



PRESS RELEASE

24 May 2011

Visit Surrey launches as a Community Interest Company

On Tuesday 22nd June, Visit Surrey will be officially launched as a Community Interest Company (CIC) at Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking. The company, which represents tourism organisations across the county including accommodation providers, visitor attractions, golf clubs, racecourses, local authorities and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was initially a partnership organisation but following budget cuts from the regional tourist board (Tourism South East) has now decided to form its own company.

Tourism South East (TSE) had to restructure its organisation, following funding cuts from the regional development agency SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), which resulted in Visit Surrey's Partnership Manager being made redundant. Where previously the Visit Surrey Partnership had been funded through TSE membership fees, with half the money being used on marketing Surrey and its tourism offer, it was clear that this was no longer going to be viable with no-one in position to carry out the work. Therefore, the tourism businesses collaborated to establish their own organisation to ensure Surrey was not overlooked.

A board has been established which included, Chairman Kevin Lorimer from Guildford's County Club, Manny Sawhney of Asperion Hotels, Michael More-Molyneux from Loseley Park, Mark Pearson from Surrey Economic Partnership and Chris White from Denbies Wine Estate.

Funding and support has been pledged by several local authorities, primarily Surrey County Council, along with Guildford Borough Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council and Woking Borough Council, all of whom see the value and importance of the tourism economy in Surrey and support the new Visit Surrey with its goals. The organisation is also in discussion with other local authorities who wish to participate. Many of the local businesses are also actively involved with the company providing in kind support and marketing collaboration to assist Visit Surrey with its aims.

Visit Surrey has recently appointed Anna Tomkins as Consultant Project Manager, whose role will be to recruit more members and champion Surrey's tourism offer. The company will continue to market itself through the Visit Surrey brochure, at exhibitions and the website,

www.visitsurrey.com. As Chairman, Kevin Lorimer says, “the main aim of Visit Surrey is to deliver a return on investment to our members by putting bums in beds and trotters through turnstiles”.

The visitor economy in Surrey is worth £1.9 billion to local businesses and employs over 33,000 people (Cambridge model 2009). As Visit Surrey aims to grow, it is looking beyond its natural boundary to the wider Local Enterprise Partnerships. These new style economic partnerships operate in geographical areas that reflect natural economic areas and bring together local business and civic leaders to drive sustainable private sector growth and job creation in their area.

Mark Pearson, Surrey Economic Partnership comments “Surrey’s tourism industry forms an important part in the diverse economy in the county. Visit Surrey will look forward to working with the Local Enterprise Partnerships to explore ways in which the Surrey tourism industry and offer can be supported.”

Any organisation wishing to find out more about Visit Surrey CIC, should contact Anna Tomkins, Consultant Project Manager on Tel: 07554 007422 or Email: managervisitsurrey@gmail.com.

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For further press information, please contact Kevin Lorimer, Chair of Visit Surrey CIC on Tel: 01483 600449 or Email: chairvisitsurrey@googlemail.com

Picture shows the front cover of the 2011 Visit Surrey brochure.