**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF TAYTO PARK **

**March 28, 2017**

**TAYTO PARK ATTENDANCE FIGURES GO *NORTH***

***Ireland’s only theme park and zoo celebrates new season with rise in visitors from NI***

TAYTO PARK, Ireland’s only theme park and zoo, launched its new 2017 season today with the news that a whopping 25 per cent of visitors to the County Meath park now travel from Northern Ireland.

As one of the most popular attractions on the island of Ireland, Tayto Park visitor numbers have risen year on year from 330,000 in 2011 to 762,351 in 2016, which means that almost 200,000 thrill seekers from Northern Ireland visited the park last year.

Now Tayto Park is gearing up for its biggest season yet as it opens its gates again on Friday April 7, with the promise of exciting new rides and attractions.

Speaking at an event in Belfast, Tayto Park founder Raymond Coyle said: “*Since we first opened our doors in November 2010, the Northern Ireland market has become increasingly important to us with almost 200,000 visitors travelling from the north last year alone.*

“*Last year was a record year for Tayto Park which is very encouraging as we get ready to open our gates to the public once again next Friday (April 7). We are confident that this season will be our biggest and best yet and have invested heavily in new rides and attractions that we’re sure will be a big hit with customers from across Ireland*.”

Mr Coyle said that the company was investing €9 million (approx. £7.7 million) in the park this year, with a further €17 million (approx. £14.7 million) already ear-marked for 2018.

New attractions for 2016 will include the *Viking Voyage* *at the Park* water flume ride and the *World of Raptors* birds of prey demonstration, which will both open in the summer. These will complement a host of existing favourites including the gravity-defying *Rotator*, the *Power Surge* and The *Cú Chulainn Coaster*, Ireland’s first rollercoaster and Europe’s First wooden rollercoaster with an inversion.

*Tayto Park Zoo* hosts an exceptional and diverse animal collection, while *Dinosaurs Alive,* Ireland’s only life-size animatronic dinosaur exhibition, features the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex, Stegosaurus and Apatosaurus.

“*With easy access from Northern Ireland and free parking for cars and buses, Tayto Park offers a great day out for families, couples, schools, birthday parties, corporate events, etc*,” continued Mr Coyle.

“*There really is something for everyone and visitors to the park can expect to have a jam-packed day of fun during which they can try out the numerous theme park rides before taking in the animals at the zoo which include a mountain lion, fossa and a range of birds of prey, just to name a few*!”

Tayto Park caters to a wide range of sectors including primary and secondary schools who can avail of various tours all of which include admission to the park, unlimited access to all attractions and educational aspects ranging from business to ecology and conservation.

Tickets for Tayto Park start from €15 per person with discounts available when booking online. To find out more go to [www.taytopark.ie](http://www.taytopark.ie), call 01 835 1999 or follow on twitter @taytopark or Facebook.

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**MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For further information, please contact Michael Rafferty or Bronagh Cobain of Duffy Rafferty Communications on Belfast +44 (0) 28 9073 0880.**

**NOTE TO EDITOR:**

Key attractions at Tayto Park include:

* **The Cú Chulainn Coaster**… Ireland’s first rollercoaster and Europe’s First wooden rollercoaster with an inversion
* **Extreme Climbing Wall**… challenge yourself on one of the many routes to the top of this extreme 21 metre climbing wall
* **The Rotator**… hold tight and defy gravity when you get strapped into this awe-inspiring ride which soars 31 metres high and revolves 360°… are you brave enough?
* **The Power Surge**… get ready to be tossed and turned at great heights on this thrill ride which spins you on both a horizontal and vertical axis
* **5D Cinema**… sit back and immerse yourself in this one-of-a kind virtual experience where you are part of the action, featuring air gusts, water jets, leg ticklers, flashing lights and bubbles
* **Endeavour**… with speeds as fast as 60km and reaching a height of 68 feet, this ride is perfect for adrenaline junkies
* **Sky Walk**… conquer many obstacles that will test your fear of heights and the unknown
* **Air Race**… inviting pilots to soar, twist and spin on this amazing stomach-churning aerial adventure… not for the faint hearted
* **Tayto Park Zoo**… an exceptional and diverse animal collection which includes the largest of the big cats, the Amur tiger, the illusive and stunning Ocelot, a growing primate collection which includes Squirrel monkey, Red-bellied tamarins and the Geoldi's monkey, a selection of beautiful and colourful birds from around the globe… and the marvellous meerkats
* **Dinosaurs Alive**… this awe-inspiring, life-size animatronic dinosaur spectacular is guaranteed to delight visitors of all ages, featuring the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex, Stegosaurus, Apatosaurus and more
* **Steam Train Express**… sit back and relax on this traditional style steam train for a journey with views and attractions of the Park
* **Shot Tower**… be prepared to get strapped in and watch the ground get smaller until you reach the top and feel the exhilaration as you shoot down to the ground
* **A host of eateries** including The Lodge Restaurant, Pizza Place, Argentinian Grill, The Sweet Station and many more. A gift shop is also available where visitors can pick up a fun memento to celebrate their time at the park.