

## **Open all hours for the 2012 Olympics**

When Florence and Harry Gould opened their drapers shop in 1902 on the corner of High East Street and Icen way in Dorchester the shopping public arrived in horse drawn carriages and on bicycles. Now more than a century later Goulds department stores are looking forward to welcoming customers jetting into Dorset from the furthest corners of the globe for the events of 2012.

They may be one of the oldest businesses in town but are forward thinking in their approach. Associate director Becky Murphy recognises the opportunities that 2012 affords the family run company and has been signing staff up on Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnerships free 'Welcoming our World' courses. These are part of the 2012 Customer Care Campaign, funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

"Modern customers have high expectations and an integral part of Goulds' ethos is to meet and exceed their demands above and beyond the competition. Having the facility to train staff without the cost of course fees is an excellent resource, as a result our employees have come away feeling valued and motivated."

The 'Welcoming our World' courses are being rolled out by Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership as part of the 2012 Customer Care Campaign and are available to the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors.

Goulds recently sent 3 members of staff on the visual merchandising course and through Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership's Retail Skills Shop, they've secured funding for 15 members of staff to complete an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) in customer service.

"There's a real sense of excitement about the Olympics in the business community and this facility ensures we're ready to give visitors an unrivalled personal shopping experience so they want to come back again and again."

To find out more about access to free 'Welcoming our World' courses please visit [www.dorsetnewforest.org](http://www.dorsetnewforest.org) or call 01202 451151.

For more information on Goulds department stores visit [www.gouldsstores.co.uk](http://www.gouldsstores.co.uk)

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### **Notes to Editors:**

The 2012 Customer Care Campaign, funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF), is called 'Welcoming our World' – WOW for short – and aims to raise awareness of the importance of how, as a region, we meet and greet global visitors. Through free short courses in customer service delivery, front of house skills and team management, businesses are being invited to contribute to the 'WOW Factor!' through positive visitor experiences.

### **Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership**

Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership has delivered business and skills development for the tourism industry in the sub-region since 1996.

It has secured more than £5m external funding to promote and help develop performance and skills in this sector. The Partnership also manages the Dorset Retail Skillshop which delivers training and support services to the retail sector.

### **The Learning and Skills Council**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive.