



## Green Hospitality annual conference

### Presentation of the 2014 Responsible Travel & Tourism Awards

The place to be will be The Marker Hotel, Dublin, on Thursday 16th October for Green Hospitality's annual conference. The theme is "Making Responsible Tourism Pay" with a focus on Responsible Tourism as a Competitive Advantage within Ireland.

Joining the excellent panel of speakers will be Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport. Other main speakers will include Tina Roche, CEO, Business in the Community Ireland and Kevin McGillicuddy, Managing Director, Brehon Capital Partners.

The conference will have three main parts:

- Identifying how Sustainable & Responsible activities are embedded within Irish & International companies and organisations thereby creating competitive opportunities for hospitality businesses
- Lessons from Industry - Best Practice from some of Ireland's leading Hospitality practitioners of sustainability and responsible tourism
- The Green Economy and the Environment. Minister Donohoe, Dara Lynott - EPA, Paddy Mathews - Fáilte Ireland and Kevin McGillicuddy - Brehon Capital Partners - will give their take on how Irish Tourism accepts its role in the new Green Economy and what more we could do.

Maurice Bergin, MD of Green Hospitality noted "Ireland is promoted as a destination that has a wonderful natural environment and recent surveys show that the key attractions for overseas visitors are our beautiful scenery and countryside and the natural environment. We sell Ireland as a "Green" destination. But is Tourism walking the talk? What are our policies and strategies with respect to the environment? Is it tourism's responsibility or some other government department? What tourism organisations champion the environment? How does tourism step up to the Green Economy challenges and opportunities adopted by the government and other business sectors?"

The recent Chambers Ireland CSR Awards shortlisted 70 applications and came up with 15 winners. There was not a single travel or tourism business amongst them. If the business sector regards these issues as important - suppliers (hospitality amongst them) should take heed and align their values with their customers.

In the Food Manufacturing sector Bord Bia have launched their Origin Green Programme with an ambition - "To make Ireland a world leader in sustainably produced food & drink" The intent is that 100% of Ireland's food & drink exports will be on the road to sustainability by 2016. Bord Bia Origin Green companies travel



Maurice Bergin, Green Hospitality - Duncan Stewart, environmentalist and award judge and Charlie Sheils, General Manager, The Marker

extensively within Ireland and partake of accommodation, meals, meetings & events.

Is the Hospitality sector falling behind on the road to sustainability and responsible business practices? Can we afford to fall behind? Are we providing the leadership for the sector that we could be providing?

Green Hospitality is doing its bit - with a huge thank you to the Environmental Protection Agency which has enabled GHP to exist. As part of our process to drive change within the industry we will also be presenting the 2014 Responsible Travel & Tourism Awards to hospitality and supplier businesses that demonstrate how they have incorporated Responsible Business practices into their day-to-day operations."

Often the concept of "Going Green" is seen as a Corporate Social Responsibility issue and one for large companies with big budgets and lots of PR advisers. Being Green is also often seen as an expensive luxury with poor, if any, paybacks and by others as a recipe for meanness.

Many businesses, hospitality ones amongst them, can also take a simplistic approach and only implement the low-hanging fruit options with very short paybacks and then "pretend" that this makes them Green.

Green Hospitality contends that Going Green is a sound business decision based on good business management principles which focus on the Triple Bottom Line or 3 P's - People, Planet & Profit. A Responsible business is a business that pays attention to all three - and reaps the reward from these combined actions.

Many GHP members have made substantial savings on their utility bills with some simple actions - some of these will be telling their story in the Lessons from Industry section of the conference.

The conference aims to address these key issues and create an active and informed debate on the topics and show delegates the benefits and competitive advantage open to them by becoming Green Businesses and engaging with the Green Economy.

The conference is a half-day event followed by a light lunch. Bookings can be made through the GHP website [www.greenhospitality.ie](http://www.greenhospitality.ie) A small trade exhibition area will also showcase some suppliers who can assist hospitality businesses in implementing environmental and cost saving improvements.

The conference is approved as an IHI CPD Event and is supported by Fáilte Ireland and The Marker Hotel. Hotel & Restaurant Times is the Media Partner for the Conference. ○

