

## MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS WELCOMES KARIM HAJJAR AS NEW CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**Karim Hajjar to Spearhead Financial Strategy, Investment and M&A at  
Global Leader of Branded Entertainment Destinations**

**London, 19 January 2024:** Merlin Entertainments, a world leader in branded entertainment destinations with over 140 attractions globally, today announced the appointment of Karim Hajjar as Chief Financial Officer, effective 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Hajjar will report to CEO Scott O'Neil and will work closely with the rest of the Executive leadership team to continue delivering strong financial performance and accelerate growth across Merlin's international brand portfolio. He succeeds Alistair Windybank, who has served as Merlin's CFO since July 2020, following the announcement in October 2023 of his planned retirement.

Hajjar brings more than 30 years of financial experience at international companies across the energy, resources, and chemicals industries. In his last 10 years as Group Chief Financial Officer of Belgian chemicals company, Solvay, he was an instrumental member of the leadership that spearheaded record financial performance by structurally improving profitability, cash generation and returns, ultimately transforming Solvay into two new independently listed companies on the Euronext Brussels and Paris exchanges last year. He has also held various senior positions with Shell and Tarmac Group, with deep expertise in M&A and capital market transactions, cost and cash management strategies, and investor relations on strategic topics including ESG integration. Hajjar started his career with Grant Thornton as a chartered accountant in London and became one of the firm's youngest Partners.

**Scott O'Neil, Chief Executive Officer of Merlin Entertainments, said:**

"Karim is a deeply respected financial executive with a proven track-record of delivering strong and sustainable growth and innovation across complex multi-national businesses. He brings a wealth of expertise from his impressive career working with international companies during transformative periods. His leadership will be pivotal to our continued global expansion and ambition of creating the greatest place in the world to work and play. An exceptional strategic and financial operator, we are enthusiastic about the fresh energy and profound impact Karim will bring to our Executive and broader team, as well as our investor relations."

He added: "I would like to thank Alistair for his outstanding contribution to Merlin over the last 15 years and wish him all the best for his well-earned retirement."

**Karim Hajjar, Chief Financial Officer of Merlin Entertainments, said:**

"I am thrilled to be joining the Merlin team at an exciting moment for the company as it leverages its strong foundations and realises its full value potential, creating more amazing experiences and memories for visitors across the world. I look forward to working with Scott and the Executive team to deliver on the strategic direction, and to accelerate its growth, further extending Merlin's global leadership in the sector."

As Chief Financial Officer, Karim will lead Merlin's financial planning, investment strategies, and financial management of all 140 global attractions including new Resorts, M&A opportunities and shareholder management.

Alistair Windybank will continue to support the business whilst the appropriate onboarding and seamless handover takes place.

ENDS

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## Notes to Editors

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### 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](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz) for more information.

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