming pool, a health and fitness suite, three exercise and dance studios, a boxing hall, eight-court sports hall and a café, as well as an additional smaller community sports facility.

Richard Barker, Westminster Council’s director of sport and leisure, said: “This decision means we can now build the new facilities which I hope will encourage more people in Queen’s Park to take up sporting activity, and help improve their health.”

Construction will begin at Moberly sports centre in Q3 of 2014, with work expected to be complete by 2016, before building then begins on the community facility.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H8Y5B
CRACKNELL: TIME FOR ACTIVITY RETHINK

The health and fitness industry should be focusing on how people can squeeze time for exercise into their lives, as opposed to purely telling people why physical activity is important, according to Health Club Management editor Kate Cracknell.

“‘I’m starting to wonder if – although there must be an element of ‘why’ in our public-facing messages – the focus should be as much on the ‘how,’” Cracknell wrote in her leader column for the latest edition of HCM magazine.

“How can people squeeze activity into their time and cash-strapped days? That’s the key: making daily activity seem easily and enjoyably achievable. And where it starts is with a simple question: can you limit your sitting and sleeping to just 23 and a half hours a day?”

The idea of pushing ‘how’ exercise can be more attractive to the public has become more pertinent in recent months given the proposition of a National Action Plan supported by the three main political parties to help drive physical activity as a lifelong habit.

One such way of achieving this could be a focus on pushing early access to positive experiences in sport and activity play, she suggests. Details: http://lei.sr?a=qsT6U

SIBEC 2014: INDUSTRY DATA USE ‘APPALLING’

The health and fitness industry is “close to appalling” at how it uses data to justify its efficacy and benefits.

This was the view of ukactive CEO David Stalker, who chaired a panel discussion at the SIBEC UK 2014 networking event held at The Belfry.

He said the industry is slowly getting better at utilising data, but claimed there are only three pieces of research in the world outlining physical activity’s effectiveness in a consumer environment.

Stalker added that the industry would need to make significant improvements if it was to present physical activity as a viable alternative to medication, saying that the pharmaceutical industry spends an estimated £2.4bn a year on lobbying in the EU alone. He put it to the panel that evidence-based arguments are essential in challenging the traditional roles of “pharma giants.”

Birmingham City Council’s BeActive scheme had made use of deprivation data combined with its own findings, said Rachel Gomm, with this information then analysed in conjunction with Birmingham University. “As a result, we’ve been able to establish that every £1 spent on physical activity promotion, leads to £23 in healthcare related benefits for the locals authority.”

Everyone Active’s Michelle Dand noted that the health and fitness industry’s fledgling push into the public health sector brings with it a unique set of challenges. Data has to be results-oriented, she added, and there are confidentiality issues with patient health records that also need to be taken into consideration by operators. Details: http://lei.sr?a=TjS8k

TRX Launches Ex-Military Exclusive Training Course

TRX is to unleash its advanced-ability FORCE Level 2 education and training programme on the UK consumer market, having previously operated the course exclusively for the British military.

The course provides trainers with high-level TRX coaching and techniques to give clients results through driven workouts and the most recent science of functional training for tactical athletes. The Level 2 course delves deeper into the foundational movements of suspension training and features new exercises that were developed directly from work TRX undertook with thousands of service members of the armed forces worldwide. Details: http://lei.sr?a=U5E4y

The Gym Group Appoints New Chief Operating Officer

Jim Graham has joined budget operator The Gym Group as chief operating officer.

Graham’s appointment came in April after leaving Phoenix Equity Partners, the group’s majority shareholder, where he has advised the management teams of a range of Phoenix investments, including The Gym Group.

Prior to joining the private equity industry, Graham was managing director of Orange’s 10 million customer, £1.1bn turnover, pay-as-you-go mobile business and also worked as a management consultant as well as an engineer in the Royal Navy.

In his spare time, Graham is a committed long-distance triathlete and has competed in a total of seven Ironman races, including the World Championships in Hawaii.

“As an investor, Jim has a detailed understanding of our business and a natural affinity with our proposition,” said The Gym Group CEO John Treharne. He joins the fast expanding gym chain at an exciting time. A merger with Pure Gym is currently pending regulatory approval, with Graham to become commercial director if it goes through. Details: http://lei.sr?a=D7Mrt

Graham is also a competitive triathlete

Cracknell says more talk is needed on ‘how’ people can exercise more

Stalker called for more activity data to build a better evidence base

SIBEC 2014: Industry data use ‘appalling’
Studio saddles up for cycle workouts

London’s cycle-focused health club craze shows no signs of abating, with Richmond’s new pay-as-you-go studio CychoCycle the latest opening.

The indoor cycling studio follows the footsteps of recent high-profile debutants Psycle and Athlete Lab as evidence that workouts on wheels are in no danger of hitting the skids.

Situated on Mortlake High Street, the studio runs heart rate monitored classes for complete beginners to elite cyclists, using Keiser M3 Bikes.

The newly-renovated site is a five-minute walk from Mortlake station and studio director Sara Spencer sees commuters as being a key market.

Pay-as-you-go online booking enable clients to pick and choose visits, while the classes are broad in scope, ranging from endurance/fat burning through to strength and power, as well as hill climbing and interval training.

All bookings are taken online and classes become cheaper the more they are purchased to encourage customer loyalty. Riders can obtain their own Polar heart monitor at a reduced price or if they have no monitor they will be able to borrow a Polar heart rate monitor to wear for each class. Live streamed heart rates will appear on large screens allowing riders to monitor their progress and ensure instructors are teaching to each rider’s individual target zone.

Individual workout and performance summaries will be emailed to each rider at the end of every class. Riders who buy the Polar kit can monitor follow their improving fitness on the free App.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=S3R4g

Cardiff council mulls leisure operator options

Cardiff Council is exploring new ways to operate its leisure centres and two major cultural venues as it seeks to reduce the £8m paid last year in subsidies for the public facilities.

The authority announced in February it could no longer afford to subsidise the New Theatre and St David’s Hall, as well as its leisure facilities, and now wants to explore its options by going out to market.

St David’s is the Welsh national concert hall, while the New Theatre remains a popular venue, with the two sites having a combined economic impact of £38m a year on Cardiff, according to the council. It says the city’s leisure facilities attracted 2.2 million people in 2013/14.

A report by sports and leisure consultancy Max Associates commissioned by the council in January concluded private sector partners or established trusts may be the best option.

The council is currently looking at several possibilities, including social enterprises, not-for-profit trusts, commercial management contractors or staff mutuals, and has reportedly already had significant interest.

If new leisure centre partners are found, the council wants them in place by next summer.

According to local press, at a pre-scrutiny meeting on the proposals, councillor Peter Bradbury said: “We want to see what level of savings we can get from the market, what degree of control we could have and how our staff would be treated. We’ve seen positive examples of what we’re trying to do in other authorities. Only 28 per cent of leisure facilities in the UK are in-house. We are very much not the norm.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=C3gsQ

ARK Leisure founders start ‘Dragons’ Den-like’ venture

Andy Kay and Mhairi FitzPatrick, the pair behind ARK Leisure and London’s 37° health clubs, have launched new leisure-focused funding venture Socius Investing.

“Bearing a passing resemblance to Dragon’s Den,” Socius sees Kay and FitzPatrick investing money for an equity stake in a business, working with owners to change strategy and see accelerated growth.

“Our focus is on the leisure sector because that’s where our experience and know-how lies,” said FitzPatrick. “It would be far too grand to liken us to Dragons – we do invest our own cash but most importantly bring expertise backed up by considerable experience.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=y3z4W

Technogym lands Glasgow 2014 supplier contract

Technogym has today been announced as the official fitness equipment supplier for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Technogym equipment will be on hand at fitness centres in the Athletes’ Village, which will be home to 6,500 athletes and team officials from the 71 competing nations and territories during the Games. The Italian equipment provider will work with Glasgow Life to ensure the installations run smoothly, giving athletes access to a vital tool through-out their pre-competition regimen.

This announcement comes as little surprise, given that Technogym has been favoured as the official equipment supplier to the last five Olympic Games.

“It is vital for our competing athletes to have access to the highest quality training equipment within the multiple Village fitness centres,” commented the chief executive of Glasgow 2014 David Grevemberg.

“We are delighted to have the experience of Technogym as part of the set-up to galvanise and support the participating teams as they aspire to new achievements this year.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=g8c9H

Live streamed heart rates appear on large screens during classes

The Italian equipment provider won out again

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BUILDING BETTER SPORTS AND PLAY
Music heritage worth extra £4bn

Cashing in on the tourism possibilities provided by music stars like David Bowie, The Beatles and the Arctic Monkeys could raise an additional £4bn for the UK economy, according to research in a new report.

*IMAGINE*, a study by industry lobby group UK Music, claims that if UK cities could replicate Liverpool’s success of harnessing The Beatles brand with attractions dedicated to their own homegrown stars, the potential for inbound tourism from across the world would be enormous.

Liverpool has been a standard bearer with popular attractions like ‘The Beatles Story’ and ‘The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour’. Each year The Beatles and their music heritage generate £70m for Liverpool’s local economy.

The report cites the example of Hull – which will soon follow Liverpool’s lead in becoming the City of Culture in 2017 – where the city’s Museum of Club Culture, hosted a temporary exhibition celebrating David Bowie’s alter ego Ziggy Stardust. Ziggy’s backing band – the Spiders from Mars – were from Hull and the resulting attraction drew 90,000 visitors to the City, all of whom added to the local economy.

“Music tourism is big business, with millions of pounds spent getting closer to the music we love,” said UK Music CEO Jo Dipple.

“Our recommendations are designed to help local and central government provide a framework for a vibrant music destination economy. We want to inspire local authorities in order to make the most of the music heritage that is sitting on their doorstep.”

The report contains suggestions for Sheffield to capitalise on the popularity of local acts like the Arctic Monkeys and Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker. It also cites the success of the Coventry Music Museum, which is attracting visitors from Japan, Australia, Malaysia and the USA.

Ed Vaizey, who is the government’s creative industries minister added: “The huge financial contribution made to the UK economy by the millions of music tourists to the UK annually makes it very clear that when combined, the music and tourism industries are powerful drivers for economic growth.”

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=r9y7E](http://lei.sr?a=r9y7E)

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London pips Paris as top tourist destination

London has beaten off Paris to claim the title of most popular city with foreign tourists in the world, with the latest figures showing that a stellar 2013 propelled it to the number one spot in the chart.

According to data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the UK’s capital attracted 16.8 million visitors in 2013, with their combined spending topping £11.2bn.

The amount spent by overseas visitors to London has almost doubled in the past decade, driven by significant growth in the booming Asian, South American and Middle Eastern travel markets.

Paris was previously the most visited city in the world, but the 15.7 million trips it hosted in 2012 (the most recently published data) have now been eclipsed by this latest boost for British tourism.

2013 had already marked a record year for the UK overall, with 32.9 million overseas visitors reaching British shores, according to ONS figures released in February this year.

“Every single nation across Britain has seen an uplift in visitor numbers and, more importantly, there have been substantial increases in spending for one of Britain’s largest export industries,” said Christopher Rodrigues, VisitBritain chair.

“These strong results underpin the forecast that inbound tourism will continue to grow by over six per cent a year across the rest of this decade.”

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=U4bg5a](http://lei.sr?a=U4bg5a)
Birmingham Sea Life Centre welcomes new penguins

Birmingham’s National Sea Life Centre has opened its new attraction – Penguin Ice Adventure – featuring a colony of 12 endangered Gentoo penguins for the aquarium.

The penguins, flown in from Auckland, New Zealand, are situated at the entrance to the aquarium and are the first animals to greet guests as they enter the facility. The birds offer an energetic show to visitors, diving in and out of water up to 450 times a day and playfully moving rocks around the habitat.

The area offers several different perspectives on the den, with platforms both above and underwater as well as an area to teach guests how to ‘walk like a penguin.’

Penguin Ice Adventure has been five years in the making, according to Sea Life staff. Details: http://lei.sr?a=X6S2Z

Welsh WW2 secret comms site could become museum

A campaign has been launched in Wales to transform one of Britain’s top-secret strategic outposts from World War II and the cold war into a museum attraction.

Criggion station near Welshpool in Powys, Wales has been shrouded in mystery for much of its existence, but the remote naval communications hub is said to have sent the order for the sinking of Germany’s prized naval vessel The Bismark. In its heyday, the station comprised 160 staff, three 700ft-high radio masts and three 600 ft-high towers. It was heavily-guarded with security and surveillance, but has fallen into decay since the masts were destroyed in 2003.

But now a campaign led by Powys councillor Graham Brown is bidding to transform the site into a national museum.

“You would not believe what went on in these buildings that were linked up to Hawaii and Colorado,” he told Wales Online.

“We think the project has potential to bring in tourists and could lead to a major economic regeneration.” The campaign hopes to purchase the site from a private investor. Details: http://lei.sr?a=N3Y9k

Thomas ‘key’ to heritage rail future

Thomas the Tank Engine, has been hailed as key to the survival of heritage railways, with the popular ‘Days Out with Thomas’ events accounting for a significant amount of annual income across the UK.

HIT Entertainment – the brand which owns the licensing for Thomas – holds events with its partner heritage railways across the country where visitors can experience a ride on a steam engine, shake hands with The Fat Controller, and take part in Thomas-themed activities.

While additional characters and activities vary depending on the railway, Thomas the Tank Engine and The Fat Controller are always present at every event. This is something HIT makes sure is up to an expected quality standard, with regular inspections carried out on the events around the UK.

“As part of our contract with HIT, we run on a three-year rolling deal,” said Dick Wood, business development manager at South Devon Railway Trust speaking to Attractions Management. “Providing we satisfy their quality checks, such as the trains having proper faces etc, we are licensed to use Thomas for our annual event.” Wood went on to talk about the pros and cons of using an IP for a heritage railway. The cost of hiring a regular locomotive is around £300-350 per day at the lower end, with more recognisable locomotive engines reaching four figures. Thanks to the appeal of Thomas to railway visitors, guest numbers swell to around three times the typical amount over a typical bank holiday weekend.

“At one time there were a large number of railways holding Thomas events but nowadays there are fewer, but these showcases – however rare – are held on a much grander scale,” Wood continued. “Some railways turn against it because of the royalty payments, but for me its the three busiest days of our year with 7-10,000 visitors. Details: http://lei.sr?a=a3Z5C

Mary Rose sails to success at museums awards

The Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth was among the chief winners at the Museums and Heritage Awards, scooping two trophies at the ceremony in London.

The £27m harbourside structure – whose Wilkinson Eyre design has already won award nominations – marks its first anniversary this month and looks a strong contender for The Art Fund Museum of the Year award, which will be held in July.

The museum houses the restored Tudor ship the Mary Rose, a vessel which sank in 1545 and was famously rediscovered in 1971. It was then salvaged in 1981 – alongside almost 20,000 related artefacts from the 16th-century.

The Mary Rose Museum was presented with the restoration/conservation award, fending off competition from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. It also won the best permanent exhibition, beating the rival National Maritime Museum’s Nelson, Navy, Nation. The Museums and Heritage Awards, which were held on 14 May, also saw the Victoria and Albert Museum claim two trophies in addition to winning the Best of the Best category. The awards were set up in order to honour innovation and excellence across all sectors in the world of British museums and cultural institutions. Details: http://lei.sr?a=C4g7r
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**Booker adds ‘plus size’ category**

UK spa bookings agency, spaseekers.com has introduced a ‘plus size’ spa category to its website to help visitors identify the nation’s most size-friendly wellness facilities.

The agency – which represents over 500 spas across the UK – has received an increasing number of customers requesting larger-sized bath robes, bigger towels and wider treatment couches. Some of these spas offer spacious individual changing rooms, larger shower cubicles and wider dining chairs.

Over 80 spas have initially signed up to feature in the new category, including luxury-branded Macdonald Hotels and Q Hotels. spaseekers.com expects the number of spas that will register under this category to rise to over 100 in the coming weeks.

“The average woman in the UK is a size 16, but the average robe is a size 10-12,” Jason Goldberg, the director and founder of spaseekers.com told Leisure Opportunities.

“For our customers sake, we must meet the request of the average-sized lady and above.

We cannot be discriminatory towards women who wear a size 16 dress and above,”

The ‘plus size’ category is designed to help consumers find spas which welcome and accommodate all shapes and sizes.

“We want to make the whole booking experience simple and stress-free,” Goldberg added.

While retailers must meet demand, it could be argued that wellness facilities should promote healthier lifestyles for ‘plus size’ clients rather than capitalising on afternoon tea and spa packages. 

Details: http://lei.co.uk/a=H7M6r

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**Welsh Quay Hotel and Spa on sale for £7m**

The Quay Hotel and Spa in Deganwy, North Wales has been put up for sale for £7m after its holding company called in administrators.

The hotel features a nine treatment room spa which uses products by Aromatherapy Associates and REN skincare. Treatments range from full-body massages on a heated marble table to reflexology, scrubs and wraps. The spa is located next to the hotel’s health club, which comprises a small gym, sauna, steamroom and a 15m (49ft) swimming pool.

Details: http://lei.co.uk/a=4rz28

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**TOWIE star launches new spa facility in Shrewsbury**

The Only Way Is Essex star, Ferne McCann, launched the St Nicholas Café, Bar and Spa in Shrewsbury this month – set within a converted church which dates back to 1865.

McCann, of the BAFTA-winning ITV2 reality TV show, celebrated the launch of all three parts of the mixed-use facility situated near Shrewsbury Castle. The top floor hosts a bar, the middle floor is home to the spa and event space was completed just in time for the whole facility’s official opening.

Owners Stephanie and Ben Smith – a former goalkeeper for Shrewsbury Town – are the married team behind the Moroccan-inspired spa, which features three single treatment rooms, a couples’ room, steamroom, sauna, Turkish hammam, rasul room, spa pool and ice room.

“We hope and pray that our customers will continue to use the hotel and facilities as they have done in the past,” he concluded.

The hotel features a nine treatment room spa which uses products by Aromatherapy Associates and REN skincare. Treatments range from full-body massages on a heated marble table to reflexology, scrubs and wraps.
One of the major challenges facing hospitality businesses in the UK (and across the world), is that today’s young people are different from yesterday’s young people.

Their values, goals and world views are different from previous generations and their expectations are not like ours.

When you consider that people are at the heart of hospitality and tourism, it becomes evident that this has major implications for the sector’s recruitment. In this industry, more than any other, getting the right employees in the right position is absolutely crucial because in hospitality, success is driven by the people who represent and run businesses on a day to day basis.

What’s more, the very nature of this industry dictates that generally it is young people at the frontline of any hospitality business. Anyone responsible for hiring hospitality employees will be more than familiar with this fact. In fact, employers attending any of the BHAs Big Hospitality Conversations across the UK over the past year will be fully aware of the changing needs of young people seeking work today. “Since the Big Conversations conception almost two years ago, we’ve noticed a real shift in how the young people approach the events,” says the director of Big Hospitality Conversation James Latham.

“It seems to me that the old order is shifting and new rules are coming into play in the world of work in the hospitality sector. “Now it’s as much about employers impressing them as visa versa and in some cases young people are educating employers about tech trends and innovations.”

Meanwhile, Graeme Codrington, a keynote speaker at the Hospitality & Tourism Summit 2014 on 5 June, takes a more radical view. He believes that the future of hospitality and its success in attracting, recruiting and retaining bright, reliable young employees rests on two crucial points:

- understanding why has this change in young people has happened and...
- ...if we accept the view that the hospitality workforce is in flux, how should we respond to this evolution?

The UK hotel industry defied the recession to record its largest ever expansion in the decade to the end of 2013, with total investment for the period topping £13bn, according to a new report. The industry added 106,380 new rooms over the 10-year period, while shedding 40,000 to record a net gain of around 66,000 rooms. And the growth looks set to continue, with 9,300 more rooms planned for 2014 and 2015 in London and over 14,700 rooms elsewhere in the UK. Hospitality Digest 2014, a new 190-page publication by the Institute of Hospitality, used figures provided by construction consultants Gleeds to produce an overview of key facts and figures outlining the UK hospitality industry and the trends underlying its growth. “In a single publication it contains all the key factual information on the growth of the industry’s key sectors – tourism, hotels and food service, as well as articles and information on employment and education in the industry,” says Peter Ducker, chief executive of the Institute of Hospitality. “We believe it complements the information that is available in our library and builds the Institute’s reputation as an up-to-date source of knowledge on the hospitality industry,” Ducker concluded. Details: http://lei.sr?a=M2K6Q

‘Mirror effect’ offers Shard guests an unexpected vista

Guests at the newly-opened Shangri-La Hotel in London’s The Shard are being warned to close the blinds at night as the glass structure’s panels make it sometimes possible to see into other rooms. Some of the glass surrounding the 1,016ft (310m) building acts as an inadvertent mirror when lights are on, so the advice is being issued to maintain guests’ privacy. The hotel, which opened last week, features London’s highest champagne and cocktail bar, and will soon offer a penthouse suite. Details: http://lei.sr?a=f5E3S

Hotel hopes for Perth City Hall

Perth City Hall in Scotland may be spared from demolition and redeveloped as a boutique hotel after local councillors were urged to perform a volte-face and back new plans.

They had previously voted to tear down the B-listed (Scotland’s equivalent to Grade II listing) building, but Perth Council’s development management committee has recommended the full council approves the project.

Developer, the Seventy Group, has produced plans for a 32-bedroom five-star hotel in the Edwardian building – with designs from Simpson & Brown Architects – and claims to have had interest from international hotel chains and management companies.

The hotel would also include a bar and a restaurant open to the public, plus banquet facilities for 100 guests. The hall was closed nearly nine years ago, when the city’s new concert hall opened, and was due to be pulled down to create a new city square. This proposal was fiercely-opposed by local residents and Historic Scotland blocked a move from the council to tear down the hall in 2012. The proposals will now go to a full council vote, where details such as the building’s lease will also be discussed. Development quality officer Nick Brian recommended approval in his report, subject to preservation conditions. Details: http://lei.sr?a=s2Y4W

Industry enjoys record expansion: Study

Peter Ducker hopes to chart the growth of key sectors
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Manchester Corn Exchange to undergo £30m revamp

A boutique hotel is at the heart of a £30m redevelopment of Manchester’s Grade II listed Corn Exchange, with operators invited to express interest in the project.

The building’s owners – Aviva Investors – are behind the redevelopment programme which will include 13 new independent restaurants and the 86-bedroom Edwardian hotel, featuring a breakfast room and lounge which will be overlooking Exchange Square.

Simon Green, asset manager at Aviva Investors, said: “We are committed to the full redevelopment of this remarkable building. The vision is to create a new legacy destination for the city that will cement its future fortunes and act as a catalyst for more regeneration. Details: http://lei.sr?a=F5M7v

£2bn plans for Covent Garden Market

The UK’s largest fruit, vegetable and flower market, Covent Garden Market, could be the setting for a £2bn redevelopment featuring 3,000 homes plus a combined 21,000sq m (226,042sq ft) section of leisure, office and retail space.

Architecture giants BDP and SOM have submitted plans – a “refinement” of the scheme by Foster & Partners and Neil Tomlinson Architects which won planning in 2012 – for the regeneration of the New Covent Garden Market site in central London. The Covent Garden Market Limited Partnership, an asset which included 31 properties including the market itself and the London Transport Museum, was sold to Capital & Counties for £420m in 2006.

The latest plans, which cover Vinci and St Modwen, have been backed by the Covent Garden Market Authority and would see a new food quarter created as part of the new market, while around 50,000sq m (538,196sq ft) of facilities will be developed for the 200 business that operate out of the massive bazaar. The plans include an 8ha mixed-use residential element. Details: http://lei.sr?a=Q8P3d

Intu continues push toward mixed-use projects

Shopping centre owner and operator Intu has outlined plans to raise capital by selling sections of its biggest centres to investors to continue its concerted push towards mixed-use developments.

More than half of the company’s £1.2bn development pipeline is expected to be spent on adding food and leisure outlets to its portfolio, as it moves to capitalise on the growing popularity of destination shopping, known also as ‘retailtainment.’

Among the company’s ongoing food and leisure projects are the £80m Lakeside development in Essex and large-scale mixed-use plans to refurbish its Watford centre. A company-issued management report noted that Intu was beginning to see areas of strong interest from retailers, particularly in centres where it has been or has plans for investing. Details: http://lei.sr?a=t7FrQ

North Shields waterpark to get £1.1m new lease of life

A waterpark in North Shields, Tyne and Wear will reopen following a £1.1m revamp.

Wet ‘n’ Wild entered into administration in October despite the attraction being profitable for “much of the year”.

Moirai Capital Investments has appointed Serco to manage and operate the waterpark, which has been leased to Serco for a period of 25 years. Moirai will transform and refurbish the Waterpark into a modern family leisure attraction with the financial investment.

The waterpark offers more than 1km (0.62m) of slides including the hurricane, the kamikaze, the abyss and calamity canyon. The investment will see the development of this remarkable building. The vision is to create a new legacy destination for the city that will cement its future fortunes and act as a catalyst for more regeneration. Details: http://lei.sr?a=x455C

Records of the market go back to 1654, with the current structure built in 1830

Seaton Leisure Complex gains approval after bat row

Plans for a £15m leisure complex in Seaton, Devon, are finally set to commence after being stalled by the presence of a bat population.

The hilltop scheme – which will include a boutique hotel, restaurant, spa and gym as well as 38 two- and three-bedroom luxury rental lodges – was initially rejected because of objections by Natural England, which was concerned about interference with bat movements in the area. The plans have now been modified to include a “bat corridor” on the site.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=G8M5w
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The first step to sporting participation

IAN TAYLOR
is chief executive at Skills Active

There are many reasons why people participate in sport and active leisure, and there is an enormous amount of hard evidence demonstrating the benefits to the well-being of the individual and also to the nation.

It is now incumbent on all stakeholders to drive a unified message by working collaboratively in partnerships to not only deliver the message but also to achieve positive outcomes of more physical activity.

Some of the work that SkillsActive does is identifying and developing the workforce to be able to deliver physical activity to all age groups in a variety of facilities and locations. For example, as National Partner for Workforce Development for Sport England, we have clearly demonstrated that for every £1 that is invested into workforce development we are able to deliver a total of £23 of return.

The Professional Development team here at SkillsActive continue to provide the best possible service to our training providers and employers. It is essential we offer them ‘added value’ as part of our retention strategy. In doing so, partnerships such as our Active Advantage service for training providers can reduce business costs. For employers we offer a service for them to partner with endorsed Lead Providers, ensuring they buy with confidence and get the best possible price.

Another partnership is with the Association of Colleges where we are delivering the ‘College Sport Training and Development Programmes’. Of course we also work in partnerships with a large number of Employer groups such as the Outdoor Employers Group or the Sport and Fitness Employers group to focus on where we can add value, and ensure that they can recruit, retain and upskill the workforce. With around 101,000 employers in our sectors this creates many challenges, but excitingly also the opportunity to influence change and create positive outcomes for delivery in the Sports and Physical Activity Sectors.

Trainings

Pathways must improve for H&F industry

Is the health and fitness industry fully-qualified to deliver professional advice and guidance?

That was the question as SIBEC UK 2014 got underway with a panel discussion – chaired by ukactive CEO David Stalker – with a selection of industry figures offering views.

The four-person panel comprised of Rachel Gomm, Birmingham City Council Sport and Events business development manager; Michelle Dand, Everyone Active group fitness development manager; Tom Fairey, Alliance Leisure Services business development manager; and Stuart Lockwood, head of Oldham Community Leisure Trust.

Stalker began the discussion by saying the reallocation of public health responsibility to local authorities (under the 2013 Social Care Bill) meant the health and fitness industry now had the opportunity to provide solutions for a sector worth £8bn. Yet, he said, two thirds of health and fitness industry managers hold the minimum level of qualifications required to do their job. Gomm noted the importance of building relationships and knowledge exchanges with public health bodies – particularly with GPs in order to establish exercise referrals for conditions such as heart disease.

Dand, meanwhile, pointed out that Everyone Active’s new sister organisation – Everyone Health – demonstrated the industry was already making moves to engage with this new market. “But while it’s possible for highly-trained fitness motivators to work across both the health and leisure sectors, less experienced staff currently lack the training required to be able to deal with subsequent challenges, such as working with mental health patients,” added Dand. Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y6p9R

Heritage Alliance backs indie fundraisers

The Heritage Alliance has launched a new training scheme, designed to provide the skills and confidence necessary for independent heritage sites to secure greater success in accessing funding from both private and corporate sources.

Working alongside the Institute of Fundraising (IOF), The Heritage Alliance’s Giving to Heritage programme is a two year scheme – backed as part of a £3m Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Catalyst initiative – which launched its new website today (Friday). It will offer around 8,500 learning opportunities to heritage fundraisers, which are accessible across the country at a “fraction of the original cost”.

The training courses – part-subsidised by the HLF – are valued at £300 per head for the 15-person seminars, but will only cost participants £20 to take part in them.

99 workshops, starting in London on 3 June, will cover 13 topics on day-long events led by an IOF fundraiser in addition to a number of one-to-one surgery sessions, mentoring pairings and webinars. Participants will also enjoy access to the IOF’s Continuous Professional Development system for three months prior to the course.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive with a project in mind for fundraising and then develop a fundraising plan and case for support, with post-course projects also being added to the Heritage Funding Directory. Mark Webb, project officer for Giving to Heritage said alternative fundraising is essential for the sector. Details: http://lei.sr?a=V5H5H
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### Sport Development Officer
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- **Location:** Worcester, UK

### Club Manager
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### General Manager
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<td>Croydon, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gym Manager</td>
<td>Pure Gym Limited</td>
<td>London, Oval, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Trainer</td>
<td>Everyone Active</td>
<td>Various locations, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitness/Power Plate Instructor</td>
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<td>Personal Trainer/Owner</td>
<td>Your Gym</td>
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LIW targets ‘perfect industry event’

UBM Live – the event specialist behind Leisure Industry Week (LIW) – has teamed up with ukactive to conduct the leisure industry’s “biggest piece of independent research,” exploring how the 35-year-old event can be developed to meet suppliers’ and operators’ changing needs.

A survey undertaken by Redshift Research has been sent out to more than 40,000 industry professionals (including all ukactive members and the entire LIW database of exhibitors and visitors) asking for their feedback on a comprehensive range of factors. The survey seeks opinions on everything from the current title, location and attendee priorities – right through to thoughts on potential additions such as “speed-dating” network sessions and an awards dinner.

LIW event director James Samuel said the event had remained “the UK’s leading leisure exhibition” by taking on feedback and would continue to do so to bid to improve each year.

Some suppliers had expressed a desire for change from the current format when speaking to Leisure Opportunities, however, others seem encouraged by the refinement process being undertaken by LIW and ukactive.

“As a key supplier to the health & fitness industry, we are pleased to have been part of the initial research discussions with ukactive and UBM about the future of LIW,” said Liz Chessum, UK marketing manager of Life Fitness. “The show is an important date in the industry calendar, where suppliers can showcase new innovations. We look forward to seeing how LIW evolves as a result of the market research.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=s3D9u

UK pubs website bids to tempt tourists

The British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) has teamed up with VisitBritain to launch a new website designed to help tourists experience the best of the British pub.

The Pubs are GREAT website - developed in conjunction with industry publisher and platform provider Inapub - is the latest addition to VisitBritain’s GREAT marketing campaign.

Visiting a pub is the third most popular activity for overseas visitors, with four out of ten heading to a pub at some point during their stay. With this in mind, the website has been designed to help visitors find a quality pub close to the area or attraction they are visiting.

The new service covers a range of visitor attractions under the headlines: Heritage, Culture, Natural Beauty, Sport and Music - helping visitors pinpoint popular pubs nearby. “I was proud to be asked to announce the latest stage of the ‘Pubs are GREAT’ campaign, a website that will play a crucial role in signposting those visiting British tourist attractions to high quality local pubs,” said community pubs minister Brandon Lewis during the launch at Phoenix, in London’s Victoria. Details: http://lei.sr?a=b2d4K

This year’s LIW is at Birmingham’s NEC from 30 September to 2 October

(From right) VisitBritain’s Joss Croft, BBPA’s Brigid Simmonds and pubs minister Brandon Lewis at the launch

Twitter: @leisureopps

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