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Prepared by Rain Communications UK

21st JANUARY 2009

RETAIL TRUST'S LONDON BALL AIMS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR RETAIL WORKERS

As the news of further retail redundancies continues to be reported, Retail Trust, the principal charity for the retail sector, is preparing to raise vital funds for the benefit of retail workers at its most important fundraising event of the year, The Retail Trust London Ball, held on Monday 26th January at The Grosvenor.

The Retail Trust London Ball will see nearly 1,000 of the UK retail industry's key players join together in a bid to help the sector that has been dubbed recently as the 'engine room of the economy' and is also the biggest private sector employer in the UK. All monies raised at the ball will go straight back into funding key Retail Trust services which include the free and confidential Retail Trust Helpline as well as funding the £1m in hardship grants awarded throughout the year to retail workers who are experiencing the severe impacts of the downturn.

Tables at the Retail Trust London Ball have been bought by the most well-known names in retail with CEO guests including Sir Phillip Green (Arcadia), Sir Stuart Rose (Marks & Spencer), John King (House of Fraser), Jacqueline Gold (Ann Summers), Phil Wrigley (New Look), Nick Robertson (ASOS), Belinda Earl and Harold Tillman (Jaeger) and Andy Street (John Lewis) bidding against each other in a Super Silent Auction.

In response to the current economic climate, this year's Retail Trust London Ball will auction off a selection of fundraising prizes which form a departure from the more extravagant prizes of recent years. These include several prizes that give retailers 'business benefits':

- £25k worth of media space at BAA airports (Heathrow Express)
- One year's free first class travel on the Heathrow Express (donated by BAA)
- A business master-class with Peter Jones plus a £500 made to measure suit (donated by Austin Reed)
- A Liveried taxi sporting retailer branding for 6 months - (donated by Taxi Promotions)
- A year's free valet parking at any BAA airport - (donated by BAA)

Other less business oriented prizes include:

- Tea with Penny Lancaster-Stewart at Claridges (donated by World Duty Free)
- Two Formula One VIP tickets to any Grand Prix in the world (donated by Petra Ecclestone)
- Two seats at Jaeger's London Fashion Week Show followed by Dinner at one of Harold Tillman's restaurants - Notting Hill Brasserie or The Ebury (donated by Jaeger)
- A private cocktail masterclass at Fifth Floor Bar in Harvey Nichols (donated by Harvey Nichols)
- Stella McCartney limited edition handbag (donated by Stella McCartney)
- Jasmine di Milo 'one-off' evening dress from the sample archives (donated by Jasmine di Milo)

Nigel Rothband, Retail Trust's CEO commented, "Bearing in mind the current mood of the economy, we have done our best to ensure that this year's London Ball is not about the glitz and glamour of previous years but instead celebrates the extraordinary power of the retail community as we pull together to help the sector and its people through hard times.

"As the biggest private sector employer in the UK and an industry which serves all of us on a day-to-day basis, retailers have a responsibility to support their staff. Consequently, many of them have signed up to our Employee Assistance Programme that promotes all the Retail Trust services to their staff, in particular the free and confidential Retail Trust Helpline. All you need to do is glance through the impressive guest list to see that everyone who's anyone in retail has splashed out on a table and I'm sure they will also give generously on the night as they continue to support their industry."

The London Ball will be held at the Grosvenor House on 26 January 2009. Prices start at £330 + VAT. Visit www.retailtrust.org.uk to book your place or call 0208 358 7251 for more information.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

About Retail Trust

Retail Trust (registered charity numbers 1090136 and SC039684) is the principal charity of the retail sector supporting people who are working in or have worked in the retail industry or associated businesses.

Retail Trust provides a range of services; a free and confidential Helpline (0808 801 0808) including access to free counselling, free legal advice, an outplacement service, career development, an employee assistance programme, team building opportunities such as Retail Trust Week as well as retirement housing throughout the UK. www.retailtrust.org.uk Retail Trust's current list of employee assistance programme partners include: Arcadia Group Limited, Harrods Ltd, Harvey Nichols, Debenhams, Matalan Retail Ltd, Iceland, House of Fraser, ASOS.com, Jaeger, Selfridges. Mosaic Fashions and Next.

Retail Trust, in conjunction with Skillsmart Retail, provides free scholarships to the prestigious Oxford Retail Masters Forum run by the British Shops and Stores Association (BSSA), which takes place every March at the University of Oxford. The scholarships, worth £1950 each, are open to anyone who has worked in the industry for at least seven years but are particularly relevant for senior managers, regional managers, store managers, retail owners or individuals who feel they cannot progress their career work because they lack a qualification. Applications are now open.

Retail Trust are now offering an outplacement service whereby junior and middle managers, who have been made redundant, can be helped to move to new jobs. More information can be found at www.retailtrust.org.uk