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MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS SHOWCASES ITS SOCIAL IMPACT WITH NEW REPORT LAUNCH

Merlin Entertainments, a global leader in branded entertainment destinations, this week launched a report with the Purpose Coalition setting out its social impact in the UK.

Merlin is one of the world's largest operators of branded entertainment. Since it was founded in the UK in 1999, its overriding purpose has been to create experiences that inspire joy and connection for the millions of guests that visit its sites, as well as long-term value for its investors. It operates more than 140 attractions in 23 countries around the world, with over 30 UK attractions ranging from SEA LIFE, Madame Tussauds, and the lastminute.com London Eye to iconic theme park resorts like LEGOLAND® Windsor and Alton Towers Resort. Merlin employs approx. 30,000 staff at peak, with 8,000 of these in its UK attractions.

The Force for Good Impact Report – launched at an event in Parliament on Wednesday 8th May – assesses Merlin's existing best practice in the UK against a framework of 15 Goals, developed by the Purpose Coalition and setting out the key barriers that prevent people from accessing opportunity. The report also includes an in-depth view of best practice on the ground following a survey of Merlin's sites across England and Scotland. The report highlights how the business prioritises guest safety and memorable visits through its 'Protecting the Magic' approach, and provides transformative experiences for children with disabilities or serious illness. It places a strong emphasis on colleague development and their training and professional growth, and promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including particular support for veterans and care leavers. It also has a strong focus on sustainability and conservation initiatives – including in collaboration with its charity partner the SEA LIFE TRUST.

The report also explores areas where Merlin can build on its existing work and extend its social impact in the UK even further. These measures include:

- Transforming regional social impact, replicating its work in Blackpool in other locations
- Establishing a 'Merlin Charter', which would serve as a foundational framework to drive social value across its supply chain
- Enabling its affiliated charities – The SEA LIFE TRUST and Merlin's Magic Wand - to play a proactive part in key campaigns on sustainability and early years wellbeing for children with disabilities or challenging circumstances
- Setting and tracking targets for socioeconomic diversity
- Delivering a holistic menopause approach

Chair of the Purpose Coalition and former Education Secretary, Rt Hon Justine Greening, said: *"Lack of opportunity is still a big problem in this country, stifling individual achievement as well as economic growth. Businesses can play a huge role in shifting the dial, driving social impact in the areas that need it most. The role of the leisure and tourism industry is a vitally important part of this effort. It contributes to the national economy as well as countless local communities and delivers jobs and opportunities across the UK, as well as helping create memorable experiences for millions every year. Some of our greatest resorts and attractions are in some of the most deprived parts of the country, with many in coastal areas where social mobility has traditionally been poor.*

"This report demonstrates Merlin's commitment to purpose-led social good and sets a fantastic example for socially conscious business practices for all purpose-led organisations. The company provides exceptional experiences for its guests,

fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for its employees and makes a meaningful contribution to the communities and environments it serves. It has the potential to make an even greater difference, extending its role as a force for good in the communities that need the most support, far beyond the doors of its attractions and resorts.”

Matt Jowett, Chief Corporate Officer at Merlin Entertainments said:

“We welcome the publication of this Force for Good Impact Report by the Purpose Coalition. Whilst we’ve known for some time that Merlin’s sites in England and Scotland make a positive difference at a local level, never before have we looked in such detail at the full extent of it.

“As this report sets out, our resort theme parks and attractions in the UK are having a meaningful social impact in their local communities – and there are some tremendous examples of best practice. But we need to go further, and ensure that what is effective in some places can, where possible, be replicated and expanded elsewhere. Thanks to our partnership with the Purpose Coalition, we are now in a position to deepen our impact in all parts of the UK where we have a presence.

“At Merlin, our purpose is to create moments of joy, allowing families to enjoy fun and memorable experiences. This philosophy very much extends to how we approach our efforts to contribute to local communities, in terms of helping to break down barriers and boost access to opportunity; in addition to promoting sustainability and protecting nature.

“We look forward to taking the Purpose Coalition’s recommendations on board so that Merlin can contribute even more effectively to communities around the UK.”

Florence Eshalomi MP, Shadow Minister for Democracy – who has the South Bank attractions in her constituency – welcomed Merlin and the Purpose Coalition to Parliament, saying:

“Merlin’s attractions in the Vauxhall constituency – including the iconic London Eye – have a hugely positive impact on the local area, helping deliver substantial economic and social benefits to the community I represent. It is good to see this report highlighting some of initiatives undertaken by the South Bank attractions to help tackle the barriers to opportunity – as identified through the Purpose Goals.

“Tackling such challenges is a key mission for Labour, which is why this assessment of Merlin’s social impact is so welcome. It is clear from the report that Merlin is in a strong position to further support efforts to improve the life chances of those in those communities across the UK where it has a presence.

“It is essential that all businesses strive to deepen their social impact – and Merlin is leading the way, including in my constituency. I am therefore delighted at this week’s decision by Lambeth Council to make the London Eye a permanent feature of the capital’s skyline, thereby ensuring that the economic and social footprint of this attraction will continue long into the future – including 1% of the Eye’s turnover which will continue to be invested, alongside other funds, in maintaining and improving the South Bank area. This is a fine example of Purpose Goal 15 – working in partnership – which provides a model to be replicated elsewhere to deepen social impact.”

Ends

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Notes to Editors

About Merlin Entertainments:

Merlin Entertainments is a world leader in branded entertainment destinations, offering a diverse portfolio of resort theme parks, city-centre gateway attractions and LEGOLAND Resorts which span across the UK, US, Western Europe, China and Asia Pacific. Dedicated to creating experiences that inspire joy and connection, Merlin welcomes more than 62 million guests annually to its growing estate, with over 140 sites across 23 countries. An expert in bringing world-famous entertainment brands to life, Merlin works with partners including the LEGO® Group, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Peppa Pig, DreamWorks and Ferrari to create destinations where guests can immerse themselves in a wide array of brand-driven worlds, rides and uplifting learning experiences. See www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information.