

# big horizons

Wirral's Business Newsletter  
November 09 Issue 6



## WIRRAL LAUNCHES ITS TOP 100

“... I'M DELIGHTED THEY HAVE COMMITTED TO GROWING LOCAL BUSINESSES...”

Wirral Council's innovative new programme The Wirral Apprentice was officially launched on the steps of Wallasey Town Hall in October with the apprentices and their employers together to celebrate.

One hundred new apprentice positions have been created in local companies with Wirral Council paying their salaries for the next 18 months. The young people will also have their training paid for them by the National Apprenticeship Service while they complete an Apprenticeship in their chosen field.

Sue Price, North West Regional Director for the National Apprenticeship Service said: “The Wirral Apprentice is a great opportunity which supports both local businesses and young people. With just under 100 local Wirral businesses taking on apprentices through this initiative the Council is providing vital support for the area. I'm delighted they have committed to growing local

businesses and developing Wirral's young people into the managers of the future, who may in turn become employers themselves.”

Mike Walton from SamelCo, Energy management and monitoring company added: “We help large companies like Tesco save money by saving energy, something which is high on everyone's agenda at the moment. Our apprentice will get the chance to learn a good trade in a cutting edge field. I think The Wirral Apprentice is a fantastic initiative, we will definitely employ another apprentice next year and I hope this acts as a catalyst for other companies to do the same.”

Cllr Phil Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning said: “It is vitally important that we keep investing in our young people, especially during a recession and I think The Wirral Apprentice is an example of how committed we are to supporting individuals and businesses in the Borough.”

## Wirral restaurants voted best by the best

Wirral has triumphed in this year's Which Good Food Guide 2010.

Michelin-starred Restaurant Fraiche, in Oxton Village, has not only risen from six to seven, it is now listed as the 30th top restaurant in the country and was presented with the Editor's Award for best wine list in the UK.

Chef/owner of Fraiche, Marc Wilkinson, said: “It makes me proud to put a Wirral restaurant on the map and achieving the top 30 in the UK has opened the door for others to believe in Merseyside and see that it can have food as exciting as anywhere in the country. I also have to thank Gemma and my team for their support.”

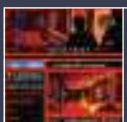
The qualities the Which Guide was looking for was a conscientious eye to the best producers, a clear, comprehensive presentation and fair value. Fraiche is described as having “flavour-filled, mind-expanding menus.”

The best new entry for 2010 for the whole of the country was Da Piero, a small restaurant in Irby, with a score of five, and described as ‘food that fills you with joy’.

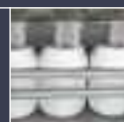
Steve Maddox, Chief Executive from Wirral Council said: “This is tremendous news, particularly in the lead up to our Year of Food next year, and shows that the peninsula is continuously raising the quality of its food and tourism offers.

Congratulations again to Marc at Fraiche and Piero and Dawn at Da Piero, for their commitment and dedication.” For details about the Wirral Year of Food in 2010 visit: [www.visitwirral.com](http://www.visitwirral.com)

Above:  
Wirral's 100  
Apprentices



Fallen Industries  
record a hit p4



Council support makes  
real difference p7

**Wirral**  
We're thinking big



## A word from the Chief Executive

Earlier this year, the Council announced a number of measures to support our business community through the economic downturn. I am pleased to see this support making a real difference with companies like Pharmapac and Organica UK Ltd not only safeguarding but creating new jobs in the Borough with the help of the Think Big grant. The Invest Wirral team regularly organise business support events and broadcast important information via [businesswirral.com](http://businesswirral.com) and I would urge you to sign up. I have always felt we can weather the storm of this recession because the public and private sector works so well together in Wirral.

The Wirral Apprentice was officially launched in October and is another example of how we are making funding available to support not only our young people at a time when it is extremely difficult to find employment but also our businesses who without this initiative may not be able to afford to employ and train the future managers of their company.

Despite the recession, exciting developments continue to progress and the planning approval for New Brighton and Wirral Waters as well as the announcement of our plans for the Mersey Coast demonstrate our commitment to attracting investment and improvement in the borough to make it an even better place to do business.

**Steve Maddox**  
Chief Executive, Wirral Council

# Laundry ‘cleans up’ with new commercial contracts

“...THE COMPANY HAS GONE FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH...”

TTH Laundry Service is celebrating diversifying into the commercial laundry rental service with several new commercial contracts including one with a luxury hotel and spa.

The company, which employs 15 people, moved to new premises at Arrowe Business Park in early 2009. It has gone from strength to strength with a team handling the domestic side of the business which was set up fifteen years ago and another team handling the new and growing commercial contracts. Sales Director Vicki Hughes, 25, joined the company, founded by her Mum, when she left school and is now the driving force behind TTH’s move into the laundry rental service. Vicki

has worked with Ben Lavell, relationship manager at Invest Wirral to maximise opportunities as the company experiences rapid growth. Ben has helped TTH access funding from the Council’s Business Investment Grant to help with their move into the commercial laundry market and encouraged Vicki to apply for NWDA’s High Growth Programme designed to encourage the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Vicki said: “Ben’s been brilliant for us, he has set us up with so many opportunities. We initially approached Invest Wirral for help with finding a new unit but we’ve got so much more out of the relationship than we could’ve dreamed of.”

# SlinkyMedia put down roots in Wirral



Business is booming for photography and design studio SlinkyMedia after they committed to their first commercial premises in West Kirby this summer.

The company was founded by photographer Amy-Jayne Higgins and her partner Ian. Both were successful freelancers who felt that the time (and demand) was right to take a studio especially as they had found what Amy-Jayne describes as ‘the perfect premises at the perfect location’ in West Kirby. She added: “We fell in love with Banks Road, there are a lot of complementary businesses around us and we’re booked up for weddings in 2010 but we’ve been

overwhelmed by the interest in our family portraits and pet photography.

“The interest in our corporate work has been a real bonus. We are experienced in producing product and promotional images that show off a company’s staff or service in the best possible light. We are sensitive to the small business and can provide excellent rates, as well as super-fast turnaround for companies whose work just cannot wait. With our new premises we now have one of the biggest shooting spaces in the Northwest as well as some of the most beautiful scenery on our doorstep and are really well placed to grow the business in Wirral.” [www.slinkymedia.net](http://www.slinkymedia.net)

Above:  
The studio in  
West Kirby



## WINNERS SHINE AT THE YEAR'S PREMIER BUSINESS AWARDS

Wirral's business community was out in force in July to celebrate their achievements at a glittering ceremony for the Wirral Investment Network Business Awards.

The Borough's premier annual business awards dinner was again held at Birkenhead School with over 300 key industry figures and businesses in attendance at the black tie evening to celebrate commerce and industry in Wirral.

A total of 12 awards were presented spanning a range of sectors, markets and industry disciplines with Cammell Laird Shiprepairers and Shipbuilders Ltd scooping the Business of the Year award and Scantec Personnel's John Robinson winning the Business Person of the Year.

Wirral Council Leader, Cllr Steve Foulkes said: "Tonight has been a celebration of the innovation, hard work and excellence displayed by our businesses on a daily basis during

what has been a very tough year economically. It is only right that we take time out to celebrate and reward them for their success and ongoing commitment to Wirral."

Cllr Jean Stapleton, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration added: "I'd like to congratulate not just the winners but all those nominated. The excellent relationship that has developed between the public and private sector in Wirral was there for all to see tonight and it is vitally important that we continue to work together to make the Borough an even better place to do business."

Other winners included CDO Group, for Business Start of the Year, and T-Systems, for Investment of the Year. Guests also raised over £1300 on the night for the 'Wirral Fund for Children with Special Needs' charity.

A full list of winners and photos from the night are available to view at [www.winpartnership.org](http://www.winpartnership.org)

**"...A CELEBRATION OF THE INNOVATION, HARD WORK AND EXCELLENCE DISPLAYED BY OUR BUSINESSES..."**

Above:  
Representatives  
from Cammell Laird

## Typhoo launches new charity link up

Footballing legend Sir Geoff Hurst kicked off Typhoo's Sports for All project in the summer.

Britain's much-loved tea brand Typhoo, based in Moreton, is partnering with the Federation of Disability Sport to make sport more accessible for disabled men, women and children right across the UK, and 1966 World Cup legend Sir Geoff Hurst is lending his support.

Exercise may not be everyone's cup of tea, but for some it is a pleasure they rarely get to enjoy. The 'Typhoo Sports for All' project will enable everyone to get involved in sport - and for those who would rather sit back with their feet up and enjoy a cuppa, they can help too as money from every pack of Typhoo sold will be donated to the cause.

This brand new initiative will train a minimum of 500 community-based sports coaches all over the UK and provide them with an accredited qualification in coaching disabled people, funded entirely by Typhoo. Sir Geoff Hurst is backing the project as brand ambassador to help raise awareness. He says:

"I feel that this initiative is extremely worthwhile in helping to make a range of sports accessible to disabled people, enabling them to remain active and take part in everyday sport. Exercise is something which many of us take for granted and something which should be readily available to everyone. The Typhoo Sports for All project is working hard to make this possible. I am appealing to anyone in the sport and fitness industry to come on board and help raise the profile of Typhoo Sports for All to secure even more support."

The FDS mission is to increase participation in sport and ensure disabled people can access the sport and physical activity of their choice. The collaboration with Typhoo will go a great distance in helping to further the charity's goal.

## ACE GAIN INSIGHT VIA ONLINE FORUM

“...WE’VE REALLY MADE THE MOST OF OUR MEMBERSHIP...”

Founded by Martin Davies in 2007, ACE Audio Visual is at the forefront of innovation in technical production, making collaboration through the Wirral Business Forum with Insight Moving Images a natural development for both companies.

Insight Moving Images has established an excellent national reputation for their corporate video production services and realised the need to offer a complete event service for their clients. Having used [www.businesswirral.com](http://www.businesswirral.com), to identify clients in the past, Lisa Roberts realised that the forum is an excellent way to identify intertrading opportunities as well.

“We’ve really made the most of our membership on the forum. We regularly use the directory feature to find potential customers which has resulted in a number of contracts and positive relationships.”

The most obvious example of those new relationships is with ACE Audio Visual and its founder Martin Davies. ACE and Insight realised that by teaming up on certain projects they can offer a more comprehensive service to potential clients utilising both companies’ specialist services.

Martin said: “Lisa contacted me through the Online Business Forum earlier this year after speaking to a client who needed

audio equipment for an event. We very quickly realised that if we teamed up on certain projects both Insight and ACE could benefit from increased work whilst providing our clients with many more options for events. [Businesswirral.com](http://Businesswirral.com) is free and easy to use and has really made a difference to both our companies.”

Martin added: “By working for clients like the NHS, AXA, DeVere Carden Park, Merseyside Police, and AAH Pharmaceuticals we’re able to demonstrate a track record of delivery on a variety of audio and visual jobs. Now because of the Wirral Business Forum and our link up with Insight Moving Images both companies’ opportunities for growth have been expanded.”

The Wirral Business Forum is a core component of the Council’s support package to help businesses survive and thrive during turbulent economic conditions. A series of sector focused events and a supporting online forum help Wirral based companies to identify commercial opportunities and take advantage of the wealth of support that exists to assist them. With 700 members, a figure which continues to grow daily.

To become a member and experience the benefits of the forum visit: [www.businesswirral.com](http://www.businesswirral.com)



Right:  
Ben Lavell,  
Lisa Roberts,  
Martin Davies &  
Ken Newman

## Recording studio a champion venue for region’s bands

Merseyside’s rich musical heritage is alive and thriving with the help of Wirral’s premier recording studio, Fallen Industries at Champions Business Park in Upton.

Founded by Mike Austin, 27, in West Kirby, Fallen Industries moved to Champions Business Park a year ago as demand for rehearsal and recording space grew. The studios in Upton are the Borough’s only purpose built rehearsal and recording studio for bands and boast industrially

soundproofed and equipped rooms for band rehearsals, recordings and video filming. The space is also used by many freelance music teachers and the team at Fallen Industries can put you in touch with a teacher of even the most weird and wonderful instruments.

The studios are often used for music workshops and students are able to study for and take their ‘RockSchool’ exams in guitar, keys, drums, bass and vocals. Mike said: “People come from all over the northwest to use the studio

with evenings and weekends being particularly busy times for us. We are really passionate about the workshop side of the business and have linked up with Active8Success to deliver music workshops for their students and are actively developing that side of the business. We’ve experienced fantastic feedback since we moved to Champions because we have good quality, industry standard recording space available at an excellent rate...in Wirral.”

[www.fallenindustries.tv](http://www.fallenindustries.tv)

Below:  
Fallen Industries  
Website





## Mayor celebrates the best of the borough's businesses

Cllr Andrew Hodson hosted the cream of Wirral's business community during the summer with several receptions in the Mayor's Parlour at Wallasey Town Hall.

The Mayor had invited individuals and businesses to personally congratulate them for achieving recognition for themselves and the borough at several awards ceremonies throughout 2009, including the WiN Business Awards held in July.

Representatives from businesses such as Scantec Personnel, T-Systems, Hankinson Painting Group, Pharmapac UK, Regal Wholesale and Pickled Walnut Catering spoke to the Mayor and Mayoress outlining why 2009 had been both a challenging but ultimately successful year for their businesses.

The Mayor said: "Winning these awards is fitting recognition for the hard work, professionalism and pride shown by these individuals and diverse businesses from right across the peninsula.

"The current economic climate has impacted on us all and it is vital that businesses like T-Systems and Regal Wholesale are aware they have our support."

Stephen Hankinson, Group Chief

Executive from Hankinson Painting Group added: "Despite the downturn we've had a good year and have won a number of awards like the International Award for Environmental Best Practice at the Green Apple Environmental Awards and the Excellence in Training Skills Development Award at the WiN Business Awards. It's fantastic that the Mayor has recognised us and the other businesses in this way and is another example of how Wirral Council is working to actively support businesses like ours."

The Mayor also held a reception for the hospitality industry to personally congratulate them on reaching the final stage of The Mersey Partnership's Annual Tourism Awards.

Lorna Tyson, owner/manager of 5 star guesthouse, Mere Brook House, and Chair of the Wirral Accommodation Partnership said: "It's lovely to be invited to take tea with the Mayor, but there is a serious side to it all; the accommodation and hospitality industry provides thousands of jobs for local people and is an important factor in making Wirral such a great place to live in or to visit."

**"...WIRRAL COUNCIL IS WORKING TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT BUSINESSES LIKE OURS..."**

Above: The Mayor & Mayoress with some of Wirral's successful tourism businesses.

## Publisher makes budding authors dreams come true

Many people believe that 'everyone has a book in them' and Birkenhead Press have been helping budding authors to realise that dream for almost 50 years.

The company enable budding authors to bring their manuscripts to life through their 'self publishing service'.

Managing Director of Birkenhead Press, John Emmerson, explains: "Many people dream of seeing their own book in print and we can help them achieve it. They can bring their manuscript to us and we will give them a breakdown of the costs involved and if they want to pursue it we will edit it, print it and market it for them.

"We can do this very cost effectively for first time authors these days because of the advances in technology. We also carry out general printing as well as publishing our own local history and interest books through our sister company Countyvise."

In August, John presented a number of Countyvise's local history and interest books to Wirral's Archive Service as a first birthday present. The presentation was a result of the company's link with Invest Wirral and they are working with the team to develop other potential projects.



Above: John & Jean Emmerson with Wirral Archives' staff.



“...THIS IS GREAT NEWS FOR BOTH NEW BRIGHTON AND NEPTUNE...”

Above: Artist's impression of the new New Brighton

## Projects get the green light

Several key development projects in Wirral got the go ahead to move forward over the summer.

The Council approved Peel's Northbank East proposal for the Wirral Waters site that will see some £200m investment and create around 1,000 jobs, in construction and proposed office and retail uses.

The project connects the converted Grain Warehouses on Dock Road to the Hydraulic Tower on Tower Road. The proposals will see an additional residential community,

attracting residents to a wider choice of homes, together with local shops and places to work all within walking distance.

### 2011 completion date set for New Brighton

There was also good news for Neptune Developments who finally received approval for their plans for New Brighton Phase 2 and aim to complete the scheme in 2011.

The second phase consists of a new Morrison's Supermarket, a 66-

bed Travelodge hotel, a digital cinema, bars, restaurants, a watersports training centre, a new model boating lake, a public lido and other public spaces, as well as improved public transport links. Neptune Developments Director Rob Mason has said: "This is great news for both New Brighton and Neptune as we are now all systems go to complete our vision for this once great seaside resort. We would like to thank Wirral Council for their support for this scheme and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the local community as construction gets underway later this year."

### Mersey Coast development plans announced

The Council also announced plans to redevelop the coastline between Rock Ferry and Eastham including the Royal Mersey Yacht Club in September.

The plans represent an overall investment of £10million in a part of the coastline that has long been neglected. Known as the Mersey Coast project it will incorporate the yacht club's plans to redevelop their land including the derelict Admiral Pub to provide members with improved facilities and a new clubhouse that is capable of hosting national and international sailing events.

## Hotel Hits The Gold Standard

Hillbark Hotel has been awarded the prestigious Gold Award by Visit Britain.

Visit Britain is the national tourism agency responsible for marketing Britain worldwide under the auspices of The Visit Britain National Quality Assessment Scheme.

Hillbark Hotel set in 250 acres of beautiful rolling parkland in Royden Park, is the recipient of the award following a recent mystery stay by a hotel inspector from Visit Britain.

The Visit Britain National Quality Assessment Schemes bring together the vast experience of dedicated tourism professionals, assessing over 23,000 accommodation businesses across nine

different Enjoy England schemes on behalf of Visit Britain.

The historic hideaway with its individually styled bedrooms, elegant dining rooms and magical meeting spaces personified by the Great Hall certainly made an impression on the inspector.

He awarded Hillbark a coveted gold award which recognises hotels demonstrating a very high level of quality. Properties achieving the Gold Award have exceptional levels of quality, comfort and cleanliness in bedrooms and bathrooms, and outstanding levels of customer care and food.

Hillbark joins an elite club of select hotels around the country that

have been awarded this accolade, and is the only hotel across the Liverpool City Region to have been recognised in this way by the national tourism agency.

Craig Baker, Managing Director of Hillbark Hotel and Contessa Hotels commented: "We are delighted to have been recognised in this way by VisitBritain as it reflects all the hard work put in by the team at Hillbark over the last year to ensure that we offer a truly first class product and service to our many guests who come for leisure and golfing breaks, for weddings, for business meetings or simply to dine with us."

[www.hillbarkhotel.co.uk](http://www.hillbarkhotel.co.uk)

Below: Hillbark



# JOBS CREATED WITH AWARD OF 'THINK BIG' GRANTS

The Council has awarded its first round of grant funding to a number of companies in the Borough who will be able to use the money to not only safeguard jobs, but create new ones as well.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing, filling, packing, storage and distribution company Pharmapac UK has received a £100,000 grant which will help them secure an additional 10,000sq ft of production space to accommodate seven new production lines.

The company based in Bidston operate 24 hours a day to fulfill the orders for their global customer base and this new investment will enable them to create a further 70 full time jobs at the site.

Cllr Jean Stapleton, Cabinet Member for Economy and

Regeneration said: "I think it's important that the Council makes a positive difference when it can and we believe the 'Think Big' grant will do that for Pharmapac UK. The money will enable the company to grow and create more jobs in Wirral which can only be good news for us all."

The 'Think Big' Investment Fund supports existing and inward investing businesses with potential for growth in Wirral. This fund represents a partnership between the business and the Council, investing in the future of the business and the Borough.

Other companies to benefit from the Think Big fund include Organica UK Ltd, and Regal Wholesale. A business investment fund - BIG - has also been set up for potential grants between four and twenty thousand

pounds and the first group of companies to benefit from that award include TTH Laundry Services, Construction Services Ltd, Let's Go Publishing, Sign Lights and Wish Trac.

To find out more about the support that is available to Wirral companies contact Invest Wirral on 0151 650 6915.

"...I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE COUNCIL MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE..."



Left: The Pharmapac UK production line.

## Mayor hopes to Active8Success for young people



Wirral's Mayor Cllr Andrew Hodson officially opened a new centre for health and wellbeing for young adults with mental health issues in Hamilton Square in September.

The new Active8Success centre now has its base in an impressive building over five floors with high quality facilities including an IT suite, health and fitness suite, educational

training rooms and relaxation areas.

Active8Success provide a free service to young adults between the ages of 18-25 years with mental health difficulties. Founder Ellen Cullen said: "We are a structured, integrated centre for young people providing health, social and educational services. My view is that we are helping to regenerate

Wirral by engaging with some of the most hard to reach young people and providing them with the tools to flourish and build confidence."

Wirral's Mayor Cllr Andrew Hodson said: "The work carried out by Ellen and her staff is something which deserves the highest praise. They help to raise the aspirations of those young people experiencing mental health problems and integrate them back towards work skills, whilst helping to boost their confidence and develop their social skills. I'm honoured to officially open this fantastic new centre today."

Also present at the opening ceremony was Professor Peter Kinderman, Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Liverpool who added: "Third Sector providers like Active8Success are positive about helping vulnerable people. This fantastic new centre can deliver innovative and different services in an integrated way by combining education with counselling to hopefully make a real difference."

Active8Success were helped in their launch by Invest Wirral.

Left: The Mayor & Mayoress with Ellen Cullen & Prof Peter Kinderman



## UNIVERSITY MOVES A STEP CLOSER

”...THIS PROPOSAL CLEARLY REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY FOR WIRRAL...”

Wirral is the only area in the north of England to move through to the next stage of developing a new university.

Professor Tim Wheeler, the University of Chester's Vice-Chancellor, said: “We're delighted that our proposal to create a new Centre of Higher Education in Wirral has been given the green light to move onto the next stage in the process.

“This proposal clearly represents a significant opportunity for Wirral, and we presented a very strong and robust case in our Statement of Intent.

“Under the proposals, the Higher Education centre would be part of ambitious plans for a new Wirral Learning Zone, also incorporating a new Further Education campus and a Special Educational Needs teaching facility.

“The Learning Zone would be at the heart of the proposed Wirral Waters development, a £4.5 billion, 30-year inward

investment programme.

“We believe the Centre would achieve long-term, sustainable developments for local people, local businesses, and the communities residing and working in Wirral.

“It would help unlock the potential, competitiveness and productivity of Wirral by providing not just the highest quality teaching and learning facilities, but also a stable and nurturing environment within which individuals can be supported to maximise their talents”. Council Leader Cllr Steve Foulkes said: “This is fantastic news and a real vote of confidence in our plans to drive forward the educational aspirations of Wirral's young people. This is also great news for our ambitions for Wirral Waters which is key to the Council's Investment Strategy.

“We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with both the University of Chester and Wirral Metropolitan College to make this exciting vision a reality.”

Above:  
Wirral Waters - an  
artist's impression

## Business passengers attracted to KLM Liverpool link

KLM's new operation at Liverpool John Lennon airport has proved ideal for business passengers with up to three flights to Amsterdam each day.

The link was established in March 2009 and passenger numbers have steadily grown throughout the year as business travellers take advantage of the onward connection opportunities from Schiphol to over 650 worldwide destinations with KLM and SkyTeam partners.

Fly with KLM and benefit from a range of products such as a dedicated check-in desk, free baggage allowance up to 20kgs, 2 pieces of hand baggage and online check in. Business passengers can register to the Flying Blue frequent flyer programme and earn Award Miles every time they fly with KLM and participating airlines to any destination on their global network.

In addition, clients working for an SME can join BlueBiz, the KLM corporate loyalty scheme which you can manage online. Members can earn Blue Credits on every flight with KLM and participating airlines, which can then be used to buy tickets to any destination on their global network. [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com)

# big horizons



Big Horizons is Wirral Council's inward investment newsletter.

To sign up for the Wirral Business Forum and Online Network please visit: [www.businesswirral.com](http://www.businesswirral.com)

If your business is looking to expand contact our business support team, Invest Wirral on: +44 (0)151 650 6915 or email: [invest@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:invest@wirral.gov.uk)

For further information visit: [www.investwirral.com](http://www.investwirral.com)

