



LONG AWAITED £9M LEISURE CENTRE HAS BEEN APPROVED

The eagerly anticipated leisure centre, given the green light by the Forest of Dean District Council, symbolises a major investment in community health, wellness, and engagement within Gloucestershire. Set to transform the Speedwell building at Five Acres, near Coleford, into a vibrant community hub, this project includes the construction of a cutting-edge multi-purpose sports and performance hall, showcasing the council's commitment to fostering active lifestyles and cultural enrichment.

Key to this development is the creation of a seamless integration between the historic Speedwell building and the new sports facilities through a striking glazed atrium, designed to be a welcoming space for social interaction and community gatherings. This architectural feature not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the centre but also symbolises the transparent and inclusive approach taken in its planning and execution.

Facilities are meticulously planned to cater to a broad spectrum of activities and interests. From a café offering a convivial atmosphere in the atrium to state-of-the-art fitness areas, including a multi-gym and studio spaces for dance and performance arts, the centre promises to be a cornerstone for community health and creativity. The inclusion of office and meeting spaces, along with Hartpury College's dedicated rooms, further demonstrates the centre's role as a multifaceted educational and leisure resource.

Councillor Tim Gwilliam's reflections on the project underscore the transformative power of community activism and partnership between local governance and residents. This leisure centre stands as a beacon of achievement, illustrating how persistent advocacy and collaborative effort can lead to the realisation of long-held community aspirations.

The design incorporates environmentally sustainable materials and technologies, including timber cladding that will naturally age, contributing to the centre's aesthetic harmony with its surroundings. The emphasis on renewable energy through photovoltaic panels and the comprehensive parking and cycling facilities underscore the project's commitment to sustainability and accessibility.

Looking ahead, the project lays the groundwork for further development, including sports pitches, tennis courts, and potentially a hotel, signalling a long-term vision for making the site a premier leisure and wellness destination. The council's foresight in earmarking space for a future swimming pool further signifies a dedication to expanding the centre's offerings in response to community needs and aspirations.

As Gloucestershire anticipates the completion of this landmark project, the new leisure centre at Five Acres is set to become a pivotal hub for fostering community spirit, promoting health and well-being, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. This ambitious development not only revitalises the local landscape but also sets a precedent for future community-centred projects across the region.



Architects proposed view of the new leisure centre complex at Five Acres, near Coleford

LATEST ACTIVITIES & EVENTS AT SYDENHAM HOUSE

Bringing in the New Year ...

2024 is already speeding by us but I wanted to talk about the wonderful Christmastime that all of us here at Sydenham House enjoyed ...

“The twelve days of Christmas” became “the thirty-seven days” in Sydenham House with festive decorations going up in the lounge and conservatory at the start of December and remaining in place up to twelfth night in January. Different entertainers were booked for each week of Advent and we were delighted to see some of our favourites like Ticked Pink and on Christmas Eve, Mickey and his Rooster from Bristol thrilled everyone at the Big Family Party.

Mindsong and Antek came to sing seasonal songs with us and the pre-school group from Blakeney came to share their celebrations with us, too.

Our Activities sessions included making our own Christmas Cards,

reminiscing about Christmases past, and testing a whole variety of mince pies including Amaretto, Spekuloos, All-Butter and Brandy, crumble-topped, iced and traditional. We liked all of them! The theme through the month was “Christmas around the world”, and we explored celebrations in other countries including talking about the arrival of Saint Nicholas in a boat on the 6th December in The Netherlands, making and sharing biscuits in Switzerland, and setting a spare place at the Christmas Eve table in Poland. We especially enjoyed tasting our way around the world, trying Panettone, pumpernickel and marzipan treats and sweets.

Santa visited Sydenham, of course, and on Christmas morning a heap of presents were found at the foot of our tree. We spent the morning opening our gifts before a delicious home-cooked traditional lunch with a glass or two of something festive so we could doze off during the King’s Speech

and wake up in time for tea. Thank you to everyone who helped to make our Christmas special; Richard at the Post Office who sent us a chocolate Advent Calendar, and everyone who participated in the Christmas Sale, raffles and fund-raisers which enable us to make Sydenham Christmases special for our ‘family’.

We’re looking forward to the New Year kicking off with a celebration of Britain. From Wassailing to Chinese New Year and Burns’ Night, we’ll be taking our part in events around the country. And in between we have pub games afternoons, quizzes, bird-spotting and seed-planting to get on with.

A belated Happy New Year and Happy Easter to all our Readers!



There's always plenty to do at Sydenham House ...



VERTICAL FARM OPENS IN LYDNEY!

Jones Food Company, a trailblazer in sustainable agriculture, has unveiled its second vertical farm, JFC2, in Lydney, nestled in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. This launch follows their inaugural vertical farm in Lincolnshire, established six years prior. JFC2 distinguishes itself by leveraging 100% renewable energy to cultivate an assortment of crops such as basil, coriander, parsley, and various types of lettuce. This innovative approach is aimed at mitigating critical challenges like food shortages, climate change, and the impacts of food inflation.

James Lloyd-Jones, CEO and Founder of Jones Food Company, is optimistic about JFC2's impact on the agricultural sector: "This farm signals a significant milestone for agri-tech in the UK. We have unlocked the formula for year-round, sustainable, and affordable premium food production. Overcoming commercial hurdles, this facility exemplifies how vertical farming can address global issues such as climate change, food security, and labor shortages, all while enhancing production efficiency."

Glyn Stephens, Head of Growing at Jones Food Company, emphasized the technological advancements made at JFC2, particularly in energy efficiency concerning temperature and humidity control. "Our focus on energy efficiency,

especially in our groundbreaking irrigation system, positions us at the forefront of making vertical farming economically viable. These are not minor improvements; they represent monumental strides towards integrating profitability into vertical farming," Stephens commented, highlighting the significant progress made in reducing operational costs and enhancing product quality.

Jones Food Company's expansion into JFC2 not only underscores the potential of vertical farming in revolutionising food production but also demonstrates a scalable and environmentally responsible model for addressing future food supply challenges.



Employees inspecting produce at the new vertical farm in Lydney

© image and story gloucestershirelive.co.uk/Jones Food Company

Under 8's Football Team scores £1K!

Persimmon Homes has contributed £1,000 to Chepstow Town Juniors, enhancing the under 8s team's resources. The donation, part of Persimmon's Community Champions initiative, was presented by employee and parent, Sean Gibbs, supporting the volunteer-run club that hosts 250 young players across various age groups. This funding boost, aimed at covering equipment and kit expenses, underscores Persimmon's commitment to fostering youth sports and community engagement. Victoria Williams, East Wales sales director, expressed delight in aiding

the team, reflecting Persimmon's dedication to leaving a positive legacy. Chepstow Town Juniors expressed deep gratitude for the support, highlighting the importance of sponsorship in sustaining their youth football programs.



Inspirational Quote

“ When we choose to trust the journey and embrace love and joy, we are free to fly ”

Annicken R Day

Sydenham House
because we care

sydenham-house.co.uk

© image and story freepresseries.co.uk