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# PRESS RELEASE



29 April 2022

## MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS NICK VARNEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TO RETIRE

London, 29 April 2022. Merlin Entertainments today announces that Nick Varney, Chief Executive Officer, has informed the Board that he intends to retire.

Nick has a 12-month notice period during which the Board will identify his successor and ensure an orderly handover. The Board is starting a process that will consider both strong internal candidates, as well as external talent, and the Board expects that a successor will have been appointed and an orderly handover will have taken place within this period. Mark Fisher, Chief Development Officer, has also decided to retire in the same time period.

Merlin Entertainments was formed in 1999 following the £47m Management Buyout of Vardon Entertainments led by Nick, who subsequently became CEO of the rebranded group. Since then, Nick has grown the business from 19 attractions to a global leader in location based, family entertainment, operating 140 attractions, 23 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 24 countries and across 4 continents. During this period, it grew EBITDA from £7m to £569m pre-pandemic.

**Roland Hernandez, Chair of Merlin Entertainments, commented:**

"I would like to thank Nick for his outstanding leadership of Merlin Entertainments over the last 23 years. He has created one of the best leisure businesses in the world through his passion, dedication, and talent. The growth has been incredible, particularly through a period of such macro change. He will leave Merlin in strong shape to continue creating and delivering memorable experiences to our millions of guests around the world. Nick and Mark will be in place and wholly focused for some time, and we are fortunate to have an exceptional team in place. On behalf of the Board and Shareholders, we are extremely grateful to Nick and Mark for their remarkable service to the company and wish them all the best."

**Nick Varney, CEO of Merlin Entertainments, added:**

"Merlin has been my life for most of my career. I love the people, the attractions, the visitors and the industry and I am proud to have played my part as we built Merlin into an incredible business. I know that with our amazing attractions, as well as our committed and capable people, Merlin will go from strength to strength over the coming years."

**Ends**

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## Notes to Editors

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### About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin operates 140 attractions, 23 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 24 countries and across 4 continents. Merlin's purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its millions of guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its employees.

See [www.merlinentertainments.biz](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz) for more information and follow on Twitter [@MerlinEntsNews](https://twitter.com/MerlinEntsNews).

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