

## Portland Port tariff freeze for 2021

Portland Port has frozen its fees for customers in 2021 after the country has been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

There had been high hopes that the start of 2021 would see the country starting to return to normal business, however, even with the roll out of a vaccine, the whole country is back in national lockdown.

Ian McQuade (Commercial General Manager at Portland Port) said “Portland Port acknowledges the significant challenges faced by all industries during this pandemic, so to help, we have decided to keep our tariff prices the same as last year. During these extraordinary times, Portland Port wants to try to support its tenants and customers more than ever.”

Some of the hardest hit businesses in the maritime industry, continue to be the cruise lines; most oceangoing cruise lines took the unprecedented step to voluntarily suspend worldwide operations from 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020, and sadly, most are still extending their suspension month by month.

Portland Port has been able to support those cruise lines that have used and are using, the South Coast as a home for their ships during the global suspension. Their ships have been able to come alongside a berth to carry out maintenance, loading of stores or the offload of waste for example, or by using the ports passenger pontoon for their tenders to enable crew changes and the important transfer of PCR tests to laboratories for processing.

It is anticipated that normal cruise operations will recommence later in the year but it remains hard to predict when the restart will get underway. In the meantime, Portland Port will continue to offer its support to the sector as best it can.

The port itself continues to apply the appropriate restrictions and safety measures to protect the port's staff, its contractors, customers, and the local population. Port staff have continued to work from home where possible since the first lockdown last year, however this is not possible for all staff; pilots, marine officers, police, and security, are crucial to the port's ability to operate and maintain its integrity. For those coming into the workplace, be it an office, tug or pilot boat, the social distancing rules are observed and there are supplies of hand sanitiser gel and the necessary PPE as required.

Prior to any vessel arriving in port waters or coming alongside they must provide the necessary health declarations, and where necessary, the local Port Health Authority are consulted.

Portland Port remains optimistic that this lockdown, combined with the vaccine will allow life and business to start the long road to recovery during this year.