

Tall Ships Races to return to Lerwick in 2023

Lerwick has been selected for the third time to be a host port for the spectacular Tall Ships Races.

Sail Training International, operator of the Tall Ships Races, has today (Tues) announced the selected host ports for the 2023 series, with the Races expected to visit Lerwick, the only Scottish location, from 26-29 July. The isles previously hosted the event in 1999 and 2011.

Shetland Islands Council has led the isles' successful bid, in partnership with Lerwick Port Authority and Shetland Tall Ships Limited, which will undertake delivery of the event locally. Many other organisations are supporting the event, including EventScotland, part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate, and Sail Training Shetland.

Steven Coutts, Leader of Shetland Islands Council: "It is tremendous to get a final confirmation of this news. We have a strong history of delivering memorable Tall Ships Races here in Shetland; they really hold a special place in the memories of so many in our community.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Shetland's rich maritime heritage and promote Shetland internationally. It will provide a valuable boost to our economy and community as we move into recovery and renewal."

Sandra Laurenson is Interim Chairman of Shetland Tall Ships Limited: "It is very exciting to have the opportunity to bring the spectacular Tall Ships Races back to Lerwick. With just over two years to go, there is plenty to do, and, building on our experience of the two previous visits, we'll now be establishing organising committees, appointing a project manager, fund-raising and developing a programme of events and entertainment for islanders, ships' crews and visitors.

"The event is a great opportunity to rebuild and we very much look forward to working with the community on the broad appeal of the Tall Ships Races event."

Captain Calum Grains, Port Authority Chief Executive: "The announcement of the Tall Ships' return would be great news at any time, but particularly so during the gradual recovery from the pandemic, and it gives Shetland something exciting and positive to look forward to, and contributes to the promise of better times ahead.

"The colourful visit will provide a major event for the community, a showcase for island products and culture, a boost for the economy and enhance Lerwick's international reputation as a tall ships-friendly port."

Sail Training International Chief Operating Officer, Alan James: "We are delighted to announce Lerwick as one of the Host Ports of The Tall Ships Races 2023. We have immense pride in our rich history together and are excited to return to the Shetland Islands for the first time since 2011. With a rich maritime history, shared values of international friendship and understanding, and a strong record staging events, we

look forward to Lerwick welcoming the Tall Ships fleet in spectacular style once again."

Paul Bush OBE, VisitScotland's Director of Events: "The confirmation of the return of the Tall Ships Races to Lerwick is great news after they successfully hosted the event in 1999 and 2011, and EventScotland is delighted to be supporting the return of the event in 2023. Hosting major events will be a key part of Scotland's recovery from Covid-19m, and Tall Ships will be a significant driver in helping re-build and support the tourism and events sector in Shetland.

"Scotland is the perfect stage for events and Lerwick's selection as a host port for the race will provide us with a wonderful opportunity to showcase the region's amazing scenery and culture to an avid audience of sailing enthusiasts."

Ends.

For media queries, please contact Steven Coutts on 07392 120745, Calum Grains on 01595 692991, Sandra Laurenson on 07717 537 838, Alan James through Commercial Director Vanessa Mori on 07719 318373, and Paul Bush through Amy Wright, Events PR & Media Manager, on 07966 002 009.

Notes for editors

The ports were announced today (Tues) by Tall Ships Races International Ltd, a subsidiary of Sail Training International, which describes the event as 'Europe's largest, free family festival' – you can find more information on their announcement here - <https://sailtraininginternational.org/sailtraining/news/first-four-host-ports-of-the-tall-ships-races-2023-announced>

Photo credit - Ryan Leith