

Celebrations for Portsmouth International Port's 50th anniversary

A port open day and economic report launch are some of the activities planned for next year as Portsmouth International Port celebrates 50 years since Portsmouth City Council created the international port in 1976.

The 50th year will kick off with a launch event in Westminster for the port's latest economic impact report, with data gathered from the port, contractors and customers and the contribution this makes locally, regionally and nationally.

On Saturday 13 June 2026 the port will host an open day so residents can see behind the scenes and find more out about all the activities at their port. More than 1,800 people attended in 2023 and of those surveyed after the event, 90% said they would come again. In addition to promoting the port, the open day involves partner organisations showcasing their activities, which includes harbour tours, onboard vessel visits and an equipment showcase.

There will be a formal event on 17 June 2026, exactly 50 years after the first commercial ferry crossing took place from Portsmouth to St Malo. The port will work with long-term customer and partner Brittany Ferries to commemorate this inaugural sailing.

Cllr Steve Pitt, Leader of Portsmouth City Council said: "The port is widely regarded as the UK's most successful local authority owned port, the anniversary offers the opportunity to celebrate the progress and the important role it plays as a city owned port on a local, national and international level.

"A series of activities are planned for the 50th year in 2026, with a focus on engaging with staff, residents, partners and other stakeholders. The priority is to showcase the activities at the port now, a reminder of how far the port has come and where it hopes to be the future. It will celebrate innovation and how the port is becoming a leader in the field of sustainability, with a game-changing shore power project underway next year, making the port an attractive option for environmentally conscious customers and showing residents it cares about the impact it has on the city."

The year of events will:

- Celebrate the diversity of port activity and staff and show appreciation for their hard work.
- Create a legacy for the port's profile beyond 2026.
- Provide education and engagement opportunities with young people and the Portsmouth community.
- Promote the council ownership model of the port and shared values.
- Involve a range of stakeholders from across the city and customers.
- Complement the city's centenary celebration.

The 50th anniversary year is a chance to put the spotlight and showcase roles at the port, highlighting the range of varied and interesting positions in the maritime industry as a future career for young people. We will be profiling staff who work at the port in roles such as security, traffic, pilotage, berthing and mooring, to innovation, project management and engineering, which is an opportunity for the community to see the critical roles in keeping a major port running.

Increasing local knowledge of what happens at the port, and an understanding of how it contributes to the city, is extremely valuable to the port to maintain our licence to operate from our most important stakeholders, our community.

2026 also marks Portsmouth's centenary, with many events and celebratory moments taking place to mark 100 years of city status, the port will be featuring in the city's Wild Art Trail, which involves specially commissioned sculptured lions positioned across the city, with a lion in the terminal building.