

“Oh no it isn’t” ...Helmsley announces Panto themed Christmas Tree Festival and Festive Fun Day

- *Town celebrates its independent businesses with a Festive Fun Day to mark the third annual Small Business Saturday*
- *Popular Christmas Tree Festival returns for a fourth year*

Helmsley in Business has announced it is to hold its fourth annual Christmas Tree Festival and third magical Festive Fun Day this December - and in true Christmas style it's a great British Pantomime theme all round!

The Christmas Tree Festival will take place at the town's historic All Saints Church, with 30 beautiful trees which have been individually and creatively decorated by businesses and organisations in the town to fit the panto theme. From the traditional Pantomime Dame and Principal Boy to the Ugly Sisters and King Rat, visitors will be able to see the Helmsley take on all things panto every day, 10am to 4pm, from Saturday 5th December to Sunday 20th December 2015.

It has also been announced that on 5th December, Helmsley will again celebrate the town's many independent businesses by marking Small Business Saturday with a Festive Fun Day. The day encourages people to keep trade local and there will be activities run by local businesses, along with fun, games and entertainment for all the family taking place throughout the town from 10.30am to 3.30pm.

Some of the activities taking place include a Candy Cane Trail, a road train, festive music, a DJ and compere, children's fancy dress and novelty dog competitions, children's crafts, Christmas baking, games, rides, entertainers, choirs, bee keepers, food and drink tastings, a selfie portrait booth, stalls and of course a few surprises... (including a visit from the man himself - Santa!)

Back by popular demand, the Black Swan Hotel will also again be home to a pop-up ice rink, overlooking Helmsley's bustling market place from Thursday 3rd to Sunday 6th December.

Showing their support for the event, Ryedale District Council has reduced all day parking in the long stay car parking to just £1.50 for 5th December.

Helmsley, which is currently a finalist in the Great British High Street Awards' market town category, has a large concentration of independent, small businesses, with one business

for every 14 residents. It has been a high profile supporter of Small Business Saturday since it launched in the UK in 2013.

Local business owner Katie Atkinson of KVA Planning Consultancy, who is a member of the Helmsley in Business (HiB) Christmas Committee, said: “The last few years has seen Helmsley put on Christmas events like never before - and the feedback is always great, from residents, visitors and business owners alike. So this year we’re going bigger and better than ever! The Christmas Tree Festival promises to offer lots of smiles, given the pantomime theme, and with our beautiful Church as the backdrop, will no doubt add a magical touch to the festive season.

“We love to support Small Business Saturday, and the Festive Fun Day really gives people a reason to visit. We’re pretty much all independently owned, small businesses in the town, and to keep going we need people to use us. So whilst people are enjoying the entertainment, hopefully they can make the most of the town’s many independent shops and boutiques - the perfect place to find gift ideas you won’t see on any other high street - before warming up with a hot chocolate in one of the cosy cafes, and maybe staying overnight in one of our many luxury accommodation providers.”

Scotts Fish and Chips restaurant in Helmsley has been chosen as one of the 2015 Small Business Saturday 100. These are 100 businesses spread across the country showing the diversity, importance and success of small businesses in the UK. Tony Scott, owner of Scotts and HiB committee member, said: “Small Business Saturday is all about keeping trade local and discovering the variety and quality of local traders. It is the UK’s most successful small business campaign - last year 16.5 million adults went out to support a small business on Small Business Saturday and 64 per cent of people in the UK were aware of the campaign. This year it hopes to be even bigger and better - and in Helmsley we intend to do everything we can to make that happen!”

To find out more about the event go to www.visithelmsley.co.uk or follow Helmsley on Facebook www.facebook.com/visithelmsley or @visithelmsley on Twitter. To vote for Helmsley in the Great British High Street Awards log on to: thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

Helmsley in Business is a group of 52 businesses working together to ensure the continuing success of the North Yorkshire town of Helmsley. Members include: Antiques and Interiors; Auntie Anne's Bakery; Bay Clinic; Bella di Notte; Black Swan Hotel; Browns of Helmsley; Castle Stores; Carters Country Wear; Celebrate Country Cake Design; Claridges; Crema Coffee Shop; Cut Price Bookshop; Duncombe Sawmill; Duncombe Park Gift Shop; Duncombe Park Estate; Elijah Todd; English Heritage; Feversham Arms Hotel and Verbena Spa; Helmsley Art Centre; Helmsley Brewery; Helmsley Galleries; Helmsley Post Office; Helmsley Town Hall; Helmsley Traditional Sweet Shop; Helmsley Walled Garden; Helmsley Wines; Honeysuckle Cottage; Hunters of Helmsley; International Centre for Birds of Prey; JEB Taxis; KVA Planning; Lazenby Visuals and Framing; Libby Butler Jewellers; Look Gallery; Marleys Butchers; No. 54 B&B; North York Moors National Park; Pennita Fashions; Porters Coffee Shop; RED taxis; Retals; Saltbox Gallery; Scotts of Helmsley Fish and Chip Shop; The Feathers; The Stickman; Think Fresh; Thomas of York; Thundercliffes; Tulchan; Viva Hair; and Yorkshire Deals.

Helmsley is a beautiful market town in the Ryedale District of North Yorkshire, with something to offer everyone - and a great place to explore the North York Moors National Park. It is popular with tourists for its characterful Market Place, historic architecture, the wide range of quality independent shops, and the excellent selection of accommodation, pubs, cafes and restaurants, many of which are award-winning. There are also plenty of interesting activities and attractions available on the doorstep including The International Centre for Birds of Prey, Helmsley Castle, Rievaulx Abbey and The Walled Gardens. Helmsley also marks the start of the Cleveland Way, which is popular with walkers and loops round the National Park to end up at the coast near Filey.

For more information log on to www.visithelmsley.co.uk