

NEWS

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Leam Hydro Project

Action21 with Warwick District Council and the Leamington Transition Town steering group are investigating the feasibility of installing hydro powered electricity generation on the River Leam at the Mill Bridge and Princes Drive weir sites. This scheme would include consideration of flood alleviation plans for the centre of town that were put forward by Warwick District Council.

To this end Action21 are working with local renewable energy company Encraft to commission a feasibility study and are seeking £3,750 to cover the cost of the study. Pledges of matched funding have already been received from the sponsoring organisations.

The feasibility study will include:

- The technical feasibility of the hydro and flood alleviation scheme
- A review of environmental impacts
- Exploration of capital funding models including community ownership of the generated electricity

Action21 are seeking donations, however small, from the local business community to help move this important project forward. To donate call Rick Smith, General Manager of Action21 on 01926 456 067 or email rick@action21.co.uk. All donations will be gratefully acknowledged.

Business Recycling Scheme

It's official – businesses in Warwick, Leamington and Wellesbourne are seeing the green shoots of recovery. Local companies are taking up the opportunity to recover and recycle their waste,

at the same time saving money on their monthly bin costs. Warwickshire County Council is backing a new business service being provided by HW Martin. Martin's have managed the county's household waste recycling centres for more than two years and this year is celebrating 10 years in recycling and waste management.

Martin's recycling service has been designed to be cost-effective and easy to use. Recyclable materials can be wrapped together with pre-paid Martin tape, placed in pre-paid sacks (from a roll of 20), or for larger amounts there are a range of wheeled bins available. All materials can be collected (as long as it is not hazardous waste) and they can be mixed together or separated out. Separating the materials before collection reduces the price to the business.

Tania Wall at Leamington-based Palmer Hargreaves Wallis Tomlinson comments: *"Not only are we saving money but HW Martin have also offered a lot of support in finding the right recycling solution for us."* For more information and to arrange collections, call free on 0800 121 4879 or e-mail recycling@hwmartin.com.

Retail Radio Link

The Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative (WRCI) provides businesses with a security system directly linked to the Town Centre CCTV Control Centre and Warwickshire Police. This service operates 24/7, every day of the year so you can be sure that your business is connected to the support you need when you need it.



The report also commends the service for its comprehensive integration into the local shops via the 'Retail Radio Link', a system of hand held radios used to assist communication at ground level. The 'well trained and motivated' staff were also singled out for praise.

Looking to the future, it is hoped that further external funding can be achieved to widen the camera network and take full advantage of wireless technology to lower installation costs, whilst reviewing the current location of some cameras to ensure coverage of the most advantageous positions. The full report can be found on the Warwick District Council website: www.warwickdc.gov.uk.

The WRCI are currently offering the opportunity to spread the cost of purchasing a radio. To be eligible, you must be an independent business based north of the river Leam.

For more information contact Mike Cornes on 01926 450 595 or email wrci@btconnect.com.

CCTV Scrutiny Report

A comprehensive review of the CCTV service operated by Warwick District Council has recently been completed. The results of the review have overwhelmingly endorsed the high quality and professionalism of the current service, working in partnership with Warwickshire Police.

Safer Neighbourhoods

Safer Neighbourhood Teams work with communities and partner organisations to identify and address local and force-wide policing priorities. For more information and the contact details of your local Safer Neighbourhood Team visit: www.safer-neighbourhoods.co.uk.

Guidelines for 'A' Boards

- It must not exceed 60cm in width and 1metre in height.
- It should be placed at the back of the footway (near to your business premises).
- It can only be placed outside your own business.
- You must have £5 million Public Liability Insurance.

Complaints received about A Boards that are too large, are placed away from the shop or block the line of sight for drivers and pedestrians are followed up by Warwickshire County Council. It is your responsibility to make sure that the placement of your board does not create an obstruction or could cause an accident.



PARTNER FOCUS

Royal Leamington Spa Chamber of Trade



The Chamber has recently celebrated its Centenary Year with a whole host of workshops, events and commemorative commissions. A specially designed timepiece was unveiled at Leamington Town Hall and businesses have been invited to contribute to a time capsule.

The Chamber have two positions available on their Executive Committee – a representative from the Evening Economy and a manager for Membership Services. The committee meet monthly to discuss member issues. If you are interested in fulfilling one of these vital roles or contributing to the time capsule please contact the Chair, Parminder Birdi on 01926 337 648

OTBA Old Town Business Association



Old Town Business Association

Founded in 2002, the Old Town Business Association is an independent organisation that represents businesses based in Old Town. They are currently working with an independent consultant to examine their future service delivery and focus. Help create an action plan for the OTBA, come along to the AGM on Monday 18th May, 7.30pm at the Salvation Army Centre, 1a Chapel Street. All old town business owners and managers are welcome to attend. Please contact the Chairman, Graham Allen for more information on 01926 426 573.

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 1

April 2009



Meet your new TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

As your new Town Centre Manager, it is my role to serve the needs of the local community, attract shoppers and businesses into the town and to promote Leamington through the co-ordination of activities and events in the town centre.

We have over a thousand businesses based in the town centre, covering a broad range of sectors from retail to construction. Half of the businesses are based south of the river in Old Town and we have a strong retail offer north of the town. With around 65% of the businesses in the town independent traders, this unique mix of national and individual brands places us in an excellent position to serve our local community and attract shoppers.

However in this current financial downturn, I am mindful of how

shoppers are changing their habits, travelling further for better deals and expecting a high standard of customer service. I am working with businesses to strengthen customer loyalty. If you have any ideas, please get in touch.

It is great news that we now have a BID (Business Improvement District) operating in part of the town centre to deliver additional services over and above those provided by the Town Centre Partnership. I work closely with BID Leamington to ensure that we co-ordinate our events and promotions effectively. Currently, we are developing a new website which will make it easier for customers to access promotions, to find your business and to keep up to date with events in the town.

I work as part of the Town Centre Partnership – an organisation

set up to enable key groups and organisations in the town to work together. The Town Centre Partnership Steering Group are currently reviewing the town centre action plan and are developing a vision and strategy for Leamington which will take us through until the year 2026. Over the next few months, we will ask for your feedback and ideas to help us shape this plan.

Join my email circulation list and I will keep you up to date with all the latest news and developments. Just send me your email address and you'll receive regular bulletins.

I am looking forward to meeting you over the coming months and discussing future plans and projects with you. **If you have any issues or concerns affecting your business which you would like to discuss in confidence, please contact me on 01926 456 017, 07788 722 042 or email: pamela.dunsdon@warwickdc.gov.uk**

Pamela Dunsdon
Town Centre Manager –
Royal Leamington Spa

Current Partners

We are fortunate to have a number of key sponsors, financial contributors and supporters:

- BID Leamington Ltd
- Mercia
- Norman Stephens Unlimited
- Leamington Spa Courier

- Old Town Business Association
- Pub Watch
- Royal Leamington Spa Chamber of Trade
- Royal Leamington Spa Town Council
- Royal Priors Shopping Centre
- Tandy UK

- Touch Radio
- Warwick District Council
- Warwickshire College
- Warwickshire County Council
- Warwickshire Police
- Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative
- Wright Hassall Solicitors



Leamington & District Flood Forum

This group meets every quarter to discuss issues concerning residents and business owners relating to the water systems in the area. If your property is flooded from a public sewer, please telephone the Severn Trent emergency number on 0800 783 4444.

For more information regarding sewer flooding, visit the Severn Trent Water website: www.stwater.co.uk/server.php?show=nav.5902

TOWN CENTRE ECONOMY

Local Business Forum

This is a new group that has been set up by James Plaskitt to engage with businesses asking them what they want the government to do for them in response to the current economic climate. There have been two meetings so far. For more details and the latest updates visit: www.jamesplaskitt.com/businessforum.



Small Business Rates Relief

The Government introduced a new Small Business Rate Relief Scheme with effect from 1 April 2005 enabling certain small businesses to claim relief up to a maximum of 50% of their rates bill. To qualify for relief you must occupy and have to pay rates on either:

- One property with a rateable value below £15,000, or
- One main property and other additional properties, providing these additional properties each have rateable values less than £2,200 and the aggregate value of all the properties is less than £15,000.

To find out more or to request an application form, either visit www.warwickdc.gov.uk or call Warwick District Council on 01926 456 066.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

In response to the current climate, Warwick District Council are running a number of initiatives aimed at helping to support businesses through these challenging times:

Weathering the Storm

A series of FREE workshops for small businesses, delivered in partnership with the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.

Two workshops have so far been held, one at The Chesford Grange Hotel and the second at The Holiday Inn, both in Kenilworth. Presentations covered included: reducing business costs, creating effective marketing plans, managing redundancies and growing your business.

Date of next session

Wednesday 3 June 2009, 8.00-9.30am, Saxon Mill, Warwick

For further information contact:

Jodie Kennedy Tel: 024 7665 4227

Email: info@cw-chamber.co.uk, Website: www.cw-chamber.co.uk

Business Link Credit Crunch Hotline

Business Link West Midlands is the main provider of business support in the area and operates a Credit Crunch Hotline, 8am to 6pm: 0845 002 0900 Email: info@businesslinkwm.co.uk. Website: www.businesslinkwm.co.uk

Warwickshire College Courses

For free careers and redundancy advice, Essential Skills and Business Start-up courses, and advice for employers on how to Future-proof your business, visit: www.warkscol.ac.uk/Credit_Crunch



Good News

Althorpe Enterprise Hub

This brand-new centre providing fully-furnished office premises for new businesses operating in the high-technology and creative sectors is now open for new business clients. Althorpe Enterprise Hub offers a combination of open plan desk space, and small and larger grow-on units totalling 5,500 sq.ft. of lettable space. The Centre will have the capacity to provide accommodation, and jobs, for over 60 people and in excess of 30 businesses. Specialist advice will be available to help start-up companies develop and plan for the future.

For further information please contact:

Enterprise Development Manager Ray Smith on 01926 833 908, Althorpe Enterprise Hub Manager Anne Douglas on 01926 833 909 or by email enterprise@warwickdc.gov.uk. Details of location, facilities and tariffs can be found by visiting www.wdcbusinessenterprise.co.uk.

Mystery Shopping

Angi Egan from Pure Vision is a retail and merchandising expert. She carried out a mystery shopping exercise last month visiting five Leamington outlets – a beauty salon, fashion retailer, coffee shop, electrical retailer & gift shop.

In summary, Angi found her shopping experience disappointing, encountering unhelpful or disinterested staff in four out of the five businesses. Angi says "there are a few lessons we could all learn when

it comes to excelling at customer service.

Now, more than ever, there needs to be comprehensive change on the high street which demands a true passion for your product and a fanatical understanding of who is going to want to buy it."

Visit www.purevisionuk.com for Angi's suggestions to help make Leamington Spa a leading town when it comes to providing top notch customer service.

Inward

Investment

The Warwickshire Investment Partnership function for Warwickshire County Council responds to investment and property enquiries for Warwickshire, helping businesses to relocate, start up or expand. This includes finding business premises for industrial, office, land and retail use.



On average they receive 800 enquiries a year, however, due to the current climate they have so far received 475 property enquiries. As you can see, numbers have declined recently, but on a positive note the enquiries they receive are more focused and are more likely to result in a business relocating to the area or expanding.

They work closely with local property agents to ensure that they are marketing the commercial premises in Leamington and Warwickshire. There has been an increase in vacant premises due to businesses closing and the team are working hard to ensure that they have those premises on their database and website.

To find out more, please contact the team on 01926 412 140 or by email on wips@warwickshire.gov.uk.



TOWN CENTRE EVENTS

Christmas Lights Switch On

This established event always draws a large crowd, not only to enjoy the shopping, but also the fairground rides and local performers on the stage outside Leamington Town Hall. Countdown to the Big Switch On was led by the Leamington Mayor and Special Guests from the Royal Spa Centre's panto 'Beauty & the Beast'.

Thanks go to BID Leamington for co-ordinating the brochure listing all the activities in the town over this period and for their contribution to the new Christmas Lights in the north of the town.

Fairtrade Fortnight – 23 February to 8 March

Aimed at promoting businesses that stock Fairtrade products, 21 businesses signed up to take part in the first Fairtrade Trail in Leamington on Sat 7 March. This fun event involved people visiting participating businesses and collecting Fairtrade Facts to qualify for a whole range of fantastic prizes from boxes of chocolates to even a windchime, all Fairtrade.

If you stock Fairtrade products and would like to be included in next year's Fairtrade Directory contact Robert Nash at Leamington Town Council on 01926 450 906.

For more information, visit: www.leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk

Welcome to New Businesses

Bonita – 35 Warwick Street (Hair, Health & Beauty)
Buy Specs Direct – 25 Park Street
Casa Rica Mexican Take Away – 1 Brunswick Street
Chesca – 64c Regent Street (Ladies Clothes, Fashion)
Chic Fireplaces Marble and Granite – 21 Regent Street
Clements and Church Limited – 23 Park Street (Fine Tailoring)
CompriseIT – 124 Regent Street (Computer Software)
DJ Gold Depot – based in Living Designs, 3 Satchwell Walk, Royal Priors Shopping Centre

Coming up...

- **WARWICKSHIRE FARMERS MARKETS** – Pump Room Gardens, 4th Saturday of every month, 9am-2pm
- **WELCOME HOME PARADE** – 1st Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. The Parade, 2 May, 11.30am
- **CANAL FESTIVAL** – Clemens Street and Canal-side, Old Town, 3 May, 10am-4pm
- **PEACE FESTIVAL** – Pump Room Gardens, 13 & 14 June
- **MELA CULTURAL FESTIVAL** – Pump Room Gardens, 16 August
- **FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL** – Pump Room Gardens, 29 & 30 August
- **HISTORIC WALKING TOURS** – Guided walks of Leamington throughout the summer months
- **BAND CONCERTS IN THE PARK** – Jephson Gardens, every Sunday afternoon from 31 May until 30 August, 3pm-5pm.

Dobson White Partnership – 42 Holly Walk (Event Design)
Exclusive Roots – 45 Park Street (Ethical products)
Internacionale – 15 Parade (Ladies Clothes, Fashion)
Krówka – 3 Clemens Street (Polish food shop)
Noa Noa – 117 Regent Street (Ladies Clothes, Fashion)
Outline Studios – Althorpe Street (Art Gallery, Framing)
Salsa Mexican Take Away – 37 High Street
Seventeen – 17 Parade (Sandwich shop)
Stress Free Claims LLP – 35a Park Street
The Rustic Food Company – 129 Regent Street (Café)