

Westleigh Vocational Academy Opens for Pupils

A brand new vocational centre which will provide further educational opportunities for hundreds of local youngsters has been officially opened.

The £400,000 state-of-the-art and environmentally sound facility at Countesthorpe Community College was unveiled on Saturday (11th September) by Margaret Allen, East Midlands Director of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as part of the college's 40th anniversary celebrations.

A total of 125 students started the new academic year at the centre, which provides space to learn bricklaying, hairdressing, beauty therapy, joinery, IT and vehicle maintenance.

Westleigh are delighted to have partnered with the college, providing not only significant capital investment, but also invaluable design expertise. The 3,800 sq ft, single storey building, named the Westleigh Vocational Academy, houses five workshops and one theory classroom, each able to cater for up to 14 students at a time.

Margaret Allen comments, "I am proud to have been invited to open this centre, and as a Leicestershire resident myself I can vouch that it will be a real asset to the local community. It is a fantastic example of how

housing providers, educational facilities and local authorities are coming together to address the skills agenda, which in this case is resulting in a first class training facility for local people."

Brian Myatt, Principal at Countesthorpe Community College, says, "We are delighted to open our new vocational academy, a fantastic purpose built facility which will benefit the whole community. We knew Westleigh Developments would build us something special but what it has done is build us something exceptional, the first of its kind in Leicestershire and in record time of just nine months. The Westleigh Vocational Academy offers outstanding provision and is finished to the highest

Ian Jones, Business Development Director at Westleigh comments, "The brand new Vocational Academy at Countesthorpe College provides a long-term sustainable training facility for students both pre and post 16. As a company we strongly believe in the importance of apprenticeships and have recruited three or four every year for a number of years. Not only do we hope to take on youngsters who graduate through this centre, but there is also potential for it to provide apprentices to other developers and contractors in the area."

The centre was built using timber frame construction methods and also features photo-voltaic panels, a heat recovery and mechanical ventilation system, LCD lighting and is developed to meet the requirements of an A rated Energy Performance Certificate.

The Westleigh Vocational Academy has been shortlisted as one of three finalists in the Sustainable Development of the Year category at the 2010 Leicestershire Property and Construction

(ProCon) Awards. The winner will be announced at the awards evening on Thursday 11th November 2010 at the Walkers Stadium in Leicester.



quality. This is exactly what working together in partnership with local industry is all about and to the benefit of the local community."

Farming New Rural Offices

A Leicestershire farmer who took the decision to diversify his business due to the struggling farming industry has had a £500,000 tailor-made office scheme built on site by Westleigh Commercial.

Simon Marlow-Thomas, owner of Rectory Farm in Marston Trussell, near Market Harborough has had an attractive two-storey building created where an old Dutch barn once stood, providing 4,000 sq ft of space over three offices.

Two of these offices have already been secured by a Corby company which required bespoke new offices to move to, leaving the remaining 950 sq ft office available for rent.

Mr Marlow-Thomas comments, "With the recession hitting the farming industry particularly hard I decided to look at different ways of using the land I have to supplement income. After drawing up the initial plans for some office accommodation, experts at property consultants Fisher German assisted me in securing a large grant from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to fund the project, which was then overseen by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)."

"I required assistance with turning my plans into a reality and Westleigh was recommended to me as the perfect solution by agents at Mather Jamie in Loughborough. Thanks to Westleigh, what was once a redundant old metal barn is now an attractive office building, finished in slate, with excellent countryside views."

Anthony Ashford, Commercial Manager, comments, "We are delighted to complete this design and build project at Rectory Farm. A number of clients now approach us looking for bespoke premises at our new build office developments across the region, so whilst this represents something slightly different, we were more than happy to assist Simon in creating this attractive office scheme."



Steve Orwin - Buyer

Steve Orwin has changed role from Procurement Surveyor to that of Company Buyer with immediate effect and will be bringing all his previous national house builder buying skills to Westleigh on a full time basis.

Steve will be looking at our existing supply chain and following up new company introductions with regards 'Better, Cheaper, Faster' purchasing. "I'm really looking forward to getting fully involved in the buying role & confident that before too long the benefits to Westleigh will be clear to see", said Steve.



Vista Attracts National Names to Kettering

We can reveal that our Vista Park trade development in Kettering is now 80% occupied after three national companies and a local bathroom firm became the latest to sign up.

New branches of Toolstation, Johnstone's Paint and The Bathroom Store have all arrived at the £4m scheme on Telford Way, with GSF Car Parts, the UK's leading car parts supplier, the most recent to agree a deal. They will join existing outlets of Vets4Pets and In 'n' Out, plus local occupier Gammidge and Co Ltd, at the 30,000sq ft site.

Matt Moore, Property Director, comments, "We are delighted to announce the arrival of these four established names to Vista Park. The fact that five national companies and two local firms have now selected this new trade development proves its appeal to potential occupiers both from this community and nationwide."

Dan's 7 Year Switch

After joining the company as a trainee estimator back in 2003, and progressing through to procurement surveyor, Dan Gooch has moved on to pastures new.

Staying within the construction industry, Dan has seized an opportunity to further develop his career, with larger projects offering the challenge of greater responsibility.

We all wish Dan the very best in his new career.





Westleigh Helps Win Top Housing Award

We have helped a Derbyshire local authority to win a prestigious housing award.

The Development Team at Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) scooped the Development Team of the Year Award at the 2010 UK Housing Heroes Awards in London, for its work to maintain house building in the area, despite the challenges of the recession.

The team comprises nine local organisations led by the District Council, including Westleigh, with our Partnership Homes division providing well over half of the council's affordable homes over the last year.

In total since 2002, the Development Team has delivered 578 new homes across the Derbyshire Dales whilst also accounting for over a third of all new affordable homes built in the county in 2009.

Gary Turner comments, "This award is fantastic recognition for all the hard work that all parties involved in this partnership have contributed. It's great to be part of a successful development team and we look forward to continuing our work with Derbyshire Dales District Council and other partners to build affordable homes in that area."

Rob Cogings, Head of Housing at DDDC, comments, "We are delighted that the team has won this title at the Housing Heroes Awards. The provision of affordable housing is the District Council's top corporate priority and Westleigh has played a key role in this over the last year, providing us with over 65% of our affordable homes."

New Starters

We would like to welcome the following new employees to the Westleigh team.

Westframe

Reathan Bradley / Chris Chapman

OnSite

George Abbott / Leslie Burton

Florin Draia / William Earley

Ashley King / Trevor McCullough



New Site Starts

Manvers Way, Rotherham

66 houses for Great Places Housing along with Homebuy Direct and speculative houses for Westleigh Homes

Manor Farm, Hamilton, Leicester

42 dwellings for East Midlands Housing Association including 10 supported housing flats and 2 wheelchair bungalows

Bendbow Rise, Braunstone, Leicester

22 dwellings for NCHA including 6 flats and 1 wheelchair house

Rockingham Road, Corby

49 dwellings for Riverside Group along with 18 Homebuy Direct houses



Westleigh Helps Educate Fire Service

Leicestershire firefighters recently visited our new homes scheme in Lutterworth as part of an educational visit.

Firefighters from Lutterworth Station visited our Stretton Court development, a three-storey apartment building which is currently being built on Leicester Road. Here they were able to learn more about the latest modern building methods which are being used in the construction of the scheme, and find out more about the design strengths of such a building.

Karl Anderson, Watch Manager at Wigston Station, comments, "During the last few years we have looked at and discussed the various construction methods across a range of buildings. Whilst we can learn from books, nothing beats getting out within the local community and visiting these different types of buildings to help us understand how and why they are being built in the way they are."

I'd therefore like to thank Westleigh for allowing operational crews to visit its Stretton Court development in Lutterworth. The feedback both during and after the visit has been very good and has stimulated many discussions about the various modern methods of construction."

Robert Orr, Sales and Marketing Manager, comments, "We were delighted to assist Leicestershire Fire and Rescue members in their education by welcoming a crew to our Stretton Court development in Lutterworth. It's extremely encouraging to know that our firefighters are constantly updating their knowledge of local buildings, particularly as modern methods of construction are now seeing new structures such as homes, offices, schools and warehouses built using a number of different materials."



Westleigh Win Gold

Westleigh are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the prestigious Investors in People (IIP) Gold status.



The Gold award is presented to fewer than 1% of all companies across the UK annually and is fantastic recognition of the importance we place on developing our employees.

We first achieved the IIP award in 2004 and it has been, and will be, reviewed every three years by an assessor. This year IIP introduced a 'Beyond the Standard' award in which you can achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold status by meeting additional requirements across the company. Confident of achieving the very best, we applied for Gold status and had a recent assessment over three days.

HR Manager Suki Deol says, "Preparing for the assessment involved a lot of hard work gathering evidence for all of the 165 indicators we were required to meet in order to be eligible for the award. However a large part of it involved the assessor interviewing employees from across the company, which simply relied on people being open and honest about Westleigh and the strategies we already have in place.

"The Investors in People Gold status is a symbol of our commitment to developing our people through continuous improvement, environmental and social responsibility, quality and value. We hope this will allow us to continue to build relationships with our existing clients and suppliers but also encourage new companies to work with us too."

£15m Leicester Housing Project at Former Shoe Machinery Factory

Construction work is progressing well with a major £15m project to build 119 new affordable homes on a former industrial site in Ross Walk, Leicester.

The project is the first phase in the redevelopment of the former British Union Shoe Machinery (BUSM) works, being carried out in partnership between Westleigh Developments, Leicester City Council, landowners Trafalgar Global Ltd and Trustees of GS Fashions Retirement Benefit Fund, architects Marchini Curran, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and two housing associations.

Leicester City Council's cabinet member for regeneration and transport, Councillor Abdul Osman, says, "It is great to see the work is underway on what will become a prestigious development near the heart of the city's Belgrave community. It goes to show what can be achieved by working alongside local

partners, and with the help of the Government funding for infrastructure to enable development of housing sites such as this during a recession."

Allan Fisher, Assistant Director of Development and New Business at NCHA, says, "This development is a great example of multi-agency working and funding coming together to provide a much needed mix of affordable and private homes. We are committed to delivering homes in the areas where they are needed and wanted and this project provides a great opportunity for local people to benefit from the housing, but also from the regeneration of this area."

Mandeep Singh at GS Fashions Ltd, added, "There has been a huge amount of work placed into the project by all parties involved, including the Planning and Regeneration Team at Leicester City Council."

Site Manager of the Year 2010

Following the traditions of the Wheelwright Award, for the most improved employee, it seemed only right that we recognise contribution and achievements of our Site Managers.

The annual company presentation was chosen as the most suitable venue to present this prestigious new award, and in its inaugural year was presented to Jason Mann. Currently working on the BUSM site in Leicester, Jason has previously managed the company's largest multi-storey project at Woolmonger Street in Northampton.

Tony Keable, Production Director said, "As with all awards, the decision between the final few was extremely difficult, but I'm delighted that Jason has received the honour."





Every Little Helps

Westleigh's Accounts Department shall soon be reaping the rewards of going green.

By switching over to electronic email remittances, the company is set to make savings, not only in the obvious costs such as paper and envelopes, but also in administrative time and of course, associated postage.

Craig Johnson, ICT Manager said "The use of electronic payments and remittances will not only see a rapid return of investment, but will also importantly further reduce our environmental impact".

Energy Savings at le³

We already strive in the residential market to produce the highest level of environmentally friendly homes and we're now leading the way in the environmental field with commercial projects.

Our research has shown that companies occupying space at our le³ business park in Leicester could save more than 50% on their running costs.

The average annual expenditure for services such as hot water, heating, lighting and fans in a traditional Westleigh office built from brick and block in 2006 came to £2,529. This compares to an average running cost of just £1,095 for a new build office of the same size at the development off Ratby Lane, which has been built using timber frame and brick methods of construction.

These new offices also have an improved energy efficiency level with an energy performance certificate rating of 'B', compared to a 'D' rating in the 2006 office. This in turn leads to lower heating costs, with our research calculating that a bill of £1,103 in 2006 would now be just £165 - a significant 85% reduction.

Matt Moore commented, "Whereas in the past a newly built, environmentally friendly office building might have been seen as a luxury, businesses are realising that going green is a sound investment providing lower running costs and a reduced carbon footprint. Our research shows just how significant these savings can be and we hope it will help potential occupiers understand just how an environmentally friendly building can really benefit their companies."

Kickstarting homes in Corby and Rotherham

Construction work is to begin on 156 new affordable homes across two schemes after we received Kickstart funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

36 homes and 13 apartments are to be built on Rockingham Road in Corby, in partnership with Riverside Housing Association, after £3.1m of funding was allocated. Meanwhile in

Rotherham, 89 new affordable homes will be built on Manvers Way in association with Great Places Housing Group following an allocation of £4.5m.

These schemes are two of 130 recently confirmed by the HCA as receiving a total of £174m to build over 8,800 homes across the country.

Ian Jones, Business Development Director, commented, "We are delighted to have received Kickstart funding for these two developments. The success of these bids will not only allow us to commence build work and provide much needed homes, but will also offer additional employment and training opportunities throughout the East Midlands and South Yorkshire."





Barrie's Great North Run

Site Manager, Barrie Armston has joined the ever increasing numbers of Westleigh runners, by completing the 30th Great North Run.

Having applied in January of this year, Barrie secured a guaranteed place via the Parkinson's Society.

Along with nearly 40,000 other finishers, Barrie is delighted to have seen Ant & Dec, and in completing the 13.1 mile course in a time of 2:52:22.

Barrie said "The whole spirit and atmosphere of the race was amazing. It was hard work, but very rewarding. A big thank you to everyone who sponsored me, managing to raise just over £1,000. I'd thoroughly recommend the Great North to anyone".

Now fully recovered and having been truly bitten by the running bug, Barrie has already entered for the 2011 Great North Run, and is considering the London Marathon.



Race the Train

ICT Manager, Craig Johnson was amongst 799 finishers who recently took on the gruelling 14 mile, predominantly off-road, Race the Train course in Tywyn, Wales.

Thanks to the deluge of rain over the previous 2 days, the runners were greeted with soft, undulating fields underfoot, but that also meant potentially treacherous sections of steep, slippery-when-wet gravel & shale paths.

The picturesque Dolgoch Falls introduced the runners to their first non-elected slowdown, as the steep stepped hillside brought the majority to a determined power walk, but recovery arrived soon afterwards on the downwards grassy slopes.

Following much needed refreshment at 6.5 miles, the route gently rose again onto a narrow muddied steep hillside track where only the foolish would have strayed from the single file that was forced upon the competitors. And before the equally treacherous downhill section on the opposite banks for the Dolgoch Falls, the runners had no option but to plough through a treacle thick muddy quagmire, thanking themselves for tightly lacing their shoes an hour or so before.

The remainder of the course offered narrow footpaths, exposed stones & tree roots along with further steep hillsides to negotiate, before returning into town to finish.

Craig said, "The race was a true experience, varied terrains with loads of mud and water!"

Site Managers Golf Day

The 2010 Site Managers golf day was held on 17th September, at the wonderful Kilworth Springs golf course.

Congratulations goes to Craig Warner who won the event with 37 points. In second place was Paul Townsend on 35, nearest the pin on the 6th was Mark Rockley, and longest drive on the 15th was Ross Gibbons.

Efficiency Drive

Three years ago, the company introduced an incentive scheme for our company car drivers, where the most efficient drivers would be rewarded with a valuable prize.

With each fuel transaction being scored, based upon pence per litre and calculated miles per gallon, company car drivers are pitted against one another, all with sights upon the £500 prize at the end of the year.

Thanks to greater employee awareness and more efficient driving styles, resulting in an overall increased MPG, almost £10,000 was saved in 2009/10.

The company were delighted to present Mick Harrison, Rui Afonso and Phil Silvester, each with a £500 gift voucher.

Baby Olivia

Congratulations to Property Director Matthew Moore and wife Vanessa on the birth of their 2nd child, baby Olivia.

Born on 11th June and weighing in at a very healthy 6lbs 12oz, the Moore family could not be happier!





Londres à Paris

On 4th, 5th, 6th September Gary Turner, Head of Partnerships and Investments took part in the British Heart Foundation London to Paris Cycle ride. Gary tells his story below ...

I was part of a Team of five, friends from our village. The idea was put to us by one of the team in the pub on Xmas Eve 2009. It seemed a really good idea at the time, giving us something to focus on in terms of getting fit (again) in 2010 whilst raising money for a very good cause.

Training started in January, and I am pleased to say we kept to our target of training twice a week at least. The summer months and holidays interrupted preparation but the September weekend soon arrived and we set off for the start in good spirits for the starting point, Chetwood House (Churchills residence) in Kent.

On the first day we turned up at 7.30am for the start, expecting or rather hoping to find fellow bike riders of all shapes and sizes on all sorts of bike, chopper, butchers bikes etc. No such luck, we were surrounded by 87 fellow cyclists who looked in significantly better shape than us and on serious looking bikes.

The route was fantastic although hilly and more demanding than we had expected. We stopped for a great lunch and still completed

the 75 miles in just over 4 hours finishing somewhere in the middle of the pack. The second night we stayed in Calais, with the only lasting memory being that the beer was very expensive.

The second day's ride began at 8.00am and took a route through fantastic French countryside. Very hilly with rough road surfaces making the ride very uncomfortable; the start of my bum ache.

We finished the 85 mile ride to Amien in just under 6 hours. Amien was great. A quick shower and change and we went for a meal and beer by the water front.

The last days weather was horrible, cold, wet and windy. The route was less than pretty and in parts, down right dangerous. All that said we worked our way through the day, and the only trouble we all had was with bum ache. 95 miles later we were in sight of the finish The Palace of Versailles, with the ride down a cobble road not improving the pain in the backside.

All five of our Team finished together completing the final 95 miles in just over 7 hours. The photo above shows us at the finish and gives a sense of relief and joy I think.

The key stats are. Five of us started, five of us finished. We arrived at the finish line at shortly after 3.00pm, the last riders arrived at 8.30pm, so we finished well above half way. The most important stat, we beat our target to raise £10,00 for BHF and as it stands it looks like we have raised £11,500 (incidentally that made us the Team that raised the most on the ride, and one Team had 24 members).

On behalf of the Team I would like to say thank you to everyone who donated, individuals and Organisations. I don't want to single out specific donations but I feel I must give a very special thank you to Longhurst Group for their donation and to Westleigh who made a very significant contribution.

Everyone asks the question, would you do it again? Answer, very simple ... No. Three days on a bike doing 250 plus miles is quite simply a pain in the bum!

**£11,500 raised for
the British Heart
Foundation**

Brian Dearlove

1947-2010

Everyone at Westleigh Developments were deeply saddened to hear of the sudden and untimely passing of our friend and business colleague, Brian Dearlove earlier this summer.

Brian has been working alongside us since the start of the company and was instrumental in our first commercial project in 1987, the Westleigh Business Park in Blaby, both as the architect and advisor on the concept. It was he who really came up with the vision and design of the small business park for local people, which has proven to be a highly successful formula, for which Westleigh continue to be recognised.



The Brian Dearlove Partnership originally operated from their Wigston home before expanding into offices within the town. But as the relationship with Westleigh grew ever stronger and with space available at our Whetstone head office, it made sense for Brian and his team to work from here. This they did for a number of years before making the short trip across the road to new premises at the Grange Business Park.

In recent years the Partnership has become our affordable homes expert, not just in designing the plans but really understanding the whole process which goes into creating these schemes.

Brian's passing was a big shock to everyone and our thoughts are with his wife Pauline and his children Sam, Ben and Amy. Brian was always someone you could turn to, he was a well-respected friend and colleague and he really was one of life's genuine people. In typical Dearlove tradition, his family is moving on with the company and continuing his good work and we wish them the very best of luck.



Brian & Pauline, 60's party



Westleigh Business Park, Blaby



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