

WORKERS SET ABOUT CONSTRUCTION OF **THE HIVE**

The Hive, the new indoor leisure destination for Halton, has moved a significant step closer with construction workers now on site for the 12-month build programme.

Developed by Widnes Regeneration Ltd, a joint venture between Halton Borough Council and St Modwen Properties PLC, phase one of The Hive will include an ice rink, a multi-screen cinema operated by Reel Cinemas, 24-lane bowling alley operated by Tenpin, Frankie and Benny's restaurant together with retail and additional restaurant units creating an entirely new leisure experience in the borough.

Leader of Halton Borough Council, Councillor Tony McDermott, said: "This is another important milestone reached in the process of delivering leisure facilities that the people of Halton can be proud of and will use again and again."



L-R Tony McDermott (Halton Council), Rob Polhill (Halton Council) and Richard Bakes (St Modwen)

"The whole Waterfront development is progressing confidently at the moment and by the end of this year it will have changed out of all recognition again as other developments come on stream or reach completion. This is an exciting time to be involved in the future of Widnes and the whole of Halton."

Richard Bakes of St Modwen said: "We are delighted that work has now started on site and look forward to the opening of this exciting leisure development next spring."

It is anticipated that the main construction work will complete in November with fit-out of the ice rink and cinema commencing before the end of the year.



Developer Priority Sites and representatives from Halton Council welcomed rugby great Jonathan Davies MBE to officially open Turnstone Business Park recently, a significant milestone in the regeneration of one of The Waterfront's major developments. (see page 2 for more)



A word from
**COUNCILLOR
TONY
MCDERMOTT
MBE**

All large scale, complex and demanding regeneration projects, if they are to succeed, will reach a tipping point. By that I mean the point in the steady and relentless drive towards completion when it becomes evident that the project has reached that crucial, critical mass when all the elements fall into place.

I sincerely believe that The Waterfront programme has reached that tipping point.

Work has begun on the major leisure development, the new gyratory, a number of key environmental projects, like the new Linear Park are either about to get underway or nearing completion and the first new speculatively built office development in Widnes for many a long year is open for businesses.

Widnes Waterfront is now well and truly on the map. It is recognised throughout the region as a modern business location: a far cry from its status just a few short years ago.

We recently welcomed back to the borough rugby legend Jonathan Davies who opened Turnstone Business Park.

I well remember the seismic effect Jonathan's signing had on Widnes Rugby League Football Club and, indeed, the whole town way back in 1988.

Jonathan's presence not only galvanised the team and its supporters but also the town. Jonathan's arrival was the catalyst for the resurrection of the clubs fortunes.

I would argue that the developers at The Waterfront have made a similar leap of faith.

I sincerely hope, and confidently believe that, like Jonathan before them, the confidence that the developers are showing in Widnes will be rewarded.

News

RUGBY GREAT RETURNS 'HOME' TO MARK KEY MILESTONE IN WIDNES REGENERATION

The Waterfront was the scene of double celebrations recently, when regeneration specialist, Priority Sites, marked the completion of its 60,000 sq ft business park development by welcoming rugby legend Jonathan Davies MBE back to Widnes.

Priority Sites, which is currently sponsoring Widnes RUFC, has completed 60,000 sq ft of quality business accommodation for the area. The scheme forms a key part of the £70 million regeneration project currently underway at The Waterfront, which when fully completed, will create up to 2,700 jobs and provide the town with a thriving new commercial centre.

The Turnstone Business Park development offers Priority Sites' hallmark recipe of high quality office and hybrid accommodation, which has been very popular among a variety of occupiers across the country, looking to relocate or expand their businesses. The self-contained units range in size from 2,254 to 6,616 sq ft and are available for sale or rent, on flexible terms.

Murray Carr, Area Development Manager for Priority Sites commented at the event: "We are very excited to see this day arrive, it is a significant marker in the regeneration of Widnes and a key milestone in Priority Sites' £50 million development programme for the North West region. We are delighted that a legend such as Jonathan Davies has come back to Widnes to witness at first hand how collective regeneration efforts are transforming the town."

Murray adds; "We have worked closely with Halton Council over the past few months to provide a new development that will respond to the high market demand for quality, flexible business space in the local area and interest has been very high. The park opens with several units already

under offer and we are confident that the remaining space will be snapped up quickly."

Halton Borough Council Leader Tony McDermott said: "It's about 20 years since Jonathan Davies was electrifying the crowds at Naughton Park playing for Widnes and it's great to see him back here today.

"Jonathan inspired belief in Widnes back then and it is fitting that he is on hand to witness the latest stage of redevelopment of The Waterfront as it is doing just the same thing for the borough today.

"We're sure he'll notice a number of improvements in the whole of Halton since the late 80s and will recognise the borough as an area that is going places."

FIRST PHASE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED TODAY FOR MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT



The first phase of formal planning applications for the Mersey Gateway Project have been submitted.

The Mersey Gateway Project has submitted two planning applications outlining major alterations to the road network in Runcorn and Widnes and an application for listed building consent to change the traffic flow and road layout on the Silver Jubilee Bridge once the Mersey Gateway bridge has been built.

While the applications are not for physical works to the proposed bridge, they represent an important step in the vital second crossing becoming reality.

Following these applications a series of consultation exhibitions will take place at the following locations:

Date	Time	Location
Monday 9 June	12noon - 8.00pm	Stobart Stadium, Halton
Tuesday 10 June	10.00am - 5.30pm	Stobart Stadium, Halton
Wednesday 11 June	12noon - 8.00pm	The Brindley, Runcorn
Thursday 12 June	10.30am - 4.30pm	The Brindley, Runcorn

Further information can be viewed at www.merseygateway.co.uk



EARLE ROAD LANDSCAPING

Work to extend the landscaping further along Earle Road is well under way. The new planting and public realm is pushing further into The Waterfront opening up new development opportunities.

FORWARD KEEPS UP WATERFRONT MOMENTUM

Construction work has started on a £2.4 million regeneration project at The Waterfront.

Forward Partnership has commenced construction at its Forward Point development. The scheme will create 1,535 sq m of valuable new office space, across three modern, flexible office buildings with glass façades.

Situated at the junction of Tan House Lane and Moss Bank, Forward Point is positioned at one of the key access points to The Waterfront.

Forward's Chris Wright said: "Our aim is to provide high quality office space for businesses from within and outside the region. Forward Point has been designed to attract growth sector businesses that will create job opportunities for the local community.

"We are already experiencing strong demand for the space, proving that this location is sought after and an up and coming place to do business."

The appointed construction team, which consists of contractors Globe Management Serviced Ltd, CB3 Architects and structural engineers Clancy, have already completed

ground preparation work to begin the much-anticipated big dig.

The scheme will bring back into use brownfield land. The three buildings will be released for sale or lease and are expected to be completed in October this year.

The Liverpool office of Mason Owen has been appointed as sole letting agents for the development. Contact Chris Connor on 0151 242 3000.



Chris Wright of Forward Group

Atisreal secures appointment for Bayer CropScience site



Atisreal has been appointed by Bayer CropScience, one of the world's leading crop science companies, to provide planning consultancy and agency advice in respect of the forthcoming sale of its manufacturing site on Gorsey Lane - one of the largest sites in single ownership in the North West.

The site comprises approximately forty acres and following selective demolition a series of industrial and office buildings totalling approximately 75,000 sq ft will be left in position.

The Bayer CropScience site is located adjacent to The Waterfront and occupies a prominent site with extensive frontage to Gorsey Lane. Demolition is scheduled to be completed during late 2008 and early 2009.

WORKS TO IMPROVE BOTTLENECK JUNCTION ACCELERATE



A £1.24m improvement scheme that will simplify the junction between Widnes Eastern Bypass, Fiddlers Ferry Road and Earle Road is well under way.

The works, that will remain in place until around July will greatly improve access for all users to The Waterfront and aid traffic flows around one of the busiest junctions in Widnes.

Newcomers



As new developments are springing up across The Waterfront, a number of new businesses have also started to pop up.

Let's take a brief look at some of The Waterfront Newcomers.



B&Q

The Waterfront's most well-known newcomer is household name DIY and home ware retailer B&Q which has relocated its Widnes store to a new purpose-built warehouse facility on Dennis Road.

For opening times or other information please contact the store direct on 0151 495 2010 or visit www.diy.com



CHESHIRE PLUMBING SUPPLIES

Plumbing and heating merchants, Cheshire Plumbing Supplies were one of the first names to move onto Heron Business Park, and are open to the trade and general public. The company which has a team of four staff, have been located on the site since November 2006.

Contact them for more information on 0151 420 4003.



CUNNINGHAM BROWN LTD

Cunningham Brown Ltd is a building company which carries out all aspects of construction work within the commercial, education and insurance sectors.

They specialise in the reinstatement, refurbishment and re-modelling of buildings with a client base that includes Royal Mail, major insurers, school authorities, universities and the NHS.

The company can be contacted on 0151 424 6677.



EDMUNDSON ELECTRICAL

Edmundson Electrical have also taken advantage of a new central location amongst other complementary businesses by relocating their busy trade counter operation into modern, spacious, purpose-built premises at Widnes Trade Park.

Contact them on 0151 424 7411 for more information.



KEYTRAK

Keytrak Lock and Safe Co, master locksmiths and security installation specialists, have relocated from Warrington to Unit 1 Heron Business Park. Keytrak is a long established privately run business that employs 11 skilled personnel, and offers services encompassing all aspects of physical and electronic security systems and devices to private and public sector clients, along with on-site locksmith services.

Contact: 0844 669 1292



MAINTENANCE CLEANING SERVICES

Maintenance Cleaning Services is a specialist contract cleaning company, providing services in specialist contract cleaning - high pressure water jetting, and closed circuit television surveys for: drainage, vessels, silos, confined spaces and inaccessible areas. The company employs 20 people.

For more information contact: 0151 420 0200.



SCREWFIX

Screwfix is the first stop for thousands of tradesmen and D.I.Y enthusiasts due to the wide-range building electrical and plumbing products offered.

Recognised as being where the 'trade buys' and being fully committed to superior customer care and support, Screwfix can promise a truly fast and reliable trade counter service and next day delivery into store or to mainland U.K.

Contact: 0151 423 0502



TUBE FABRICATION MACHINERY LTD

Tube Fabrication Machinery Limited is a privately owned company specialising in the supply of all types of tube bending & processing machinery. From its North West base in Widnes, the company supplies businesses throughout the UK and offers a full backup service. Tube Fabrication Machinery limited is the exclusive UK dealer for TubeMart, a subsidiary of world leading tube manipulation machinery manufacturer, AddisonMckee. **Contact them on 0151 424 0763**



WIDNES BLINDS

Widnes Blinds has also recently relocated to Heron Business Park. The company, which manufactures and installs window blinds, were previously located on the outskirts of the town centre, but now see the advantages of a more central location in The Widnes Waterfront area.

Contact: 0151 424 0444 or visit www.widnesblinds.co.uk

News

RAILWAY TRACK

The Llangollen Railway Trust's bid to restore the former Llangollen Railway line between Ruabon and Corwen in North Wales has been put right on track - thanks to the Council. It has come to the aid of the trust by donating the disused railway track and ancillary materials from the former Blue Circle sidings, which stretch the length of the linear park.

Thanks to the council and the agreement of the linear park funders - NWDA, ERDF and the Halton Strategic Partnership - the donation will see the Halton Blue Circle sidings find a active new life across the Welsh border. The linear park will benefit as well, as a section of embedded track and 100 of the best conditioned sleepers will remain on site as feature landscaping.

Funding secured for Linear Park

Halton Council has secured £675,700 of funding to create a 500 metre long 'linear' park at The Waterfront on the site of a former railway line.

The funding has been sourced from Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) (£360,000); European Regional Development Fund (£204,500) and from Halton Strategic Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (£111,200).

The funding will be used to complete all site investigations, design development, land acquisition and the physical creation of the new park.

Work is expected to get underway in April with the park completed in the autumn.

LESSONS FROM THE WATERFRONT

Pupils from Wade Deacon High School enjoyed a taste of the new national curriculum recently as they rose to the challenge of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Week.



The Waterfront was the focus of the week's activities as pupils divided into teams to study the environment and plan for regeneration.

Each team of Wade Deacon pupils was assigned a plot of land within the development area which they could develop for a variety of uses.

Representatives from each team visited the Waterfront site and reported back to their teams on what the Waterfront looked like and how it could be improved.

In ICT lessons, pupils created a variety of advertising banners and videos to market their plans, while in Technology and Maths lessons they produced accurate scale models of their Waterfront area along with futuristic designs for public buildings they would like to see developed.

In Science lessons pupils studied how bird anatomy is adapted to life in the real world, and how architects draw inspiration for buildings from bird physiology.

WARTH WILDLIFE

The burgeoning of Spring brings many changes to the Mersey Estuary, on the marshes the bleached gold of winter is rapidly overtaken by lush green growth. The masses of wintering wildfowl and waders have melted away leaving behind smaller numbers of breeding birds.



The 'dweedling' song of the Redshank can still be heard on these marshes, though breeding numbers remain low due to the lack of grazing. It is hoped that as part of the regeneration of the Waterfront we will be able to re-introduce cattle and further increase the diversity of the wildlife to be found here.

One bird that is most obvious through the spring and into early summer is the Shelduck. It breeds in good numbers along the estuary and its favoured nest site is an abandoned rabbit burrow. This is the



largest of our native duck species. At long range it looks black and white, but closer too a rich chestnut band can be seen across its chest and then along the belly. The bill is a vivid red colour. Close views of this bird can be had from the viewing platform on the Widnes Warth.

The marshes are dotted with posts and close inspection some of these may reveal the presence of the locally rare Water Ladybird. This is like a small, elongated version of the more commonly observed Seven-spot ladybird. Much easier to see on these posts will be hunting Common Buzzards. This is probably the most abundant predatory bird in Halton. A remarkable fact considering that it only appeared as a breeding bird about fifteen years ago.

By the end of the April the reedbeds of the marshes and along the St Helens Canal will be jumping with freshly arrived warblers from Africa. Look and listen for the Reed Warbler in the pure stands of reed. It has

Waterfront shuttle-bus service begins

The Waterfront's newest bus service has recently started making the area even more accessible than ever.

The number 13 service will be operated Monday to Saturday by Halton Traveller Ltd. on behalf of Halton Council.

It will provide a frequent shuttle service between the new B&Q store and Widnes Green Oaks between 0700 and 0900 and 1800 and 2320.

For more information about the service that links The Waterfront with Widnes town centre, Cherry Sutton, Hough Green railway station and Ditchfield Road, please call the **Neighbourhood Travel Team on 0800 1953 173**, email ntt@halton.gov.uk or check out the Travel and Transport section of the website on www.halton.gov.uk/transport

a rather 'chuntering' song that lacks the high, laughing giggle present in the warblers of its close relative the Sedge Warbler. This latter species prefers areas reed with a mix of bramble tangle and small trees, particularly Hawthorn.

Out on the mudflats there may seem little to observe, but spring is the time when many fish, including Sea Bass, come to the estuary to spawn and their presence can bring the unexpected sight of a Grey Seal, or even a Harbour Porpoise, right into the heart of the inner estuary. Just one more piece of evidence to demonstrate the dramatic recovery made by Halton's natural environment, from the ravages of its industrial past.

Photographs of Common Shelducks (top) and Common Buzzard (bottom left) courtesy of Jeff Clarke.

News

FUTURE FLOWER

MARKS THE GROWTH OF WIDNES WATERFRONT

Award winning architectural practice Tonkin Liu has won an international design competition for a new £125,000 landmark public art commission at The Waterfront.

As part of a wider public art and environmental uplift programme, over the last six months Waterfront bosses have sought a creative designer to deliver a major piece of public art which is to be funded solely from external sources.

The brief called for a dramatic artwork sympathetic to the ambitions of the Widnes Waterfront and alluding in contemporary expression to the environmental and social character and of the region.

Future Flower

The winning proposal Future Flower, is a dynamic 12 metre high wind powered sculpture with bright yellow Perspex petals that gently flutter and light up in the wind.

The direction of the wind determines which petals illuminate resulting in an ever-changing and dynamic sculpture.

Leader of Halton Borough Council, Tony McDermott, welcomed the appointment. He said: "We had an excellent shortlist to

choose from and some thoroughly inspiring and thought-provoking designs. Tonkin Liu bring with them a wealth of experience in designing and delivering memorable pieces of public art in the UK and internationally.

"People are often cynical about pieces of public art but we see this piece, coupled with the extensive public art programme as making a real difference to the environment. We are not expecting the Future Flower to become the Eiffel Tower of Widnes but it demonstrates growth, civic pride and our belief in the area.

"To the thousands of people that work in the area and the thousands that will view it from other vantage points in Widnes it will hopefully resonate change and an emerging future for the entire borough.

"We are very pleased that they are on board and are sure that their Future Flower will become a firm favourite with the people of Halton."



The next meeting of the Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group will take place on Wednesday 18th June at The Foundry on Lugsdale Road between 12.00 noon and 1.30 pm. Invitation will be issued shortly but for more information call Steve Clark on 01928 516124.

Further Information

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