# Kingsway Centre in Newport embraces experiential and educational transformation amid retail decline



The Kingsway Centre in Newport, under the ownership of The Boyce Group, is carving out a distinctive path amid the widespread challenges faced by retail hubs across the UK. Despite the closure of the Wilko store as part of the group's wider restructuring involving 32 shop closures, the centre's management remains optimistic about their forward-looking business model.

Having acquired the centre in late 2023 for £615,000, The Boyce Group, led by Niall Leighton-Boyce, has embarked on a comprehensive transformation. This reinvention has seen Kingsway operate at near full capacity, an impressive feat given the current countrywide retail climate. Central to this success has been the introduction of experiential leisure offerings, notably The Underground—an indoor venue featuring airsoft, axe throwing, and a rage room. These immersive activities have not only attracted new visitors but also extended the time spent onsite, boosting secondary spending and energising the centre's atmosphere.

In addition to leisure, the group is actively diversifying Kingsway's portfolio by securing planning permission for educational use, signalling plans for academic partnerships and potential university-led expansion. This move is expected to generate consistent year-round footfall, contribute to local skills development, and bolster the surrounding economy. The Boyce Group has also announced plans to convert Sovereign House into 112 student studios, further aligning with their vision of a multi-use community hub.

The repurposing of former retail spaces, including the Wilko unit, is also underway to accommodate a broader mix of tenants. The centre is poised to welcome new food and drink outlets, financial and professional services, and additional leisure and hospitality venues. Further family-friendly attractions have been introduced, such as the Little Kingdom Adventure play area, which reportedly attracted hundreds of families and benefitted adjacent retailers.

Future enhancements include establishing a food court and vending options designed to increase visitor footfall and dwell time, aiming to reinforce Kingsway’s status as a vibrant, community-centred destination. According to The Boyce Group, this strategic pivot away from traditional retail underscores a broader industry trend: the future success of high streets hinges on adaptability and the integration of diverse experiences beyond shopping alone.

While Kingsway is evolving as a leisure and educational hub, it is worth noting that similar developments are being pursued in other parts of Wales. For instance, the 71/72 Kingsway project in Swansea, opened in mid-2025, has become a thriving mixed-use space with notable tenants and sustainable design features, including solar panels and heat recovery systems, highlighting a regional shift towards multifunctional commercial spaces.

The Kingsway Centre's ongoing transformation exemplifies a proactive response to retail challenges by blending leisure, education, hospitality, and community amenities to retain relevance and promote economic vitality in Newport. The Boyce Group's approach could serve as a model for other centres facing modern retail pressures, embodying a belief that reinvention is essential for future prosperity.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.boycegroup.co.uk/kingsway-centre), [[4]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/10444-bristol-developer-swoops-for-shopping-centre)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/), [[4]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/10444-bristol-developer-swoops-for-shopping-centre), [[5]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.boycegroup.co.uk/kingsway-centre), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/), [[4]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/10444-bristol-developer-swoops-for-shopping-centre), [[5]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/10444-bristol-developer-swoops-for-shopping-centre), [[6]](https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/news/further-tenant-announced-as-7172-kingsway-in-swansea-officially-opens/), [[7]](https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/news/further-tenant-announced-as-7172-kingsway-in-swansea-officially-opens/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25450781.kingsway-centre-shopping-bosses-unfazed-retail-woes/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.boycegroup.co.uk/kingsway-centre> - The Boyce Group acquired Kingsway Centre in Newport in late 2023. Under the leadership of Niall Leighton-Boyce, the centre has been reimagined to attract new tenants and diversify its offerings. Within the first six months, 11 new independent businesses have moved in, and plans are underway to convert Sovereign House into 112 student studios. The lower ground floor is set to host The Underground, an airsoft and paintball centre, along with student facilities, retail, hospitality, and leisure units.
3. <https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/> - Following the closure of Wilko in September 2023, Kingsway Centre's new owner, the Boyce Group, plans to repurpose the former retail space. The vision includes introducing diverse uses such as food and drink outlets, financial and professional services, leisure, and educational facilities. This strategy aims to revitalise the centre and adapt to changing consumer patterns, moving beyond traditional retail reliance.
4. <https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/10444-bristol-developer-swoops-for-shopping-centre> - In January 2024, the Boyce Group, led by Niall Leighton-Boyce, acquired Kingsway Shopping Centre in Newport for £615,000. The acquisition plan includes converting Sovereign House into residential accommodation and redeveloping Emlyn House into a public square. The group also intends to fill vacant units with leisure and hospitality operators, introduce a food court, and establish a soft play area, aiming to transform the centre into a multi-use hub.
5. <https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/newport/kingsway-centre-targets-diverse-use-for-wilkos-former-space/> - Kingsway Centre's new owner, the Boyce Group, plans to repurpose the former Wilko store space to introduce diverse uses such as food and drink outlets, financial and professional services, leisure, and educational facilities. This strategy aims to revitalise the centre and adapt to changing consumer patterns, moving beyond traditional retail reliance.
6. <https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/news/further-tenant-announced-as-7172-kingsway-in-swansea-officially-opens/> - The 71/72 Kingsway development in Swansea, officially opened in July 2025, has attracted tenants including Futures First, IWG, and TUI. The development offers 104,000 square feet of office space and shared workspaces, alongside an event hall and spaces for food and beverage businesses. A green rooftop terrace with views over Swansea Bay also features, along with solar panels on top of the building and heat recovery systems to minimise energy use.
7. <https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/news/further-tenant-announced-as-7172-kingsway-in-swansea-officially-opens/> - The 71/72 Kingsway development in Swansea, officially opened in July 2025, has attracted tenants including Futures First, IWG, and TUI. The development offers 104,000 square feet of office space and shared workspaces, alongside an event hall and spaces for food and beverage businesses. A green rooftop terrace with views over Swansea Bay also features, along with solar panels on top of the building and heat recovery systems to minimise energy use.