



Merlin to end use of plastic straws by end of 2018

Part of broader review of single-use plastic across business

23 November 2018: Merlin Entertainments, one of the world's leading visitor attraction operators, announces today that it will phase out the use of plastic straws within all of its owned attractions worldwide by the end of the year. Merlin, whose brands include LEGOLAND, SEA LIFE and Madame Tussauds, will only provide an alternative where it is either a requirement for the product or upon visitor request at all food and beverage outlets throughout its estate.

Chessington World of Adventures Resort in the UK was one of the first attractions within Merlin to remove plastic straws completely from its park and hotels in time for the start of its 2018 peak season and from the 1st November this year, all plastic straws and plastic bags across Merlin's attractions in Australia and New Zealand have been eliminated.

The move comes as Merlin reviews single-use plastic within its operations as part of its efforts to reduce unnecessary packaging and environmentally harmful consumables from its retail stores and food and beverage outlets.

Initiatives already underway to remove plastic from its business include:

- the removal of single-use plastic water bottles from company offices, replacing them with water coolers or similar refreshment devices;
- continuing to work with the global supply chain to remove unnecessary plastic packaging from shops;
- providing opportunities for staff and guests to become involved in closing the recycling "Loop" at our attractions, spearheaded by SEA LIFE Brighton's engagement project, as well as helping them consider behaviour change in their everyday lives; and
- support our adopted charity, the SEA LIFE TRUST, in campaigning for greater protection over our marine environment and its creatures.

Nick Varney, Chief Executive Officer, said: *"We're committed at Merlin to reduce our impact on the environment wherever we operate. Like many of our guests, we are concerned about the negative environmental impact associated with the disposal of plastic straws and we have an even deeper reason for taking action across our business given our SEA LIFE teams champion these issues on a daily basis. It is something we can act on immediately as we continue to assess how we minimise the use of plastics within our business."*

Andy Bool, Head of SEA LIFE TRUST, said: “We regularly see the direct impact plastic has on marine life through our own Seal Sanctuary and our wider marine conservation work across the world, so it is excellent to see Merlin taking positive steps towards eliminating unnecessary single use plastic like straws from its business and we welcome their commitment to doing so.”

Ends

Notes to the Editor

As part of the **Business in the Community** (BITC) Environmental Leadership team **Waste to Wealth Summit** which took place on 22 November, Merlin Entertainments made a *commitment pledge* to end the use of plastic straws by the end of 2018 globally.

In recent months Merlin’s 51 SEA LIFE Centres across the world have joined forces with over 200 other aquariums, oceanographic museums and zoos to form a global coalition all pledging to raise public awareness about plastic pollution with the **#BeatPlasticsPollution** campaign. The campaign has been created by the European Commission, together with the United Nations Environment Programme and with the support of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the European Union of Aquarium Curators, the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the US Aquarium Conservation Partnership and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.

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About Merlin Entertainments plc

Merlin Entertainments plc is a global leader in location based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates over 120 attractions, 18 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. The company aims to deliver memorable experiences to its more than 65 million visitors worldwide, through its iconic global and local brands, and the commitment and passion of its c.29,000 employees (peak season).

Visit www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information or see www.merlinbackstage.com for an insight into Merlin and its attractions.

About SEA LIFE TRUST

SEA LIFE TRUST is a registered charity (no. 1175859) working globally to protect the world’s oceans and the amazing marine life that lives within them. Our vision is of a world where our seas are healthy, protected and full of diverse life. We own and operate marine wildlife sanctuaries, run inspiring conservation campaigns and fund projects and education programmes that champion the need for plastic-free oceans, sustainable fishing, effective Marine Protected Areas and an end to over-exploitation of marine life. www.sealifetrust.org