

GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE

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Students visit The Place to get hands-on experience of major building project in Great Yarmouth

With the exciting regeneration work gathering pace at the former Palmers department store in Great Yarmouth, more than 40 students have visited the site to see first-hand the project taking shape.

Morgan Sindall Construction, which is carrying out the work on behalf of Great Yarmouth Borough Council to create The Place – a £17m library, university and learning hub – has agreed a new two-year partnership with East Norfolk Sixth Form College to deliver job opportunities and placements for students.

The Place will be home to the town's public library - replacing its current location in Tolhouse Road - along with adult learning, a registry office and other community services such as Citizens Advice.

It will also be the base for a new University Learning Centre from where East Coast College and the University of Suffolk will offer degree and diploma courses, as well as access to higher education and adult learning courses.

The ambitious project is being funded via £8.1m from the Government's Town Deal, with a further £3.4m from the Future High Streets Fund. East Coast College and the University of Suffolk are contributing £3.5m and Norfolk County Council £2m.

As part of Morgan Sindall's new partnership, 15 T-Level students from East Norfolk Sixth Form College and 25 brickwork students from East Coast College visited The Place. They were shown around the site and learned about the additional considerations around the project regarding health and safety, carbon capture and modern methods of construction.

The East Coast College brickwork students will be returning to the site throughout the year to get hands-on experience assisting in the renovation of the external masonry and brickwork at The Place.

Helen Clements, senior social value manager at Morgan Sindall Construction in the East, said: "At Morgan Sindall we are committed to creating social value where it is most needed within the communities where we operate. A career in construction offers a world of training, skills and other benefits.

"We want to champion the next generation of talent, and working directly with sixth forms and colleges is the best way to do that. The new partnership aims to educate the next generation about the benefits of a career in construction, as well as the future of the industry regarding sustainability, social value and digital transformation."

Rachel Bunn, East Coast College's director of commercial employer and community partnerships, said: "We work hard to expose our students to as many different real working opportunities as possible to enhance their knowledge and employability skills.

"It was fantastic to have the chance to send students to see modern methods of construction in action. The Place will be an exciting hub of learning for the community, and we are delighted to be a leading partner in the development.

“The student visit is another great example of East Coast College working with the sector to inspire the future workforce and open doors to them once they have finished their studies.”

Sophie Green, employer engagement co-ordinator at East Norfolk Sixth Form College, said: “We are thrilled to have formed an educational partnership with Morgan Sindall, one of the leading construction and regeneration groups in the UK.

“This partnership will provide our students with a unique opportunity to learn from industry experts, with access to work placements that offer first-hand practical exposure. We believe this collaboration will enrich our curriculum and enhance our students’ learning, they will be able to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios and develop valuable skills for their future careers.

“We are excited to be working with Morgan Sindall and to witness the positive impact of this partnership on our students and the wider locality.”

Morgan Sindall has already offered two work placements to students at East Norfolk College. This will equate to more than 315 placement hours at The Place project, working across a range of different roles including pre-construction, design management, health and safety, environment, project management and quantity surveying.

Councillor Daniel Candon, Great Yarmouth Borough Council’s portfolio holder for economic development and growth, said: “The Place is hugely significant for Great Yarmouth and demonstrates our commitment to working hard to help fulfil the aspirations of those in our community.

“Seeing local students being able to participate in this project as part of their learning is really important as The Place begins fulfilling its role as a key part of our aim of improving educational opportunities for the people of Great Yarmouth. We are grateful to Morgan Sindall and all of our partners as we work towards delivering the jobs and careers of the future.”

Amber Wells, one of the two students from East Norfolk Sixth Form College to be offered a placement with Morgan Sindall, said: “The visit was really interesting. Listening to the team explain what they are doing on the old Palmers site was very exciting. It is sometimes hard to visualise in the classroom, so being able to come and see the work brings it to life and confirms this is definitely the industry I want to work in.”

Dr Catherine Richards, principal at East Norfolk Sixth Form College, said: “Working with Morgan Sindall is a critical part of the work we are doing to upskill young people in the area. At East Norfolk Sixth Form we are passionate about providing courses that meet local industry needs for the future of the East.”

The 5,300 sqm, five-storey building in the town’s Marketplace first opened as a drapers in 1837 and is being transformed as part of a wider ambition to locate all relevant learning and training functions in a single, high-profile building in central Great Yarmouth.

The Place project was procured via SCAPE Construction, a direct award framework process designed to drive collaboration, time and cost efficiencies and meaningful social value.