



Celebrating Leaders in English Tourism: VisitEngland announces Awards for Excellence finalists

2 February 2016:

VisitEngland, the national tourist board has announced the finalists for the Awards for Excellence 2016, the most prestigious awards in English Tourism. Working in collaboration with destinations and businesses throughout England, the Awards pay tribute to businesses and individuals who champion best practice and exhibit excellence in customer service. The winners will be announced at the Award ceremony on Tuesday 8 March at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool.

With 16 categories ranging from Access for All to Visitor Information Provider of the Year and 2016's debut Dog Friendly Business of the Year Award, applications were received from a variety of businesses including hotels, B&Bs, glamping operators, restaurants, food and drink producers, pubs, museums, festivals, conference centres and even motorway service areas.

"Awards for Excellence finalists exemplify outstanding tourism talent and distinguished businesses throughout England," said Sally Balcombe, CEO of VisitBritain and VisitEngland. "Our Awards highlight exceptional commitment to quality care, service and English tourism as a whole. The Awards not only honour the great and the good in tourism and hospitality, but raise the profile of England and celebrate the importance of the industry's contribution to local and national economies."

Sally Balcombe goes on to say, "we received some truly impressive applications this year and shortlisting 80 finalists has been a tough feat, involving a team of mystery shoppers and even two dogs testing dog-friendly businesses. There's absolutely no doubt those chosen are representative of the best in the industry who place delivering an unforgettable experience to visitors in England at the heart of their business operations. Working collaboratively, we are inspiring and motivating businesses to provide the highest standards."

Judged by industry leaders, all finalists will receive either a Gold, Silver, Bronze or Highly Commended Award.

The VisitEngland Awards for Excellence winners will be announced at an Awards ceremony, which is being held for the very first time this year during English Tourism Week. The Awards ceremony will also include the official presentation of the VisitEngland and Daily Mirror's Tourism Superstar 2016 Award for the nation's publically voted unsung tourism hero.

To find out more and book tickets visit www.visitenglandwards.org

VISIT **BLACKPOOL**

2016 Finalists

Below are the finalists in each category for this year's awards (listed alphabetically)

Access for All (sponsored by Barclays www.barclays.com)

Attenborough Arts Centre
University of Leicester, Leicester
<http://www2.le.ac.uk/hosted/attenborougharts>

Calvert Trust Exmoor
Barnstable, Devon
<http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk/exmoor/exmoor>

Hampton Court Palace
London
<http://www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/>

Hoe Grange Holidays
Matlock, Derbyshire
<http://www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk/>

The Roman Baths
Bath
<http://www.romanbaths.co.uk>

Bed & Breakfast/ Guest Accommodation (sponsored by Quality in Tourism www.qualityintourism.com)

Low Mill Guesthouse
Leyburn, North Yorkshire
<http://www.lowmillguesthouse.co.uk/>

Molland Manor House
Sandwich, Kent
<http://www.mollandhouse.co.uk/>

Pebble House
Mevagissey, Cornwall

<http://www.pebblehousecornwall.co.uk/>

St Cuthbert's House
Seahouses, Northumberland
<http://www.stcuthbertshouse.com/>

Trevose Harbour House
St Ives, Cornwall
<http://trevosehouse.co.uk/>

Business Tourism

Crewe Hall
Crewe, Cheshire
<http://www.ghotels.co.uk/our-locations/crewe-hall/>

Dartington Hall
Totnes, Devon
<https://www.dartington.org/our-venue/conferences/>

Highbullen Hotel Golf & Country Club
Umburleigh, Devon
<http://www.highbullen.co.uk/>

Seaham Hall Hotel & Spa
Nr Seaham, County Durham
<http://www.seaham-hall.co.uk/>

Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Golf & Spa and Country Lodges
Colchester, Essex
<http://www.stokebynayland.com/>

Dog Friendly Business (sponsored by Pets Pyjamas <http://www.petspyjamas.com>)

Higher Wiscombe
Colyton, Devon
<http://higherwiscombe.com/>

Old Swan & Minster Mill
Lovell, Oxfordshire
<http://www.oldswanandminstermill.com>

Poston Mill Park
Peterchurch, Golden Valley, Hertfordshire
<http://www.postonmill.co.uk/>

Sun Inn
Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria
<http://www.sun-inn.info>

Talbot Hotel
Malton, North Yorkshire
<http://www.talbotmalton.co.uk>

Holiday Park/ Holiday Village

Castlerigg Hall Caravan & Camping Park
Keswick, Cumbria
www.castlerigg.co.uk

Darwin Forest Country Park
Matlock, Derbyshire
www.darwinforest.co.uk

Padstow Touring Park
Padstow, Cornwall
www.padstowtouringpark.co.uk

Poston Mill Park
Peterchurch, Golden Valley, Hertfordshire
<http://www.postonmill.co.uk/>

Woodovis Park
Tavistock, Devon
www.woodovis.com

Large Hotel

Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa
New Forest, Hampshire
<http://www.chewtonglen.com/>

Peckforton Castle Hotel
Tarporey, Cheshire
<http://www.peckfortoncastle.co.uk/>

Rockliffe Hall
Darlington, County Durham
<https://www.rockliffehall.com/>

Salcombe Harbour Hotel & Spa
Salcombe, Devon
<http://www.salcombe-harbour-hotel.co.uk/>

South Lodge
Horsham, West Sussex
http://www.southlodgehotel.co.uk/EXCLUSIVE_HOTELS/the_hotel.aspx

Large Visitor Attraction

Beamish, The Living Museum of the North
Beamish, County Durham
www.beamish.org.uk

Brunel's ss Great Britain
Great Western Dockyard, Bristol
www.ssgreatbritain.org

Chester Zoo
Upton-by-Chester, Chester
www.chesterzoo.org

Salisbury Cathedral
Salisbury, Wiltshire
www.salisburycathedral.org.uk

The Whitworth
The University of Manchester, Manchester
www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

Self Catering Holiday Provider (sponsored by Cottages.com www.cottages.com)

The Dandelion Hideaway
Nuneaton, Leicestershire
<http://www.thedandelionhideaway.co.uk/>

The Dovecote Barns York
Kelfield, York
<http://www.dovecotebarnsyork.co.uk/>

Treworrey Cottages
Looe, Cornwall
<https://www.cornishdreamcottages.co.uk/>

Whalesborough Cottages & Spa
Bude, Cornwall
<http://www.whalesborough.co.uk/>

Wolds Edge Holiday Lodges
Bishop Wilton, York
<http://woldsedge.co.uk/>

Small Hotel

Cross Lane House
Minehead, Somerset
www.crosslanehouse.com

Hell Bay Hotel
Bryher, Isles of Scilly
<http://www.hellbay.co.uk/>

Kentisbury Grange
Barnstable, Devon
www.kentisburygrange.com

Tudor Farmhouse
Clearwell, Gloucestershire
www.tudorfarmhousehotel.co.uk

Yorebridge House
Bainbridge, North Yorkshire
www.yorebridgehouse.co.uk

Small Visitor Attraction

Bombay Sapphire Distillery
Whitechurch, Hampshire
www.distillery.bombaysapphire.com

Emma Bridgewater Factory and Shop
Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent
<http://emmabridgewaterfactory.co.uk/>

The Crystal
Royal Victoria Docks, London
<https://www.thecrystal.org/>

Wheal Martyn
St. Austell, Cornwall
www.wheal-martyn.com

Yorkshire Trike Tours
Horsforth, Leeds
www.yorkshiretriketours.co.uk

Sustainable Tourism

Browsholme Hall and Tithe Barn
Clitheroe, Lancashire

<http://www.browsholme.co.uk/>

Colton House

Nr Rugley, Staffordshire

<http://www.coltonhouse.com/>

Hoe Grange Holidays

Matlock, Derbyshire

<http://www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk/>

Railholiday

Saltash, Cornwall

<http://www.railholiday.co.uk/index.htm>

St Cuthbert's House

Seahouses, Northumberland

<http://www.stcuthbertshouse.com/>

Taste of England

Eckington Manor

Eckington, Worcestershire

<http://www.eckingtonmanor.co.uk/>

La Locanda Ristorante Italiano

Clitheroe, Lancashire

www.lalocanda.co.uk

Martineau Guest House

Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear

<http://www.martineau-house.co.uk/>

The Dining Room

Rock, Cornwall

www.thediningroomrock.co.uk

The Guardhouse Café

Brixham, Devon

<http://www.guardhousecafe.com/>

Tourism Event

Durham University - Magna Carta Exhibition

Durham

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/>

IWM North - From Street to Trench Exhibition

Trafford Park, Manchester

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-north>

Liverpool City Council - Memories of August 1914
Liverpool
<https://www.liverpool.gov.uk/>

Visit Eastbourne – Airbourne
Eastbourne
<http://www.visiteastbourne.com/>

York Racecourse - Juddmonte International
York
<https://www.yorkracecourse.co.uk/>

Tourism Experience

Canterbury Historic River Tours
Canterbury, Kent
<http://www.canterburyrivertours.co.uk/>

King Richard III Partnership
Leicester
<http://www.kriii.com/>

Livingstone Lodge Overnight Safari Experience
Ashford, Kent
<http://www.aspinallfoundation.org/livingstone-lodge>

Morecambe Bay Partnership - Bay Cycle Way
Morecambe, Lancashire
<http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/bay-cycle-way>

River Cottage HQ
Axminster, Devon
<https://www.rivercottage.net/>

Tourism Pub (sponsored by Free to Book <http://www.freetobook.com>)

The Cartford Inn
Preston, Lancashire
www.thecartfordinn.co.uk

The Fleece Inn
Bretforton, Worcestershire
www.thefleeceinn.co.uk

The Rising Sun
Truro, Cornwall
www.risingsuntruro.co.uk

The Shibden Mill Inn
Halifax, West Yorkshire
<http://www.shibdenmillinn.com/>

The Swan
Bampton, Devon
<http://www.theswan.co/>

Visitor Information Provider

Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
<http://www.visitchesterfield.info/>

Eastbourne Tourist Information Centre
Eastbourne, East Sussex
<http://www.visiteastbourne.com/>

Gloucester Tourist Information Centre
Gloucester, Gloucestershire
<http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/resident/leisure-parks-and-events/tourism/Pages/Tourist-Information-Centre.aspx>

Thanet Visitor Information Service
Margate, Kent
<http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/>

The Welcome People
London
<http://www.thewelcomepeople.com/>

Ends

For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact: Jenia Jeroh, Corporate Communications Manager on T: 020 7578 1482 | M: 07583 103881 | E: jenia.jeroh@visitengland.org | W: www.visitengland.com/biz

Notes to editor:

About VisitEngland

- VisitEngland's focus is on the development and delivery of the new Discover England fund for product development to ensure that bookable regional product is being sold in international markets. This activity will also benefit the domestic industry by building engagement and partnerships between and across regions and developing product that will be attractive to both domestic and international markets.

- Our work is underpinned by robust research and customer insights. You can access the latest in-depth market intelligence and statistics on www.visitengland.org/insight-statistics
- Tourism in England is worth £106 billion, and supports 2.6 million jobs.

For corporate information see www.visitengland.org and for consumer information see www.visitengland.com.

About the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2016

- The VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2016 celebrate the best of English tourism. They promote healthy industry competition and high standards, helping to ensure England's place as a world-class destination. www.visitenglandawards.org.
- the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence are firmly established as representing the highest accolade in English tourism
- The categories for the 2016 awards include: Access for All Tourism Award, Bed & Breakfast Award, Business Tourism Award, Dog Friendly Business of the Year, Holiday Park / Holiday Village of the Year, Large Hotel of the Year, Large Visitor Attraction of the Year, Self-Catering Holiday Provider of the Year, Small Hotel of the Year, Small Visitor Attraction of the Year, Sustainable Tourism Award, Taste of England Award, Tourism Event of the Year, Tourism Experience of the Year, Tourism Pub of the Year, Visitor Information Provider of the Year.
- In addition to the 16 categories are the additional Awards of Tourism Superstar and Outstanding Contribution to Tourism. The Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Award will be announced on the night. Previous winners of this award have included The Great English Pub, Michael Eavis CBE, HM The Queen, the Harry Potter films, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Sir Paul McCartney, Liverpool, The National Trust, the English Garden, 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Makers, The Travel Agent and last year The Chefs of England.

About English Tourism Week

English Tourism Week is led by the national tourist board, VisitEngland, and is an industry-wide initiative designed to shine a light on the importance of tourism in England. The industry as whole is worth £106billion to the UK economy and supports 2.6 million jobs. Hundreds of tourism organisations and businesses will be putting on events to celebrate English Tourism Week this year. For more information about English Tourism Week which takes place between 5 – 13 March 2016, see www.englishtourismweek.co.uk

About Tourism Superstar

The initiative provides destination management organisations with the opportunity to participate for free in a national campaign which guarantees national media coverage. The campaign champions careers in tourism (for people of all ages) and promotes quality, customer service and excellence within England's tourism industry. It importantly acknowledges that the industry is a people-facing, people-focused industry. For more information and to cast a vote, visit <https://www.visitengland.com/biz/about-us/campaigns-and-opportunities/english-tourism-week/visitengland-tourism-superstar>