



## **Planning the Kent County Show 2016 set to start immediately**

### **July 2015**

Organisers of the annual Kent County Show start the planning of the next year's event as soon as the current Show closes.

The first job is to talk to the 250 stewards and volunteers that man each section for feedback. This along with social media comments and general visitor feedback marks the start of the process.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager and her team begin by looking at the entertainment for the following year. Many displays and demonstrations are invited back each year and have become firm favourites with visitors; The Sheep Show, Birds of Prey, Terrier Racing, Dogs and Ducks are a few that attend annually. The main Astor Ring entertainment is changed annually and availability is a key consideration.

The RAF Red Arrows have been contacted for a large number of years but it was only in 2015 that they were able to attend.

Whilst the entertainment is being looked at, the other important job to be decided in the months leading up to Christmas is the equine and livestock competitions. Many of the equine classes are categorised as Horse of the Year Qualifiers and as such the date needs to be confirmed, qualified judges contacted and the rules and schedules need to be well thought out. The Kent County Show hosts in excess of 150 equine and show jumping classes as well as countless cattle, sheep and goat competitions. The trophies and prizes all need to be confirmed with Breed Associations and sponsors. The trophies need to be engraved and sent to winners and thousands of rosettes and prize cards ordered for the following year.

The Trade and Sponsorship Co-ordinator starts looking at the following years sponsors as soon as the Show ends. Many continue year after year as it has become a wonderful opportunity for them to market their business.

The Kent County Show has over 400 stands which means looking at layout and getting a site map drawn up. The Trade Stand brochure is written and price of entry decided. Catering across the Show needs to be planned precisely to ensure that the 80,000 visitors have plenty of refreshments to choose from. The County Show has over 50 catering concessions and the quality and variety of food offered needs to be carefully considered.

The other services that are addressed prior to Christmas and are provisionally booked include: Show security, ticket sellers and gate staff, car parking company, marquee hire, toilet and welfare hire, Highways Agency for traffic management, fencing and livestock housing, trophy engravers, power and water contractors, first aid providers plus booking on-site vets and first aid.

After the Christmas break, all services, displays, music, caterers and competitions are finalised and hundreds of Trade Stand brochures and booking forms are sent out. Equine and Livestock schedules are sent to thousands of people in March and the online booking system to purchase advanced tickets is activated.

Marketing of the Show starts in January and continues right up to and throughout the Show, campaigns are decided, adverts placed, artwork created and press releases issued. The Kent County Show website is updated as soon as the previous Show ends and information added as plans progress.

Maps and layout needs to be finalised, health & safety, risk assessments and traffic management needs to be signed off by various authorities. Hundreds of signs need to be ordered and lots of meetings are attended by Kent County Agricultural staff, Board Members and Chief Stewards.

The showground grounds team spend the whole year preparing the ground for the next Show. Cutting grass, trimming of hedges, maintenance to the growing number of buildings and in

particular they concentrate on the quality of the main Astor Ring for the high calibre Show Jumping competitions.

The Kent County Show takes a year to plan and has a core team of five full-time staff and a number of additional temporary staff who are employed from April. The outside grounds team has a staff of three. All staff are supported by a large team of volunteers. Planning and executing a three day event with 80,000 visitors and 10,000 exhibitors, competitors, contractors and volunteers takes dedication, knowledge and hard work.

**\*ENDS\***

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The online ticket system is open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2015 Show until Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015. With a whole host of entertainment lined up, incredible equine competitions, livestock classes, lots of food and drink stands and specialist areas, the Kent County Show is an exciting and wonderful day out. A family ticket will cost £41 in advance or £48 when bought at the gate. The family ticket entitles 2 adults and 2 children aged between 5 and 15 a full day entrance. Children under 5 go free and parking is free. Adult tickets are £18.50 in advance and £22 on the gate, concessions are £13 when bought online and £15 on the gate. Child ticket is £5 in advance and £6 on the gate.

The Kent County Show starts at 8am and stays open until 6pm although there is no rush to leave as some of the food stands stay open later. The Show has over 120 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager

[lucy@kentshowground.co.uk](mailto:lucy@kentshowground.co.uk) 01622 630975.

Kent County Show 2015    10, 11, 12 July

Kent County Show 2016    15, 16, 17 July

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