

## New Record For Orkney Cruise Ship Port Calls

A new record had been set - with more than 100 visits to Orkney by cruise ships already booked for 2016. This is by far the highest number of port calls in a single year, since cruise ships first began visiting the islands in the 1970s.

Next year will be a season of celebration, with Orkney set to receive its 1500th port call - and the 750,000th cruise passenger to visit the islands.

So far, 105 cruise ship port calls are expected in 2016. Orkney will be the first UK destination port to receive this many visits by cruise ships in a single season.

Michael Morrison, Business Development Manager with OIC Marine Services, said, "The Council, the Harbour Authority and the stakeholders who deliver the cruise product and service continually reflect on how to meet and exceed the expectations of the passengers and crew, irrespective of the size of cruise ship calling into Orkney.

"More frequent port calls and larger ships calling here require us to act on economies of scale in terms of passenger numbers at historic sites, traffic management, general facilities for the public and, most important of all, in getting the balance right so that all tourists have an enjoyable experience in Orkney.

"Only nine of the ships next season are what would be termed as very large liners, and the current berthing policy, that limits too many passengers arriving one day, seems to be working well."

Gavin Barr, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure at OIC, said: "The overall economic benefit to Orkney is substantial both in terms of direct tourism spend during the cruise visit, and cruise visitors returning as individuals to experience more of what Orkney has to offer over a longer period of time.

"Orkney's increasing profile as a must-see Scottish and European tourist destination, and attracting tourism from many geographies and demographics, presents us with the enviable challenge of ensuring that the quality of the visitor experience is maintained across the County.

"The Council and local and national partners are undertaking project initiatives to ensure that this is achieved and that mechanisms for sustainable tourism development are implemented."

The cruise ship list for 2016 can be found at:

[http://www.orkneyharbours.com/cruise\\_ship\\_list.asp?y=2016](http://www.orkneyharbours.com/cruise_ship_list.asp?y=2016)