



International port leads the way as 'landmark' sustainable cruise terminal opens in Portsmouth, UK

After 18 months of construction, Portsmouth International Port has welcomed guests from Saga's 'Spirit of Discovery' cruise ship as the first to experience its innovative net carbon neutral terminal extension, made possible through £11.25m of Levelling Up funding to transform the city's visitor economy.

Cutting-edge environmental engineering has been at the forefront of development plans, resulting in the port becoming the first in the UK to use sea water to heat and cool the building, other environmental features include wind and solar technology, and internal and external living walls to help purify the air. All the elements combined means the building will generate more energy than it consumes, eventually moving from net carbon neutral to becoming what's known as carbon positive.

The new terminal has been built to accommodate a growth in cruise ships coming to the port, which is expected to rise to over 100 calls in 2024 and could mean an additional 250,000 passengers per year. Following a major berth extension, coupled with the new terminal, the port is now in a position to handle ships up to 300m in length and the associated passenger capacity these vessels carry.

The design features a sky garden, which is a public viewing space to watch the activity across the port site, a walkway between the existing terminal and an exclusive lounge area for passengers. Portsmouth appeals to the small to medium sized, boutique, luxury and expedition cruise market, and the terminal has been designed to reflect this experience from the moment they arrive at the port.

Mike Sellers, Portsmouth International Port's director said: "This terminal transformation follows a number of significant infrastructure projects to position Portsmouth as not only one of the UK's leading ports, but a global one too.

"From the start of this development we were determined to retain our environmental values, however we have now exceeded our ambitions and the new terminal extension with its sophisticated engineering is on track to generate more energy than it uses.

"Our Masterplan has focused efforts towards a sustainable future that aims to be the first carbon neutral port by 2030, we're able to do this by working alongside innovative industries and partners who share our vision.

"In 18 months we now boast an inspiring terminal extension, ready to handle a forecast increase in trade. I'd like to thank everyone involved for their determination to have this ready for our first call from our customer Saga cruises today."

The port was part of a successful £20m bid called Transforming the Visitor Economy, which also includes funding for a Lido and the creation of the UK's longest urban park 'Linear Park' in the north of the city. The aim of the funding is to boost the local and regional economy, each cruise ship call having the potential to bring £1.5m into the city through port charges, passenger and crew spend on local goods, and services such as hotels and attractions, and also supplies to the ship.

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson Cabinet Member responsible for the port said: "This is a landmark moment for the city and puts Portsmouth on the international map for its ambitions to grow the visitor experience.

"Portsmouth lends itself ideally as a cruise port, with wonderful heritage assets and a spectacular waterfront for arrivals and departures. This new terminal extension is hoped to kick start further investment in the city, from hotel capacity to an increase in tourism spending.

"As the UK's most successful local authority owned port, we're building on our strong partnerships with long-term customers such as Brittany Ferries and Condor Ferries, who share our values and ethos. Likewise we have been fortunate to see a variety of new cruise ships visit Portsmouth for the first time, as well as repeat calls from major brands.

"The port is integral to Portsmouth and supports our ambitions to become a leading marine and maritime city, providing opportunities for residents and high quality experiences for visitors."

Guests on Saga's cruise ship 'Spirit of Discovery', whose Godmother is Her Majesty Queen Camilla, are the first to make use of the terminal, as they head off on an 'Islands of the Western Mediterranean' itinerary.

Spirit of Discovery is a regular visitor to Portsmouth where many of its cruises begin and as she is a boutique ship with just up to 999 guests on board, she is one of the smaller vessels the port welcomes.

Nigel Blanks, CEO of Saga Cruises, said: "We were delighted to play our part in this historic moment for Portsmouth Port as the first cruise operator to welcome our guests through the new terminal.

"The quality of the building and the attention to detail that has gone into its development really are second to none, and our guests thoroughly enjoyed the new arrival experience."