

**News Release
For Immediate Release
18 November 2019**

Portsmouth bids to host international racing conference: Yacht Racing Forum

Portsmouth Harbour Marine and Portsmouth City Council are in discussions with MaxComm Communication with the aim of hosting an international sailing and yacht racing conference in Portsmouth in November 2020.

The annual Yacht Racing Forum draws a rich pool of speakers from the marine community. Held over two days, it brings together pro-sailors, suppliers, yacht clubs, agents, boat builders, technology companies and many others to meet, network, discuss and debate the key issues in the yachting industry. If Portsmouth's bid is successful, it will host the 14th iteration of the conference.

"Portsmouth is the obvious choice for the conference's location in 2020," says Mark Bowden, chief executive, Portsmouth Harbour Marine. "This is such an exciting time for marine development. Portsmouth and Gosport have a wealth of high-tech marine businesses and supporting industries such as marinas and boatyards. Plus, racing teams such as Ben Ainslie and his Team INEOS and Alex Thomson Racing, who are both at the cutting edge of design and technology, are based here. We've got the facilities and expertise to host the conference – now we need to put the final few pieces in place to make it happen."

"Both Portsmouth and Gosport Councils are enthusiastic to support local marine businesses on the international stage," says David Williams, Chief Executive of Portsmouth City Council. "We have a cluster of world-class yachtsmen and women based around Portsmouth Harbour and many cutting-edge industries related to yachting and the wider marine sector.

"Hosting the International Yacht Racing Forum would provide the stage to showcase Portsmouth Harbour - the heart of the UK's maritime design, innovation, technology, and racing waters. If we're successful in bringing the conference to the city, it will be a great platform for our marine businesses and wider tourism."

Bernard Schopfer, CEO of Maxcomm says: "We are very excited to be talking to Portsmouth about bringing our annual conference to the city in 2020. We have not held the event in the UK before, and with so many exciting projects and innovations being developed around the south coast of the UK it seems a natural destination. Portsmouth Harbour also has so much maritime history, we are confident in attracting a truly international group of delegates and speakers."

The final decision about the location of the 2020 conference will be made in late November. In the meantime, anyone wishing to know more can contact mark@portsmouthharbourmarine.org.uk.

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Notes for Editors

High resolution images available at: <https://maa.agency/media-centre>

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Portsmouth Harbour Marine promotes and supports the development of Portsmouth Harbour, its facilities, marine businesses and their networks, to stimulate economic growth, marine employment and inward investment for the sector. In addition, it works with charities and other providers of local on-water activities to promote water-based activities to schools, groups and individuals as a means to improve health, develop life skills and increase marine career awareness. More: <https://portsmouthharbourmarine.org.uk>

The Yacht Racing Forum is the only business to business conference that brings together the key players from across the whole yacht racing industry to discuss the issues facing the sport and to share best practice. It also facilitates business development through providing quality networking opportunities with decision makers from all areas within the industry. More: <https://www.yachtracingforum.com/forum/>