

6 November 2006

HRH PRINCE OF WALES ANNOUNCED AS PATRON OF FIRST BRITISH TOURISM WEEK

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is to be the Patron of the first British Tourism Week, which takes place from 12-18 March 2007. Announced at World Travel Market, The Prince's involvement will further draw national and international attention to the size, value and importance of Britain's £74 billion visitor economy.

Stephen Dowd, chairman of the British Tourism Week executive council and chief executive of inbound tourism trade body UKinbound, welcomed the announcement: "Royal recognition of the importance of British Tourism Week will help us redefine both the image and the reality of British tourism in the important years ahead. His Royal Highness' interests in heritage and in many of the quintessential elements that constitute Britain's tourism brand, make him a perfect ambassador for our industry."

Tom Wright, chief executive of national tourism agency VisitBritain, added: "It's fantastic news that The Prince of Wales has agreed to be Patron of British Tourism Week. His support is further evidence of the critical importance of tourism to the UK economy and of our royal heritage to the tourism industry. HRH has consistently supported our industry over many years and has been an influential ambassador at home and abroad. We are delighted that he will lend his support as we lay the foundations to ensure the future growth and prosperity of our visitor economy."

British Tourism Week highlights the contribution made by businesses from every part of the UK's tourism industry, large and small, public and commercial in maximising future opportunities such as the Olympic Games. It will galvanise the commitment of organisations and individuals to further improve and develop the industry.

Information about British Tourism Week website is available at www.britishtourismweek.com. Organised by VisitBritain and UKinbound, working with Reed Travel Exhibitions and with the support of the Tourism Alliance and the Tourism Society, the week of major events will:

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- increase industry awareness and address the lack of understanding of the size, scope and importance of the tourism industry
- encourage a greater appreciation of the value of providing a quality tourism product
- encourage tourism employers and employees to improve their customer service and skills levels through training and development
- explore how the UK's complex tourism industry can work together to improve its international competitiveness

Three national events are the focus of British Tourism Week: VisitBritain's British Travel Trade Fair (13-14 March 2007), UKinbound's 30th Anniversary Convention (14-15 March 2007) and the Tourism Alliance Annual Event (12 March 2007). Held in Birmingham and London, they will be the centrepiece for national, regional and local events.

A number of different organisations are also supporting British Tourism Week including the Association of British Travel Agents, the Scottish Tourism Forum, the Tourism Alliance, the Tourism Society, UKinbound, VisitBritain, Visit London, VisitScotland, Visit Wales, Wales Tourism Alliance and the regions of England.

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Notes to Editors

- British Tourism Week (12-18 March 2006) has been established to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry
 - Raise quality standards
 - Promote training and professionalism
 - Improve competitiveness of the UK tourism industry
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- The Week has cross-party political support from Tourism Minister, Shaun Woodward MP, Hugo Swire MP, Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Don Foster MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

