



## Berkshire's Wasing Wins Countryside Alliance Award 2009

### **Best Rural Enterprise Award goes to the Wasing Estate near Aldermaston**

Wasing Estate, Aldermaston, Berkshire, has been voted Regional Winner of the South of England, Countryside Alliance Award for Best Rural Enterprise 2009. They attended a Parliamentary

reception held at the House of Lords on 3rd February 2010. The Countryside Alliance runs the competition in response to the growing awareness that putting money into the local economy benefits far more than a rural retailer and is critical to the fabric of rural life.

Nicknamed the "Rural Oscars", the Countryside Alliance Awards, now in their fifth year, aim to celebrate the characters, skills, traditions and enterprise of the countryside through the people who work so hard to make it tick. This year's Awards attracted a record 2,500 nominations from the public, and regional finalists across four categories included village shops and post offices, butchers, breweries, pubs, cheese makers, feed merchants, smokeries, tea rooms, hotels, ice-cream makers, farm shops and even an oysterage. As well as delivering economic benefits, the local food sub sector delivers benefits for social inclusion, health and landscape quality. As consumers have a choice - to use local retailers and retain them, adding to the survival and prosperity of the countryside - or ignore them and lose them, the Alliance recognises the importance of keeping these entities thriving for the greater good, and has run the competition since 2005 to promote and highlight the quality and calibre across a variety of businesses.

### **Rural Business Beats Recession, Wins Award**

Wasing Estate is a perfect example of a recession busting business and was the only business from Berkshire to celebrate winning a regional title in this year's Awards. The estate was described by head Judge Sara Rutherford: *"The Wasing Estate itself has been around for hundreds of years, and within its 4,000 acres there is now a wedding and conference venue in a sympathetic and enterprising re-working of an old estate. One of Wasing's main objectives was to bring the community together through holding a variety of events such as the film club, Christmas carol concert and functions for local schools and fundraising events for charities. Not only this but local produce is used where possible, many local people are employed, and Wasing even appeared in the BBC TV series, Cranford! This is a truly impressive enterprise."*



Said Joshua Dugdale, owner of the Estate who has been instrumental in developing Wasing Park, the new events venue, and upgrading the Estate to better serve the surrounding community, *"We believe that the future of rural estates is based around their ability to become a hub in the local community. An estate is vitally important to many many people in the local area both directly and indirectly - a thriving estate means a thriving community. This is about so much more than the bottom line, and in winning this award our amazing team have shown you can be a financially successful and, importantly, a socially responsible business even in a recession."*

Located between Reading and Newbury, just 45 miles from London, the Wasing Estate is one of the South of England's best kept secrets. The 4,000 acre property is an unblemished jewel with magical ancient wooded lakes, and undulating farmland engraved by the meandering rivers, Enborne and Kennet. At the core of the Estate lies Wasing Park with a prodigious variety of venues affording an unrivalled and discreet setting for festivals, weddings, parties, corporate events, as well as an established site for film and TV. Visit Wasing Park at the Wedding Open Day to be held Sunday 7th March from 12:00am to 4:00pm. Explore the venue, see the Estate, have some refreshments, talk with suppliers and meet the Wasing team. For more information about Wasing Park and the Wasing Estate, go to [www.wasing.co.uk](http://www.wasing.co.uk).