



Regal Princess arriving in Portland Port

Regal invite for businesses at Portland Port

Businesses working at Portland Port found themselves with a change of scene - onboard the latest cruise ship to make a visit to Dorset's Jurassic Coast.

Regal Princess, operated by Princess Cruises, called in at Portland Port for 12 hours on Sunday 13th August at the start of a fully booked 12-day cruise around the British Isles, having sailed from Southampton.

Representatives of businesses based at the port were invited by the port to take a look onboard the 141,000 tonne vessel, which is 330 metres in length and has capacity for 3,560 passengers and 1,346 crew.

The port employs 53 staff, with a further 220 people employed by commercial port occupiers, including dry and liquid bulk cargo businesses.

Ian McQuade, Portland Port's Commercial General Manager, and Chair of Cruise Britain, said: "Businesses at the port have seen our cruise activity grow and develop over recent years - this was a lovely opportunity to provide our customers with a tour of the Regal Princess, with lunch onboard."

A total of 57 cruise calls have been booked in at the port for this year, with 130,000 passengers being welcomed.

Based on figures from the Cruise Lines International Association trade body for spend per head of

passenger, the local economy in Portland and Weymouth benefits by around £10 million annually. The figure includes spending in shops, bars and cafes, along with expenditure on taxis, coaches, shuttle buses and tours.

Mr McQuade confirmed that bookings from cruise lines planning their itineraries are already being taken for next year, 2025 and 2026.

“The £26 million investment in our newly redeveloped deep-water berth, officially launched in June, also means cruise ships of up to 350m in length can now be accepted rather than having to go elsewhere.”

Regal Princess was berthed at the facility which has been in regular use since it opened to shipping.

“In the last eight years the port has invested more than £40 million in developing infrastructure and more than £3 million in repairs and maintenance; it is this investment that has enabled the port’s continued growth and development, not least in the growth of the cruise business.”

Many passengers from the Regal Princess headed out on Sunday via the shuttle bus service or on tours to local destinations such as Abbotsbury Swannery, Athelhampton House, Bovington Tank Museum, Cerne Giant, Corfe Castle, and Weymouth harbour as well as further afield to Forde Abbey in north Dorset and Stonehenge. Dorchester-based Durnovaria Silver band, founded in 1936, played out the departing Regal Princess, with the traditional celebratory cannon salutes from Nothe Fort in Weymouth.

Earlier this summer, for the first time, Portland Port also hosted trade association Cruise Britain’s annual summer gathering. Delegates came from across the country for the two-day event hosted in partnership with Princess Cruises, including representatives from cruise lines, ports, tour operators and service providers. More than 50 delegates attended, with many staying overnight in Weymouth and Portland.

Cruise Britain is a network of cruise operators, ports, destinations, service providers and cruise lines who work together to welcome ships to the country and promote the industry. Its annual summer event is held at different member ports each year.