

'Super September' for local economy – record cruise line activity at Portland Port

In a month of record firsts, Portland Port, South Dorset, will receive the highest number of September cruise calls resulting in a £3.6m boost to local businesses. A second record has already been set with the two largest cruise ships to berth together also taking place and there will be a third record with a 'shoulder season' boost for firms as, for the first time, cruise ships will be visiting in 10 out of 12 months next year.

More than £3.6 million is set to be generated in the local economy with the record arrival of 18 cruise ships at Portland Port in south Dorset throughout September and at the end of August.

Based on figures from Cruise Lines International Association for spend per head of passenger, Portland and Weymouth benefits directly by around £10 million annually.

The estimate of £3.6 million from 18 cruise calls includes combined spending by day excursion visitors to shops, bars, cafes and takeaways, along with expenditure on tourism attractions, taxis, coaches, shuttle buses and tours.

A port spokesperson said: "It is very much 'Super September' for the many businesses which directly benefit from the cruise line calls here at Portland Port, with a record number of passenger vessels scheduled throughout the month and the tail end of August.

"Depending on the size of the ships and number of passengers booked in for landside activities here on the Jurassic Coast, the local economy benefits from around £175,500 to up to £400,000 for each cruise line call.

"The amount of revenue these calls bring to the area's businesses is considerable, at an estimated £3.6 million generated alone by the 18 calls, and we thank them for their supportive role in providing a warm Dorset welcome to cruise passengers.

"A second record is also being made – the two largest cruise ships to berth together also takes place on 30 September, with upwards of 8,000 passengers from the 326m-long Norwegian Getaway and 330-metre Regal Princess.

"In a third record for the port, passenger vessels have booked in to call at the port for 10 months out of 12 next year, with the first call as early as February. As things stand, January and March are the only months without cruise calls.

"There is more good news for local businesses this October – the port has three visits from ships with passenger capacity each of 2,000-plus.

"There is also a call in November, showing that the 'shoulder season' is being squeezed thanks to hard work by the port globally in attracting cruise lines to the Jurassic Coast throughout the calendar year.

"The £26 million investment in our newly redeveloped deep-water berth, officially launched in June, means cruise ships of up to 350m in length can now be accepted rather than taking their business elsewhere, and that's why we are seeing more calls.

"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 head out 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.

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

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