



**For immediate release**

**May 2017**

## **ANIMALS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT THE KENT COUNTY SHOW**

The Kent County Show 2017, has extended the deadline for some of the showing classes for Livestock and Equine. The Show which takes place on Friday 7th, Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th July hosts in excess of 150 competitions throughout the three day Show.

The Kent County Show has an impeccable reputation for its livestock competitions and has eleven livestock rings including those used by Kent Federation of Young Farmers Clubs.

The main ring showcases some exceptional show jumping competitions as well as being used first thing in the morning for Working, Ridden and Novice Hunter classes. Visitors can also see all the Heavy Horse classes in the Astor Ring.

Amy Thomson, Features and Competitions Co-coordinator, said “We have a number of new competitions and although we have received high numbers of entries, we have extended the deadline date in response to competitor feedback. Exhibitors have until this Friday\* at midday to complete the online process.”

This year there are several new livestock classes which have been introduced. The Hampshire Down Sheep will have their own class this year and Any Other Pure Bred Beef has been split for Native and Continental due to demand. In the equine classes, a new class for British Spotted Ponies and Horses as well as two new side saddle classes; Equitation Championships open qualifying class and Side Saddle Costume Concours d’Elegance. Side Saddle riding has been on

the increase this decade and has attracted a growing number of women who believe that the experience is liberating and does not restrict the ability to gallop and jump along with normal saddled riders. The side saddle competitions can be seen on Saturday and will be judged by a trio of experts; Miss J Strange, Miss J Lewis and Mrs V Oakley-Pope.

The Kent County Show has a full show jumping programme which attracts some top riders who take part in competitions with a prize fund of over £24,000. This year the Kent County Show has introduced a 'Senior Discovery' class and a 'Senior Newcomers' class for less experienced horses or riders.

This year the Show is encouraging novice riders to take part. Amy Thomson said, "The Kent County Show is an ideal venue for novices. We have four excellent rings, a sand practice ring and a large number of very experienced stewards who are on hand to help. Gaining experience for both the horse and rider is vital if you are interested in competing and we would be delighted to receive new entries from people who are just starting their competition journey."

Another equine highlight in the main Astor Ring is 'The Shetland Pony Grand National', on all three Show days. The jockeys are youngsters aged between 8 and 13 years old who, will not only entertain the crowds, but their participation is part of a qualifier for the ultimate Shetland Pony Grand National at the Olympia Horse Show later in the year.

The spectacular race sees the children take part in a high-speed dash on their pint size Shetland Ponies. All incredibly talented, this is how some of our racing legends have started their careers. The first Shetland Pony Grand National was over twenty years ago when it was designed to mirror the famous Aintree race on a miniature scale. Since then it has become a firm favourite with audiences from all over the UK. This year they will be raising funds for the Bob Champion Cancer Trust. Bob is a sporting legend and the jockey who came back from the brink of death with testicular cancer to go on and win the famous Grand National in 1981 on Aldaniti.

The Agricultural Area houses the cattle, sheep, goats and poultry competitions, for details of entry to the 2017 Show, please check the website for details.

The online ticket system is now open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2017 Show. A family ticket will cost £45 in advance or £50 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 £20.70 in advance and £23 on the gate, a child ticket is £6.30 in advance and £7 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 150 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

**\*\*ENDS\*\***

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\* 24 May 2017

Senior Horses and Ponies – deadline 31 May 2017

Show Jumping Classes – deadline 23 June 2017

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager

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Kent County Show – 7,8,9 July 2017

The Kent County Show is organised by the Kent County Agricultural Society. The Society has been supporting education and improvement in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and related industries since 1923. They provide grants to Kent Young Farmers Clubs, offer scholarships to university students, provide free school visits with their initiative 'Farming in the Classroom' and host over 2,800 children at the annual education event, the Living Land. The Kent County Show attracted 80,000 visitors last year and over 500 trade stands.

Registered charity number: 1001191.

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