Isle of Man due to welcome record numbers of cruise visitors

The Isle of Man is set to welcome a record number of cruise passengers in 2018 with over 9,900 passengers arriving on 24 cruise ships due to visit this year.

This compares with 23 cruise days and 6,397 passengers welcomed ashore in 2017. With over 50% more passengers due to arrive in 2018 this demonstrates that not only are new cruise lines being attracted to the Island, but that the visiting vessels are also in line with the industry trend of larger capacity ships.

The figure for 2018 is itself due to be exceeded in 2019 with 37 cruise ships booked in so far to visit the Isle of Man in 2019 and bookings already in place for 2020 and 2021.

Rob Callister MHK, the Department for Enterprise Member with responsibility for Tourism said: 'It is very encouraging to report the record numbers in cruise visits and cruise passengers due to visit the Isle of Man this year and in 2019 and the outlook for the Island as a cruise destination continues to be very positive with very healthy long-term bookings for cruise calls. These figures are evidence of the increasing desire from globally-renowned cruise line companies to establish the Island as an important stopover destination on cruise itineraries.

'As well as the exciting plans for the deep water berth in Douglas harbour, which Tynwald supported in principle as part of the Harbours Strategy in March, we are continuing to develop our services for cruise passengers and tourists within the Sea Terminal, with new signage, complimentary Wi-fi within the building and a number of outlets selling local artisan crafts, produce and souvenirs.'

The first cruise ship visiting the Isle of Man in 2018 will be Ponant's *Le Soleal,* chartered by American Tour operator Tauck, due to arrive into Douglas on the 29th April at 0800 hrs and departing at 1800hrs. As well as the shore excursions, passengers on-board will have the opportunity to enjoy a range of Manx produce as this is being incorporated into the cruise menus. This includes a new product, 'Isle of Man Meats boneless rolled lamb shoulder'. She returns to the Isle of Man again on Wednesday 9th May.

For both calls, the passengers will enjoy a choice of bespoke tours that have been designed by Isle of Man consultants, Neptumar, to fit the requirements of Tauck. In addition to the excursions arranged, local musicians will entertain the passengers on-board before their departure.

The largest vessel due to visit the Island this year is the 54,000 tonne *Seven Seas Explorer*, which is due to arrive in Douglas during TT Week on 7th June.

We are also proud to host six inaugural cruise ship visits this year, with commemorative plaques to be presented to each visiting ship's Captain to celebrate the vessel's first visit to the Isle of Man. This year, the Isle of Man will welcome for the first time: *Ocean Adventurer* – 16th May; *Silver Cloud* – 20th May; *Seven Seas Explorer* – 7th June; *Azamara Journey* – 15th July; Azamara Pursuit – 25th July; *Star Breeze* – 31st August.

The full cruise call schedule for 2018 can be found on the Cruise Isle of Man website here and the link to the Isle of Man's promotional film for cruise line companies can be viewed here.