

City Centre matters

The newsletter of the Wolverhampton City Centre Company

City Centre Manager's Update

Well Christmas is nearly upon us and this issue contains all the things you need to know about free parking, shopping hours, events and entertainment as well as some partnership campaigns to ensure our visitors, shoppers and revellers are safe.



Kim Gilmour

I am pleased to report that there are currently more shops opening than closing at the moment in the city centre and we welcome many new independent traders. You can also search for details of over 1000 businesses and brands on our new on-line shopping directory.

See www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk for further information on WCCC's work.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE LAUNCHED

Wolverhampton City Centre Company has launched a Best Practice Guide on how to improve vacant units following the success of its empty shops strategy.

Working with the **City Council** and private landlords for the past two years **WCCC** has managed to improve the appearance of 30% of empty properties including graphics, 'pop up' shops and art galleries.

Now everything that has been learned is contained in the **Utilising Empty Shops Guide**.

Kim Gilmour, City Centre Manager said: "The guide contains case studies, learning points and contact details to enable people all over the country to take advantage of our experience as it is often harder to open up an empty shop than people imagine."

WCCC has worked with the **City Council** and used the £52,000 grant from **Empty Shops Initiative** funded by the **Department of Community and Local Government (DCLG)**.

Projects include hoardings to cover a run of 10 derelict shops; three community projects that opened for a number of months and large scale graphics featuring artworks and promoting Wolverhampton shopping.

Further details and a downloadable copy of the Guide are available via: www.wolverhamptonccc.co.uk

Early Christmas Present for Shoppers

Over 1,500 parking spaces will be available for late night shopping in a partnership arrangement between retailers, car park owners and **Wolverhampton City Council**.

Four car parks in the centre of the city used by shoppers will be free to use on late night shopping evenings, which begin on **Wednesday 24th November** in an attempt to boost the fortunes of Wolverhampton shops at their busiest time of the year.

House of Fraser/Beatties, Birch Street (courtesy of Carillion), **Mander Centre** and the council owned **Fold Street** car parks will be free to use from 5.30pm until normal closing time on the following Wednesdays: **24th November, 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd of December**.

The above car parks will also be free **every weekday evening from 13th to 23rd December** (Fold Street also free on December 24th) - normal charges apply during the day. **Mander Centre** car park and all Council owned car parks (except Civic Centre) are free **every Sunday** throughout the year. **Birch Street** is free on Saturdays and Sundays during December (except when Wolves FC are at home).

Kim Gilmour, Wolverhampton City Centre Manager said: "Retailers offered to open up their car parks free of charge for late night shopping as they did last year. Wolverhampton City Council agreed to match this offer as evening parking charges were not in force last year. It's great that the public and private sector are able to work together and we will be heavily promoting these 1,500 free car parks in the run up to Christmas."

Councillor Paddy Bradley, the city council's cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise, said: "We have decided to make **Fold Street Car Park** free to use on Christmas shopping nights and hope that people who may have been thinking about going elsewhere to do their Christmas shopping will in fact come into the city centre."



New businesses open in City Centre

In the last three months there has been a positive flurry of new shops in the city centre, from independent retailers to big brands. Here's a round up ...



Steve Baxter at Sweet Memories

Sweet Memories - this retro sweet shop in Victoria Arcade in the Mander Centre stocks a selection of old-fashioned confectionary.

Greggs - has opened up a shop in Victoria Street on the corner of Farmers Fold... mmm more cakes!

Impulse Accessories - great to see this Dudley Street shop in full retail use again.

Gym Squid 'The Student Gym' - has opened at 51 Lichfield Street. Open to students (at discounted prices) and non-students.

Fallen Saint - come and buy amazingly creative and original jewellery in this beautiful little shop located in Lichfield Passage.

Teresa Hairdressers - treat yourself to a new look for Christmas and the New Year at this Polish-run hairdressers.

Indi Bar - after a long awaited refurbishment the former Rothwells Bar is now open.

Property Lounge - welcome to Sarah Kaul and Sharon Dhir in their new property agent venture in Cleveland Street... gorgeous leather sofas!

Now - ladies fashion store in the former Dorothy Perkins unit in the Mander Centre.

Independent Finance - offering financial advice from their new shop in Victoria Street.

House of Fraser - new concessions in store include **Dickins & Jones**, **Pied-a-Terre** with **Biba** arriving next year.

City Centre Crime Reduction Success

A high-visibility policing operation targeted at alcohol-fuelled crime and disorder in **Wolverhampton City Centre** has reduced violent crime by nearly 30 per cent.

Operation StaySafe has seen more officers patrolling streets in the city centre since May, clamping down on drunken behaviour and related crime such as assault and robbery.

The number of reported incidents of violent crime has fallen month-on-month since July and the police will continue to run special operations every weekend in Wolverhampton

particularly in the run up to the Christmas and New Year period.

The policing operation was partly a response to feedback from licensees and door supervisors at **Pubwatch** meetings, after they requested a greater police presence during weekend evenings.

There have also been steady reductions in virtually all other crime types over the last few months including shoplifting, theft and criminal damage.



The all important 'Curry Capital of Britain' Portfolio Tourism project officer Emma Cleary (left) and city centre manager Kim Gilmour (right) with the head chef of Wolverhampton's Red Fort restaurant Ram Chandra Subedi

City Bids to be Curry Capital of Britain

Wolverhampton is one of 12 cities vying to be crowned **Curry Capital of Britain 2010**. The competition is part of **National Curry Week (November 21st - 27th)** and sees the city competing against cities like Bradford, Manchester, Glasgow (3 times winner), Liverpool, Birmingham and Leicester.

Four restaurants in the city - **Bilash** and **Red Fort** in the city centre, **Cafe Rickshaw** in Chapel Ash and **Malabar** in Penn - were selected by members of the public to form Wolverhampton's 'team'.

Each restaurant will be visited in secret by a judge who will assess the standard of food, service, hygiene, cleanliness and how they serve their communities. In addition a dossier has been submitted by **WCCC** and **Wolverhampton City Council** explaining why Wolverhampton should win the title. During November every restaurant will hold a charity evening in aid of **The Curry Tree Charitable Fund** to help the poor and undernourished of the world. The winning city will be announced on 8th December; so fingers crossed for Wolverhampton.

Paul Uppal, Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West, is backing the city's bid. He said: *"I have a passion for Indian cuisine and a passion for Wolverhampton so I am more than happy to lend my support to anything that brings a positive spotlight on our city."*



WARNING GOES OUT TO SHOPLIFTERS

Police in Wolverhampton have sent a clear message to local shoplifters in the run up to Christmas - **“If you continue to offend, expect a custodial sentence.”**

The number of shoplifting offences reported to police saw an increase in November. Officers have been working closely with **Wolverhampton City Centre Company**, which manages the **Radio Link Scheme**, and high street stores in a bid to raise awareness of shoplifters. Patrols have been stepped up to prevent and deter offences being committed.

Police are also working closely with the **Courts** and **CPS** to ensure those committing this type of crime are dealt with appropriately.

DCI Derek Quinn said: “This type of crime traditionally increases at this time of year but with the help and co-operation of the **City Centre Company** and retailers we hope to work together to prevent offending.”

A new operation is underway by police in Wolverhampton City Centre to tackle the predicted seasonal rise in crime throughout the festive season.

Operation Christmas Cracker aims to raise awareness of what shoppers can do to prevent themselves from becoming a victim of crime.

Posters will be going up in shopping areas and representatives from all agencies will be handing out flyers containing top tips to avoid falling victim to crime.

Purse Bells will also be distributed in an attempt to cut down on ‘purse dipping’ offences. This activity will all be coupled with targeted, high visibility patrols.

Police are issuing this simple advice to reduce your risk of being a victim of Christmas crime:

- Never carry more money than you need.
- Make sure you put your money away before you leave the counter.
- Never carry a handbag on the outside of your shopping. Keep it close to you.
- Avoid leaving presents in your vehicle while you continue shopping.
- Put presents away out of sight when you get home, not under the tree.
- Postcode new electrical items, TVs, cameras and mobile phones.
- Make sure you lock up before you go out and leave lights or a radio on.
- Break up boxes from new TVs, DVD players, etc or take to the tip, don’t leave by the bin.

GETTING HOME OVER CHRISTMAS

Thanks to Wolverhampton’s Keep It Safe Campaign, visitors to the city centre this Christmas will experience an even greater feeling of safety and security.

Getting home safely after a great night out is a vital part of Wolverhampton’s city centre experience.

The **Keep It Safe** campaign launches on Thursday December 9. **Keep It Safe** stewards will be on hand at the **Market Street** hackney carriage rank to assist passengers getting home safely and also at the **Safe Haven** on **Lichfield Street**.

The **Keep It Safe** partners will be putting more police officers on the street, while **Wolverhampton’s volunteer Street Pastors** and **Prayer Patrol Team** will be on hand to offer help and advice.

Led by **Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust**, the **Keep It Safe** partners will also give revellers practical help to enjoy themselves in safety. With the support of the licensed trade, **‘Spikey’** anti-drink-tampering devices, **‘condom key rings’** promoting a safe-sex message and **flip-flops** to reduce the risk of ankle injuries will be distributed.

Repeating one of the successes of last year’s campaign, a temporary minor injuries clinic - the **‘Safe Haven’** - at the **Epic Youth Café Lichfield Street** will be set up where revellers can wait in a warm secure environment and arrange pre-booked hire cars with the stewards.

By providing on-the-spot care for people who need it, the **Safe Haven** will reduce the demands on the ambulance service and the accident and emergency department at New Cross Hospital.

This year’s **Keep It Safe** activities start on **Thursday 9th December** and will run **every Thursday, Friday and Saturday** (excluding Christmas Day) and **Thursday 30th December until New Year’s Eve**.



Getting the message home with advice for revellers

It's Christmas

in Wolverhampton

Join the Celebrations

24th November - 24th December

With great shopping, markets and entertainment, Wolverhampton City Centre really is the place to be this Christmas

Enjoy shopping at top high street names and over 250 independent boutiques, menswear, gift and jewellery shops and some of the best butchers in the Midlands.

Late Night Shopping Hours

Wednesdays: 24th November - 22nd December - open until 9pm

Weekday Nights: 13th December - 23rd December - open until 9pm

Saturdays: 11th and 18th December - open until 7pm

Sundays: throughout December - 10.30 - 16.30

Christmas Eve: 24th December - 9.00 - 17.30

Christmas Day: 25th December - closed

Boxing Day: 26th December - 10.30 - 16.30

Bank Holiday: 27th December - 9.00 - 17.30

New Year's Eve: 31st December - 9.00 - 17.30

New Year's Day: 1st January - 9.00 - 17.30

Bank Holiday: 3rd January - 10.00 - 17.00

Please check as individual shops may vary.

Eating Out & Christmas Parties

Wolverhampton is a great place to eat out in style so why not hold your Christmas party in the city centre and enjoy the festive atmosphere? Visit www.wolverhamptoncity.co.uk/wheretoeat

Music & Comedy

You will be laughing all the way to Christmas with comedians **Ken Dodd, John Bishop** and **Jimmy Carr** whilst **Human League, Pixie Lott, Hawkwind** and many more provide fantastic music.

Handel's Messiah will be performed by the **Civic Choir** at **St. John's in the Square** at 7.30pm on **Saturday 18th December**.

City Centre Church & Carol Services

Take time out to remember what Christmas is all about - **Carol Concerts** at **All Nations, St Peter's** and **St John's** in the **Square** churches.

Christmas Markets

Enjoy the entertainment while picking up your Christmas goods at the **Christmas Gift and Food Market** in **Dudley Street** from **10th to 19th of December**, as well as at **Wolverhampton's** indoor and outdoor markets open as usual in **Market Square**.

Festive Flair

The **Flair Designer Maker Fairs** at **Light House** in **Fryer Street** and the **Art Gallery** are the perfect opportunity to purchase unique hand-made art and contemporary craft pieces whilst enjoying a glass of mulled wine.

11th December 11am - 4pm - Free admission

Magical Grotto - Wulfrun Centre Piazza

Come along to the fantasy themed grotto in the **Wulfrun Centre Piazza** where **Santa** will be in residence from **24th November** until **Christmas Eve** (charges apply).

Beatties Grotto

Visit the **Beatties Santa** in the ground floor **Toy Department** from **24th November to Christmas Eve** (10.00am to 5pm - charges apply).

Light Switch On

Father Christmas arrives with a real reindeer parade, brass bands and children of **Punch Theatre**; at 6.30pm the sky will be set aglow with a dazzling firework display while **Peppa Pig** and panto star **Christopher Biggins** switch on the lights.

Wednesday 24th November in Queen Square 5.00pm - 6.30pm

Santa's Coming to Town

See **Santa** ride the **Monster Trucks** around the city streets accompanied by steam engines, vintage fire engines, real reindeers, brass bands and street entertainers, coming to a halt in **Queen Square** where the trucks will stay until 5pm.

Saturday 11th December - midday

Christmas Entertainments

Throughout the festive market, street performers and brass bands will keep shoppers entertained, with a vintage organ playing seasonal tunes and small fairground rides for the children.

Wulfrun & Mander Shopping Centres

Festive events in the **Mander Centre** include the **Tree of Remembrance** (switched on **20th November**), **Santa's Reindeers** calling in on **11th December** and the **Orpheus Male Voice Choir** from 2.00pm - 3.30pm on **18th December**. **Wulfrun Centre** will be having choirs during the day at various times during **November** and **December** and on the **Saturday's 4th and 11th** the **Lions Club** and **Moseley Park** school band return with their popular entertainment.

Information correct at time of print, for full details see: www.itschristmaswolverhampton.co.uk



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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, Executive Group 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, Hortons' Estate, National Express, Sainsburys, Boots and the University of Wolverhampton.