

KENT GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

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A statement from Visit Kent Chairman Jonathan Neame & CEO, Deirdre Wells OBE

RE: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Press Statement

17th March 2020

The latest advice from the Government regarding the Coronavirus has significant implications for our industry. As we approach the all-important Easter season we are faced with the prospect of a significant reduction in business for our members, due to the advice on social distancing.

We understand that the priority must be to protect public health and due to the unprecedented scale of this virus, disruption to our everyday lives is inevitable. We are concerned, however, that many of our businesses will simply be unable to manage the downturn in revenue which this announcement will mean. Many small and medium sized businesses which are the lifeblood of our industry and our economy will struggle to manage cash-flow over this difficult period.

We are therefore calling on the Government to provide immediate cash injection to enable businesses and their teams to survive following the latest advice. Before this crisis took hold, our destination was in high demand, with an exciting year of events ahead of us. Government support now will ensure that our vibrant and innovative industry can weather the storm and be ready to rebuild when the crisis has passed.

We at Visit Kent stand ready to do all we can to support our businesses through this difficult time and we urge the Government to do the same.

END

NOTES FOR EDITORS

For further media information on Visit Kent and images please contact Brand Manager Lana Crouch on lane.crouch@visitkent.co.uk or call 01227 812914.

About Visit Kent

Visit Kent Ltd is the Destination Management Organisation for Kent (the Garden of England), welcoming 65million visitors a year, championing the county's £3.8 billion tourism industry and supporting more than 77,000 jobs.

It is recognised as one of the country's leading DMOs, targeting UK and overseas markets to raise Kent's profile as a premier destination, improving quality and skills within the industry, and growing investment in tourism. Visit Kent is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, district and borough councils, and the leading sector tourism businesses in Kent.

For further information visit www.visitkent.co.uk (consumer) or www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk (business), or tweet @visitkent.