

## **Seminar – Local Lodging as an Asset to the Algarve Tourism Industry**

**In the presence of the Secretary of State for Tourism**

**21<sup>st</sup> April 2015**

**Introduction Speech by David Thomas**

**President Safe Communities Algarve**

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman.

Firstly I would like to thank the Secretary of State for Tourism Aldofo Mesquita Nunes for being here today along with all the other officials, and off course you the audience for attending in large numbers for this unique event.

I am particularly pleased to see representation from overseas companies involved in the tourism industry as well as representatives from local government departments and municipalities here in the Algarve.

The fact that we have a full house clearly shows the importance of this topic.

For those of you who may not be aware of Safe Communities Algarve, we are a registered non-profit professional association run by volunteers, working closely with the police and other authorities in the area of crime prevention and public safety.

The objective of this seminar is to promote high standards in local lodging in support of the Algarve as a Safe Destination, though compliance with the new local lodging regulations.

As with anything new, it is important in my view that every opportunity is taken to explain to all stakeholders the new requirements to ensure understanding and compliance.

Following discussions with Turismo do Algarve we therefore took the initiative to hold this seminar in order to create greater awareness of the regulations and provide an opportunity for you to seek clarification of any aspects of the regulations and procedure, which may not be clear to everyone.

The decision to hold this in English was taken as a seminar had already been held in Portuguese in Portimao just before Christmas, and in order to further promote awareness within non-Portuguese speaking communities, including the international tourism industry.

We have labelled this seminar a “one stop shop”, as we are bringing together all the relevant government officials in order to achieve these objectives.

Maybe because I have spent nearly 40 years in the police, but I consider “compliance” important. In the case of local lodging this is particularly so because this includes elements of safety and security.

The need for this can be borne out through research, such as that conducted by ABTA, the UK’s travel trade association for tour operators and travel agents.

In its 2014 Travel Trends report it states quote “that safe and secure accommodation and financial protection are at the top of people’s booking essentials”. So it is important to focus on these issues to enhance our competitiveness as a destination of choice.

Although the Algarve is a safe destination, it is important that we keep it that way. We have therefore taken the opportunity to include a presentation by the GNR to remind us all, on ways to keep villas safe and secure.

Likewise we all know that Cybercrime involving on line fraud is increasing globally and Portugal is not immune to this. Often such criminality is targeted at the tourism industry. We have therefore included a presentation by the Judicial Police on this subject to help enhance our awareness and what steps can be taken to minimize the risks.

We do not have a government speaker on the subject of fiscal compliance, but I am sure that the newly formed association NALLE, the National Association for Local Lodging Establishments will be able to answer questions on this subject.

In this respect the presentation by the president of NALLE will form the opportunity to launch this new association dedicated to Local Lodging in Portugal.

As you can see we have many topics to cover in a relatively short time. I will therefore ask you all for your patience and co-operation in leaving your questions to question time which will follow the last speaker.

I am conscious of the fact that not everyone is able to attend today, so we will be making available all the presentations on-line following the seminar. Details of where these can be found will be just before question time. We will also link these through Facebook

Lastly I would like to thank Turismo do Algarve for all their support and help in planning this seminar.

Finally please complete the evaluation of the seminar which you were given when you came in as this will help in planning future events, and hand these to reception before leaving.