



Media release

18 July 2011

with pic: Sandra Matthews-Marsh

OPEN LEGACY WILL BOOST KENT TOURISM FOR YEARS TO COME

A two-year Visit Kent campaign promoting the county as an international golfing destination is establishing a legacy that will provide support to local tourism businesses for many years to come.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive at Visit Kent, said she was delighted that the Open Golf at Sandwich had been a major triumph offering outstanding golf and achieving thousands of hours of global media coverage for the course.

And she was particularly pleased when, as the tournament reached its final stages, BBC commentator Peter Alliss complimented Visit Kent on air for its hard work not only in attracting people to the competition but also making them feel so welcome during their visit.

“However, an even more important goal for us has been ensuring that this four-day event is not a one-off success story,” she said.

“Throughout our marketing campaign to develop Kent as a top European golfing destination, launched at the European Golf Championship at London Golf Club in 2009, we have been working closely with all our golf courses, accommodation providers, international golf tourism providers and the global golf media. We have been building awareness of the fantastic courses and facilities available in our county. And the interest has been phenomenal.

“Kent is a perfect destination for golfers of all levels – right on London’s doorstep. Plus there is a wealth of attractions for family members not so eager to spend all their time on the greens.

“With our golf courses, accommodation providers – such as Shepherd Neame – and other Visit Kent investors, we have developed a series of golf breaks and packages with Golfbreaks.com, Europe’s largest golf travel company. More are in the pipeline.

“We promoted Kent at the International Association of Golf Tour Operators’ trade show in Valencia last year and will be in Turkey for the same show later this year. Visit Kent was at St Andrews for the 2010 Open and, of course, we were well represented at the Golf Live Event at London Golf Club.

“To date we have hosted more than 100 specialist press trips focusing on Kent’s golf and tourism offer – generating press coverage valued at more than £500,000 – and we have ensured all marketing activity for the campaign has been backed by website and e-marketing initiatives.”

The Visit Kent golfing campaign has also built on the tourism champions’ existing strong links with tourism specialists in the Nord Pas De Calais and Kent’s Cross-Channel operators to create two-centre golfing breaks.

“Our fully-integrated golf marketing campaign has been, and continues to be, partnership-working at its best,” said Mrs Matthews-Marsh.

“Once again pooling the resources at Kent County Council, local authorities, transport providers, Visit Kent, and the county’s top tourism, leisure and tourism businesses, we have demonstrated that we are more than capable of hosting international sporting events and the global media that accompanies them.

‘We are now perfectly placed to welcome the many visitors and sports enthusiasts who will be flocking to London and Kent in 2012.’

Mrs Matthews-Marsh is particularly delighted that The Open has drawn attention to East Kent.

“Of course I want to showcase all of Kent all of the time.

‘However, following the loss of so many jobs at Pfizer and stories of coastal decline, the Open was a great opportunity for us to highlight to all the visitors to St George’s not only the natural beauty of our countryside and high quality golf courses but all the world-class attractions in the area from Dover Castle and Turner Contemporary to the new Marlowe Theatre as well as all our special events from Folkestone Triennial to the festivals and concerts that make a Kent summer.’

ends

*For further media information, please contact Delphine Houlton, Andrew Metcalf or Andy Rayfield, at Maxim, tel: 01892 513033 email: Delphine@maxim-pr.co.uk; or Julie Edwards, at Visit Kent, tel: 01227 812900 email: Julie.edwards@visitkent.co.uk.
For images of Kent, go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/visitkent/>*

- Visit Kent Limited is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, district and borough councils, Tourism South East and

the leading sector tourism businesses in Kent. Visit Kent champions Kent's £3.2 billion tourism industry by targeting UK and overseas markets, improving quality and skills and growing investment in the tourism product. For further information visit www.visitkent.co.uk or www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk