

Kevin Horkin

Local Lancashire Business Owner, Philanthropist, Charitable Fundraiser & Responsible Pet Ownership Campaigner

kevin@spexopticians.co.uk

Experience

Managing Director at Spex Opticians

December 1983 - Present (33 years)

It's a little known fact that Spex owner Kevin Horkin was the first person to introduce cut price eyewear to the UK in 1983. "Our aim is simple - to give our customers a top quality optical service combined with the best eyewear deals available."

Kevin opened his first shop called 'The Eye Shop' in Warner Street, in Accrington to national headlines. Kevin was instrumental in challenging the opticians monopoly on the sale of over the counter ready reading glasses and in 1987 won a case against that monopoly. During this time it was illegal to sell spectacles by anyone other than a qualified Ophthalmic Optician. Kevin argued publically this was monopolistic trading and began to challenge the law in the courts on the sale of ready made reading glasses in the U.K. It wasn't long before the opticians ruling body The General Optical Council took out simultaneous private prosecutions in an attempt to stop the sale of ready made reading spectacles. Kevin successfully fought the actions by the General Optical Council until Margaret Thatcher's Government decided to change the law to enable non qualified opticians the right to sell spectacles without the need for a prescription. Many national optical brands were established around this time. Kevin then re-branded his business from The Eye Shop to Spex Opticians opening 18 branches across Lancashire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside.

Managing Director at Ken Varey's Outdoor World

April 1997 - Present (19 years 8 months)

Kevin bought the business off Ken Varey himself in 1997. The business at the time was titled Ken Varey Outdoor World and sold fishing products as it's speciality. The company name was recently changed to Ken Varey Town and Country wear to in keep with the products that the stores now sell. Ken Varey Town and Country Wear is part of The Horkin Group

Managing Director at Lady

January 2010 - Present (6 years 11 months)

Ladieswear Clothing

Media Director at OUR DOGS PUBLISHING CO LTD

July 1990 - Present (26 years 5 months)

The leading canine weekly has been published continuously since 1895. Our printed paper has covered the world of dogs, shows, breeding and exhibiting since the reign of Queen Victoria.

OUR DOGS is THE dog paper for dog people...WE KNOW the world of dogs and have been covering the scene since 1895! Join us in print and online.

Charitable Fundraiser & Responsible Pet Ownership Campaigner at The Pet Role Trust

January 1990 - Present (26 years 11 months)

Kevin founded the Pet Role Trust, a registered charitable trust promoting responsible pet ownership and devoted to improving animal health & welfare through charitable fund-raising - primarily for the Kennel Club Health Foundation and Manchester Dog's Home - the largest in the country.

The Pet Role Trust also distributes cash to smaller, lesser known animal charities.

The aims & objectives of the Pet Role Trust are:

1. To promote responsible pet ownership.
2. To inform & advise people of the need to respect pets & animals.
3. To assist in the alleviation of pain & suffering in pets & animals.
4. To discourage cruelty to animals.
5. To encourage & assist individuals or small groups to develop care facilities for pets & animals in need.
6. To support & work with existing caring organisations.

TV Presenter, Actor, Celebrity Pet Consultant & Correspondent at Granada TV, This Morning, The Big Breakfast & Nickelodeon

January 1987 - Present (29 years 11 months)

Kevin has been a regular contributor and pet consultant to many TV programmes including This Morning and Coronation Street. When asked by Bill Roach of Coronation Street how he would describe himself, Kevin said "Resourceful. The problem is that I don't fit into any pigeon hole. I've been an actor, a reporter, a newspaper columnist. I've created and hosted TV shows, worked as an advisor on numerous films. Resourceful is the only word I can think of to describe myself."

In 1987 a new career dawned. Kevin had already supplied spectacles to some of the actors of Granada Television's Manchester Studios. Realising that Kevin was an animal lover, Granada asked him if he could supply some animals for 'Coronation Street' During this time Granada T.V. were piloting a new format for I.T.V. called 'This Morning' hosted by Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan. Kevin had started supplying animals for them from the start and was called upon to judge the 'This Morning' Pet of the Year

Competition. Many, many T.V appearances followed. Kevin continued to work on the programme for a further 8 years just before its famous move to London.

Kevin is an experienced writer, national newspaper columnist, and contributor to many glossy magazines. He has interviewed over two hundred stars and personalities about their pets, has appeared on and presented many television programmes, including live presentation at Crufts and other major dog shows. His Pet People column appeared in The Sunday People Newspaper from January 1995 onwards.

Kevin had continued to meet many celebrities who he had interviewed for frequent articles for the T.V Times. Since then Kevin has been a regular columnist for national magazines such as 'Mad about Dogs', Sainsbury's Pet Club Monthly Magazine in which he had a Pet features column and 'On the Air' to mention just a few.

As an Actor Kevin has appeared in a number of TV Dramas including the Comedy Drama Catwalk Dogs (2007).

Patron at The Kirsty Club For Francis House Children's Hospice, Manchester

January 2006 - Present (10 years 11 months)

For the Past ten years Kevin has also been patron of 'The Kirsty Appeal' named after Kirsty Howard. Over that period he has helped to raise in excess of £5 million required for a new large extension for Francis House Children's Hospice in Manchester. As recognition of his philanthropic work he was Awarded Lancashire Community Philanthropist of the Year in 2011.

Board Member of the Development Advisory Group at The Community Foundation for Merseyside & Lancashire

January 2009 - Present (7 years 11 months)

Since 2009 Kevin has been a Board Member of the Development Advisory Group of the Community Foundation for Merseyside & Lancashire which is a charitable trust which helps donors to support their community by channelling money into community projects. The Foundation is a registered charity which undertakes grant-making, facilitates philanthropy and "contributes to achieving positive social change in Lancashire's local communities." It is part of a nationwide network of community foundations which collectively delivered £70m. throughout the year in 2015. Kevin has held a number of events at both 10 and 11 Downing Street for both the former Prime Minister, David Cameron and his wife Samantha and the former Chancellor, George Osborne showcasing all that is best in Lancashire. Following an invitation from Samantha Cameron Kevin has organised a number of Special Children's Christmas Parties for Disabled Children at Number 10 Downing Street including one hosted by Ant and Dec. In 2014 Kevin received a Lifetime Legends of Industry Award from the Variety Club of Great Britain. Legend of Industry Award 2014 for his work with the Foundation.

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Hyndburn Constituency at The Conservative Party

January 2015 - May 2015 (5 months)

Kevin was selected on the 15th of January, 2015, by local Conservative Party members as their prospective parliamentary candidate to fight the Hyndburn parliamentary seat. He was one of the last few Conservative Candidates to be selected to fight a parliamentary seat in the country leaving him just three and a half short months to put together a campaign. The prospects were not good. In the Borough Council Elections of 2014 in Hyndburn the Conservatives achieved just 20% of the Vote finishing third behind Labour on 32.2% with UKIP. topping the poll on 34.6% The Conservatives didn't do very much better in the EU Elections that year either finishing third once again with 20% of the Vote, once again with Labour on 32.21% and UKIP topping the poll on 34.55%. The expectation from Conservative Central Office was a subsequent third place finish behind a resurgent UKIP in one of the strongest areas for them in the entire North West with UKIP, former BNP and English Democrat Voters already strong on the ground. UKIP increased their number of Votes by 7,673 of which it is estimated that nearly 4,400 or 59% came from Labour. The Conservatives finished a Strong Second with 31.9% of the Vote, losing just 765 Votes to UKIP on 2010. It was an impressive performance to staunch losses to UKIP to less than 10% of the total increase in their overall vote especially from a political party on the right of the political spectrum. The In-Out or Shake It All About Mini EU Referendum carried out in the constituency during the General Election is thought to have strongly demonstrated Kevin's credentials as a Eurosceptic candidate. Labour's losses to UKIP were balanced out by an estimated 3,500 left leaning Liberal Democrat Voters transitioning across to the Social Democratic leaning Labour Candidate, Graham Jones as their Vote collapsed. That allowed the Labour Party which had far longer to prepare on the ground to increase their share of the Vote by 1% or 545 Votes.

Conservative Town Councillor for the Clitheroe, St. Mary's Ward at Clitheroe Town Council

May 2011 - May 2015 (4 years 1 month)

Kevin was elected to Clitheroe Town Council for the Clitheroe St. Mary's Ward receiving 499 Votes and beating the popular incumbent Simon Entwistle by just 1 Vote.

Conservative Borough Councillor for the St. Mary's Ward at Ribble Valley Borough Council

May 2011 - May 2015 (4 years 1 month)

Kevin fought the St. Mary's Ward in May, 2011 achieving 502 Votes. As a Borough Councillor, he campaigned on a wide variety of issues including town centre and high street regeneration, Policing, tackling anti-social behaviour, street drinking,, better pavements and safer roads, over-development and air pollution.

Mayor of Clitheroe at Clitheroe Town Council

May 2013 - May 2014 (1 year 1 month)

Kevin was appointed Mayor of Clitheroe for the Civic Year 2013-2014. During his period in office Kevin launched the Clitheroe Community Fund to raise money for good causes in The Town of Clitheroe. £39,000 was raised and distributed to a range of community causes. Much of this was raised through the Mayor's Charity Shop in Clitheroe which Kevin opened.

Proprietor & Pet Detective sourcing Animals for TV Programmes & Film at Pet Role - Star Pet Agency

January 1987 - December 2012 (26 years)

Kevin's passionate interest in animal welfare is long-term and stems from the days when he used to provide animals for a number of high profile T.V. Programmes. In 1987 Granada Studios asked him if he could supply some animals for the nations best loved soap 'Coronation Street'. Kevin agreed and there began an association with the programme that lasted some 18 years, supplying everything from the cat on the roof to Jacks Pigeons, Hilda's cat and even Mavis's Budgie. During this time Kevin was in great demand for his 'Animal Services' The Pet Role agency's list of credits (programmes that they had worked on) is impressive. Pet Role worked on some of the nations top T.V. Programmes. ITV's Touch of Frost once called for a flatulent bulldog which Kevin was able to supply. The Sooty and Sweep Show, Pat Phoenix Love Story, You've Been Framed, Common as Muck are just a few of the programmes who have used Pet Role. Other programmes include a Touch of Frost, Emmerdale, The Bill and Where the Heart is.

As a consequence of his involvement with animals Kevin has interviewed over two hundred stars and personalities about their pets, has appeared on and presented many television programmes, including live presentation at Crufts and other major annual events. During Kevin's early T.V. career many celebrities had called upon his skills and services to supply them their own individual pets, this resulted in Kevin's two books which were 'Pets and personalities on Coronation Street' and 'Star Dogs: What Stars Think about their Pets'.

He has also appeared as a Pet Expert in The Pet Set (2003) a 6 Programme Series exploring our relationship with pets & Animal Tales (2004) Kevin has also appeared on Blue Peter.

Conservative Borough Councillor for the Altham Ward at Hyndburn Borough Council

May 1987 - May 1991 (4 years 1 month)

Between 1987 and 1991 Kevin was elected as a Councillor on Hyndburn Borough Council rising to the role of Group Whip for the Conservative Group. Kevin fought the Altham Ward and was elected as the then youngest Councillor in Lancashire. Kevin was also Joint Coordinator for the Hyndburn Constituency in 1987 for the re-election campaign for Ken Hargreaves MP.

Education

Holy Family Roman Catholic College, Accrington

1971 - 1976

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[Contact Kevin on LinkedIn](#)