

## CruiseAberdeenshire launched to promote the region

CruiseAberdeenshire, a new partnership between VisitAberdeenshire and Port of Aberdeen, has been launched with the goal of promoting the region to the international cruise market and securing business for future years.

The partnership – funded by Opportunity North East, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council – aims to highlight the expanding opportunities for cruise lines and shore excursion operators, while showcasing the guest experience that awaits passengers on arrival at Port of Aberdeen.

Aberdeen has seen a 130% growth in the number of cruise calls since 2022.

2024 saw cruise calls rise to 49, compared to 22 two years ago. Plus, Aberdeen is now attracting larger vessels to the region, including the 290m Costa Favolosa which called twice this year.

Looking ahead, the port anticipates up to 70 cruise calls in 2025 and has bookings as far out as 2027.

‘The successful 2024 cruise season is testament to the dedication of the teams who made it possible,’ said Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, Port of Aberdeen. ‘The CruiseAberdeenshire partnership will enhance the world-class service already provided to cruise guests at the port and will position Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire as one of the UK’s top cruise destinations.’

This year, VisitAberdeenshire secured funding to enrich the cruise guest experience upon arrival into the city including the purchase of an information trailer, the running of an enhanced volunteer training programme, and a 50% increase in volunteer numbers since 2023.

The volunteer programme creates a positive first impression of the city, offering a warm welcome and practical inspiration for cruise guests on how to make the most of their day ashore. Supported by Port of Aberdeen, the programme delivered 547 volunteer hours this year – an 82% increase on 2023.

In addition, Port of Aberdeen ensured all cruise guests received an authentic Scottish welcome, with Alba Bagpipes performing as each cruise ship arrived throughout the year.

CruiseAberdeenshire will position Aberdeen as an untapped tourist destination at upcoming key global trade shows and industry events.

Chris Foy, CEO, VisitAberdeenshire, stated, ‘The powerful combination of compelling visitor experiences across the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire region paired with excellent infrastructure and capabilities of Port of Aberdeen tell a compelling story to decision makers. Momentum is building at just the right time. CruiseAberdeenshire is a unified, joined up approach to highlight the region’s pull as a cruise destination, and together we’re looking ahead to a bright future.’