PLANS TO CREATE NEW LIGHTHOUSE VISITOR CENTRE AT PORTLAND BILL

Trinity House has agreed a lease with The Crown Estate for the former lighthouse keepers’ cottages at Portland Bill Lighthouse in Dorset on the south coast of England. The premises will be rejuvenated to house a new visitor experience themed around the maritime history of Trinity House and its responsibilities providing aids to navigation, charitable support and educational services to the mariner since 1514.

Portland Bill Lighthouse has been popular with visitors for many years but their experience to date has been limited to ascending the lighthouse; the new centre will engage visitors in the history, workings and importance of aids to navigation such as lighthouses and fog signals and the people who made it all work. The displays will demonstrate the nature of modern aids to navigation and demonstrate why as an island nation—dependent on the sea for trade—they remain of critical importance to the safety of the mariner and to a growing maritime leisure community.

The new centre will be created in the coming months and will open by Easter 2015. This will be an exciting, informative and stimulating new attraction for the area aimed at locals and tourists alike. Through its lighthouse-themed Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Education Packs, Trinity House will encourage school groups to Portland Bill to engage in science, numeracy and literacy-based curricular activities.

The Crown Estate—which took over ownership of the lighthouse keepers’ cottages in the mid-1990s when the lighthouse was automated—wanted a tenant who would use the ground floor of the premises in a manner sympathetic to the history of the lighthouse and the local community.

The reinvigorated attraction will complement the nine other lighthouses that Trinity House opens to the public across England, Wales and the Channel Islands, including the flagship Lizard Lighthouse Heritage Centre in Cornwall, reopened by HRH The Princess Royal in 2009. As well as creating the new centre Trinity House is looking for a partner organisation to operate the business on a day-to-day basis. This will be of particular interest to those who have a background in managing tourism-based activities with experience in generating footfall, liaising with educational establishments and developing a locally-based team to man and support the centre.

Neil Jacobson, Portfolio Manager for the South of England at The Crown Estate, said: “We are delighted that we have been able to agree a lease with
Trinity House, building upon the progress made since 1997 when the centre first opened. This is a great example of how we can work with our tenants to both fulfil our commercial mandate and benefit local communities.”

About Trinity House
The Corporation of Trinity House was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1514 to oversee the improvement of pilotage on the River Thames and manage the welfare of distressed seamen and their dependants. Today it serves the mariner as the General Lighthouse Authority (GLA) for England, Wales and the Channel Islands, with responsibility for nearly 600 aids to navigation, from traditional aids such as lighthouses to the latest satellite navigation technology. It is also the UK’s largest-endowed maritime charity, wholly funded by its endowments, spending around £4 million each year on its charitable activities including the safety, welfare and training of mariners, and the promotion of safety at sea. It is also a Deep Sea Pilotage Authority. In 2014 the Corporation is celebrating the 500th anniversary of its incorporation by Royal Charter with a number of charitable initiatives and commemorative publications. Readers are invited to visit: [www.trinityhouse.co.uk](http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk) for more information.

About The Crown Estate
The Crown Estate is an independent commercial business, established by Act of Parliament. 100% of its annual profits are returned to the Treasury for the benefit of the public finances. Over the last ten years The Crown Estate has returned over £2.2 billion to the Treasury. In the last financial year the value of the business rose to almost £10 billion and its returns were £267 million. Across its diverse portfolio, The Crown Estate’s approach remains consistent; driving sustainable returns and growth through an active approach to asset management and long term investment in four key sectors; Central London’s West End, prime regional retail, rural land and offshore wind.

The Crown Estate’s portfolio is one of the most diverse anywhere in the world, including some of the UK’s most iconic assets and includes the entire UK seabed and around 50% of the foreshore. The Crown Estate’s history can be traced back to 1066. In the 21st century it is a successful, commercial enterprise, established as a market leader in its key sectors and known for a progressive, sustainable approach that creates long term value, beyond its financial return.

Picture caption
*Portland Bill*  
*Image © Kevin Borg.*