

KNOWSLEY Place News

BUSINESS HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND KNOWSLEY

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Business Awards celebrate the best of Knowsley

The business community in Knowsley turned out in force once again for this year's Knowsley Business Awards. More than 660 people packed out the Grand Marquee at Knowsley Safari – making this the biggest awards event so far for Knowsley.



The winners were:

- Housing Development of the Year – Countryside Properties
- Commercial Development of the Year – db symmetry
- Green Award – Green Growth Power
- Retailer of the Year – Walton Flooring Centre
- SME of the Year – Blends Ltd
- Investment of the Year – Jaguar Land Rover
- Newcomer of the Year – LM6 Commercial Property
- Transport & Logistics Business of the Year – Sovereign Transport Services Ltd
- Employee of the Year – Mike Matthews – St. Modwen
- Corporate Social Responsibility – Knowsley Community College in partnership with Knowsley Council
- Excellence in Export – Clarke Energy
- Excellence in Export (SME) – Minta Group
- Small Business of the Year – Citrus Electrical Ltd
- Manufacturer of the Year – Tratos UK Ltd
- Manufacturer of the Year (SME) – Olympic Foods

Big increase in jobs and businesses

New figures released in October confirmed a boom in the number of businesses establishing themselves in Knowsley – and a rapid rise in job creation too.

The Office for National Statistics confirmed that Knowsley really is leading the way when it comes to business growth. Since 2014, when the council agreed to refocus and accelerate its economic growth plan, Knowsley has welcomed an extra 935 businesses – an increase of 29%. **This is highest rate of growth in the Liverpool City Region and double the rate of growth nationally.**

This increase in business numbers has also helped to provide thousands of new jobs in Knowsley each year, with approximately 6,000 new posts created during that time.

These latest figures come on the back of earlier data from the Office of National Statistics that showed that Knowsley had the **highest rate of growth in productivity out of more than 350 places across the country – up 140% since 1997.**

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT DRIVES UP COUNCIL INCOME

Increased growth and housing development has seen Knowsley's **Council Tax base rise by more than the national average over the last four years.**

New figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government reveal Knowsley has increased its Council Tax base by 14.2% since 2014.

The national average increase during the same period is just 10.3% and the average Liverpool City Region increase just 10.2%.

And there's more good news...

November's Planning Committee in Knowsley saw approval of a range of new developments for the borough. As well as exciting new homes, shops, Shakespearean theatre and even a hotel, it is estimated that the projects combined will generate approximately £1.1 million annually in business rates and Council Tax receipts.

This is all great news for Knowsley and clearly shows the impact the ambitious growth strategy is having.



New boutique hotel for Prescott

A new Shakespearean themed luxury boutique hotel in Prescott has been given the go ahead. The 27-bed hotel, set across five floors will include a restaurant, bar, function room and car parking.

The development will bring back into use a currently empty site directly opposite Prescott train station and create new job opportunities for local people both in the construction phase and once the hotel opens.

It is envisaged that the new hotel will provide much needed accommodation for the increase in visitors expected when the new Shakespeare North Playhouse opens in 2020.

200 businesses benefit from relief scheme

Almost 200 Knowsley businesses are set to benefit from a new relief scheme set up by the council to cover increases in their business rates.

In response to the Government's revaluation process and potential increases for some businesses, the

council is managing a fund of £198,000 which will cover up to 100% of the increase in business rates for around 190 firms in the borough this year. The move has been welcomed by the business community, especially the small firms who would be heavily impacted by such increases.

Kirkby regeneration pushes forward

Progress on the regeneration of Kirkby town centre is pushing forward with really positive progress being made in the last couple of months.

Planning permission for the key retail aspect of the development has been granted. This will be anchored by a new Morrisons supermarket and

include additional retail units, a petrol station and car parking.

Work has already started to demolish a number of derelict buildings to make way for the new development, which is expected to start on site in 2018 and be completed in 2019.

Alongside this, it has been confirmed that St. Modwen has also been selected by the council to deliver a complementary leisure scheme in the town centre. This will include a new cinema and three new restaurants and bars.



Amendments to Shakespeare theatre plans approved

Revised plans for the Shakespeare North Playhouse in Prescot have been given the go ahead. The amendments to the original scheme approved in April 2016 include the addition of a dedicated Exhibition and Education Centre, changes to the external glazing façade and removal of plans for a basement.

This is a further positive step forward for the landmark project which will include a 350 seat theatre, education facilities, performance studio, exhibition area, office accommodation, a small shop, a coffee shop and bar and an outdoor performance area to accommodate an audience of 150.

It is hoped that a main contractor will be appointed before Christmas 2017

and that pre-construction work will begin in February 2018. It is anticipated that the construction will be completed by April 2020 with the first Masters Students expected to start their studies in October 2020.

What's happening now?

Further archaeological investigations are taking place on site. Earlier work uncovered medieval and post-medieval artefacts.



Business opportunity in Prescot

A tender process is underway to secure an occupier for a newly remodelled and refurbished building in Prescot town centre.

The premises and adjacent public space is being designed by Mark Wray Architects and Seed Landscapes, the winners of an international design competition.

The new facilities are being transformed as part of the Prescot Townscape Heritage Initiative and will link with the new Shakespeare North Playhouse, the town centre and other key developments in Prescot.

Interested parties have until Friday 12th January to apply.

Other news in brief

- Knowsley's Beverston Engineering – a manufacturer of state-of-the-art engineering components for a range of industries – is celebrating after the news that UK Aerospace has secured a £9 billion order following the Dubai Airshow. This is the biggest ever Air Bus order which will mean many more busy years ahead for Beverston.

- The last of eight new Knowsley gateway signs has been installed.



- Countryside Properties' Highfield Green in Kirkby has picked up the Regeneration Award at this year's North West Property Awards.

- Orbit Developments' construction on Phase 1 of Academy Park is well underway.

Other news in brief

- Great news for The Spa at Suites Hotel as it retained its 5 Bubble Spa Rating and picked up the Health and Beauty Business of the Year Award at the Merseyside Independent Business Awards 2017.
- The refurbishment of a 200,000 sq ft warehouse at Knowsley Business Park – Knowsley 200 – has been completed.
- Knowsley based Walton Flooring picked up the Retailer of the Year at the Merseyside Independent Business Awards.
- Network Space has secured planning permission and £1.8 million of funding to start the next phase of the Alchemy industrial site on Knowsley Business Park.
- Stuart Lord, Director, Production Operations at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Mark Povall, Strategy Director from Liverpool John Lennon Airport have joined the Knowsley Place Board.



Affordable homes and Extra Care scheme for Kirkby

A development of affordable homes and an Extra Care scheme in Kirkby have been granted planning approval.

Liverpool Mutual Homes will deliver the scheme on a disused brownfield site. The development will see the site transformed into high quality housing and supported living accommodation for some of the area's elderly and vulnerable people.

The state-of-the-art Extra Care facility will comprise a mix of 100 one and

two bedroom apartments, with support provided around the clock to meet residents' individual needs. Additional benefits will include a communal sensory garden and an on-site bistro and hairdressers.

Westhead Avenue's additional 70 properties will comprise 16 supported housing units, as well as 54 two and three bedroom houses and bungalows, earmarked for affordable rent and rent to buy.

Figures confirm national rise in GCSEs

Figures released by the Department for Education in October confirmed the strong performance of Knowsley's GCSE students this year with pass rates rising almost 7% more than the national average.

The results come after a period of intense focus on raising educational attainment across the borough, in a partnership between schools, Knowsley Council and the newly established Knowsley Education Commission.

Securing such a strong improvement in good passes across the borough is a real achievement, especially in a year when changes to the marking and grading system have been introduced.

This improvement also means Knowsley has moved off the bottom of the national performance table for GCSEs.

KNOWSLEY SCHOOLS WIN BIG AT EDUCATE AWARDS

There was more positive news for education in Knowsley at this year's Educate Awards. The awards celebrate the best in the sector in the region and this year Knowsley's schools and staff were big winners.

Not one but four Knowsley schools were recognised - Plantation Primary School in Halewood achieved the Outstanding Sport in Primary School Award, Finch Woods Academy in Halewood picked up an award in recognition of its provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Evelyn Community Primary School in Prescot won the Innovation in Education Award. There was also recognition for Halewood Academy who were runners up in the Most Inspirational Secondary School category.



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