

New President and Chairman for regional tourism organisation

Two of Norfolk and Suffolk's foremost tourism and hospitality businessmen are today announced as the new President and Chairman of the region's visitor economy organisation.

Lord Leicester of Holkham becomes President, a newly-created position, and Dr Andy Wood OBE, chief executive of Adnams of Southwold, becomes chairman of Visit East of England, formerly known as Visit East Anglia.

Lord Leicester said: "I'm delighted to be the organisation's new President. The visitor side of my family's own business, Holkham Hall and Estate enterprise, has increased enormously in the past few years, so I am very aware of its importance to the region as the largest sector and one of the main employers."

"This is an exciting time for tourism and I look forward to working with the industry to continue its success."

Dr Wood said: "There is a big agenda to tackle, not least encouraging skills development and training, improving the perception of the industry, growing the year-round visitor economy and attracting more overseas visitors, particularly post-Brexit when we must ensure that we are seen as a welcoming and attractive destination."

"Working with partners and stakeholders in the sector, particularly the transport providers, gateways and local enterprise partnership, we want to ensure the East of England becomes a more top-of-mind destination. We must also work together to offer a collective voice when we are talking to government and national visitor organisations."

The rebranding of Visit East Anglia as Visit East of England will culminate with the launch of a new website in the New Year, working closely with the New Anglia Cultural Board.

Executive director Pete Waters said: "This is great news for the region's tourism industry and will give us the higher profile we need to represent the sector's interests and help address its many challenges.

"It is important that this region has a credible, authoritative voice for its visitor economy, particularly at a time when a sector deal with the government is on the horizon. Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, we want to be on the front foot if initiatives like Tourism Zones come to fruition.

"Our objectives continue to be converting day trippers to stay visitors and raising the overall tide of tourism towards the high-water mark of summer, but as Visit East of England we also want to work with the sector to create careers for life and growth opportunities."

Doug Field, chair of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, said: "Tourism is worth more than £5 billion per year to Norfolk and Suffolk's economy. But more than that, our visitor and cultural assets are a vital part of our identity and offer to the world. We look forward to working even more closely with Visit East of England to support the sector to achieve even greater success in the future.

"The arrival of Lord Leicester and Andy Wood as president and chairman is a huge boost for Visit East of England. Both will bring a wealth of experience, talent and energy to their roles, which can only benefit the organisation."

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said: "I welcome the appointment of the new President and Chairman of Visit East of England. The region deserves strong leadership to ensure that collectively we promote the extent of the opportunities available, and also the allure and beauty of the region as a holiday destination."

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Councillor Andrew Proctor, Leader of Norfolk County Council, said: “I congratulate Lord Leicester and Dr Wood on their appointments and I look forward to working with them to further promote Norfolk’s outstanding tourism offer, which is an important part of our economy.”

The news follows the retirement of chairman Richard Ellis, of the family-owned Original Cottage Company, who co-founded Visit East Anglia in 2011 with leading tourism business owners after the demise of the East of England Development Agency and East of England Tourism.

The board has long-standing members including Martin Dupee of Banham Zoo and Africa Alive, Ian Russell MBE of Wroxham Barns and Keith Brown of Roost Hotels. Full details of the board [here](#).

Visit East of England also manages Visit Norfolk and Visit Suffolk and has service contracts with Visit North Norfolk and Greater Anglia.

Picture caption: (left to right) Pete Waters, executive director, Visit East of England; Jeanette Wheeler, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership; Holly Loxam, VEE; Keith Brown, VEE director; Lord Leicester, President, Visit East of England; Martin Dupee, VEE director; Dr Andy Wood OBE, chairman, Visit East of England; Ian Russell MBE, VEE director; Andrew Proctor, Leader, Norfolk County Council; Helen Wilson, chair, New Anglia Cultural Board.

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Notes to Editors

Visit East of England is:

- The private sector-led organisation to promote the East of England visitor economy.
- Supported by some of the most successful tourism businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- Managed by experts bringing a unified tourism voice to the East of England.
- Fully-aligned with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership’s Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk.
- Working with the New Anglia LEP on the visitor economy sector skills development plan.
- Committed to making the East of England a leading visitor destination in the UK.

The visitor economy of the East of England is £10bn pa. Norfolk’s 2017 Volume and Value figure (the total worth of tourism, using the Cambridge Model) was £3.25bn, and Suffolk’s was £2bn. Essex is approximately £3bn and Cambridgeshire approximately £2bn.

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Thomas Edward Coke, 8th Earl of Leicester

Thomas Edward Coke succeeded to the title in May 2015 upon the death of his father. He has been actively involved in managing the estate since 1993, when he left the army after six years. Like his ancestors, he served in the Scots Guards. He was educated at Eton College, then studied History of Art at Manchester University.

He has overseen the diversification of the estate away from its dependence on agriculture toward leisure, tourism and property development. In 1996, 70% of the income at Holkham was derived from agriculture and the land. Whilst the income from farming has continued to increase, the percentage has reduced to little more than 25%, as businesses such as Holkham Property Company, Pinewoods Holiday Park, The Victoria Inn and renewable energy ventures have developed.

As well as sitting on the regional committee of Historic Houses, he is Chairman of Norfolk CLA (Country Land and Business Association) and sits on a couple of their national committees. He is a Board member of ALVA (The Association of Large Visitor Attractions) and Chairman of the Treasure Houses of England.

He is Chairman of the Board of Governors of Beeston Hall Prep School and President of the Caravan and Motorhome Club.

Dr Andy Wood OBE DL

Andy Wood joined Adnams in the mid-1990s with responsibility for developing its customer service and supply chain operations. He joined the Board in 2000 as Sales and Marketing Director becoming Managing Director in 2006 and Chief Executive in 2010. Andy has an MBA, a doctorate from Cranfield University and Honorary doctorates; in Business from Anglia Ruskin University, in Science from Cranfield University and Civil Law from the University of East Anglia. He was also awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2013 and between 2014 to 2016 was HRH The Prince of Wales' Ambassador for Responsible business in the East of England.

Andy is Non-Executive Chairman of SGWM a wealth management company operating throughout East Anglia. He is also a Non-Executive Director of Thorpeness and Aldeburgh Hotels.

From mid-2010 to April 2014 Andy was the founding Chairman of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and was instrumental in securing Central Government financial support for a variety of economic development initiatives across Suffolk and Norfolk. In particular the New Anglia LEP area was the only one to secure two City Deals for Ipswich and Norwich.

Andy has also co-authored a book on Lean and Green Business Systems. The book was awarded the Shingo prize for Operational Excellence in 2013.

Contact: Visit East of England
Tel: 0333 320 4202
Email: info@visiteastanglia.net