

PRESS RELEASE



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MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS PARTNERS WITH PURPOSE COALITION TO DEEPEN SOCIAL IMPACT

Merlin Entertainments announced as latest signatory to the Purpose Coalition with strategic partnership focused on social impact in the UK

Blackpool: 20th November 2023: Merlin Entertainments, the UK and Europe's largest branded entertainment destination company, today announced its strategic collaboration with the **Purpose Coalition** to publish a comprehensive Impact Report on Merlin's social impact in the UK. The partnership launch took place earlier today in the iconic Blackpool Tower Ballroom, nestled in the heart of Merlin's Blackpool Cluster featuring eight of its attractions.

Merlin's Impact Report, which will be published in Q1 of 2024, will be crafted in partnership with esteemed figures in politics and social advocacy, including former Education Secretary and Chair of the Purpose Coalition, Rt Hon Justine Greening, and crossbench peer and former Labour MP, Lord Walney. The report will explore Merlin's people and community focused initiatives through the prism of 14 Purpose Goals, addressing critical life stages and barriers to opportunity including successful early years, school years and good health and wellbeing. The report will help to identify the gaps where access to opportunity is limited and where Merlin as a major UK employer will be able to aid social mobility further.

A Global Entertainment Force with a Purpose:

Merlin Entertainments, founded in 1999, has evolved into one of the world's largest attraction operators and the largest in the UK with a portfolio spanning 140 attractions in 24 countries. From the enchanting SEA LIFE and Madame Tussauds to the iconic LEGOLAND Resorts and Alton Towers Resort, Merlin's purpose has been to collaborate with household brands to deliver the very best in immersive brand experiences which spread joy and happiness to families across the world.

Chair of the Purpose Coalition, Rt Hon Justine Greening, emphasised the pivotal role of the leisure and hospitality sector and acknowledged its contribution to job creation and economic vitality. Greening said "The role of the leisure and hospitality sector is hugely important in the UK, delivering jobs and opportunities across the country, and contributing significantly to local and national economies. The pandemic hit the sector hard, and it continues to be affected by cost-of-living pressures, in terms of its operations and the spending power of its customers. Despite that, however, there is no doubt that it remains a hugely popular part of people's lives and attractions and theme parks offer an ever more sophisticated experience. By sharing its purpose-led best practice on attracting, developing, and retaining its staff and on its community engagement, Merlin can play a leading part in shaping the sector and levelling up the communities where it operates."

Matt Jowett, Chief Corporate Officer for Merlin Entertainments, asserted the collective power of Merlin to create lasting societal impact. He added: "Every year, Merlin delivers fun and memorable experiences to millions of guests around the world. As a business made up of over 30,000 teammates globally, we recognise that we have the collective ability to create lasting change that benefits society and our planet, well beyond the doors of our attractions and resorts. As a business we have consistently looked to positively contribute to the local communities in which we are based – whether through our employees or our two dedicated charities, Merlin's Magic Wand Children's Charity, and SEA LIFE TRUST. At Merlin, we

believe our superpower is being a force for good, and people are at the heart of everything we do. As part of the Purpose Coalition, we are looking forward to finding new ways to support social mobility and the wider levelling up agenda in the UK.”

From Joyful Experiences to Social Transformation:

Kate Shane, Regional Director for Blackpool, showcased the depth of Merlin’s community partnerships at the launch event with a large group of partners in attendance. She emphasised the company’s dual commitment to spreading joy to guests and bringing happiness to the communities it operates in. With pride in the legacy Merlin has established in Blackpool, touching lives across diverse backgrounds, Shane commented: “We’re here today in the beautiful Blackpool Tower joined by so many of our key partners and community advocates – from schools and accessibility charities to Council partners – who have demonstrated the power of collaboration and what we can achieve together when a private business like ours becomes a valuable community partner. Our purpose at Merlin is to spread joy and happiness to our guests but we also recognise that we have the power to bring that joy and happiness further to the communities we work in. Many young people who have attended these attractions as kids may end up working with us in the future, and I am proud of the legacy that we have created in Blackpool by touching the lives of so many people. We look forward to the partnership with the Purpose Business Coalition and how the Impact Report will give us additional insight into what more we can do in the future.”

A Force for Good to Create Opportunity:

Lord Walney, concluded: “Like most businesses in the leisure and hospitality sector, Merlin’s success is built on its people. It offers a wide range of roles and responsibilities, from customer-facing staff to those behind the scenes, including its technicians and engineers who develop the innovative experiences that keep attracting visitors. At a time when there is an increasing shortage of workers with the right skills, a company’s ability to develop key personal, technical, and digital skills that are also transferable is vital in delivering opportunity across the country.”

The strategic partnership between Merlin Entertainments and the Purpose Business Coalition will leverage Merlin’s influence as a global entertainment giant to become a catalyst for positive social and economic change. As the Impact Report takes shape, Merlin is set to redefine not just the entertainment industry but its broader impact on society.

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Notes to Editors

About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in branded entertainment destinations. As the UK and Europe’s Number 1, Merlin operates over 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 for more information and follow on Twitter @MerlinEntsNews.
