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BCE Awards –National News Release FINAL version

INTERNATIONAL RETAIL GROUP WINS TOP ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Europe's largest home improvement retailer, Kingfisher plc, has taken the top honours in this year's prestigious Business Commitment to the Environment (BCE) Environmental Leadership Awards. The company beat off fierce competition to land the Sir Peter Parker Award for its outstanding commitment to environmental excellence in spearheading sustainable timber sourcing practices.

Fourteen other companies from multi-national corporations to SMEs also won major awards or commendations across a range of sectors including retail, IT, manufacturing, food and drink and construction.

Founded by Sir Peter Parker in 1975, the BCE Awards scheme is one of the world's longest running international environmental competitions. It celebrates businesses that an independent judging panel recognises as meeting the commercial demands of the present, without compromising the environment for future generations.

Kingfisher is the third largest home improvement retailer worldwide with more than 830 stores in Europe and Asia and annual sales of more than £10.5 billion. The company received the top accolade in recognition of its pioneering leadership role since the early 1990s in ensuring that its wood products come from well-managed, sustainable sources. Deforestation is a major contributor to global warming, and is often cited as one of the major causes of carbon dioxide emissions and a threat to biodiversity.

In particular, the judges praised Kingfisher's UK operating companies B&Q and Screwfix for their instrumental role in encouraging the UK timber industry to move towards Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, a lead now being followed by all Kingfisher overseas operations.

Presenting the Award at a ceremony on 8 June in London, the BCE president, Sir Anthony Cleaver, praised the company for putting environmental sustainability at the top of its business agenda.

He said: "Kingfisher richly deserve this award for showing outstanding leadership and a huge commitment to protecting the world's dwindling forests. There is no doubt that the company regards its present stance as fundamental to its successful business model, and I'm delighted that the lessons learnt from the B&Q timber initiative are now being applied to other parts of the product range."

Kingfisher Group Chief Executive, Ian Cheshire, said: "At Kingfisher, we believe that working on environmental sustainability is simply part and parcel of being a leading business. Through our 'Future Homes' strategy, we are committed to helping our customers make their homes more efficient at lower cost, whilst ensuring the sustainability of our own business and supply chains. I am absolutely delighted that we have won the Sir Peter Parker Award, as this recognition gives us the confidence we are heading in the right direction."

The Sir Peter Parker award was the highlight of 15 awards and commendations presented at the ceremony, which was attended by representatives from many of the UK's leading businesses.

Premier Awards went to global drinks company Diageo's Shieldhall whisky bottling plant in Glasgow; the UK's sixth largest water and sewerage company Dwr Cymru Welsh Water; eco-friendly greeting cards publisher Glebe Cottage; and eco-smart store designer Quantum4.

A number of other businesses received Major Commendations. These were Nampak Plastics; the Authentic Food Company Ltd; Cafedirect plc; Interserve; Hanson UK; Avon Metals Ltd; RM (Research Machines); Terereal Trillium; Seacourt Ltd; and supply-chain partnership Veolia Water UK and SQS Ltd.

Sir Anthony said that the quality and variety of entries demonstrated the growing awareness and importance of environmental issues as a key business driver in their own right.

He said: "Despite the continuing economic challenges, standards in this year's competition have been higher than ever. All the winners are innovative and forward thinking, driven by a high regard for corporate social responsibility, and they set the benchmark for other businesses."

Congratulating the winners, Sir Anthony went on: "The 2010 BCE Awards have once again successfully promoted the business benefits that the UK's environmental pioneers have achieved through their ingenuity. All the winners deserve immense credit for putting environmental issues at the top of the business agenda."

Kingfisher joins an illustrious list of previous high-profile BCE Award winners. Over its 35-year history, the Awards have attracted some of the most influential names in industry, including ASDA, Unilever, Marks & Spencer and Rolls-Royce.

Energy and climate change consultancy, AEA, is the main sponsor of the 2010 BCE awards. Other sponsors include the Brunswick Group, E.ON, Sustainable Business magazine and WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme).

Applications for the 2011 BCE Awards are now being invited. Companies who believe they deserve peer and public recognition for their outstanding environmental performance and leadership are asked to request an application form from the BCE Awards website (www.bceawards.org) and submit it before the closing date of 11 October 2010.

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Notes for editors:

- The Business Commitment to the Environment (BCE) Environmental Leadership Awards scheme was established in 1975. Since then, it has been showcasing UK environmental excellence and recognising businesses whose activities enhance or protect the environment while meeting commercial demands.

- The BCE Awards are the UK's oldest environmental awards and are also the only nationwide UK awards open to all sectors and technologies. They are free to enter, are presented annually and are acknowledged as a hallmark of success.
- BCE is unique in that it is run by business rather than any regulator, authority or government agency, and specifically rewards the efforts of business to address environmental issues without regulatory intervention.
- Under the scheme, UK businesses compete to show best practice in areas such as climate change, air quality, waste management, resource efficiency, and protecting Britain's countryside and natural resources
- Previous top BCE Award holders include Bovis Lend Lease, Innocent Drinks, ASDA, Unilever, and M&S.
- The BCE Awards are an accredited feeder scheme for the biennial European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE).

For more information on the BCE Awards and this year's winners, please contact:

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