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For immediate release

COUNTDOWN TO THE 2017 THE KENT COUNTY SHOW

Organisers of the Kent County Show on the 7, 8, 9 July 2017 are delighted to report a high number of online advance ticket sales and are confident that this year's entertainment will be a hit with the thousands of visitors expected over the weekend.

Kevin Attwood, Chairman said, "Each year the Kent County Show team strive to bring more excitement, entertainment, educational displays and demonstrations for our thousands of visitors. This year we are delighted to welcome the Shetland Pony Grand National, which will certainly give people plenty to smile about".

Entertainment throughout the Showground is high on the agenda this year; in addition to the Main Ring displays and competitions, the Show has hundreds of other activities, workshops, demonstrations, displays, exhibits and competitions to delight visitors.

The Kent County Show are also delighted to announce that 2017 has seen significant increases in the livestock entries with the number of entries reaching a ten year high for Sheep. There are 422 sheep entries, which marks the highest number in a decade. There will be 47 wool entries, which has not seen this number of entries since 2005. Cattle will have 393 entries, the Show's highest since 2012.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager, said, "The Kent County Show team have worked incredibly hard to encourage the agricultural community to support the Show. Amy Thomson, our Competitions and Features Co-ordinator, has been working with the relevant committees to rally livestock farmers and ensure that the Kent County Show is a great place to compete."

The biggest increase in competition entries comes from the Show Jumping Classes. Two new novice classes have really sparked the imagination of the equine community and entries have almost doubled, with a staggering 296 entrants over the three days, in 2016 the figure was 184.

Rosie Gouldsworthy, Trade Stand Co-ordinator, reports a high number of Trade Stands are attending the Show this year with some national companies bringing their brand to Kent. Bosch will be bring their Smart Living Roadshow, Tesco will be promoting their Eat Happy Project, UK Power Networks will be chatting to consumers about safety and The Wrinkly Roadshow, an organisation dedicated to providing information for the elderly will be providing advice and support.

On Saturday BBC Radio Kent will attempt to break the World Salsa Dance Lesson Record. The task will involve 2,000 visitors who will be encouraged to join them at 4.00pm in the Countryside Ring. The current World Record is held by Greece and if successful will put Kent on the map.

In contrast to the more traditional areas of the Agricultural Show, Titan the Robot will return to entertain the crowds that form around the giant robot. Titan's hilarious antics leave the crowd amused as he works through the highly polished and unique routine. New for this year is the Dinosaur Roadshow, Dexter is a 4m long, two year-old baby tyrannosaurus. The Dinosaur is part animatronic and will not only intrigue young visitors, but fascinate older visitors too. Show goers will also be able to visit the Dinosaur Nursery, with a new-born tyrannosaurus, a baby triceratops, and a baby stegosaurus.

One of the highlights on all three days at 12.30pm will be The Kent Spitfire fly-past, known as 'Spirit of Kent' from the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar.

The display commentary will take place in the main Astor Ring but the iconic aircraft can be seen and heard over the entire Show. Other attractions in the main ring will be the Grand Parade of Livestock, Marching Bands, Parade of Hounds, Heritage Vehicle displays, Double Harness Scurry and Show Jumping.

A favourite area on the Showground is the Food Hall, which has moved from the traditional Marquee at the main entrance to the purpose built Clive Emson Exhibition Hall. Over 50 stands will bring the best local, national and international food to Kent. Some more of the food and drink highlights include the Wine and Cheese Tent, which brings the finest wines, ciders, juices and of course cheeses from across the country to the Showground.

The large Produced in Kent area allows visitors to purchase local food and hand-made crafts. Unique to the Show, and probably the world, is the Cherry and Soft Fruit Show. Showcasing top quality fruit, the area boasts of royal connections with a basket of the prize winning fruit sent to the Queen each year.

Not to be missed is the Garden Living marquee which now houses the Flower Show, Kent Beekeepers, Floral Art and Horticultural Societies. This colourful tent is one of the hidden gems and visitors will be dazzled by the stunning displays, immaculate arrangements, perfectly grown fruit and vegetables and fascinated by the humble working bee.

The Food and Farming Cookery Theatre in the Maidstone Exhibition Hall on Saturday and Sunday will see a full line-up of local chefs, organised by local radio and farmers market regular, Matthew Kearsley-Lawson. On Friday the main event in the area is the Kent is Delicious competition, organised by the Diocese of Canterbury. The competition, which started in 2012, is made up from the finalists chosen from three local schools who will compete in creating

a tasty breakfast using as many locally grown, sourced or produced ingredients as possible.

The Kent County Show provides visitors with a chance to see top class competitive show jumping in Kent this year. With a prize fund of over £22,000, many of the top riders in the country will take part. Top of the list is British show jumper Robert Whitaker who lives in West Yorkshire. He is the son of John Whitaker and nephew to Michael Whitaker, so has grown up in one of the most successful show jumping families in the world.

Other top riders include; David McPherson, Paul Craggo, Tracy Priest, Graham Fletcher and Robert Bevis.

The equine classes include a large number of showing classes, farrier demonstrations, heavy horse turnouts and the fast paced scurry driving competitions, many of these are qualifiers for both the Horse of the Year Show and the Olympia Horse Show.

Vehicle lovers can stroll round the Heritage section to marvel at the beautiful steam engines including some that will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary or concourse standard vintage cars then on to the modern car stands to look at the new models for 2017.

Other parts of the Show include the Country, Game and Canine Area featuring the Husqvarna 25m UK Pole Climbing Championships. The 25m poles have been erected and the climbers will ensure that this amazing spectacle is something visitors to the annual Kent County Show, will not forget in a hurry.

Two wonderful areas of the Kent County Show are the Woodland Area and Kent Young Farmers. Murrain Wood is a small woodland on the Kent Showground site. This beautiful, quiet and shady area will be home to working horses, woodland craft, archery and a miniature gauge railway and forestry school. The skill and dedication of the craftsmen in the area is well worth

seeing as is the large area run by the Girlguiding and Kent Scouts who bring a variety of activities for both young and old to enjoy.

Kent Young Farmers surpass themselves each year with the standard of livestock and competitions. Located in the Agricultural Area these young people aged 10 to 26, showcase exactly why encouraging young people to understand where food comes from is so important. Over the three Show days, the 300 Young Farmers will take part in over fifty cattle, sheep, pigs and small animal competitions which highlight the dedication and high standards shown by all competitors.

These young people will one day be providing the food we eat and looking after the countryside we enjoy.

During the Kent County Show there will be a number of sporting events taking place across the UK and Europe. Wimbledon will feature in the afternoon on all three days as well as a selection of sporting events including, Tour de France and Formula 1.

These hugely popular competitions need not be missed, the 'pop-up sports festival' means visitors can enjoy these sporting moments whilst spending the day at the Kent County Show.

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 160 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

****ENDS****

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager
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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.

Kent County Show – 7, 8, 9 July 2017

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