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MEDIA RELEASE

There and back again – Hobbiton Movie Set celebrates 20 years of New Zealand as Middle-earth™

On 10 December 2001, the first installment of Sir Peter Jackson's adaptation of J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring* first premiered on the world stage at Odeon Leicester Square in London. It was also the debut of New Zealand as the fictional world of Middle-earth, and a sheep and beef farm just outside Matamata as Hobbiton™, as the home of the Hobbits™.

To mark this milestone, Hobbiton Movie Set will be celebrating with a special outdoor film screening where the adventure first began, on the grassy clearing of The Party Field, where Bilbo celebrated his eleventyfirst birthday. It was here in January 2000 that over 100 extras and approximately 300 crew filmed one of the most memorable scenes from the film, over the course of three nights.

The Lord of the Rings 20 Year Anniversary Celebration will be held on Friday 10 December at Hobbiton Movie Set with an event of special magnificence. Guests will follow the same path as Frodo and Gandalf did in the first scenes of the film on a guided tour. They will be escorted through the twelve-acre outdoor movie set recounting fascinating details of how this location was transformed from a slice of Kiwi farmland into the Shire as it appeared on the silver screen.

After a visit to Bag End, home of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins and a wander down the meandering paths of the Shire™, guests will arrive into The Green Dragon™ Marketplace – a bustling, vibrant festival-like atmosphere with traditional Hobbit™ fare bursting from the market stalls.

The exclusive Hobbit™ Southfarthing™ beverages will be flowing fresh from the kegs, alongside the Middle-earth wine range, with interactive games to keep everyone entertained.

As the sun goes down, groups will be shown back to the Party Field, where a 13-metre outdoor cinema screen will be waiting for an open air screening of the 4K theatrical cut of *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Hobbiton Movie Set Deputy CEO Shayne Forrest said "We're excited to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the release of the first film and couldn't think of a better way to do so than with a screening on the very soil some of the scenes took place on. It will be a first for us and a unique occasion for our guests. We believe the event will be the first outdoor 4k cinema screening in New Zealand too which is quite exciting!"

"It's an exciting time for Middle-earth fans and film tourism in New Zealand, as we celebrate 20 years of adventures and the story of a very brave little hobbit and his epic journey."

Tickets are on sale now for The Lord of the Rings 20 Year Anniversary Celebration at Hobbiton Movie Set and include a fully guided tour of Hobbiton, beverages throughout the evening, a light dinner and dessert and the outdoor screening of the film.

Interviews and images available on request. Contact Hobbiton Movie Set Marketing Manager Lily Craig for more information. Lily Craig, Marketing Manager – lily@hobbitontours.com / 022 369 5054