

## **DIGGERS REV UP IN TRANSFORMATION OF WATERWORLD SITE**

WORK has begun on a multimillion pound transformation of one of Stoke-on-Trent's most familiar landmarks.

Land adjacent to Waterworld, the ever-popular leisure complex on Festival Park, is being prepared to house an 18,000sq/ft indoor Adventure Golf facility as well as a new 40,000sq/ft purpose built premium lifestyle fitness club.

The rejuvenation is expected to create an extra 60 jobs and attract an additional 150,000 visitors to the state-of-the-art leisure destination which will see Waterworld itself improved with two major new rides, details of which will be released later in the year.

The new M Club facility will also include a 50-metre indoor sprinting track, functional training zone, a main pool and a family pool, family changing facilities, and children's swimming lessons in keeping with the junior school curriculum.

For the first time, meanwhile, the site will be linked directly to the nearby Trent and Mersey Canal, meaning it will be accessible by those not wishing to drive.

The outdoor area will also be used to create 'boot camp' style fitness classes and facilities including jogging and running tracks where people can exercise in the open air amidst green space.

"Bringing M Club and Waterworld together makes total sense and achieves economies of scale," says Mr Chaudry, who also owns the 65,000 sq ft M Club 2 site at Trent Vale, in addition to 15 other fitness and soccer sites around the country, with six more set to go live within months.

"The new M Club will be a game changer for North Staffordshire. Not only will facilities look fantastic but they will be of the absolute highest standard and offer something for everyone. There won't be a fitness centre like it anywhere across the region.

"I am also excited that we'll be interconnecting with nature by finally connecting the site to the canal and making it much easier for visitors to walk to the club without having to drive".

Mr Chaudry believes the Waterworld upgrade and the wider leisure complex, built by Leek-based Broadstaff Construction Ltd, will keep the attraction at the top of the tree in terms of comparable facilities nationwide, offer a wider choice of attractions, and reward those who have enjoyed its thrills and spills down the years.

"Waterworld is already one of the biggest attractions in the country," he says, "but I have never been one for standing still. I am always looking for ways to expand and improve. Visitors love it as it is, but I want to take it to the next level.

"It's great news for Stoke-on-Trent. Not only will Waterworld and M Club be incredible facilities for the people of North Staffordshire but they will bring even more tourists.

"It's exciting that, after all the planning, the development is now taking place. I'm like everyone else – I just can't wait to see the final result and use everything it has to offer."

Designs for the building were drawn up by architects at Newcastle's Hulme Upright. "We've been working with Mo for the past 25 years," says managing director David Morrey, "and this is the biggest project yet – bringing the three distinct facilities and two visitor attractions under one roof."

The main challenge, he explains, was in attaching the new structure to the existing Waterworld building. "We have found a solution that not only allows us to accommodate Mo's businesses but also means we can give Waterworld a new image as well.

"It has made it look aesthetically more pleasing, with high specification cladding and a long sloping roof. There is also lots of glass. It's going to be a very light and pleasing area.

"We want the building to be a reflection of the quality of service that the club provides."

The new building adds to the rapid expansion of the Festival Park area in recent years.

"It's one of the last major sites to be developed," adds Mr Morrey, "which adds to its significance.

"We're very pleased to be involved in the project. It's always good when something is happening in Stoke-on-Trent to see a local business use local professionals. That doesn't always happen.

"But we've developed a good relationship with Mo over the years. We understand him and how his businesses work and that undoubtedly helps when it comes to designing buildings."