

# City Centre matters

The newsletter of the Wolverhampton City Centre Company



Kim Gilmour

## City Centre Manager's Update

2009 was a busy year for Wolverhampton City Centre Company, dealing with vacant units taking up more of our time than anticipated but we are now beginning to see the results of all the hard work.

We also built up strong relationships with city centre retailers, attractions and businesses and the better flow of information and ideas means a more joined up approach to marketing as well as dealing with common issues.

The new **Food & Drink Guide** is just one example of how working together (and persistence) pays off; hopefully the guide will benefit both diners and restaurants. Planning is now underway for a new **CityStyle** fashion and beauty event in the summer.

See [www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk](http://www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk) for further information on WCCC's work.

## Promoting Sunday Trading

A campaign to inform shoppers of the benefits of **Sunday Shopping** was launched by **Wolverhampton City Centre Company, Wulfrun Centre and Mander Centre.**

Free parking, quieter roads and a more relaxed environment were all highlighted as good reasons to come to Wolverhampton on a Sunday. The campaign also encouraged people to come with the family and stay for meal or go on to some other free activity, like visiting West Park.

Kim Gilmour City Centre Manager said: "Many people are not aware that all the Council's city centre car parks are free on a Sunday along with the Mander Centre car park. To highlight the number of shops open on a Sunday we have produced and distributed 200 'Open on Sunday' door stickers which also highlight the free parking."



## CITYSTYLE COMES TO WOLVERHAMPTON!

Catwalk shows, beauty makeovers, hair demonstrations and competitions will come together under the **CityStyle** banner in an exciting new event this summer.

Developed as concept within our Core Retailers Group, **CityStyle** now has the support of the **City Centre Marketing Partnership** and involves a wide range of retailers, businesses, the **College** and **University**.

Taking place on June 19th and 20th, there will be six professional shows over two days in the **Wulfrun Centre** and a whole host of other activities around the city centre including competitions.

For further information contact Marianne on 01902 551077 or [wccc@wolverhamptonccc.co.uk](mailto:wccc@wolverhamptonccc.co.uk)

## Priorities to Improve the City Centre

Having made considerable progress against our **2009-2011 Business Plan**, WCCC has now set out its priorities for the year ahead.

The seven key areas of work include improving the perception and image of the city; enhancing access; improving community safety and maintaining a quality environment. These are the core activities of any town centre partnership.

Kim Gilmour City Centre Manager said: "In addition we will continue to represent the views of city centre businesses and organisations, acting as a facilitator to make things happen. Our meetings are never just talking shops we follow up actions and encourage others to do the same.

"In these difficult economic times, with regeneration and development on hold nationwide, we will continue to act as an ambassador for the city centre, promoting good news stories and working with partners to encourage new development and investment whether a single shop or a multi-million pound project. We want Wolverhampton to improve its competitive position as a retail centre and as a destination for leisure and entertainment."



Pictured: Dean Kelly (Wulfrun Centre), Laurence Givens (Mander Centre), Richard Sash (Primark) and WPC Abigail Chandler

## CITYSAFE BUSINESS CRIME PARTNERSHIP

**Wolverhampton City Centre Company (WCCC)** and **M-R-S Communications** went into partnership in August 2009 to launch a new city centre radio communication tool. Now six months on we have over 95 businesses linked together across the city centre.

The **CitySafe Radio Link** is a tool to assist businesses to communicate effectively about anti-social behaviour, shoplifting, counterfeit money and the movement of 'undesirable' people.

**WCCC** has seen a huge improvement in the new system and increased communication by retailers, pubs, camera operators and transport providers which strengthens our business crime partnership. **M-R-S Communications** has been on site to provide training, and regularly attends **CitySafe** meetings.

Working closely with retailers and the new **City Centre Wardens** via the Radio Link scheme, **WCCC** has been compiling and circulating information about known offenders, encouraging staff to report incidents and giving advice on how to deal with offenders. The radio system has proved an important link between shops to track the movement of both opportunist and prolific shoplifters.

The police will be following up with evidence to secure **'CRASBO's'** anti-social behaviour orders attached to criminal punishment, where convicted shoplifters will, for example, be banned from the city centre.

**If you want further information on the CitySafe Business Crime Partnership please contact Lucy Bickley at WCCC.**

See something



Say something

If you see any nuisance or anti-social behaviour during your bus journey say something, visit

safertravel.info

text 07624 818332

phone 0845 113 5000

SAFERTRAVEL



See Something Say Something

## Wolverhampton Keep It Safe

The **Keep It Safe** campaign has successfully completed a second year of making Wolverhampton a safer place to visit in the run up to Christmas.

Evening revellers were reassured with extra police officers patrolling the city centre and a 'safe haven' for medical assessment of minor injuries and somewhere to wait for a taxi.

For the first time, road closures prevented all vehicles except Hackney carriages entering Market Street; this was to increase safety of visitors during the early hours and was deemed to be very successful.

Empty shop windows were used to display information about responsible drinking, where to find taxis, toilets and medical assistance. These messages were also beamed onto buildings and put onto Hackney Carriages to ensure visitors were aware of how to 'keep it safe'.

Partners in the campaign included the **Primary Care Trust, West Midlands Police, Wolverhampton City Council**, the licensed venues and Security Officers and the **City Centre Company**.

Volunteer **Street Pastors** were on hand to give advice and signpost people to taxi ranks and the medical triage giving out flip-flops for the few unfortunate females that needed to relieve their tired feet of high heels.

The campaign has been recognised on a local and national level for its success and partners are looking to do a similar campaign with licensed venues during the World Cup in June 2010.



Black cabs spread the word

## Crime Prevention Campaign a Success

A campaign to raise awareness of increased crime over Christmas has been hailed as a success by partners **West Midlands Police, Wolverhampton City Centre Company** and the **City Centre Wardens**.

Crime figures showed that 'theft from a person' in December was less than half the figure in 2008; shop lifting had also decreased by 14%.

The campaign included additional training for shop and security staff on the **Radio Link** system to prevent and report theft. Improved communication between retailers acts as an early warning system about known shoplifters and is effective in reducing crime.

Sergeant Steve Edwards, responsible for the **City Centre Policing Team**, said: "Posters were put up around the city centre to highlight increased activity by thieves over the Christmas period and a mobile billboard and a thought-provoking display in an empty shop were also used.

"One of the most popular items was the free purse bells that were given out, pensioners in particular find these very useful."



Promoting the new guide

## Fabulous Discounts for City Diners

**Eat in Wolverhampton** is the new guide promoting the wonderful variety of restaurants, bars and cafés the city has to offer. This comprehensive booklet, produced by **WCCC** and the **Tourism Department** of the City Council, suggests both city centre venues and those on the outskirts, giving an eclectic mix to cater for all tastes and budgets.

In addition the guide boasts a discount voucher section allowing city users to dine in style and not feel the pinch!

The guide will be widely available from venues around the city, bars, restaurants and cafés mentioned in the guide and will be available on line from February 22nd by visiting [www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/foodanddrink](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/foodanddrink).

The launch event on February 22nd will include a competition encouraging people to send in recipes with a local theme and taster sessions at **The Bluebrick** restaurant. Email: [foodanddrink@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:foodanddrink@wolverhampton.gov.uk) for more details.

## Local Businesses Offered Grants and Free Training

Free training is on offer from **City of Wolverhampton College** with a focus on practical hands-on sales and merchandising techniques. **The Sales Skills NVQ Level 2** course could help boost your profitability and leave the competition behind!

### Modules include:

- Brush up your sales techniques
- Understanding the legalities
- Face to face sales
- Window displays
- What's hot and what's not
- Internet, trade fairs and other ways of selling

**Call Clare Gage for further information 01902 837127**

In addition, the **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)** is offering employers a grant of £2,500 to take on new apprentices as part of an initiative to help young people affected by the current economic climate.

The offer is available until the end of March for the first 5,000 employers to take on an unemployed 16 or 17 year old apprentice. The £2,500 grant is in addition to the costs of training which is met by the National Apprenticeship Service.

**Call Clare McAuliffe at City of Wolverhampton College on 01902 317691.**

## Improving the look of the City Centre

WCCC is project managing the **Empty Shops Initiative** grant working closely with local authority officers in Regeneration and Environment.

Large scale graphics have gone up in eight shops promoting city centre attractions under the '**Capture the Moment**' branding including high profile stores like Woolworths and Oasis.

Kim Gilmour City Centre Manager said: "WCCC is now awaiting planning permission to board up a run of 13 derelict shops in Worcester Street. The hoarding will feature large images of local independent traders still active in the surrounding streets rather than generic images of Wolverhampton."

Work is also progressing with **Hortons' Estate**, to open up three empty shops to support community based projects. Hortons is providing the units rent free with the DCLG grant funding the occupation costs for six months.

The **We Create** shop will sell a range of student fashion and provide mentoring and equipment for fashion students to design and produce clothing lines.

A consortium of artists from the **Eagle Works** project have joined together with the **Art Gallery** and **University of Wolverhampton** to set up a **contemporary art gallery** from March. Additional funding is being sought from the Arts Council.



Posters improve the image of vacant shops

The newly formed **School of Law, Social Sciences and Communications** at the **University of Wolverhampton** will provide free law clinics undertaken by students trained by a local firm of solicitors. There will also be a series of special interest sessions such as poetry readings and taster language sessions.

**Watch out for further developments in and around the city centre and in future newsletters.**

## What's New!

**Ditsch** - in the Mander Centre sells a variety of tempting pretzels, pizzas and bakes, tasty enough to make you forget your New Year Resolutions!

**St Peter's Church Visitor Centre** - open weekdays 10am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm, charts 1,000 years of history of the Church and the City with displays and interactive plasma touch screens.

**Commando Army Wear** - trading in the City since 1991, the army surplus store has moved to larger premises in Darlington Street.

**Epic** - located in Lichfield Street, this new youth café will open shortly offering internet accessible computers, television and gaming lounge, and a downstairs performance room.

**Soprano's** - Italian/American diner and cocktail lounge has been stylishly refurbished serving healthy food in its restaurant and takeaway.

**Who's new!** - new Chief Executive for Wolverhampton City Council has been announced - Simon Warren will take over from interim chief executive Steve Boyes shortly.

**PaddyPower** - Ireland's biggest and most successful bookmaker will open premises in Princess Street in the former Central Bar.

**PreshaDem** - check out the amazing decor in this new shop selling skater wear and gear in Worcester Street.

## What's Going On...

### The Slade Rooms and Little Civic

In the course of the last 10 years The Little Civic venue established itself as a hub for new music with the likes of Coldplay, Snow Patrol and the Kaiser Chiefs, appearing there early in their careers. Now The Little Civic has found a new home in a new live music complex called The Slade Rooms. This brand new venue in Broad Street has a full programme of exciting new music plus a burgeoning calendar of contemporary stand-up comedy. There are club nights on Fridays and Saturdays featuring DJs and a mix of dance favourites. Further information on [www.wolvescivic.co.uk](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk)



## GALLERY VISITORS WATCH IN AWE

**Castle Galleries** in Victoria Street held a very special event when artist Bob Barker painted 'live' in front of visitors for three hours, at times in pin-drop silence as everyone stared in awe. He completed a black-and-white cityscape using palette knife and brushes, whilst answering questions. A public vote decided a bridge should be included in the picture, which is on display in the Gallery, titled by the viewers as 'Hold onto the Night'.

Future events include With Love from Govinder - Exhibition on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th February, and Neil Dawson - Artist Appearance on Sunday 25th April 12pm-3pm.

[www.castlegalleries.com](http://www.castlegalleries.com)



Stunning Cityscape

## What's on Where: January - March

The new issue covering council supported live music, film, theatre, art, workshops, family/outdoor events and sports from is now available from around the city centre. Further information from Emma Cleary 01902 551069 or [emma.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:emma.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk), or visit [www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/whatson)

### Just a few of the Highlights...

Matthew Burt Acclaimed Furniture Maker - Art Gallery, until 17th April

Kurt Tong Photography - Light House Media Centre, until 26th March

Come Dancing - Grand Theatre, 9th to 13th February

Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll - Light House Media Centre, 12th to 13th February

Russian State Ballet - Grand Theatre, 18th to 20th February

Donald Locke Sculpture - Art Gallery, from 20th February

Rocky Horror Show - Grand Theatre, 22nd to 27th February

Such is Life by Mobius Dance Theatre - Arena Theatre, 26th February

English Chamber Orchestra - Civic Hall, 5th March

Charley Boorman Show - Civic Hall, 5th March

The Hollies - Civic Hall, 13th March

Move Over Moriarty - Arena Theatre, 31st March



Kim



Lucy



Marianne

## For further information contact:

Kim Gilmour, Lucy Bickley or Marianne Carter

Wolverhampton City Centre Company Tel: **01902 551077**

Email: [wccc@wolverhamptonccc.co.uk](mailto:wccc@wolverhamptonccc.co.uk) or visit: [www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk](http://www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk)

**Wolverhampton City Centre Company** is an independent, proactive organisation working strategically and operationally with partners to identify and address key issues to improve the marketing, environment, safety and economy of the City Centre. Through a Board, an Executive and Stakeholder Groups, WCCC works with a large number of private businesses representing the 'Voice of the City Centre'.

WCCC is funded by the public and private sector including Wolverhampton City Council and key organisations like the Mander and Wulfrun Centres, Sainsbury's, Boots and the University of Wolverhampton.