

City Centre Director
November and
December 2019
Update Report

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Regeneration News

Travelodge hotel

Travelodge intends to open a 67-bedroom in in disused office space above the Haymarket Shopping Centre and is working with Leicester City Council on the scheme. The council has agreed a £10 million package to assist the project which includes improvements to the offices, which have been empty for 30 years, and the adjacent Haymarket car park.

Work has also begun on the construction of two new lifts, which will provide access from Belgrave Gate to the new hotel and the refurbished Haymarket car park, as well as to the Haymarket Theatre – allowing people with disabilities to have full access to the whole building. Both the hotel scheme and the new lifts are due for completion in August 2020.

NMCN Operations director Nick Banks said: “We are delighted to start on this project in the centre of Leicester and to be part of the regeneration and economy of the area.” City mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said “I’m very pleased that NMCN are now on site as the principal contractor and we’ll soon see some real progress on this scheme,” he said. “Haymarket House has been vacant for years, so it’s really important that this high-profile site in the heart of the city centre is brought back into use. “Leicester’s increasing appeal as a visitor destination means there’s growing demand for hotel accommodation in the city centre, so I’m pleased that this scheme will deliver 67 additional rooms in the very heart of the city. “Our investment in this building will further invigorate the city centre, while providing a welcome boost to the council’s own finances.”

The project will support the regeneration of the key city centre site and the city council has secured a 125-year-lease on Haymarket House, sub-letting the refurbished building to Travelodge. As part of the scheme the city council has carried out a major £1.8million refurbishment of the Haymarket car park, with new surfacing, wider parking spaces, new lighting and improved pedestrian walkways. A new automatic number of plate recognition system and improved CCTV security will also be installed as part of the refurbishment. The city council has extended its lease on the car park – which is owned by Haymarket Property Ltd – until 2049.



The proposed Travelodge at Leicester's Haymarket Shopping Centre

Business News

Ownership change at Chutney Ivy

Shaf Islam has bought out his long-term business partner Simon Postlethwaite to take sole ownership of Chutney Ivy, which has been based in heart of the city's Cultural Quarter for the past decade. He said in that time the business had evolved into more than just a traditional Indian restaurant, becoming a busy bar and a venue for celebrations and business events. Shaf said "Having been known as the Morecambe and Wise of the Cultural Quarter, we have a long-established great working relationship, but I felt with the changing times I wanted to go it alone and Simon felt ready for change too.

"It's a new chapter as we continue to grow, and I am excited for what 2020 will bring." Simon said: "After 10 years I felt the time was right to move on. "I wish Shaf every success in the future and will always be around to support him as he continues to create a restaurant and venue in our city with an exceptional reputation."

Council flexible workspace boost for Fenwick revamp plans

Plans for a major revamp of Leicester's historic former Fenwick building are set to get a boost with £450,000 of council investment for a new flexible workspace. Leicester City Council has announced plans to create almost 12,000 sq. ft of flexible co-working business workspace in part of the ground floor and basement of the 1880s-built four-storey property in Market Street. The city council will invest £450,000 to fund the fit-out and set up costs of the proposed workspace and then take a 25-year lease on the new space. Council funding for the proposed co-working scheme will come from capital set aside for the Leicester Economic Action Plan.

This will support and complement Aimrok Holdings' £17million plans for the building which will see it converted into a 121-bedroom aparthotel, including a hotel lobby bar, restaurant and gym facilities, together with a series of ground floor and basement commercial units. The new development will be called 'The Gresham', in a historic nod to the building's original name. Serviced co-working business space is a growing market that is particularly attractive to start-up companies, freelancers, sole traders and small businesses looking for a flexible and affordable workspace. This would be the first dedicated co-working business space to be developed in Leicester, though similar facilities are becoming more common in other cities including Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby and Coventry.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "The ambitious plans for the redevelopment of the former Fenwick building will bring a huge benefit to other businesses in this part of the city centre. "Building on the success of our workspaces at LCB Depot, Makers Yard and Dock, this new flexible co-working business space will offer a very attractive option for freelancers and for new and small businesses looking for a city centre base. "We're very excited to be able to play a part in the exciting wider redevelopment plans for this historic and important building."

Andrew Crainey, managing director of Aimrok Holdings, said: "We are delighted to be working in collaboration with the City Mayor and Leicester City Council. The council are seasoned operators in this particular property class, and we believe that this partnership is a substantial step forward in restoring this iconic building to its former glory.

Gateley Legal takes on more office space and adds to its headcount

The Leicester office of Gateley Legal is continuing to grow with new appointments and office expansion on the horizon. The law firm, which is based in Knightsbridge House, in Lower Brown Street in the city, has strengthened its presence in the region with five new appointments across its teams. It comes on the back of new figures showing revenues for the listed national firm will be at least £51 million for the six months ended October 31, up from the £46.4 million reported a year earlier.

Gateley said its growth had mostly been organic, attributed to building on the services it offers and expansion in the average number of fee earners to 673, up 10 per cent on the preceding year, and up by a fifth on the same period a year ago. In the Leicester office, partner Satpaul Dard has joined the real estate team, with solicitor Lora Moutafova and trainee solicitor Katie Shaw welcomed into the construction team. Solicitors Andrew Dennis and Sumaya Ali have joined the family and commercial dispute resolution teams respectively. The business also recently secured more office space on the first floor of Knightsbridge House to make room for the growth and the range of legal services it offers to clients.

Chris Greenwell, partner and head of Gateley Legal's Leicester office, said: "As we experience a period of growth in Leicester, we are delighted to attract the right talent to the business. "These new appointments will enable us to expand our presence in the city and broaden our range of services. "The move to occupy new office space also reflects the progress we've made and underlines the confidence we have in the future development of our team." He said Gateley had had an office in Leicester for two decades.

The team was recently ranked tier 1 across five services areas in the Legal 500 2020 listings. It also made four promotions with Claire Herbert, in commercial dispute resolution, becoming partner, Natalie Howes, in the same team, and Melissa Chantrill in real estate promoted to senior associates. Amrit Hunjin, in the family team, was promoted to associate. There were also promotions among support staff. The group was the first commercial law firm to float on AIM in 2015, and has nine offices across the UK, employing 1,000 people.



Some of the Gateley Legal team in Leicester

Transport

Park & Ride every day in Leicester this December

Leicester Park & Ride is running extra services throughout December, which means you can catch a Park & Ride bus into the city centre every day in December, apart from on Christmas Day. The extra services will be running on all five Sundays in December. On those Sundays (December 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29), buses will run every 15 minutes between 10am and 5.30pm from the three sites at Meynell's Gorse, Enderby and Birstall. On top of the Sunday services, BID Leicester is funding extended Leicester Park & Ride services so that people can make the most of late-night Christmas shopping or enjoy a night out. Extended services will be running until 9pm every Monday-Saturday from December 9 to December 23, and the buses will run every half hour from 7pm until 9pm. BID Leicester is also funding an additional service on Boxing Day (Thursday 26 December) from 10am to 5.30pm. The core Park & Ride services are jointly funded by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council.

There will be no Park & Ride services on Christmas Day and New Year's Day and the normal timetable resumes on Thursday 2 January. All three of the Park & Ride sites have free parking for customers, including spaces for Blue Badge holders and parent & child parking.

Free Wi-Fi is available on all buses. The timetable for Park & Ride services in December is available at www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/file/xmas-pr-timetable/.

People who want to choose a green transport option this Christmas could also consider cycling into Leicester city centre. Cyclists can make use of the many free public cycle stands dotted around the city centre – or, for a small fee, can leave their bike at Leicester's Bike Park. Located at the Town Hall - with its entrance on the corner of Horsefair Street and Town Hall Square - the Bike Park offers secure parking with showers and changing facilities for cyclists. Parking costs 50p for up to an hour, or £1 for the whole day.

The Bike Park is open from 8am-6.30pm from Monday-Friday, 8.30am-6pm on Saturdays and 10am-4pm on Sundays. It will close at 2pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve and will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Details of all the events taking place in Leicester this Christmas are available at christmasinleicester.co.uk.

Openings and Closings

We wish all new businesses good trading and a warm welcome to Leicester City Centre!

Open & Opening

Just So Italian Deli, St Martin's Square

A new delicatessen and coffee shop has opened offering a delicious array of traditional Italian produce. Just So Italian has launched in St Martin's Square, in the unit formerly occupied by Escape Asylum. The new business officially opened on Wednesday 13 November. Just So Italian is run by Italian chefs Danilo and Alison Trozzi, who trained and worked in Italy and now live in the UK. Aiming to offer a "true taste of Italy" they already have traditional Italian delis in Market Harborough and Stamford, which they say are just as you would find in towns across Italy. Now they are bringing their selection of Italian delights to Leicester.

Customers can purchase traditional and authentic Italian food to take away, such as fresh cheeses, cured meats and pastries - with an incredible range of cannoli, with flavours including vanilla, chocolate and hazelnut, lemon and pistachio. Ideal for Christmas, there's plenty of panettone, as well as hampers, with selections including spicy, sweet and antipasti. There's pasta – including gluten-free varieties, olive oils, grappa and limoncello, and balsamic vinegar, which is from the same producer that supplies the Queen. Customers can sit and relax with a cup of Italian coffee, and enjoy freshly-made pizza or focaccia sandwiches and sweet options such as bomboloni (Italian custard doughnuts).

Alison and Danilo launched Just So Italian in 2008, and as well as running their own delis, supply Italian produce to other delis around the UK. Passionate about great food, they regularly tour Italy from north to south searching for new and exciting products which not only taste fantastic but have a story behind them. Danilo said: "For us, it's all about the food and the passion behind it. Everything is from small producers in Italy, who we get to know personally. "We want to create a little corner of Italy in Leicester."

Tim Hortons

Canadian café and bake shop chain Tim Hortons has opened at 12-14 East Gates. The 6,500 square foot Leicester branch which is the company's 24th UK site and is the biggest UK branch to date is spread over three floors and has more than 150 seats. The Grade II listed East Gates unit, most recently occupied by designer clothing shop Cruise, has been sympathetically refurbished and retains original features including the beautiful windows and wood panelling on the walls. The building has a long history, and originally opened as Eastgates Coffee House in 1885 during the Temperance Movement.

Customers can relax on the comfy seats - all of which are cushioned - and make use of the plug sockets and USB sockets around the spacious restaurant. There are pictures on the walls showing the journey of the coffee bean from plantation to cup, and on the upper floor is a story wall, with 'Leicester' at the heart of it, plus facts about the brand and a photo of the original branch in Ontario, Canada.

The Tim Hortons brand was founded in 1964 by its namesake, a top professional ice hockey player, who wanted to create a space where everyone would feel at home. The first Tim Hortons in the UK

opened in Glasgow in June 2017, with fans travelling from across the country and queuing overnight to sample the brand's coffee and baked goods.



First look at Tim Hortons, Leicester (Image: Peter Fothergill)

Sophy – King Street

A new bar is set to open in the King Street building formerly occupied by nightclub Sub8ten. The team behind the development has revealed that a cocktail bar, named Sophy. will be launching soon. The name Sophy. is a nod to the nightclub Sophbeck, which was located in the building prior to Sub8ten. It also reflects the feminine look that the bar will have. The design of the bar is set to mix botanical and industrial themes, with feature walls and indoor planting incorporated. You can expect to see a white marble bar top, exposed brick walls and lots of natural light flooding into the venue through the new large windows. All of the former fixtures and fittings have been ripped out and replaced, including the staircase, which is now on the right-hand side rather than the left-hand side as it was previously.

According to the Sophy. team, the bar won't be high end or exclusive, but will provide a place for creatives to enjoy a casual drink in stylish surroundings. Sophy. will initially focus on cocktails, but it is planned that food will be introduced early next year. For further details visit the website <https://www.lovesophy.co.uk/>.

Belezar pop-up store - Highcross shopping centre

A Leicester-based clothing brand has opened its first ever store, in the Highcross shopping centre. Belezar is a family-run men's clothing business which specialises in formal and casual wear. The company has previously been selling clothing via its website, but owners decided that now was the ideal time to launch a pop-up store in their home city - a city they say they "know and love so much." It could be ideal place for men to pick up a suit for any festive functions that are coming up over the next couple of weeks.

The shop has opened on the upper level of Highcross, in the unit formerly occupied by high-end fashion retailer Karen Millen - which closed in January 2019. According to Belezar, more men are now in search of "best fit, quality material and fashionably relevant formal wear". The city clothing brand aims to bring quality and uniqueness to suit the modern man, using a diverse selection of fabrics from brocade silk to luxurious velvets, as well as a variety of colours and styles to suit every shape and preference. Fabrics are all ethically sourced and 80 per cent organic.

Belezar is open until January 10. The shop's opening hours are 9am until 8pm Monday to Saturday, 11am until 5pm Sunday.

Restaurant NineB - Great Central Square development

New independent Leicester restaurant NineB has revealed details about what customers can expect when it launches in Leicester's Great Central Square development next year. NineB is set to open on January 16 and will celebrate the best of Leicestershire's cuisine by supporting local food and drink suppliers. The supplier list, which has been created by food and beverage manager Manish Sharma and owners Charles Street Building Group, will include Leicestershire favourites Brockleby's Melton Mowbray pies, Langton Brewery ale, St Martin's coffee and Two Birds Spirits gin.

Manish Sharma, food and beverage manager at NineB restaurant, said: "We're incredibly excited to be working with some of the county's most prestigious artisan food producers. "Our team of chefs is committed to serving high quality Leicestershire food to local people and we knew we had to start with those award-winning suppliers closest to us.

Manish said: "We're working really hard to ensure that NineB has a comfortable, relaxed ambience that reflects the hospitality of the Roman era, when service was all about the host's duties of hospitality, as well as the divine rights of the guest. "We want our patrons to feel thoroughly looked after during their visit with us."



How new restaurant NineB will look (Image: Konzept ID)

Other News

Leicester's high street has been named 'one of the most thriving in the UK'

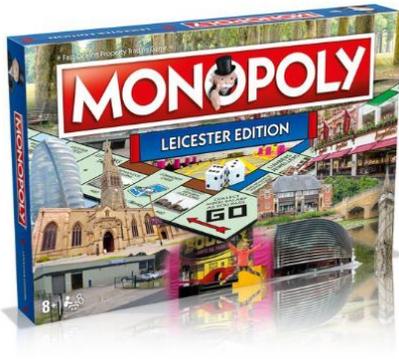
Leicester has been named as having one of the most thriving high streets in the UK according to a new study. Analysis conducted by AskTraders.com shows the city is bucking the trend as retail closures reach a five-year high nationwide. During the first half of 2019, around 16 stores closed their doors every day - whilst only nine stores were opened.

This has resulted in a net decline of 1,234 chain stores across Britain's high streets. To find the best and worst high streets in the UK the trading advice website looked at open data from Link ATM, Which? and the Office for National Statistics which analysed ATM, retail store and bank closures in fifty of the largest cities and towns in the UK. It then looked at the percentage of new openings and retail growth in comparison.

Steve Miley, senior market analyst at AskTraders, said: "The UK high street has been weathering tough trading conditions with many UK retailers dropping by the wayside. "Traditional retail store closures are on the up as businesses grapple with a weak consumer in the face of Brexit uncertainty, the unabated rise of e-commerce, higher costs and changing tastes." He continued: "There are, inevitably, going to be winners and losers. High street retailers with inflexible business models that

have failed to adapt to their changing environment are and will be the most noticeable casualties. "Big names have just vanished from our high street and there will certainly be more to come. "The challenges that the high street is facing aren't going anywhere fast. This will be a case of survival of the fittest. Those retailers that can evolve whilst still giving their customers exactly what they want could have a lot to gain."

Leicester Monopoly set



The first ever Leicester edition of Monopoly officially went on sale on Friday 22 November. The family favourite board game has now added a special Leicester edition to its portfolio. The new set was launched at the Morningside Arena, home of the Leicester Riders. The basketball club are among those to have their own spot on the board. "We are over the moon to have been invited to feature," said Rachel Callis, head of ticketing and engagement at the Riders. "As one of four major sporting organisations within the city, it is an honour to be included."

Other familiar landmarks available in the game include The King Richard III Visitor Centre, Leicester City FC, Leicester Cathedral and The National Space Centre. Each of the four was considered for the prized "Mayfair" spot, prompting much deliberation by the game's manufacturer Winning Moves UK. "We very nearly had to roll the dice on this one," a spokesman said. "It was exceptionally close between all four to land the Mayfair - and just fractions separated the visitor centre and the football stadium."

In the end it was decided that the King Richard III Visitor Centre would take the top spot. It will cost £400 (in Monopoly money). And it was a result that the visitor centre had hoped for. Iain Gordon, visitor centre director, says: "We are so thrilled to have been selected for the Mayfair property space in the Leicester Monopoly game, especially against such strong competition. "It's good to know that Richard III still holds sway in Leicester after 530 years. Long live the King's story!"

The Thomas Cook building as well as the Clock Tower (Old Kent Road) are the game's most affordable property spaces costing £60. Even the money has been personalised to the city with a small crown and a football on the notes. That's because public voting concluded that Leicester City FC and Richard III best symbolised the city. A rocket symbol narrowly came third. Other locations on the board include: the Golden Mile, Abbey Park, Victoria Park, the Clock Tower, Leicester Mercury and many more.

Many of the Chance and Community Chest cards are also Leicester-themed. One even sends players back three spaces for getting scared whilst visiting King Richard III's tomb. The game also sees leading Leicester charity Wishes 4 Kids charity featuring on its own Community Chest space. Afolabi Omotola, custom games executive at Winning Moves UK, which holds the licence from Monopoly owner Hasbro to produce the game, said: "This game is a love letter to Leicester." The new Leicester edition is on sale, from today, for £29.99. It is available at stores including Waterstones, WH Smith and The Works. It can also be purchased online via platforms such as Amazon.

History of children's clothing told in new exhibition

A collection of baby clothes and shoes that tells the story of 350 years of children's clothing opened at Leicester's New Walk Museum on Saturday 16 November and will run until 26 February 2020.. *Dressing for Childhood* features more than 100 items of clothing, with the earliest items on display dating from the late 17th century. A knitted baby's jacket and a baby's christening set – both dating from the 1690s – will be on show, as well as a dress worn by Prince Octavius, son of King George III. The dress, which dates from around 1782, is made from a woven cream silk brocade and features a zigzag pattern of silver metallic thread.

In contrast, the most recent item on display is a child's Kate Greenaway dress that was bought in Marshall & Snelgrove in Leicester in the 1950s. Leicester City Council's collections officer Fiona Graham said: "Our children's clothing collection is rarely seen in public because textiles are so vulnerable to light exposure and can easily be damaged by poor handling and insect attack. "This exhibition is therefore a great opportunity to see the clothes and shoes that children were wearing from the late 17th to the mid-20th century, and to learn how children's clothing has developed over the past 350 years."

It's the first in a series of exhibitions called *Out of the Stores* that will showcase the many quirky and fascinating items in the city council's stores that are rarely on display. Future exhibitions could feature items from the museum's natural history collection that are currently in storage, or some of the pieces from the modern art collection which are rarely on display.

More information about Leicester's museums is available at www.leicester.gov.uk/museums

Council prepares to plant 350 trees this winter

Leicester City Council has marked the start of National Tree Week by taking delivery of hundreds of new trees that will be planted in the city this winter. Between now and February, a total of 350 new trees will be planted in Leicester's parks and on the city's streets – and amongst them will be a number of disease resistant elms. Britain's elm trees were virtually wiped out by a virulent fungal infection in the 1960s and 70s, but now – thanks to the availability of disease-resistant species – the trees are gradually being re-introduced. In Leicester, 34 elms will have been re-introduced to the city by the end of this year's planting season, including a row of 16 new elm trees in Beaumont Park.

"Trees are of huge value to our city," said deputy city mayor for the environment Cllr Adam Clarke. "As well as being great for our general wellbeing, they also help to reduce air pollution, support wildlife and mitigate the impact of floods and heatwaves. "The tree strategy we launched last year sets out our commitment to increasing the number of trees in the city council's ownership and ensuring that the quality of our tree stock continues to be improved. "This year, we're continuing to deliver on that commitment by planting more than 350 new trees in our parks and on our streets – and I'm very pleased that there will be some disease-resistant elms amongst them. "Elms disappeared from Britain's landscape from the 1960s onwards, so it's really encouraging that the availability of these disease-resistant species means we can start to plant these magnificent trees once again."

The city council's tree strategy sets out its commitment to maintaining and replenishing its tree stock, while encouraging other landowners to plant trees too. It also reaffirms the council's policy of planting more than one tree to replace any tree that is lost. The city council spends around £2million every year on managing the city's trees and woodlands. Around a third of this is from income generated from contract work carried out by the council's trees and woodlands team for other

clients. This year's National Tree Week runs from tomorrow (23 November) until 1 December and marks the start of the tree planting season, which runs until February.



Cllr Adam Clarke, deputy city mayor for the environment, visits the city council's Beaumont Park depot as a delivery of elm trees arrives, ready for planting in Leicester this winter.

People invited to help shape Leicester's response to the climate emergency

People are being asked to help shape a citywide vision on the changes needed for Leicester to become carbon neutral and play its part in tackling the global climate emergency. Climate change is one of the most serious threats facing the world. Experts predict that unless drastic action is taken, we are less than 12 years away from global heating becoming irreversible, with catastrophic results. In response, Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019. Along with 1,180 other cities and jurisdictions around the world that have made this declaration, Leicester has signalled its commitment to taking the action needed to help prevent climate change becoming worse.

The city council is developing an ambitious vision for how Leicester will need to respond to the climate emergency and become carbon neutral. This will be backed by a new action plan which people are being asked to help shape as part of a three-month consultation which launches today (19 Nov).

The draft vision identifies the following six key areas where changes will be needed:

- At home
- Our choices as consumers
- Travel and transport
- At work
- Land use, green space and development of the city
- Waste

To reduce carbon emissions at home, housing will need to be a lot more energy efficient and heating will need to move towards low carbon alternatives to gas-powered boilers. A big increase in renewable energy will be needed too. Many people will need help and financial support to make these changes. For the city to become carbon neutral, people will need to be well-informed of the climate impacts of the goods and services they buy so that they can make informed choices and help increase customer demand for climate-friendly products. People's diets will need to have more emphasis of plant-based ingredients to help reduce the amount of meat, eggs and dairy produce we consume.

Travel and transport are a major source of carbon emissions in Leicester and more journeys will need to be made by walking, cycling and public transport. The city also needs to increase the use of

ultra-low emission vehicles. Leicester's population is expected to keep growing and this will mean new homes, employment sites and schools will need to be built. These will need to be designed to be carbon neutral and to cope with the challenges of heatwaves and more frequent intense rainfall. More tree planting will also be required.

Local employers have a big role to play in ensuring their buildings are energy efficient, promoting sustainable transport and ensuring the goods and services they produce and provide are climate friendly. Financial support and expert advice for local businesses will need to continue. The city will also need to reduce its waste and further increase the amount that it recycles.

Deputy city mayor Adam Clarke, who leads on environment and transportation, said: "Leicester has already almost halved its carbon footprint against 1990 levels. The city council has reduced its own carbon emissions by over 45 per cent in a decade. This is a fantastic achievement, but we know now that more needs to be done. "Responding to the climate emergency will mean making big changes to the way we live and work. "It affects everyone and that's why it's so important that people can help shape how the city responds and meets its responsibilities to become carbon neutral. "We've launched a formal consultation but that will be just one element of Leicester's climate emergency conversation. We will be introducing a whole range of other ways that people can have their say on this hugely important issue over the coming weeks and months."

The consultation was launched to an invited audience of local stakeholders and campaigners at City Hall on the 18 No). To take part in the online survey, which will run until Monday 10 Feb 2020, visit consultations.leicester.gov.uk. Leicester City Council also plans to launch a new online discussion forum on the climate emergency in mid-December, and to host two climate emergency assemblies – one aimed at young people – early in the new year.

For updates on forthcoming events being held as part of 'Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation' visit www.leicester.gov.uk/climateemergency.

Grants on offer to help local business vehicles go green

Businesses in Leicester can benefit from a generous grant scheme that aims to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles and help further improve air quality. Leicester City Council is making grants of up to £15,000 available to help local businesses replace polluting diesel vehicles with cleaner, greener ultra-low emission alternatives. The council hopes to award between 100 and 150 grants as part of the scheme, which is due to run until summer 2021. Any local business – from taxi drivers or florists to estate agents or local bakeries – can apply for support through the scheme, if the vehicle is used as part of its day-to-day work.

The grants are intended to cover up to 40 per cent of the difference in replacement costs between new diesel vehicles and more expensive ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). Grants will only be awarded where clear evidence can be provided to show that carbon savings will be achieved by changing to a new ULEV for business purposes. The value of the grants awarded will be linked to the expected carbon savings of the new vehicles. The scheme is part-funded with £1.4million of cash from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), following a successful bid by the city council for over £6million to support a range of ambitious transport-related projects that aim to cut carbon emissions.

Cllr Adam Clarke, deputy city mayor and executive lead on environment and transportation, said: "Supporting businesses in Leicester to green-up their fleets and make to switch to ultra-low emission vehicles will help us continue to cut carbon emissions and further improve air quality across the city.

“Our new grant scheme will offer a generous incentive to help local firms meet the extra cost of replacing an old diesel vehicle with a new low emission electric alternative. “The grants will be a real boost for anyone that wants to make the switch to cleaner, greener low-carbon electric vehicles for their day-today business.”

Grants must be applied for on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis and awards will be subject to ERDF terms and conditions. Support will be available for people interested in making an application. Vehicles bought with grant support must be in operation for at least five years. It is estimated that changing one diesel Hackney cab to a new ULEV model could result in annual carbon savings of over eight tons, with cab drivers eligible to apply for grants of about £10,000.

To find out more about the new grant scheme visit: www.leicester.gov.uk/electricvehiclegrant

Leicestershire Cares newsletter

Sign up to the Leicestershire Cares newsletter and never miss out on news, campaigns and updates by following the link: <https://www.leicestershirecares.co.uk/support-us/sign-our-newsletter/>.

Joe Orton statue confirmed as fund-raising hits target

Fund-raising for a statue of Leicester playwright Joe Orton has reached its £116,000 target in just four months. The appeal, launched in July, has been supported by international stars of stage and screen and was recently helped along by a £40,000 from Ian and Clare Mattioli of wealth management firm Mattioli Woods. Orton grew up on the city's Saffron Lane Estate. He became a figure of major standing in the theatre in the 1960s and beyond because of his dark comedies, including Entertaining Mr Sloane, Loot and What the Butler Saw. He was murdered by his lover and early-days writing partner Kenneth Halliwell in 1967, at the age of 34.

The plan is to put up a statue in Orton Square, outside the Curve theatre in the Cultural Quarter, and it has been backed by celebrities including Stephen Fry and Sir Ian McKellen, as well as civil rights campaigner and former MP Peter Tatchell. Mr Mattioli said: “Leicester is a great place to live and work. It’s full of people who are successful, brilliant and complex. “Joe Orton is Leicester's own James Dean. His short life should be commemorated in his home town.”

The appeal was set up by fans, Orton’s family and Dr Emma Parker, a leading Orton expert at the University of Leicester. Dr Parker said there would now be a design competition among sculptors to choose how the statue will look. She said: “I am absolutely delighted to see the appeal hit its target and it's been great to hear local people express pride at supporting the project. “It's going to be very exciting to see the sculptors' ideas when we launch the design competition. It's important that the statue reflects Orton's subversive spirit.”

Campaign begins to highlight city’s cultural and creative successes

19 local arts and creative organisations are being showcased in a new prospectus and promotional campaign designed to showcase Leicester as the place for experiencing world class culture and growing creative businesses. Leicester City Council has produced the 60-page colour prospectus, highlighting the breadth of the city’s cultural offer through the work of some of its leading arts organisations. It highlights their economic and social impact, both



for communities in the city and across the country and overseas and encourages new opportunities for collaboration.

An accompanying short film has also been produced and is being widely distributed through the digital channels of all the participating organisations. The intention is to attract further investment and use the city's world-class cultural scene to appeal to people to work and live in Leicester. The prospectus will be widely distributed across the city, including in hotels and visitor attractions. The prospectus and the video can be seen at Visit Leicester on <https://bit.ly/2rTyLP6>. The council will also soon start working with partners from across the city's creative, cultural and arts sectors to help draw up a far-reaching action plan to accelerate growth.

Leicester City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "Over the last few years Leicester has really developed its reputation as a place for creative industries to do business, as a city with world-class venues and a thriving artistic scene. "This prospectus and promotional film are the first stages of the process of beginning to build on our reputation, showcasing what is on offer in order to build our appeal to audiences beyond the city, helping attract further investment and inviting collaboration."

The process of putting together the cultural creative industries plan will be led by the city council, in collaboration with arts organisations, city communities, creative organisations and universities among others. Back in 2018, Leicester and Leicestershire were awarded £24.5million of funding from the Arts Council for England, declaring 19 arts organisations (16 of which are in the city) as National Portfolio Organisations for the following four years.

More details on are available online at www.visitleicester/info.

Tigers Hall of Fame evening

As a club with a long and rich history, fans are invited to join the club for a new annual dinner on April 21 as we introduce the Tigers Hall of Fame. This event will bring together past players and current players and acknowledge the contribution and the achievements of some key figures in the club's history. It has taken 140 years to write the story of the Tigers so far and the inauguration of the Hall of Fame is an occasion you will not want to miss.

To find out more, please visit:

https://www.leicestertigers.com/news/hall-of-fame?utm_campaign=The%20Business%20-%20Rugby%20World%20Cup%20dinner%20gallery%2C%20Tigers%20Hall%20of%20Fame%2C%20Referral%20scheme%20-%2003%2F12%2F19&utm_source=emailCampaign&utm_content=&utm_medium=email

Leicester named as one of five UK cities to watch in 2020 by property giant Consorto

A European real estate specialist has picked its top five UK cities for investing in next year. The team at Consorto have highlighted five cities as ones to watch – partly because of the amount of construction activity going on there, on top of things like growth prospects and graduate numbers. Between them they will offer many billions of pounds of investment opportunities in the coming years. Experts at the Consorto, which has operations across Europe, say that even with a new government set to be elected and Brexit stagnation slowing the country down, Britain still has lots of potential.

It said the city destinations picked are among the most popular with Consorto users, while the UK as a whole remains a top investment target for EU investors. Consorto chief executive Philip Verzun

said more than half of UK commercial real estate investors were coming from overseas, attracted by a weakened pound caused by Brexit uncertainty.

He said: “Despite uncertainty, the UK is still a preferred destination for global corporate real estate investors and is the number one destination on Consorto. “Opportunities to add yield will likely remain the key focus for investors until more clarity is provided on the macroeconomic outlook. “While the short-term outlook for the commercial market is arguably volatile, the long-term outlook remains healthy. “We have noticed an increased demand for locations outside London, where yields are more attractive.”

Consorto is a pan-European commercial B2B online property marketplace covering sectors including office, industrial, retail, hotels and resorts, land, mixed use, special purpose and development sectors. The Consorto UK commercial property market destination picks to look out for in 2020 are:

Leicester

The UK’s eighth largest city with a population of more than 500,000, is said to have achievable annual city centre office yields of 5.2 per cent. Right now, a £250 million, 125-acre Leicester Waterside regeneration scheme is underway providing added investment opportunities, while student accommodation is also in demand from 30,000 students at its universities. Leicester has been named among the top 10 UK economies according to the PwC Good Growth Index, thanks to low unemployment and rapidly improving city life and is the second-fastest growing UK city – up 1.3 per cent a year, according to the ONS. Buy-to-let investors benefit from undersupply and relatively low property prices, and the city’s £19 billion economy has been voted among the best to do business.

Birmingham

The UK’s second largest city has achievable, annual city centre office yields of 4.96 per cent. Its economy is worth £28.1 billion, up a quarter in five years, while office investment volumes are up. It has been listed among the coolest places to live in Britain and is only behind London when it comes to direct investment. A £25 million city centre regeneration project is planned, and the city profile will be boosted by hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Glasgow

The UK’s seventh largest city offers achievable, annual city centre office yields of 4.72 per cent. It is in the top 10 cities for population growth and aims to be the most productive UK city economy by 2023. There are investment options for accommodation for its 185,000 students and the city profile will be boosted by hosting the Euro 2020 football tournament

Liverpool

The UK’s third largest city with a population of more than 864,000 has achievable city centre office yields of 5.8 per cent a year. It is attracting more than £1 billion a year in investment and up to 2 million sq. ft of new commercial space is planned in the city centre over the next 15 years. Right now, more than £3 billion of development projects are progressing across Liverpool and strong buy-to-let rates are possible. There is also student accommodation demand from more than 70,000 students at its three universities.

Sheffield

The UK's fifth largest city has achievable city centre annual office yields of 5.85 per cent. Its population of more than 685,300 is expected to grow by 70,000 over the next decade and there is strong demand for student accommodation from 63,000 students at two city universities. There are major opportunities in the £500 million Heart of the City II plan, which totals 1.5 million square feet of development and there are also plans to make Sheffield city the best start-up zone in Britain.

As drink drive season begins, wellbeing company releases self-testing breathalyser kits with hope of saving lives

Whilst it might be the season to be jolly, new evidence suggests that drink driving continues to be a growing problem which is why Leicestershire police have announced their 2019 drink drive campaign since an increase in offences last year. In December 2018, Leicestershire Police officers made 122 drink and 33 drug drive arrests, this was 56% more than December 2017 which saw 78 drink and 21 drug drivers detained at the roadside.

With so much confusion around what are the legal limits allowed when drinking and then driving, it's little wonder that so many partygoers fall foul of the law – often unintentionally. Leicester-based health & wellbeing experts, Check My Health, have released a Breathalyser Self-Test kit that allows users to test themselves to see if they're below the legal limit before getting behind a wheel. Check My Health, which is part of the Unlimited Wellbeing Group, have also underlined their commitment to making the region's roads safer by offering businesses throughout the East Midlands the opportunity to obtain some free samples that can be handed out to employees ahead of the party season.

The pocket size kits take a simple saliva sample (a swab of the mouth) and, much like a home pregnancy kit, will give an immediate result. Partnering with leading supplier, Accutest Solutions, these pocket-size breath-testing devices are as accurate as a blood test with results in just 4 minutes. It is thought that this could significantly reduce DUI - (Driving Under Influence) offences - with research proving that 90% of drivers would support in-car breathalysers. The kits have been widely used on the Continent for several years and is part of a 'suggested' car care-pack that every driver is expected to have in their glovebox.

The kits, which can be purchased via <https://checkmyhealth.today/product/accutest-breath-alcohol-detector-twinpack/> are priced at just 4.99 for a pack of two. Local businesses that would like to access free samples or purchase wholesale should email hello@unlimitedwellbeing.co.uk or call 0800 1822 150.

Awards and Accolades

Winners of the 2019 Leicestershire ProCon property and construction awards

Homes for students and a family, an architect's own offices, a special needs school and a bridge were among winners at the 2019 ProCon Leicestershire Awards. The ceremony at Leicester City's King Power Stadium recognises the best construction projects in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. Three corporate sponsors backed the Awards: Galliford Try Partnerships, Salus Approved Inspectors and Unique Window Systems.

During the ceremony a Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Roy Coley, managing director of Leicester-based Sowden Group. Roy, who joined the building trade at 16, bought the contractor

Sowden & Co in 1978 and went on to set up the developer Sowden Group in the 1990s. Sowden Group has developed office space, retail, warehousing and residential projects across Leicestershire and beyond.

Politician and TV and radio star Gyles Brandreth hosted the event for 620 people and conducted the raffle in aid of Leicester General Hospital's Neurological Rehabilitation Unit. Mark Heggs of the University of Leicester, an avid supporter of ProCon, is fundraising for the unit, via the Leicester Hospitals Charity, after its staff helped him recover from his stroke at the age of 53. There were also special prizes for innovation awarded to The Willows housing development in Husbands Bosworth and Holy Trinity Church in Leicester.

LeicestershireLive Business Executive of the Year Awards 2019

Some of Britain's best business brains have been honoured for their contribution to the prosperity of UK Plc. The most successful owners, managers, CEOs and managing directors from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland were recognised at the annual LeicestershireLive Business Executive of the Year Awards. The awards, now in their eighth year, were presented at a black-tie ceremony at Leicester City's King Power stadium, which paid tribute to individuals who help keep thousands of people in work and contribute tens of millions of pounds to the economy. The overall business executive of the year was Mick Jenney, managing director of Harrison Castings, in Leicester.

The 2019 annual lifetime achievement award was presented to David Wilson CBE DL, for his decades-long contribution to housing and construction. Deborah Ewan, chief executive of Pukka Pies, was named executive of the year in a large company. Alex Nash, founder of Alcuris, which offers technology to prolong the independence of older and vulnerable individuals including those living with dementia was chosen as the 2019 young business executive of the year. Business consultant Ian Guylar – a well-known and popular member of the local business community – was named non-executive of the year.

Leicester Curry Awards 2020

Fans of Indian cuisine are now able to vote for their favourite curry house in the Leicester Curry Awards 2020. Now in its fourth year, the Leicester Curry Awards aims to celebrate the city's vibrant Asian culture and the culinary craftsmanship that goes into making Leicester one of the UK's most prized curry destinations. It's seen many curry houses from across the city and county win awards, and now it's almost time for the public to have their say once again. Categories will include Restaurant of the Year, Best Vegetarian Restaurant, Best Takeaway, Best Pub Restaurant, Best New Restaurant and Best Fine Dining Restaurant. Plus, new for 2020 the Best Street Food category.

Nominations opened on Sunday, December 1, via the Leicester Curry Awards website <https://leicestercurryawards.com/>. Public voting will decide the top five restaurants in each category. It's then over to a panel of mystery judges, who will each be assigned a number of the top five restaurants/takeaways in each category to judge against a strict criteria. Winners and runners up will be revealed on April 20 at the awards ceremony. In order to participate, all restaurants and takeaways nominated must have a hygiene rating of 3+.

Next year's event is supporting two new local charities, Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) and Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland. The event also has a new sponsor - Kings Real Estate, in addition to existing sponsors Mattioli Woods, Bond Adams, Cobra Beer, Anand and Daewoo International, and associate sponsors SANS Catering Supplies.

Romail Gulzar, founder of the Leicester Curry Awards, said: “The response to the Leicester Curry Awards continues to exceed my expectations year after year and we are very excited to see what the fourth annual event has in store. There are so many wonderful curry houses in the city and county and we’re so proud to be able to give them the recognition they deserve.”

Leicestershire Tourism and Hospitality Awards 2019

Tourism businesses across Leicestershire are celebrating after being recognised at the Leicestershire Tourism and Hospitality Awards 2019. Gold winners were announced in 29 categories at the event, held at Leicester's Athena venue. The judging process involved reviewing each finalist's original submission, online research and mystery shopping from an independent panel. Now in its ninth year, the awards, organised by Leicestershire Promotions, are the regional heat of the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence.

Of the winners, 10 will go forward as Leicestershire’s nominations for the national awards. One of the big winners on the night was The National Forest, which was recognised as this year’s Tourism Superstar for its remarkable work in transforming large swathes of scarred and damaged countryside into a successful tourist destination.

The team behind the success of the Mods: Shaping a Generation Exhibition and tie-in ReVive Festival were thrilled to win the best free Event/Festival of 2019 at the Leicester Promotions Leicestershire Tourism Awards on 29/11/19.

Local charity Soft Touch Arts received funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Bid Leicester, and worked in partnership with Joe Nixon, Founder and Director of Arch Creative and author and curator Shaun Knapp and New Walk Museum. They engaged with former Mods who told their stories. Young people listened to the stories and did their own research and produced Mod inspired creative content. The result was a blockbuster exhibition at New Walk Museum and Soft Touch Arts between April-June 2019 attracting 35,000+ visitors from Leicestershire, across the UK and as far afield as Australia. It brought the Mod youth subculture scene in Leicester and Nottingham to life, alongside a wide range of retro-themed events as part of a new festival for Leicester - ReVive.

A full list of winners can be seen via : www.goleicestershire.com/trade/tourismawards

Festivals and Events

Proud Leicester pays tribute to fallen soldiers at city's annual Service of Remembrance

Honouring fallen soldiers, a legion of remembrance services were held around Leicestershire on Sunday 10 November. In the city, thousands of people gathered At De Montfort Hall where a parade marched from Centenary Walk to the Arch of Remembrance in Victoria Park. The parade set off at 10.35am and was made up of members of the armed forces, veterans, cadets, and police officers. It was followed by a two-minute silence at 11am, which was marked by the firing of maroons.



BBC Radio Leicester Presenter Dave Andrews introduced the speakers and the Bishop of Leicester Right Reverend Martyn Snow led the service. He spoke about those whose lives in world wars and conflicts past and present have been given and taken away.

Right Reverend Martyn Snow said: “We gather today from many different places. A rich mixture of people with different backgrounds, different beliefs, different views on the world, but today powerfully united in this act of remembrance. “United in our shared humanity, united in our common desire to ensure that those who gave their lives in the cause of peace and justice should never be forgotten. “United in shared horror of war united that our desire that peace should rule not only our own land, but around the world.”

Prayers and hymns were sung in the autumn sunshine stirring emotion throughout the moving procession to all those in attendance. Civic and military leaders, and official dignitaries were called upon to lay wreaths such as Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire Mike Kapur OBE, and Councillor Annette Byrne, as well as representatives from different faiths.

The crowd heard from veteran Gordon Bennett who honoured friend Keith Chapman from Countesthorpe as he remembers being with him the day he was killed. A week later, Gordon was wounded in the same spot. Gordon and his family stood to lay a wreath and was welcomed by a round of applause. Tributes were also made around the county in towns and villages. More 30 other services were held around Leicestershire including Cosby, where thousands of poppies were dropped from an aircraft.

Members of the public put up poppies at the Groby community Tommy gathering. Purple poppies also remember the animals who served during the war. An exhibition telling stories of Leicester’s fallen service people is being held at Leicester’s Newarke Houses Museum. In Memoriam runs until February 9, 2020. Leicestershire County Council is displaying poppies on lamp posts along Championship Way, placing two Royal British Legion ‘Tommies’ silhouettes at the entrance of County Hall car park, and lighting up County Hall in red.

Christmas in Leicester

Octopus Energy helps light up Leicester for Christmas

Octopus Energy, which has a large customer service team in the centre of Leicester, helped light up the city at Christmas this year, thanks to its partnership with the city council. The energy company, which supplies almost 1.2million UK homes, was once again the headline sponsor for the switch-on of Leicester’s Christmas lights. This year, Octopus Energy also sponsored the giant tree that has pride of place next to the city’s famous Clock Tower. The 50ft spruce is decorated with 900 brand new baubles this year, giving Leicester’s tree a fresh new colour scheme for 2019.

Over 22,000 visitors watched as the tree was lit up by thousands of pea-lights on Thursday 21 November as part of a packed programme of entertainment sponsored by Octopus Energy. The switch-on event included music from popular Leicester band, the Platforms, while 4th Avenue entertained the crowd with their Motown-inspired hits, and Gareth John performed Christmas favourites from Frank Sinatra and Michael Bublé.

There was a song from Antony Costa – the singer from *Blue* who is appearing in De Montfort Hall’s Christmas pantomime, Aladdin, and who helped Lord Mayor Cllr Annette Byrne turn on the Christmas lights. "Octopus Energy is delighted to be the headline sponsor of the Leicester City Christmas Lights Switch-On for the second year running," said Rebecca Dibb-Simkin, Product and

Marketing Director at Octopus Energy. “Leicester is a brilliant city and we’re really excited to have this connection with a community that shares the Octopus mission of speeding the transition to a clean energy future.”

Deputy city mayor Cllr Piara Singh Clair has welcomed Octopus Energy’s support. “It’s very important that we create a Christmas atmosphere in Leicester that people who live and work in the city will enjoy – and that also helps to attract shoppers and visitors from outside the area,” he said. “Generous support from our sponsors helps us make our Christmas budget go further, so we’re very grateful to Octopus Energy for working with us again this year to help get the countdown to Christmas under way in style.”

Leicester’s lights are powered by 100% renewable electricity. Once the festivities are over, the city’s decorations will be packed away, ready to be used again in future years, while the giant Christmas tree will be recycled and re-used as chippings. More information about Christmas events in Leicester is available at christmasinleicester.co.uk. More information about Octopus Energy is available at octopus.energy.

Anyone who missed the big switch-on can watch video highlights of the event by following the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PINPvZjO0AE>.

Christmas in Leicester events are set out below: -

The Wheel of Light, Jubilee Square

Enjoy a bird’s eye view of Leicester’s Christmas lights from our 110-ft Ferris wheel. Daily (closed Christmas Day and New Year’s Day) until 6 January. Family ticket £15 (4 people); adults £5; concessions £4. 11am-9pm Mon-Thurs; 11am-11pm Fri-Sat; 12noon-9pm Sun.

Traditional nativity scene and Woodland Tales, Town Hall Square

See the story of Christmas and an animated tableau scene under the festive lights in Leicester’s historic Town Hall Square

Funfair, Humberstone Gate

Family-friendly fairground rides in the heart of the city centre until 6 January

30 November-1 December: Christmas Fair. The Guildhall.

Arts, crafts, gift ideas and locally-sourced food and drink.

Admission £1 adults; children free. Tel: 0116 253 2569.

11am-4pm

1 December: Make your own Christmas tree decorations. New Walk Museum.

Admission £3.50. Tel: 0116 225 4900.

11am-4.30pm

From 5 December: Christmas Ice Rink. Jubilee Square

Skate on our spectacular real ice rink, whatever the weather!

Tickets from christmasinleicester.co.uk, Visit Leicester on Gallowtree Gate and the Jubilee Square box office. £10/£8.50 (£9/£7.50 at off-peak times). Skate for a fiver on our preview days (5-6 December)

From 10am daily (11am on Mondays to Fridays until 20 December) until 5 January. Closed Christmas Day and New Year’s Day.

From 7 December: Santa in the Square. New Market Square

Visit Santa in his snow-covered grotto, every day until 22 December. Free admission – and free small gift for every child.

Monday-Friday: 11am-6pm; Saturday: 11am-6pm; Sunday: 11am-4pm

8 December: Christmas Movie Day at the Guildhall

Enjoy some of the best Christmas films in front of an open fire in the beautiful Guildhall.

The Muppet Christmas Carol (10am; 12.30pm); The Wizard of Oz (3pm); It's a Wonderful Life (6pm)

Admission £5. Tel: 0116 253 2569.

8 December: Christmas Toys & Steam Day. Abbey Pumping Station

Start the festive season with a visit to the Abbey Pumping Station Museum and a chance to see the Gimson beam engines in steam!

Admission £3.50 (£2.50 concessions). Tel: 0116 299 5111.

12noon – 5pm

From 12 December: LightWeight. New Market Square

Strike a pose at LightWeight, a giant shimmering globe featuring live animation, every day until 21 December. Presented by Bid Leicester.

5pm-10pm

Now open: The Jägerhaus. St Peter's Square, Highcross

Enjoy the finest festive food and drink at Leicester's German-themed outside bar.

Open daily from 10am-9pm until 28 December

Christmas gift ideas at Visit Leicester on Gallowtree Gate:

Book your tickets for Leicester's real ice rink. Choose from a wide range of Leicester-themed gifts, including gorgeous hand-painted baubles and Christmas cards.

Christmas shows in Leicester include:

23 November – 11 January: West Side Story. Curve

28 November: The Nutcracker. Haymarket Theatre

9-31 December: Giraffes Can't Dance. Curve

9-26 December: Beauty and the Beast. Peepul Enterprise

12 December: Sleeping Beauty. The Y Theatre

13 December – 5 January: Robin Hood. Little Theatre

14 December – 5 January: Aladdin. De Montfort Hall

14 December: The Wizard of Oz. The Y Theatre

17 December: Christmas Cabaret. The Y Theatre

21 December: Jack's Giant Adventure. The Y Theatre

Something for everyone at Leicester's ice rink this Christmas

Football fans, Bollywood enthusiasts and anyone who loves dressing up in a Christmas costume can look forward to some special events taking place at Leicester's Christmas ice rink this month. The first themed session took place on Monday 16 December, when BBC Radio Leicester's Ian Stringer hosted his Football Forum programme, live from the ice rink in Jubilee Square. Ian was joined by former Leicester City star Matt Piper and other special guests to chat about football.

Next Thursday (19 December), some of the best Bollywood tracks around will provide the soundtrack for the 7pm skating session. BBC Radio Leicester's Kamlesh Purohit and Shruti Chauhan

will present Bollywood Tamasha on Ice, with music, fun, and a family skating ticket up for grabs for the best Bollywood skater. And then on Saturday 21 December and Sunday 22 December, the build-up to Christmas continues with a crazy Christmas costume competition.

Any skater wearing a great Christmas jumper, a Frozen costume or a full Santa suit could win a pair of tickets for another session on the ice. A pair of tickets will be awarded at the 10am, 11am and 12 noon skating sessions on both days. The final special session of the year takes place on Monday 23 December, when Leicester City mascot Filbert Fox puts his giant skates back on to show off his moves on the ice. Skaters can join Filbert on the ice from 6pm-9pm on Monday 23 December.

Tickets for all the themed sessions can be booked via Leicester's dedicated Christmas website, www.christmasinleicester.co.uk, from the Visit Leicester information centre on Gallowtree Gate or from the ice rink ticket office at BBC Radio Leicester. Standard rates for adult skaters are £10, with tickets for children (aged 16 and under), senior citizens and students priced at £8.50. Discounts are available for groups of four or more people, so a family of four will be able to skate for £34.

Anyone skating between 11am and 4pm on Mondays to Fridays until 20 December – the off-peak period before the schools break up for Christmas – can save £1 on standard prices. Skating aids for young children – in the shape of penguins and seals – are available and can be booked in advance online or hired on the day at the ice rink, subject to availability. Wheelchair users can join in the fun on the ice at any session at any time. Leicester's Jubilee Square ice rink is open every day until Sunday 5 January 2020, apart from Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Skating starts at 10am each day (11am on Mondays to Fridays until 20 December), with the last session of the day starting at 8pm.

Detail of all events taking place in Leicester this Christmas are available at www.christmasinleicester.co.uk.

Little Mix

Little Mix are heading to Leicester this summer for a gig at Grace Road. The girl group's 2020 tour will stop at Leicestershire County Cricket Club's ground on July 17. Little Mix's Friday night concert comes one evening after Irish man-band Westlife play the Fischer County ground.

In a statement, band members Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Leigh-Anne Pinnock and Jade Thirlwall said: "Our last summer tour in 2018 was one of our favourites ever, so we can't wait for some more brilliant outdoor shows next year. "We want everyone to come party with us in the sunshine."

The Foxes' chief executive Karen Rothery said: "We at Leicestershire County Cricket Club are thrilled that we can now add Little Mix to our line-up of concerts taking place at the Fischer County Ground. "Having Westlife and Little Mix concerts back-to-back is a huge coup for the club and will go a long way to making us Leicestershire's premier outdoor venue. "Over the course of the two evenings, we hope to attract different audiences many of whom may not have visited the Fischer County Ground before which will raise awareness of the club throughout the city. "We look forward to welcoming everyone to our historic club."

Little Mix tickets are on sale via ticketmaster.co.uk.

New Leicester immersive experience will give you the chance to step into Van Gogh's paintings

An immersive experience is coming to Leicester following successful runs in Brussels, Naples and York. Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience will be housed in the ancient and beautiful All Saints Church in Highcross Street and is set to launch in January 2020. Visitors will be able to step inside the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh, one of the world's most famous artists. The multimedia experience tells the story of the 19th century impressionist painter's life and work. Projections, recreations and interactive elements of the artworks will fill the Grade I listed exhibition space. More than 200 of Van Gogh's works will be featured, but rather than remaining static, the huge projections of paintings will come alive with digital animation and an emotive soundtrack.

Visitors will see through the eyes of Vincent Van Gogh during the 35-minute-long, 360-degree experience. The man behind the project is Mario Iacampo, creative director and founder of Exhibition Hub. He has worked with some of the world's leading animation artists to create this unique experience. "For so many people, art is inaccessible" says Mario. "Paintings hang isolated in galleries where you understand little about the work. This immersive experience changes that completely. Some of the most famous art works in the world are shown on a grand scale and brought to life with movement that isn't confined to the edges of a picture frame." Visitors of all ages are sure to be delighted by this colourful and engaging insight into Van Gogh's life and artistic perspective using cutting-edge technology and world-class digital animation.

The immersive experience is designed to appeal to a wide range of people including local residents and school groups, tourists to the city and art societies. Lovers of fine art and fans of digital animation are likely to be impressed by this moving story and its distinctive style of presentation. Best of all, visitors will not need any previous knowledge of the artist or his works to enjoy the experience in full. Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience will be at All Saints Church, Highcross Street, from January 31 to May 10, 2020.

Admission prices are £13 for adults, £11 for concessions and students and £9 for children. Family tickets are available for £38 (two adults and two children). Discounted rates are available for school or community groups and quiet sessions will be held throughout the run to encourage visits from people with special educational needs. Tickets can be bought via the website <https://www.vangoghexpo.co.uk/>.



Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience

UK Pun Championships winners belt donated by current champion

The reigning champion of the UK Pun Championships, which takes place each year as part of Leicester Comedy Festival, has donated a championship belt which will be presented to the winner of the championships each year from 2020. Colin Leggo, who won the competition in February 2019, has designed and donated the belt and will be in the ring at the climax of the 2020 competition to hand it over to the next winner, together with host Jason Byrne. The belt features the names of all the previous winners (including Darren Walsh, Leo Kearse, Masai Graham, Lovdev Barpaga and Rob Thomas) and will be engraved with the winner names each year from 2020. Full details about the UK Pun Championships can be found by visiting www.ukpunchampionship.co.uk

Leicester Comedy Festival is run by Big Difference Company (registered charity 1135167). All surpluses made by the charity are invested back into the event. The UK Pun Championships 2020 will take place at De Montfort Hall, Leicester on Monday 10th February. Tickets are now on sale from www.comedy-festival.co.uk.

January 2020 Festival and Event Listings

Saturday 4 January	Tigers v Bristol Bears	Welford Road	15:00
Saturday 11 January	Leicester City v Southampton	Leicester City Football Club	15:00
Sunday 12 January	Tigers v Cardiff Blues	Welford Road	15:15
11 & 12 January	GWBR	Morningside Arena	9:00 - 17:00
Friday 17 January	Riders v Worcester Wolves	Morningside Arena	19:30 - 21:30
Wednesday 22 January	Leicester City v West Ham	Leicester City Football Club	19:30
Friday 31 January	Riders v London Lions	Morningside Arena	19:30 - 21:30

For more information on Festivals and Events please visit: <http://www.visitleicester.info>

Get in Touch

If you know someone who would like to receive this report, please send contact details to gitte.magielse@leicester.gov.uk.

If you have news about your own business or industry for inclusion in these reports, would like further information or if I can help you in anyway, then please do get in touch. My contact details are as follows:

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