

**START****Portland Port moves forward with cruise berth extension**

Following a lengthy planning process, the board at Portland Port have approved and finalised plans for the extension of the port's primary cruise berth, with works scheduled to start in spring this year. Portland is one of just three ports on the south coast of the UK that can already handle vessels up to 300m LOA alongside. The new facility, which will be finished in time for the 2017 season will further strengthen the ports position by increasing this capability to berth vessels in excess of 340m LOA alongside. Ian McQuade, General Manager – Commercial, at Portland Port added; "We are lucky to have minimum water depths of 9.6m on our main cruise berth, now with the berth extension we will be able handle ships in excess of 340m LOA, putting us in a very unique group of ports along the English Channel. When we add this to our proximity to the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Stonehenge, Bath and the Jurassic Coast, along with easy access to the many attractions of the beautiful English countryside, we feel we will be very well positioned to continue to serve an ever increasing range of cruise line customers".

Whilst Portland will witness a small dip in passenger numbers and ship calls this year, the port is still excited about the prospects of two flagships from key players in the cruise industry visiting the port for the first time in 2016. The 'Koningsdam' and 'Mein Schiff 5' from Holland America Lines and the TUI Group respectively are both just shy of 300m long and together are expected to bring approximately 5,000 passengers into Portland. 2016 will also see the Saga Sapphire visiting the port for the first time, with regular customers Holland America, Costa and Phoenix Reisen returning to Portland for another year. "Cruise visits are down across a number of UK ports in for a variety of reasons. That said, 2017 is shaping up to be a good year with passenger numbers back to, and indeed, exceeding previous levels. We are continuing to work very hard at securing a promising future for Portland as a cruise destination.", commented Ian McQuade.

The cruise berth extension and the forthcoming arrival of cruise line flagships in 2016 is a good indicator for the future of Portland Port and its cruise programme. As the cruise ships sailing the world continue to grow in size the new cruise berth will allow Portland to accommodate some of the biggest cruise ships in operation. The future allows for more passengers to visit Portland and experience quintessential England at its finest, award winning beaches and the World Heritage Site, The Jurassic Coast in all its glory.

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Notes to Editors:

Previously a naval dockyard for over 150 years, Portland Harbour is now a thriving and successful commercial facility. It still maintains a close relationship with the past through its ongoing contract to support the RFA, as well as being home to the activities of Global Marine and Portland Bunkers UK. It has almost 2,500 hectares of water at depths of up to 15m (C.D.); and provides vessel services from long term lay-ups to brief maintenance calls, luxury cruise liner docking facilities to industrial cargo shipments.

The tariff and general Portland Harbour Authority information can be viewed at <http://www.portland-port.co.uk/>

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Portland Port has over 2,000 metres of alongside berths and 11.6 metres (C.D.) depth of water at the deepest alongside berth.

Berthing for vessels up to 300 metres (subject to Harbour Master's approval).

11 designated anchorages are within the 1,015 hectare inner harbour. Six designated anchorages are within the 1,436 hectare Outer Harbour.

A width of 210 metres and depth of over 12.6 metres (C.D.) at the entrance of the harbour mean that there are few vessel beam, lock, or air draft restriction.

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