



March 2013

Penelope Viscountess Cobham reappointed as Chairman of VisitEngland

Hugh Robertson, the Minister for Sport and Tourism, has reappointed Lady Cobham as Chairman of VisitEngland for four years, from 1 April 2013.

Biographical details

Lady Cobham is a board member of Pagefield Communications, voted in 2012 as the New Consultancy of the Year at the PR Week Awards. She is Chairman of global management consultancy the Highland Group's Advisory Board and a director of The Leadership Agency, which advises and trains some of the UK's leading business CEOs and Chairmen in communication techniques. After 20 years' entrepreneurial success building a corporate and private entertainment business at historic Hagley Hall in order to defray the enormous cost of running and conserving it, she continues to exert influence on the heritage and arts sectors through board membership of the Historic Houses Association and Birmingham Museums Trust, and is Chairman of the Museum Prize Trust which has been responsible for running the UK's largest arts prize, the Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries.

Previously she served on the boards of the English Tourist Board, English Heritage, the Countryside Commission and Historic Royal Palaces before moving to act as the Special Adviser on tourism and heritage in the newly created Department of National Heritage in 1992 (now DCMS). Subsequently, she was appointed to the boards of the V&A, British Waterways and the London Docklands Development Corporation, where she led on tourism. She was Deputy Chairman of VisitBritain from 2005 to 2009 and continues to serve on its board.

Her experience in the private sector includes chairing, for 14 years, regional radio station 100.7 Heart FM, the largest station outside London, and board membership of Heart London. Between 2000 and 2009 she chaired the British Casino Association, steering the industry through the period of the 2005 Gambling Act. She has been a consultant with accountants Ernst & Young and lawyers Farrers, Park Resorts and Citi Private Bank. She holds no other public appointments.

Background

VisitEngland is tasked to promote the England tourism brand in domestic and key overseas markets with a headline ambition of 5% growth, year on year, through its work in conjunction with the sector. Tourism is worth £97b to the English economy. After a demanding Olympic and Diamond Jubilee year, VisitEngland is delighted to have just won a prestigious Chartered Institute of Marketing Award for its 2012 largest ever domestic marketing "GREAT" television campaign.

The Board of VisitEngland is appointed by the Secretary of State, and the process follows the OCPA Code of Practice. The Chairman receives £45,210 per annum, on the basis that she will devote approximately two days per week to the task, on average.



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All public appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for defined political activity in the last five years to be made public. Lady Cobham has declared no such political activity.