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P&O Cruises honours home port of Southampton in plaque exchange and blessing ceremony

P&O Cruises honoured the City of Southampton today in a traditional plaque exchange ceremony on board its newest ship Iona attended by many of the region's dignitaries.

Southampton has been the home port for P&O Cruises for many decades and the company expressed pride in its association with the city in an event which was the tenth of its kind this century.

Joining Carnival UK president Simon Palethorpe and P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow were Deputy Lieutenant Tom Floyd; High Sheriff of Hampshire Phillip Sykes; mayor of Southampton Councillor Alex Houghton; MP for Southampton & Itchen Royston Smith; Southampton city council leader Councillor Dan Fitzhenry and ABP director of port services Alastair Welch.

P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow said:

"This is a very special day for us, for Iona and for Southampton. P&O Cruises, as well as our sister brands of Cunard and Princess Cruises, are a vital part of the economy and community in the region. Each time a ship comes into port it contributes over £2million to the local economy – from the taxi drivers, stevedores and hundreds of local producers, suppliers and growers. The last 18 months have had a devastating impact upon them all and we are now so proud and pleased that once again we have two ships sailing to support this network of regional businesses.

"Iona is Britain's largest, greenest and most innovative ship – wholly powered by liquefied natural gas which virtually eliminates air emissions. There are 30 places to eat and drink and the ship is designed to provide the ultimate in relaxation, contemporary entertainment and be the source of restorative and individual holidays."

Iona's Master, Captain Wesley Dunlop exchanged plaques with Mayor Alex Houghton and with ABP and said: "These exchanges are a visible sign of an important connection - one between a ship and her home port. And like us, all ships need a home – somewhere to feel safe, take shelter and weather the storm - something the last few months have certainly taught us.

"There is no better home port than Southampton."

The ceremony culminated with Bishop Geoff Annas, retired Bishop of Stafford and vicar for many years at St Christopher's Thornhill, officially blessing the ship prior to its seven night maiden voyage on Saturday up to the island of Iona and around the coast of the Scottish Isles.

ENDS

From left to right:

For more information or to book call P&O Cruises on 03453 555 111, visit www.pocruises.com or contact a travel agent.

Ends

About P&O Cruises

P&O Cruises is Britain's favourite cruise line, welcoming guests to experience holidays with a blend of discovery, choice, relaxation and exceptional service catered towards British tastes. P&O Cruises fleet of premium ships combine genuine service, a sense of occasion and attention to detail. In May 2021, P&O Cruises launched Iona, its first Excel class ship. The new LNG-powered ship, with 5,200-guest capacity, is the largest ship built to serve the UK market. Iona features enhancements to already successful brand signature venues from the existing fleet, as well as features newly developed for Iona. P&O Cruises second LNG-powered Excel class ship and sister ship to Iona is named Arvia, meaning from the seashore, and will join the fleet in December 2022. Arvia is an innovative and future-focused ship and will offer outstanding, varied and contemporary holidays. Arvia has been designed to travel to the sun all year-round and to maximise views of the ocean and the seashore from everywhere on board. With over 200 destinations worldwide, P&O Cruises itineraries are carefully curated to inspire discovery, and are varied to suit newcomers and experienced guests alike. With a wide choice of holidays from two days to three months there is something for everyone. P&O Cruises sails to Australia & New Zealand, Baltic, the British Isles, Canada, the Spain, Portugal & the Canary Islands, the Caribbean, Central America, the Far East & Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, South America, the South Pacific, the United States and Western Europe.

The company is part of Carnival Corporation & plc (NYSE/LSE: CCL; NYSE:CUK).

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