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VISIT KENT LAUNCHES FAIR PRICING CHARTER FOR BUSINESSES

Kent's tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses are being urged to sign up to two Fair Pricing and Practice Charters to reassure visitors to the county that they are committed to fair and reasonable trading and providing professional service.

Visit Kent, the county's tourism champions, is promoting a national standard for industry businesses, which has been launched by Visit Britain in readiness for the influx of visitors expected for the London Games 2012.

And Visit Kent has established its own bespoke scheme, which will also cover this year when Sandwich is hosting the Open Golf and continue beyond the 2012 Games.

Cllr Nigel Collor, chairman of the Open Golf project executive, has welcomed the launch of the Kent charter ahead of the national fair pricing mark.

He said: "This initiative will recognise fair pricing and practices for all our visitors to the area during the Open Golf in July."

Businesses signing up to the charters will be entitled to display their Fair Pricing and Practice marks on their publicity material and they will also be recognised on

the Visit Kent website – a top port of call for people seeking places to stay and visit during short breaks and longer holidays in the county.

Among the first in the county to pledge to the charters were The Bell Hotel, at Sandwich, Ashford International Hotel, and the University of Kent.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, chief executive at Visit Kent, said: “This is an opportunity for Kent’s 3,000 businesses in the sector to gain recognition and establish their credentials in a highly competitive marketplace.

“Clearly we are supporting the Visit Britain national scheme and this is important. However, at Visit Kent, we are determined to lead the way in gaining recognition for our county as a leading UK destination and ensuring a legacy which will add value to our businesses long after the Olympics’ baton has been passed on.

“We believe that the Fair Pricing marks will send out a clear message to travel trade businesses and all our visitors that we take our businesses seriously and are committed to fair trading and high standards at all times.”

Mike Hill, Kent County Council cabinet member for community services, said: "The Open Golf is a fantastic opportunity for our local businesses and this initiative will help them to showcase their commitment to quality. We want visitors to experience the very best that Kent has to offer, so they not only enjoy their stay this time, but continue to come back."

For further information about signing up to the national and Visit Kent Fair Pricing charter, go to <http://bit.ly/kentcommittedtofairpricing>

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- Visit Kent Limited is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, the 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.

- Celebrating Kent is part of the Kent Campaign for the 2012 Olympic Games, a partnership led and managed by Kent County Council to maximise the benefits and long term legacy to the County off the back of the 2012 Games. The award winning Campaign primarily works across eight sectors, including tourism, sport, the arts, and education. Further details can be found at www.kentsport.org/london2012

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