

leisure opportunities

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Center Parcs CEO: UK planning process 'ridiculous'

As Center Parcs launches its new £250m Woburn Forest holiday resort last week, CEO Martin Dalby called for the UK government to take the development of major leisure investments more seriously.

Talking exclusively to *Leisure Opportunities*, Dalby urged a planning process rethink for major developments, and revealed that Center Parcs is now looking towards Ireland for its next project.

He said: "When big investments like this come along, there should be a way of bypassing the local authority to get it built – there needs to be someone in government responsible for these big projects."

According to Dalby, Center Parcs spent £5m just getting the Woburn site through planning and – more importantly – the process took five years, thereby depriving the area of valuable employment opportunities at the height of the recession. "When we announced the project in 2004, we said we'd open in 2008. We would have achieved that deadline, and then the area could have had the benefit of all those jobs right throughout the recession," he said.



Martin Dalby says red tape nearly scuppered Woburn Forest

"When we submitted the application, the council spent a year just looking at it – It was ridiculous. We had to go through that local planning process with local people who didn't really understand what we were doing. There's got to be a faster way than it taking five years.

"This was such a great site that we believed in our project and persevered – it's an amazing

forest and perfect for Center Parcs and that's where our determination came from, because even our barristers advised us that it would be a tough battle for planning."

The Blackstone Group-owned resort operator launched the new £250m complex on 6 June. It features 625 lodges, a 75-bedroom hotel, Center Parcs' largest Subtropical Swimming Paradise and an Aqua Sana spa, plus the typical indoor and outdoor activities the resort is known for.

"What was fantastic about this scheme is that the secretary of state overrode her own inspector to get it through, because she recognised the positive impact it would have on jobs and tourism. This Center Parcs development will put £20m into the

local economy each year in wages, salaries and expenditure through local businesses – she recognised that and those things outweighed the negatives of building in the green belt."

Dalby said that this fifth and final Center Parcs site completes the portfolio in England, with a development in Ireland the most likely next step. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b4gsR>*

Warner Bros considers Harry Potter spin-off

Leisure Opportunities understands Warner Bros is exploring the possibility of creating attractions based on JK Rowling's book *Fantastical Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

The media giant has already acquired film rights to the story, which was written by the Harry Potter author in 2001 and is linked to the books.

Locations are not yet known, however, the company has already announced it will be expanding its award-winning Studio Tour at Leavesden, making it one possible location. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W4b2m>*

Gym membership surges past 8 million

The UK health and fitness industry has more clubs, more members and greater market value than ever, with the majority of growth driven by low cost operators, according to the 2014 *State of the UK Fitness Industry* (SOFI) report.

For the first time ever, health club member numbers have moved past eight million, market value has exceeded £4bn and the penetration rate is at an all-time high of 13.2 per cent. The penetration rate signifies the percentage of the UK population that are members of a health club and reflects a welcome improvement on last year's figure of 12.6 per cent.

The 2014 report highlights that the industry has experienced another year of growth over the



John Treharne's low cost The Gym Group is making gains

12-month period to the end of March 2014, with increases across all three KPIs – 3.9 per cent in value, 1.5 per cent in the number of fitness facilities and a 4.5 per cent rise in members. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U4t2a>*

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PL club revenues hit £3bn landmark

The combined total of English Premier League clubs' revenues broke the £3bn mark for the first time during the 2013-14 season.

The *Annual Review of Football Finance*, by business analyst Deloitte, also shows that Germany's Bundesliga remains Europe's most profitable league, with operating profits of £226m, followed by the Premier League with operating profits of £82m.

Dan Jones, partner at Deloitte's Sports Business Group, said the increases in the Premier League revenue is mainly down to broadcasting rights.

"The global appeal of the Premier League has continued to drive commercial revenue growth, particularly at the highest ranked Premier League clubs," he said.

"We estimate that Premier League clubs' revenue will have increased by almost 30 per cent to £3.2bn in 2013-14. This growth will be driven by the revenue from the first season of the new broadcast deals and further commercial



The wealth of talent means clubs spend 71 per cent of revenue on wages

revenue growth expected at the biggest clubs."

The increase in broadcasting income is mainly down to the entry of BT Sport into the market to battle BSkyB for broadcasting rights.

The report also shows that, on average, Premier League clubs now spend 71 per cent of their revenue on wages – a record high – and only 13 of the Premier League's 20 clubs made an operating profit last year.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V5R7b>

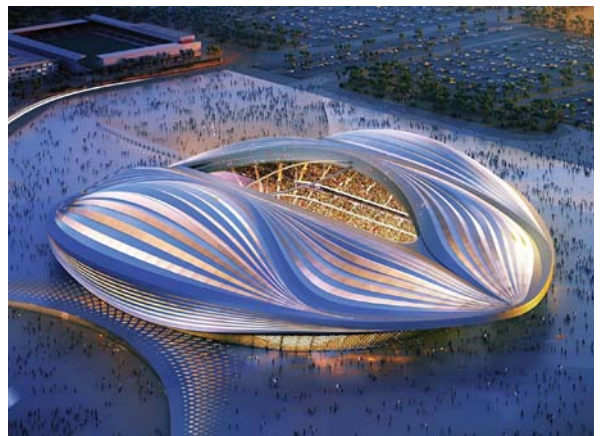
Fresh Qatar 2022 corruption allegations

FIFA investigator Michael Garcia was set to meet organisers of the Qatar 2022 World Cup last week, amid calls for the bidding process to be reopened following fresh allegations of corruption.

World football's governing body is currently awaiting results of a semi-independent inquiry led by Garcia into outcomes of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding races, with senior stakeholders reportedly considering what action to take if the report recommends a new vote.

UK politicians and former football executives have expressed concern over the current process, following allegations made in the *Sunday Times* that Mohamed bin Hammam, a Qatari former Fifa executive committee member, paid £3m in cash, gifts and legal fees to senior football officials – particularly from Africa – to help build a consensus of support.

Fifa vice-president Jim Boyce has said he would support a re-vote if corruption



One of the main Qatar 2022 stadiums has been designed by Zaha Hadid

allegations can be proven. "I certainly as a member of the executive committee would have absolutely no problem whatsoever if the recommendation was for a re-vote," said Boyce in a radio interview with the BBC.

"If Garcia comes up with concrete evidence – and concrete evidence is given to the executive committee and to Fifa – then it has to be looked at very seriously."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E7j2y>

Pop-up clubs for disadvantaged

Sports charity StreetGames will create 200 Pop Up Clubs during the summer that will enable disadvantaged young people to get involved in sport.

The nationwide programme will be operated in partnership – and funded by – Spirit of 2012 (Spirit), a charity set up to support programmes that sustain the spirit of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Sessions have been designed to give young people the chance to take part in sports that will feature heavily at this summer's Commonwealth Games – such as athletics, table tennis and badminton.

The sports will be brought to peoples' doorsteps by organising the sessions at community halls, leisure centres and parks – meaning that sporting activities can be accessed by all.



Commonwealth champion Kelly Sotherton is supporting the project

Jane Ashworth, who is the CEO of StreetGames, said: "We know that large sporting events inspire young people to get active, we saw it with the Olympics, Paralympics and we are sure to see it with the Commonwealth Games as well.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y6v4t>

Bolton's academy plans win approval

Bolton Wanderers Football Club has been granted outline planning permission to build a £100m sport, education and office development after plans were approved by the local council.

The club announced plans last year to create a free sports academy, along with retail outlets, 200 apartments, a 60-bed-room hotel and an office block with restaurants and hospitality suites as part of the club's "Middlebrook Masterplan".

The plans also include an as-yet unannounced expansion to the club's home the Reebok Stadium (soon to be renamed the Macron Stadium).

Councillors approved the plans, despite concerns over other developments being affected, including the nearby Church Wharf regeneration project in Bolton town centre. The project has been overseen by The Environment Partnership (TEP) to provide ecology, landscape and environmental assessment, though no



Bolton's £100m plans include a new sports academy

contractors or architects have yet been named.

"The development would provide much needed investment and employment opportunities with improvements to education, leisure and wider community facilities in an urban setting and sustainable location," said planning officer John Berry. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k7v7W>

Right Directions to deliver ASA's Learn To Swim accreditation

Health and safety management specialist Right Directions – the company which delivers Quest for Sport England and ukactive's Code of Practice (CoP) – will now co-ordinate the ASA's Learn To Swim accreditation scheme for facilities that are offering swim schools.

The agreement will bring all three leading health and fitness industry awards together, allowing operators to save time and money by achieving their ASA Learn To Swim accreditation and ukactive CoP as part of their Quest assessment. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U3n7U>

Paralegic teen to take opening kick at World Cup

A paraplegic teen will officially kick-off this year's FIFA World Cup in Brazil, showcasing new technology which could transform lives for millions of paralysed people.

The teen is one of eight patients taking part in Walk Again, a vast research project that hopes to enable wheelchair-bound people to remobilise using robotics.

The first big demonstration of the project will be on 12 June at the Corinthians Arena in Sao Paulo, before the World Cup's opening match between Brazil and Croatia. Wearing an exoskeleton, the patient will rise from the wheelchair, walk 25m onto the pitch and take the World Cup's first kick.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c9S8C>



Plans include a health club and community spaces

Port Talbot Town FC tables brand new stadium plans

Welsh Premier League club Port Talbot Town FC has announced plans to replace its current home, GenQuip Stadium, with a new facility within two years.

A feasibility study conducted by James + Nicholas Architects shows that the purpose-built venue is set to have an all-weather 3G pitch – to limit the number of games postponed due to weather, as well as to allow wider community use and for the pitch to be used as an extra source of revenue.

Designs also include seven multifunctional community/training rooms, space for a health club and a multi-purpose "sports barn" to be used by the club and community.

According to the club director Tim Bull, environmental sustainability will be right at the core of the stadium design.

Speaking to local media, he commented: "We will be adopting a unique eco-friendly approach using solar panels and other environmentally friendly methods to provide energy and that could even incorporate the cost effective hire of electric cars for local residents."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G3F4K>

Latest NHS weight loss info pushes activity agenda

New NHS guidelines for weight loss in England advocate physical activity as part of potentially state-funded weight management programme in a bid to encourage people to make long-term lifestyle changes.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has called for overweight people to be introduced to daily physical activity and sent to slimming classes to achieve a three per cent weight loss. The NHS has advised that obese people should aim to lose up to 10 per cent of their body mass, and NICE says this should still be the goal, but points out incremental targets are more achievable and may prevent 'yo-yo dieting.' Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v9U3R>



Grainger was on hand to relaunch the club

Olympic legend puts new Club kit through its paces

London 2012 gold medal rower Katherine Grainger was on-hand to test out equipment at the newly-refurbished Cameron House Club overlooking Scotland's Loch Lomond.

The gym, which is a key part of the Devere-operated five-star Cameron House Hotel, became the first in Scotland to offer Technogym's ARTis Connectivity equipment as part of the £250,000 overhaul.

"I'm really impressed with this new equipment and can't think of anywhere better to launch the new range than Cameron House," said Glaswegian Grainger.

"The Technogym team kitted out our gym at the Olympic Village and I know how passionate they are about fitness so the members here are really going to enjoy it."

The resort also features an 18-hole Championship golf course, a luxury resort spa with rooftop infinity pool and a range of outdoor activities. Andy Roger, ops director of Cameron House said: "It's wonderful to have Katherine Grainger here to put our brand new equipment to the test. What better way to inspire us on our fitness goals than this visit." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D8F4D>

Fitness First secures £115m loan

Fitness First has raised a new £115m debt facility to be used to pay off an existing loan from shareholders and underpin development plans.

The financial package has been provided by four banks – HSBC, Barclays, UBS and IKB – and marks the first time the group has secured an external loan since its Company Voluntary Arrangement (CVA) in 2012.

The package comprises a £100m loan (with a provision to increase up to £120m) and a £15m revolving credit facility. The transaction marks a milestone in the restoration of the company's financial position and comes at a time when the group is undergoing a £270m global makeover, implementing a widespread training overhaul and planning major expansions across parts of Asia.

"The signing of this bank facility at very competitive rates is further evidence of our continuing financial improvement and the growing confidence of external lenders in our overall strategy to reposition the Fitness First



Fitness First chief exec Andy Cosslett is overseeing a brand makeover

brand and offer," said chief financial officer John Wartig. "This new facility represents an ongoing low level of leverage but will materially reduce our cost of financing and release incremental funds for reinvestment behind the acceleration of our refurbishment programme and ongoing rebrand initiatives."

Fitness First is one of the largest fitness brands in the world with over 377 clubs. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e3U7W>

Marketers should aim to be "like Branson"

The growth in prominence of social media has opened an array of marketing opportunities for the health and fitness industry, however marketing managers should be operating more like Richard Branson to improve their online strategies, says the CEO of Icon Training Julian Leybourne.

According to Leybourne, chairs, executives and managers need to understand the digital revolution and begin to contribute to the dialogue surrounding social media development, with Virgin leader Branson's social media use a great example.

"Our approach has had to evolve in terms of the way that we listen to staff, customers and potential prospects – the way we must, today, open up a two-way dialogue to ensure that our audience look, listen and react in a positive and mutually beneficial way," wrote Leybourne in the May edition of *Health Club Management* magazine.

Since its introduction, Branson has used social networking to reach out to his customer base and engage in discussions to help improve the offerings supplied by his businesses.



Social media stars like Branson have shown how to engage users

"He uses the full range of social media: blogging, asking questions, responding to comments on Facebook and Twitter to hear what people are saying on a daily basis about each of his businesses and each brand – the good, the bad and everything in between," adds Leybourne. "By engaging on say, Facebook or Twitter, you can position your brand to showcase your values in a subtle but positive way."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m5A5k>

Les Mills: New virtual reality classes

Les Mills International has launched a brand new “immersive fitness” product in an initiative called *The Project*.

Working in partnership with Reebok, *The Project* brings together group exercise with cutting-edge entertainment to create a product which, in an exclusive interview with Health Club Management, Les Mills CEO Phillip Mills described as “transformational for fitness”.

The concept comprises a three-walled room onto which video content is streamed throughout a class.

“It’s like being inside a computer game – a virtual reality that changes each song,” says Mills.

Les Mills has made a significant investment over the last year in producing video content, working with digital special effects experts to create three classes for the launch: cycling class *The Trip*, a BodyCombat/GRIT workout, and a combined BodyBalance/BodyJam class.

“In the cycling class, for example, one minute you’ll be cycling through the stars in the universe, the next it’s as if you’re in the Tron



The Reebok-Les Mills box will tour globally to showcase *The Project*

computer game, then suddenly you’re climbing a mountain or cycling across the sea,” says Mills.

“We’re cautiously excited about how we can commercialise *The Project*. The cost of putting an immersive studio into a club is currently very high, but cycling is most likely to be the first to take off: these are smaller studios and subsequently won’t cost quite as much. I believe this is as big as when we added exercise to music – it may be the biggest thing Les Mills has ever done. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z3S8J>

énergie signs five-club Fit4less deal in London

The énergie Group has signed a new franchise agreement to open at least five of its Fit4less branded health clubs in London over the next three years, as part of a deal with operator Gymstar.

The first site will open in Bethnal Green in June, with two further sites planned this year. Gymstar will also, with partners, regenerate two existing énergie Fitness Club sites in Leighton Buzzard and Liscombe Park.

“We have committed to at least five Fit4less sites to start with, but are interested in opening as many as possible as we know Fit4less is a hugely viable financial investment,” said Gymstar operations director Chris Djuric.

Work has begun on the rural Liscombe Park health club, which has already seen the introduction of new equipment and alterations to the tune of £250,000, with a further £2.25m to be invested over the next two years. The changes will include the build of tennis courts and corporate function facilities for weddings and conferences, with the overall objective of transforming the complete site into what would be a health spa destination.



énergie Group CEO Jan Spaticchia wants more Fit4less gyms

“We are delighted that Chris and company are not just further expanding our Fit4less portfolio but also investing in two clubs that have significant historic value to the group,” said énergie Group CEO Jan Spaticchia. “The transformation of both will be exceptional and they will have my full support throughout the journey.” Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p4p5y>

REPs announces its 2014 SE Fitness Convention

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) has announced its 2014 South East Convention will run in conjunction with FitPro Live from 18-19 July in London.

The convention will give fitness professionals the chance to learn from a selection of experts in the field and experience the latest fitness technologies first-hand.

This year’s event expects to attract over 5,000 fitness professionals from across the world, who will take part in a series of workshops. The programme will focus heavily on Level 4 content and will seek to address some of the most pressing challenges currently facing the industry. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p7h3x>



The former lobby is now a thermal spa

Ageing Bridgend Rec gets 21st century facelift

Bridgend Recreation Centre has been given a new lease of life following a £4.5m 18-month leisure development project.

Work began on the then-creaking 1970s site in October 2012, and the facility has been given a dramatic makeover, with development partner Pulse overseeing the design, build and equipment fit out.

The fitness suite has been relocated and enlarged to 100-stations to meet member demand. The gym is kitted out with Pulse Fusion cardiovascular equipment, Evolve strength equipment, an X-Cube functional rig and a free weights section. It also features Pulse’s SmartCentre interactive technology, which stores personalised gym workout programmes and provides users with feedback and guidance.

The most striking development at the Halo Leisure-operated site has been the addition of a thermal suite and spa. The former first floor lobby has been converted to create the new facility which includes a steamroom, ice igloo, sauna, heated ceramic beds and experience shower. rooms.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C8F4v>

Disability in focus



With only 18% of disabled people in England taking part in sport once a week, compared with 39% of non-disabled people, Matrix Fitness is taking steps to address the imbalance.

Research conducted by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) has identified that there are three main barriers to disabled people's participation in sporting activity:

- **Physical barriers** – adaptations or changes needed to support participation are not available or have not been implemented.

- **Logistical barriers** – adaptations have been made, but have not been implemented effectively.
- **Psychological barriers** – attitudes, opinions, and perceptions preventing participation in sport.

As a stakeholder in the fitness industry, Matrix Fitness is working hard to help address the situation through the manufacture of approved inclusive products, and promotion of positive role models, including former Royal Marine Commando, Joe Townsend, and visually impaired Matrix Fitness – Vulpine cyclist, Lora Turnham.

Designed to be accessible for both disabled and non disabled people, Matrix' Universal Series (U-Series) range of 11 products follows the requirements established by the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) Fitness Equipment Standards, and supports the fitness equipment supplier's goal to ensure that disabled people have access to a wide variety of cardiovascular and strength machines.

The popular Functional Trainer, for example, includes features such as accessible and adjustable pulley heights for ease of reach, an accessible starting position from a seated position, colour contrasted adjustments and

raised tactile weight stack numbers.

In addition to providing inclusive equipment, Matrix Fitness also works with customers to create accessible gyms; advocating the following IFI Mark recommendations:

- Provide a range of inclusive cardiovascular and strength equipment, in addition to small equipment to support a full body workout.
- Ensure there is adequate space around fitness equipment to allow transfer access.
- Make any equipment on a plinth or different levels accessible for wheelchair users or people with limited mobility via a lift or ramp.
- Ensure that the gym is well lit and background noise is minimal.
- Make sure that there are no obstructions/hazards in walkways, and that free weights and equipment are stored safely.

Seemingly small changes, for example, delivering customer service training to gym staff to alter perceptions of disability, and using positive imagery in marketing and media channels that disabled people can relate to and buy into could make a significant difference; engaging many more disabled people in sport and physical activity. With inactivity said to be costing the national economy in England £8.2 billion per year, clearly now is the time for all leisure industry stakeholders to take action.

For further information about the Inclusive Fitness Initiative, visit www.efds.co.uk

Former Royal Marine Commando, Joe Townsend, experiences the versatility of the Functional Trainer.



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A new Tourism Industry Council



KURT JANSON
is policy director of
Tourism Alliance

The tourism industry has for some years now been making the case to government that it should treat the UK tourism sector as a valid industry that is vital for rebalancing and providing notable growth for the UK economy.

There are some extremely good reasons to do this. Tourism has been the largest growth industry over the past five years. It has accounted for a third of all additional jobs that have been created over the last three years and the jobs that are created in the tourism industry help resolve employment “black spots”. For example, 41 per cent of employees in the sector are aged under 30, so it helps solve youth unemployment, while 14 per cent of employees come from minority groups, compared to the average of 9 per cent across UK industry.

This lobbying has finally paid off with the very welcome announcement by government that there is to be a new Industry Council established for the tourism and hospitality sector along the lines of other industry councils that have been established to support other sectors.

The Council will be made up of 22 members representing industries engaged in transportation, hospitality, entertainment, travel and accommodation. It is designed to be a partnership between the government and the tourism and hospitality sector and has a mandate to improving skills, increasing the quality and quantity of jobs and boosting enterprise. This will be achieved by developing best practice.

One of the key aims of the Council will be to build on the work already announced by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), who earlier this year said tourism and hospitality would be part of the trailblazers programme – an initiative designed to develop clear and concise apprenticeship standards in UK industries. The Council will be co-chaired by the Tourism Minister, the Minister for Skills and Enterprise, and Simon Vincent, a senior industry representative from Hilton Worldwide. Being a cross-governmental industry council will mean the combined resources of DCMS and BIS will be brought to bear on resolving some of the issues that prevent the tourism industry providing even greater growth and employment opportunities. This couldn't be more welcome.

Inbound tourism draws revealed

More than half of Chinese visitors to Britain would head to a ‘historic city’ outside of London for a UK-based vacation, while 48 per cent of Egyptian tourists would make a beeline for the coast, according to new data on overseas visitor habits.

The research, commissioned by VisitBritain as part of the 2013 Anholt GfK Nations Brand Index Survey, asked approximately 20,000 people from 20 different countries around the world where they would most like to stay on a trip to the UK.

Unsurprisingly, London proved a big draw – having recently been crowned the world's most popular destination with overseas tourists – however, the research threw up some surprising regional preferences.

For instance, both Chinese and Russian respondents chose ‘historic British cities’ (excluding London) as their top destination. Around 52 per cent of Chinese would make this their number one stop, while 45 per cent would head for the traditional English countryside. The rural life was also a big draw for Swedish, Canadian and Australian visitors, while South Africans said the countryside was their favourite UK attraction.

Elsewhere, Egyptians and Turks revealed they like our beaches nearly as much as the Brits love theirs. Around 48 per cent of respondents from Egypt chose ‘coastal areas



Coastal settings like Cornwall proved hugely popular

of Britain’, while 40 per cent of Turks said the same. Britain's shorelines have been identified as a key driver of future tourism growth.

And despite the odd anomaly, London still remains a huge draw in Europe, with neighbouring nations including the French, Germans, Italians and Polish choosing the ‘Big Smoke’ as their number one UK destination.

“We have a wealth of destinations and beautiful countryside to attract international visitors, as well as a capital city that is a global star,” said Patricia Yates, director of strategy and communications at VisitBritain.

“Our campaigns highlight the Scottish highlands, the Welsh Coastal Path, Shakespeare Country and the Lake District to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are spread.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G8x9U>

NI tourism visitors stay flat but spending up

Despite inbound tourism figures holding steady, Northern Ireland's tourism sector saw revenues jump £33m last year to £723m.

The latest government statistics show that a high-profile year – which saw the hosting of the G8 summit in Fermanagh and the recruitment of Liam Neeson to front a new marketing campaign – had little impact on Northern Ireland's ability to attract greater numbers of people.

The number of those visitors coming to Northern Ireland for a holiday was 632,000, virtually unchanged from 2012.

Meanwhile, the growth in revenues came predominantly from the additional spending of people travelling from Great Britain in order to visit friends and family.

The calendar year of 2013 also saw Giant's Causeway in County Antrim displace Titanic Belfast as the most popular attraction.

The Causeway saw visitor numbers jump 44 per cent to 754,000, while Titanic Belfast had 604,000 visitors, down nine per cent on 2012.

Regardless of the stagnation in the number of holidaymakers attracted, Northern Irish

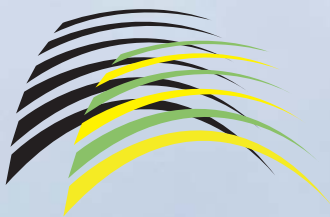


The Giant's Causeway is now the country's top attraction

tourism minister Arlene Foster welcomed the figures, which she described as encouraging.

“Our key programme for government targets for visitor numbers and tourism revenue have been achieved for 2013,” she said.

“This keeps us on track to succeed in making tourism in Northern Ireland a £1bn industry by 2020.” *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a7f2V>*



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Voya seals airline product tie-up

Irish airline company Aer Lingus will be offering hand-harvested seaweed skincare products by Voya as part of its in-flight amenities service for its business class customers.

The Irish seaweed company, Voya, is a family business that's gaining a reputation for its products and treatments offered in leading spas around the world, such as the Four Seasons, St Regis Ritz-Carlton, Canyon Ranch and Waldorf Astoria.

Aer Lingus will offer passengers of its business class lounges a Voya refreshing facial towelettes, hydrating facial crème and hydrating lip balm with a further option to buy a Voya travel bag which includes a body wash, moisturiser, shampoo, conditioner and soap.

Owned by the Walton family, the business dates back to the early 1900s when there were several hundred seaweed bathhouses scattered around Ireland's coast – with a particular concentration in Sligo in the north-east.

Used to treat conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, rheumatic pains and to treat



Voya's products from the sea are taking to skies to be sold in-flight

mineral deficiencies common amongst Europeans, Voya has added to its seaweed-based product range. In 2012 Voya had over 100 products, with sales of around 40 per cent in direct retail and 60 per cent in the professional spa market. In an interview with *Spa Business* 2012, Q3, page 78, Mark Walton – cosmetic researcher and scientist for the business – explained that he and his family had to work harder at retailing the business' products in Ireland, the UK and Europe. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A6m9V>

Meditation actually boosts brain activity, says study

Brain activity is greater during meditation than during periods of idle rest, refuting the idea that meditation is used to empty the mind – according to a study by neuroscientists from Norway and Australia.

Scientists from Norwegian institutes and The University of Sydney used functional magnetic resonance image (fMRI) scanning to determine what goes on in the brain during Acem Meditation – mindful relaxation technique based on modern psychology and scientific research. Areas of the brain which are less activated during meditation include those involved in processing memories and emotions. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U3j6a>



The wellness facilities now measure 290sq m

Mandarin Hyde Park opens wellness centre

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London has opened a new results-oriented well-being facility, with fitness packages provided by the exclusive health and fitness consultancy, Sculpt, to complement the existing eight treatment room Spa at Mandarin Oriental.

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park has teamed up with Sculpt to offer members training guidance from experts, such as former international swimmer David Jones, to provide personal training, nutrition, swimming coaching, physiotherapy, Pilates and yoga in the new centre.

The new facility is a fitness centre, with Technogym machines and a 17m (55.8ft) swimming pool – open to limited private membership with London residents in mind.

Time efficient and structured workouts for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels of training are programmed by the Technogym



The fitness centre will be available to a limited private membership

Kinesis Vision Unit and the InBody Analyser measures the guest's overall fitness. The female changing area has a steamroom and the male changing area includes a sauna. Ice fountains and experience showers are located in both areas. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G6K4w>

Beachside Jersey Health Club & Spa reopens

L'Horizon Beach Hotel & Spa, situated on the white sands of St Bredale's Bay, Jersey, opened its refurbished and expanded Health Club & Spa on 2 June.

The investment of £800,000 in the wellness facilities includes six treatment rooms, a self-contained relaxation area, a sleep room with five ergonomic beds, plus two manicure and pedicure stations.

"With the help of Glasgow-based interior designers, 10 Design, and Jersey contractors Style Shopfitting, we have converted 140sq m (1,507sq ft) of what was previously conference space into expanded wellness facilities which now measure 290sq m (3,122sq ft)," group manager for Handpicked Hotels' health and spa clubs, Lesley Bacon, told *Leisure Opportunities*.

The spa will use products by Elemis, offering up to seven different facial treatments, but the facility itself will be run by Handpicked Hotels. Built in 1850, the beachside L'Horizon features 106 bedrooms, two restaurants and a large beachfront terrace. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W3w4U>

Attractions Management launches AM2 magazine

Leisure Media and *Attractions Management* have officially launched AM2 – the first jobs and news magazine for the global visitor attractions industry – as of 1 June.

AM2 will be published every two weeks, but will keep readers up to date in between each edition with a whole raft of digital news feeds and exciting services, including a new website – www.am2.jobs – an ezine, instant news alerts, RSS feed and social media infrastructure on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

The magazine will be produced in a wide range of formats so you'll be able to enjoy it on the Digital Turning Pages system, as well as by downloading a PDF. Or if you prefer paper, you can subscribe to the print edition.

In addition, AM2 will also offer a full recruitment advertising service managed by Ricky Popat (+44 (0)1462 471907. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R7a9a>



Thorpe Park has had an Angry Birds makeover

Visitors flock to Thorpe Park for new Angry Birds attraction

The Angry Birds brand has nested at Thorpe Park following the opening of the brand new Angry Birds Land, with a large area of the park having been redeveloped to include the globally popular IP.

The park now includes the world's first Angry Birds 4D experience, telling the tale of the Angry Birds through a high-paced experience, including timed air gusts, water jets, smoke blasts and more, to immerse guests in the themed adventure.

Thorpe Park's 100ft (30.4m) drop tower has undergone the Angry Birds rebranding, while a new dodgems attraction, plus retail and catering outlets are now also adorned with the Angry Birds' colours.

Coming from humble beginnings as an iPhone app, Angry Birds has been a major hit since its emergence in 2009, with a number of branded attractions coming to market and even an animated movie due to be released at some point in 2016.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m9e8P>

Chester Zoo: major new expansion

Jamie Christon, MD of Chester Zoo, has revealed the masterplan for the attraction's second wave of expansion, which will follow the completion of the zoo's Islands project in December this year. Islands is scheduled to open to the public in May 2015.

The 111 acre (50 hectare) zoo has earmarked an additional 389 acres (157.4 hectares) of space for its second wave of development. Christon revealed ambitious plans are in the works, saying "We have outline planning permission for a 150-bedroom hotel and we're also planning to remaster the core zoo to bring it up to the same standard as our Islands project." Once open, Islands will be "one of the top five zoo projects anywhere in the world," according to Christon.

The Islands project, which will be the same size as seven full-size football pitches, will be an immersive experience, themed as an expedition through Indonesia, "following in the footsteps of the explorers and adventurers as you travel and explore between the various islands."

Christon said the idea behind the Islands project is to raise public awareness on the plight faced by animals in the Indonesian region and to show people what conservation efforts are



Chester Zoo has a number of big plans beyond its Islands project

being made by the zoo and other parties.

Architectural firm Dan Pearlman – which has also worked on zoos in Hannover and South Korea – is leading the project, while engineering company Laing O'Rourke was awarded the build after a nationwide tender process.

One of the zoo's most significant developments is its Heart of Africa project – an area which will match Islands in size, with a projected opening of 2020. Designs originally included a £90m Rainforest Biome, though plans have been revised due to funding cuts and are still being formulated. The zoo is also planning to refurbish Victorian mansion Oakfield House. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N8u5A>

Plans revealed for planetarium build in Kent

Plans have been outlined for what would be one of the UK's largest space centres, with an observatory and 200-seat planetarium, to be constructed in Ashford, Kent.

The multi-million pound scheme would be located to the south of Ashford, in an area where visitors to the centre can benefit from lower light pollution. The facility would also include a research laboratory with six state-of-the-art telescopes that could be used remotely by scientists from across the globe.

Visitor attractions would include a cinema and hands-on exhibits, while conference facilities will also be included. Ashford Astronomical Society (ASS) has already put in funding bids for the development, though an exact figure has not been released.

"I am confident this will become a reality," said Drew Wagar, AAS chair. "We have



Romney Marsh is one of the UK's best locations for stargazers

submitted some funding bids and we are already looking at planning regulations, where the centre could be located and transport links.

"We haven't got an exact location as yet, as that will depend on the availability of land, but it will likely be away from the town, out towards Romney Marsh where we have these amazing dark skies."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C9S5J>

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How many people does our industry actually need?



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If the industry's workforce is to expand, productivity levels need to increase.

One of our industry's most publicised aims – repeated last week at the *British Hospitality and Tourism Summit* – is to create 300,000 new jobs by 2020. That's some 43,000 new jobs every year for the next seven years. How feasible is this?

Even in the heady period of economic growth between 2000 and 2008 the UK accommodation and food service workforce only grew by an average of 22,200 per year. Could this period of expansion be repeated and even doubled in the next seven years?

In the last few years of high unemployment, disproportionately amongst the young, it is easy to understand the reasons behind stating such goals. But would such growth even be desirable for the industry?

Labour is the greatest cost item in every hospitality business and it is again on the rise, particularly in light of new auto-enrolment pension obligations. No employer is going to create a job simply for the sake of it.

Successful businesses are therefore continually striving to achieve higher levels of productivity. It is the golden thread that separates success from failure. Statistics show that productivity varies massively in our industry. Research highlighted in our new publication *Hospitality Digest 2014* shows that in the hotel sector, sales revenue varies between £2.14 and £18.44 for every £1 spent on labour. David Battersby's article contains indispensable tips on how every business can boost its productivity.

In the rush to be active in job creation, little mention is ever made of the industry's productivity levels. Can we really create so many new jobs when there is a big question mark over how efficiently employers use their existing staff? According to People 1st, there are some 400,000 hospitality staff (20 per cent of the workforce) who do not have the full range of skills required.

If the existing workforce is working at only 80 per cent capacity or less, as the evidence suggests, recruiting more and more workers will not make the industry more efficient, which must be the ultimate aim if profitability is to be maintained.

HOTELS

Stelios poised to float easyHotel

The founder of easyJet, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou is set to push a high-profile listing for his easyHotel company in a bid to raise up to £60m on London's alternative investment market to fund expansion.

It is not yet clear how big a stake the company is looking to sell in this initial public offering, or what it hopes to be valued at, but the funds raised are to fuel growth across European cities, as well as to repay a loan to easyGroup. The announcement comes as the latest in a flurry of IPO rumours and activity around the leisure sector in recent months.

Following Merlin's public listing at the back end of last year, there have been rumours of a float for Prestbury Investments – the property company which owns a number of Merlin's real estate portfolio. This was followed by the latest speculation in the long-running saga over whether Virgin Active will go public, with a £1bn-plus deal apparently in the offing.

"EasyHotel is raising money to accelerate growth at a much faster rate than I could have grown it as a private company, whilst enabling me to spend more time on my diversified portfolio of other investments," said Haji-Ioannou.



Stelios Haji-Ioannou's 'easy' brand covers a number of firms

"I will retain a significant minority stake post-IPO, and I am delighted to hand over to a strong board with a clear growth strategy to take this company to become one of the best known hotel brands in the world."

The chain – which is fully-owned by easyGroup Holdings – was launched in 2004 and has 20 hotels, 17 of which operate as franchises. Seven of these are in London, with two more in Scotland and the remainder spread across Europe, Johannesburg and Dubai.

It is one of the many firms under Haji-Ioannou's "easy" brand, including easyGym. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w4M8K>

De Niro's Nobu Hospitality hits Shoreditch

Nobu Hospitality – a chain famous for its Michelin-starred sushi, celebrity partners including Robert de Niro, and its glitterati clientele – is planning to open its first hotel in Europe.

The site, located in the Shoreditch area of London, will be built in the chain's signature 'east meets west' style. London-based Ben Adams Architects and Californian Studio PCH are collaborating to formulate a concept for the overall design of the project.

The hotel, currently under construction, is due to open in Q1 of 2016. It will feature 156 rooms, a state of the art fitness centre and a large selection of meeting and banqueting spaces.

Trevor Howell, chief executive of Nobu Hospitality noted this would be the company's first European hotel and that the chain is "continuing to expand its global hotel footprint with a robust development pipeline, while working with the best strategic partners."

Architecturally, Nobu Hospitality is aiming to reflect its values within the new construction. Five stories will be stacked on top of each other with fractured beams overhanging



Nobu hotel will feature a triple height restaurant and bar

each level, attempting to create a 'fun-luxury experience' as well as keeping the brand's cool persona at the forefront of the design.

The site has sparked some controversy as its previous designer Ron Arad, who was replaced by Ben Adams Architects after the initial planning stage, said he "shocked" when he saw the latest designs, claiming that major elements had "undoubtedly" come from his original plans. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r9D2q>

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South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council (The Councils) are committed to high quality leisure provision and provide 6 leisure facilities between them. They currently have management arrangements which expire in 2016. The Councils are keen to gauge interest in future management of the facilities prior to commencing on a formal procurement process.

As a result the Councils are seeking informal expressions of interest from interested parties and have engaged RPT Consulting to advise them through the process.

If this is of interest to you please contact Robin Thompson on robinthompson@rptconsulting.co.uk or 07584 486 046 to receive a briefing pack on the current portfolio.



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The winning design from NHM for redevelopment

Niall McLaughlin to revamp Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum (NHM) has announced Niall McLaughlin Architects, in collaboration with Kim Wilkie, as the winners of their Civic Realm competition to come up with a redesign for the grounds of the historic London attraction.

Niall McLaughlin was chosen from a shortlist of five architectural practices also including Stanton Williams, Grant Associates, Land Use Consultants and BIG.

The Civic Realm competition was launched to help address visitor engagement, care of the collection and renewal of the building, as part of a wider masterplan development framework created in 2012 for the five-million visitor a year attraction. <http://lei.sr?a=d9egP>

Work starts on £80m Crescent leisure project

Construction work on an £80m leisure development in southwest Leicestershire has begun month, with the project aiming to regenerate Hinckley town centre.

The Crescent development, a joint project by the Tin Hat Regeneration Partnership and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, will see the construction of a Sainsbury's supermarket with an integrated car park and a five-screen Cineworld multiplex cinema, plus family restaurants.

The project is earmarked to open in autumn 2015, with Bowmer & Kirkland to carry out construction work at the site, based on designs from TP Bennett Architects.

The long-running project has not been without issues though, with Sainsbury's threatening to pull out of the development at one point last year, while The Tin Hat Partnership was also helped out by the Borough Council, which invested £7m in the form of a short-term rolling loan to push the project forward.

The project underwent construction on Monday 2 June, based on a planning application that was approved by councillors in December of last year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F3d5r>

£16.7m grant awarded to Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre, London, is to receive funding from Arts Council England to carry out part of a conservation project across the site.

The £16.7m grant will fund the repair and maintenance of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery. Starting in 2015, the project will begin to address an accumulated backlog of £24m worth of repairs.

Arts Council England will meet 70 per cent of the required conservation budget, while the centre is planning to raise the rest of the funds from trusts, philanthropists and visitors.

Rick Haythornthwaite, chair of the Southbank Centre, said: "We are very grateful to Arts Council England for so



The Hayward Gallery at London's Southbank Centre will be under repair

generously supporting the urgent repair... This is an important step following the delay to our Festival Wing scheme in February."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J4a3x>

£370m mixed-use 'village' for Islington

A new £370m mixed-use 'village' is to be built in Islington on the site of the former North London Sorting Centre, which has been operated by the Royal Mail since 1904.

Developer Sager Group is behind the plans for the 500,000sq ft (46,452sq m) mixed use Islington Square project, which will feature 170,000sq ft (15,794sq m) of retail and leisure space along with 356 residential units.

CZWG Architects assisted with the design, while Cushman & Wakefield will work alongside Orme Retail and Shelly Sandzer as letting agents for the retail and leisure aspect – which will include shops, cafes, restaurants, a health club and cinema.

Sager has owned the majority of the site for a number of years while it obtained detailed planning consents. It is now in advanced



The development will include shops, cafes, restaurants and a health club

negotiations with a number of occupiers to take key elements of the scheme.

Sager's construction programme is expected to last approximately 24 months, with the plan – all being well – enabling retailers to open in time for Christmas 2016.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G6D2W>

Public to be consulted over South Shields development

Planners are to begin discussions with the public over a proposed £100m mixed-use redevelopment of South Shields town centre.

South Tyneside Council and developer Muse Developments are expected to showcase first-stage development plans to locals,

with alterations being put forward to provide a positive impact to all areas of town life.

These will include improvements to shopping and leisure facilities, as well as travel and access around the town.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y6B2f>

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TRAINING

Fitness First issues staff training pledge

Fitness First has hit out at the lack of supervision in UK health clubs, producing research carried out with YouGov which claims Brits spend 'up to 13,500 hours' working out in low cost gyms unsupervised each week.

The research also states 88 per cent of UK gym-goers (from a sample of 2,996 adults) believe having fitness-qualified staff in gyms is important.

In a move that could be viewed as a dig against the 24-hour low cost gyms bidding to tempt away Fitness First members, the company announced it will invest £10m up to 2017 to boost staff expertise.

The money will support Fitness First's specialist training syllabus – which deploys elements of behavioural psychology, sports-science, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and emotional quotient (EQ) training – with all 2,000 members of staff expected to have completed by the end of year. The company also pledged that the entire UK workforce will have an NVQ level two fitness qualification by the end of 2015.

"The UK gym industry has come a long way in the last few years, but gym-goers or not, the vast majority of Brits say supervision and fitness expertise are important to them, and



Many gym-goers think that staff supervision is important

we must go further to respond to that," said UK managing director of Fitness First Martin Seibold. "Gyms should be welcoming and there should always be fitness-qualified experts on hand to give advice, support and encouragement. Experience tells us that these factors are crucial in helping people to remain motivated, and to achieve the results they want."

The 13,500 figure was calculated by extrapolating estimates on supervision hours in 196 'low cost' gyms from the 2013 *State of the UK Fitness Industry* report. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=5h7t8>

Leisure initiatives bring hope to jobless

Young people and the unemployed are being offered the chance of a career in the leisure industry through a raft of new initiatives.

The leisure industry has a long tradition of creating employment and helping people into work, serving as one of the key creators of jobs and opportunities during the depths of the recent double-dip recession.

Job seekers looking for employment at gyms are being given the chance to broaden their skill sets through a swimming training initiative.

From June, Swim UK will be giving free places on its new Level 2 Exercise and Fitness courses to those over 19 and receiving Job Seekers Allowance or similar benefits. School and college leavers are also able to apply.

Meanwhile, Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) has embarked on a similar scheme to give career training and job opportunities to unemployed residents in the town.

The Fit4Work scheme offers unemployed individuals free training in careers such as swim instructing and pool lifeguarding, as well



Lifeguarding and swim instructor classes are among the offerings

as a dedicated work experience placement and a guaranteed interview for casual work.

The aim is to try and decrease unemployment within Oldham, while also benefiting the company by identifying talented local individuals who can be trained to work within OCL.

Elsewhere, the Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT) launched its Sector Based Work Academy roughly a year ago, with the scheme recently attaining an impressive 96 per cent learner satisfaction rate. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V2egC>

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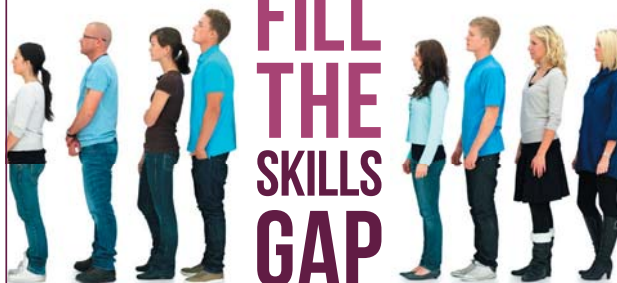
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For an informal discussion, please contact John Maude, retiring Chief Executive, Tel: (01434) 613202. No agency applications will be accepted.

For an application form, tel: (01434) 613203, email: jobs@northcountryleisure.org.uk or visit: www.northcountryleisure.org.uk. Return by: Thursday 3rd July 2014. Interview date: Thursday 10th July 2014.

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To apply or view the job description and personal specification visit www.activeluton.co.uk

The closing date for applications is 22nd June 2014 and it is anticipated that interviews will be held week commencing 30th June 2014

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For an informal discussion about this post, please contact Matt Corder, Health and Wellbeing Manager on 01582 400272.



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Company: Reboot Leisure
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Location: Wilmslow, UK

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Fitness Centre Manager

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Location: London, UK

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Company: Xpect Health and Fitness
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Centre Manager

Company: Impulse Leisure
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Swim Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Fareham, UK

Fitness Manager

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Melton Mowbray, UK

Recreation Assistant

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Newbury, Berkshire, UK

General Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Crosby, UK

Full Time Leisure Assistant

Company: City of York Council
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Spa Therapist

Company: Everyone Active
Location: St Albans, Herts, UK

Duty Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Crosby, Merseyside, UK

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Location: Nottinghamshire, UK

Customer Experience Advisor

Company: Soll Leisure
Location: Ashford, Kent, UK

Parks and Open Spaces

Development Officer

Company: Stafford Borough Council
Location: Stafford, UK

Membership Manager

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2 x Programme Managers

Company: ASA
Location: UK

Membership Sales Consultant

Company: énergie group
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Dance Instructor (Part Time)

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Location: Rushcliffe, UK

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Fitness Leader

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Lifeguards

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Health and Physical

Activity Officer

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Swimming Teachers

Company: Everyone Active
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Duty Manager

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Location: Penzance, UK

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Sport and Health

Development Manager

Company: Erewash Borough Council
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Sports and Activities Coach

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Sports and Leisure Officer

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Membership Consultant

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Casual / Part time Lifeguard

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Redcar, UK

HR Advisor

Company: Brio Leisure
Location: Chester, UK

Sports Facilities Officer

Company: Brighton & Hove City Council
Location: Brighton, UK

Gym Instructor

Company: Carlisle Youth Zone
Location: Carlisle, UK

Membership Sales

Company: énergie group
Location: Hemel Hempstead, UK

Trainee Duty Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Portsmouth, UK

General Manager

Company: Fusion
Location: Uxbridge, UK

Assistant General Manager

Company: The Gym Group
Location: London Wembley, UK

Swim Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Basildon, UK

Membership Consultant

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Basildon, UK

Part Time Fitness Instructor

Company: énergie group
Location: Bromley, UK

Duty Manager

Company: Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club
Location: Surbiton, UK

Macmillan Health and Wellbeing Officer

Company: Active Luton
Location: Luton, UK

Principle Lecturer & Lecturer in Sports Management

Company: Coventry University
Location: Coventry, UK

General Manager

Company: Fusion
Location: Lewisham, UK

Multiple Tutor & Assessor roles

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Location: North and the Midlands, UK

Aqua Fit Instructor

Company: Everyone Active
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Swimming Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Stratford Upon Avon, UK

Gym & Spa Operative

Company: Motive8 Group Ltd
Location: South West London, UK

Freelance Personal Trainer

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Various locations, UK

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Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Erith, Bexley, UK

Instructors

Company: Les Mills
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Company: Everyone Active
Location: Gloucestershire, UK

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Company: Soll Leisure
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Swimming Teacher Vacancies

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Swimming Teachers Levels 1

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Company: énergie group
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Head/Senior Receptionist

Company: Matt Roberts
Location: Mayfair, London, UK

Speedflex Trainer

Company: Speedflex
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Exercise Physiologist

Company: Speedflex
Location: Newcastle, UK

Receptionist

Company: Speedflex
Location: Competitive, UK

Leisure Centre Manager

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Location: Hampshire, UK

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Company: Lifetime
Location: Nationwide

Personal Training Diploma

Company: Lifetime
Location: Nationwide

Personal Trainer/Owner

Company: Your Gym
Location: Nationwide, UK

General Managers

Company: truGym
Location: Various locations, UK

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Company: The Training Room
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Location: Nationwide, UK

Operations Manager

Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK

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Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK

Personal Trainer

Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK

Receptionist

Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK

Housekeeper

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Location: Nationwide, UK

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Company: Amac Training Ltd
Location: Nationwide

Personal Trainer

Company: Amac Training Ltd
Location: Nationwide

GP Exercise Referral

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Location: Nationwide, UK

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Company: Urban Retreat
Location: Knightsbridge London, UK

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Location: Venice, UK

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Location: Sri Lanka

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Location: London, UK

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Location: Manchester, UK

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Location: Surrey, UK

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Location: Bournemouth

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Location: London, UK

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ukactive explains Coca Cola tie-up

Following news of a physical activity push in collaboration with Coca Cola, ukactive CEO David Stalker has outlined what drove the health and wellbeing advocate to team up with the world's largest producer of fizzy drinks.

The *Coca Cola Zero ParkLives* initiative will start at the end of May – designed to offer free activities that promote physical activity – across 70 parks in Newcastle, Birmingham and Newham, London, with plans to expand it to more cities nationwide between now and 2020.

Activities on offer will range from hula-hooping to table tennis and tai chi.

Coca Cola Great Britain has pledged to invest £20m in physical activity programmes over the next six years, as it bids “to help get one million people active by 2020.” ukactive will lead the monitoring and evaluation of the project, with a presence on the oversight committee.

The new initiative has been met with a mixed response from the health and wellbeing community, with some sections welcoming the investment, while Dr Aseem Malhotra, from campaign group Action on Sugar, branded the



Stalker wrote an article titled *Awkward marriage or golden opportunity?*

new project “a really disingenuous stunt.”

Explaining the decision to work with Coca Cola GB, Stalker said in a blog post that it was natural to question the tie up at face value. But, he added, the opportunity to help deliver a free nationwide physical activity initiative was in line with ukactive's mission statement to get “more people, more active, more often,” adding that achieving this “requires partnerships with brands that have the profile to reach consumers at scale.”

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y6z6F>

TfL eyes £37.5m for 'Boris Bike' sponsor

Companies hoping to see their brand become the new sponsor of London's cycle hire scheme will be expected to pay Transport for London (TfL) at least £37.5m for the privilege.

Barclays' five-year tenure as sponsors of the scheme – referred to by Londoners as 'Boris Bikes' after the city's cycling mayor – comes to an end in July 2015 and TfL is seeking £5.5m or more annually over seven years from a potential successor.

The new sponsor will be buying the right to name the scheme and change the colour and branding on more than 10,000 bikes used for short journeys in the capital. The sponsor's brand would also go on vehicles, docking points, pay terminals and staff uniforms for the scheme, which has so far notched up over 30 million journeys. Cycling is seen as integral to increasing physical activity levels, with £100m



'Boris bikes' have notched up 30 million journeys so far

being spent on new schemes to boost participation in outer London boroughs.

“This is a unique opportunity for a commercial partner to put their stamp on a mode of London transport that is as recognisable as our iconic black cabs and red buses,” said mayor Boris Johnson. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j3u6C>

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