

Bourne Leisure founders in talks to buy back Butlin's for £300m

The family which co-founded one of the UK's largest holiday and leisure companies is on the cusp of a £300m deal to take back control of Butlin's, *BusinessLive* understands.

The Harris family which jointly established Bourne Leisure – the parent company of Butlin's, Haven Holidays and Warner Leisure Hotels – in the 1960s, is reportedly in talks with current owner Blackstone regarding the sale. It is understood that Paul Harris is the family member leading on the deal.

The deal, first reported by *Sky News*, comes a year after Bourne Leisure was [sold to private equity business Blackstone](#) for more than £3bn. Bourne Leisure employs more than 16,000 staff and attracts 4.5 million guests to 56 sites across the UK every year.

It comes as firms continue to capitalise on demand for UK domestic holidays following the pandemic and amid the cost-of-living crisis.

In May, Blackstone began [an auction to offload Butlin's](#), which includes three resorts at Minehead, Skegness and Bognor Regis, from its business. It is understood potential buyers include Bain Capital, Epiris, TDR Capital and Guy Hands' Terra Firma Capital Partners.

An agreement between the Harris Family and Blackstone could happen as early as this week, with total proceeds from the sale of Butlin's expected to be more than £600m. It is understood that a significant proportion of the proceeds would be reinvested into Bourne Leisure's two other brands – Haven and Warner Leisure.

In July, the UK's biggest private pension fund, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), told *Sky News* it was buying Butlin's underlying real estate assets for £300m.

Butlin's was set up by Billy Butlin in 1936 with the aim of providing cheap getaways for Brits. Around one million people go on holiday at a Butlin's every year – and at its peak the company had nine camps in the UK.

US investment company Blackstone previously invested in Center Parcs UK and currently owns Merlin, which has grown to become the second largest operator of visitor attractions and theme parks globally.

Blackstone declined to comment.

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