**New Chair of Leeds Castle Charitable Foundation Announced**

Leeds Castle Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Ros Kerslake CBE as its new Chair of Trustees.

Ros was latterly Chief Executive at National Lottery Heritage Fund where she led an organisational and business transformation, as well as distributing up to £400 million per annum in funding. She also chaired the National Lottery Forum and National Heritage Memorial Fund Advisory Panel. Her earlier roles include Chief Executive at The Prince’s Regeneration Trust & RegenCo Sandwell, and Property Director at Network Rail.

Ros is currently a member of the Community and Voluntary Services Honours Advisory Committee, on the Group Board of housing group Sanctuary, and a Trustee of Re-Form Heritage (a heritage regeneration charity which owns and manages Middleport Pottery in Stoke on Trent).  Her previous non-executive roles include Senior Independent Director at U+I PLC, Quintain Estates and Development PLC, Black Country Housing Association, and Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation. Ros is a qualified solicitor and holds an MBA. Ros was awarded an OBE in the 2016 and a CBE in 2020 for services to heritage.

Ros brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the charity and has joined the Board with immediate effect, taking over as Chair from December 2022.

Ros takes over from Niall Dickson CBE who is retiring in December 2022, having chaired the Foundation for 10 years and serving as a Trustee for 14 years.  Niall has led the Foundation through a decade of momentous change which has seen major investment to restore and preserve the castle, a huge expansion of its hospitality activity and a range of new experiences for visitors. As well as overseeing this raft of successful experience and commercial development, his stewardship included a successful navigation of the charity through the pandemic when the whole operation had to be managed with almost no income.

Niall said: “I am delighted to be handing over to Ros, and I know the castle and its estate, for which the Foundation is responsible, will be in great hands under her and Helen’s leadership. It has been an enormous privilege to serve this wonderful place and to see the pleasure and peace it brings to so many people’s lives. Like many charities the Foundation faces significant challenges, but I have no doubt it will go from strength to strength and continue to bring joy to the hundreds of thousands who visit and stay every year.”

Ros Kerslake said: "I feel very privileged to be taking on the role of Chair for such a magnificent and important historic site and am very much looking forward to working with the incredible staff, volunteers and trustees of the Foundation to build on the significant legacy of the past and to take it into the next chapter of its story."

Helen Bonser-Wilton, Chief Executive said: “Leeds Castle has been extremely fortunate to have such capable and experienced Chairs over the decades and we are delighted to welcome Ros as the new Chair in December.  Niall has provided excellent leadership over the past 10 years and we are hugely grateful for the work he has done to ensure that Leeds Castle is in great shape to pass on to his successor.”

- ENDS -

**For press requests**, please contact Nicole Moor at [nicolemoor@leeds-castle.co.uk](mailto:nicolemoor@leeds-castle.co.uk)

**About Leeds Castle**

Leeds Castle is considered a national treasure, providing a window onto over nine hundred years of British history. It is a haven of tranquillity and offers a wealth of discovery and enjoyment for all ages.

Situated five miles southeast of Maidstone in Kent, Leeds Castle’s rich and riveting history, including serving six of England’s medieval queens, to its elaborate transformation into a glamorous 1930s country house retreat for the influential and famous by Anglo-American heiress, Lady Olive Baillie, secures its place as one of the most visited historic attractions in Britain.

The Castle and its estate is preserved and maintained by the Leeds Castle Charitable Foundation, a not-for-profit charity

**For more visitor information,** please visit [www.leeds-castle.com](http://www.leeds-castle.com)

* Leeds Castle, Broomfield, Maidstone ME17 1PL
* Telephone 01622 765 400 or email [enquiries@leeds-castle.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@leeds-castle.co.uk)