

Portsmouth plugs in SMS Towage tugs in carbon-cutting shore bid

Portsmouth International Port has worked with their towage provider to provide a shore power connection for their tugs, saving 131 tonnes of carbon per annum. Both the port and the towage company, SMS Towage, are Cruise Britain members.

Portsmouth International Port has ambitious targets to reach net-zero by 2030 and become emission free by 2050. The port is also working closely with all their partners to enable them to reach their sustainability goals, which led to the collaboration between them and SMS Towage.

Following a presentation by the port's head of engineering, Stephen Watkyns on future plans for shore power in Portsmouth, SMS Towage contacted the port to see if an electricity connection could be provided for their tugs. This would allow them to switch off their diesel generators when in the port.

SMS Towage's technical manager Ronald Keuning worked closely with port engineer Karl Feary to provide the quayside power connection. It's been estimated that it will save 131 tonnes of carbon emissions a year, along with improving air quality.

It has also improved life for the seafarers aboard the tugs, who carry out the vital job of guiding vessels safely into the port. Without the generators running, the tugs are now a much quieter place to rest.

Elly Howe, environmental and sustainability coordinator at Portsmouth International Port said: "This is an important step forward for the port and is just the start of our shore power journey.

"We want to be able to provide shore power on all our berths in the coming years ready for cruise vessels and Brittany Ferries' new hybrid ferries. It is vital that we are supported by the government and electricity network operators to get the power we need to the port to make this happen."

Cllr Kimberly Barrett, Cabinet member for Climate Change and Environment at Portsmouth City Council added: "The port is not only making impressive progress on its sustainability ambitions, but I think it's amazing that they are also working with their partners to help them make changes that benefit the whole city.

"As a council we're committed to implement our strategy to be a leader in reducing carbon impact of our buildings and activity, alongside reaching net-zero by 2030, so every project like this helps us reach our targets".

SMS Towage is the UK's largest independent towage company, providing comprehensive harbour towage, offshore towage renewable energy support and other specialist shipping project work. They have been providing towage services at Portsmouth International Port since 2017.

Ronald Keuning, technical manager at SMS Towage said: "Portsmouth International Port has been extremely helpful in the process of setting up the infrastructure and support need to get our tugs operating on shore-power, while alongside in port. The realisation of this project has helped SMS Towage with their aspirations towards a more sustainable and greener future."

Portsmouth City Council, who own and operate Portsmouth International Port, is investing in their climate change response to make the city a cleaner, greener, and safer place to live. By continuing to provide

knowledge, attract funding, and collaborate with the community on projects that tackle climate change whilst addressing the local challenges.