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## **Stena Line welcomes Stena Futura onto Belfast- Heysham route**

Stena Line has welcomed the first of its new hybrid freight ferries to Belfast Harbour. The multimillion-pound purpose-built Stena Futura will go into service on the freight-only Belfast to Heysham route on 22 September.

The 147-metre Stena Futura will operate 12 sailings per week providing much needed additional freight capacity on the popular route which connects local hauliers directly into the key North of England road freight network.

Once operational, Stena Futura and sister ship Stena Connecta, currently under construction and due to enter service also on the Belfast-Heysham route in early 2026, will enhance freight capacity by 40% on the Belfast-Heysham in response to an increase in customer demand for services between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The two hybrid vessels, which are 'methanol-ready' will play a key role in Stena Line's sustainability journey. They are further enhanced with built-in technologies that will be able to utilise both battery propulsion and shore power, when available.

Stena Futura represents a significant step forward in sustainable shipping, built to operate on methanol and is part of a broader initiative to integrate sustainable technologies. The sister vessel in the same series is being delivered "rotor sail ready," further demonstrating Stena Line's commitment to wind propulsion.

Paul Grant, Route Director Stena Line said: "The arrival of Stena Futura in Belfast is a significant milestone in our 30-year association with the city. Stena Futura and sister vessel Stena Connecta represent an investment of over £100 million, highlighting our commitment to our Irish Sea network. The ships were commissioned in direct response to customer demand for an increase in freight capacity on our routes and we are delighted to see the first ship enter service."

"These vessels represent a crucial step in our broader sustainability journey. By integrating battery propulsion and shore power capabilities, we are making significant strides towards our goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 30% by 2030, reinforcing Stena Line's position as a leader in sustainable shipping."

Joe O'Neil, Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour said: "It is fantastic to welcome the Stena Futura to Belfast. We would like to congratulate Paul and the team at Stena Line on this significant milestone and welcome their commitment to sustainability in shipping. The whole team at Belfast Harbour is looking forward to seeing this state-of-the-art vessel entering service on one of our most important freight routes.

"Stena Line is a valued strategic partner and we are confident that there will be further opportunity for growth in freight volumes on the already successful Belfast-Heysham route following the introduction of the Stena Futura."

Phil Hall, Port Director at Peel Ports Group added: “The arrival of Stena Futura marks an exciting new era of sustainable, greener shipping across the Irish Sea. Our own investments to upgrade the Port of Heysham, alongside the long-standing and valued partnership with Stena Line, will enable an improved, more resilient, and environmentally responsible gateway for our customers.”

Stena Line is the largest ferry operator on the Irish Sea, with the biggest fleet providing up to 238 weekly sailings offering the widest choice of routes including: combined passenger and freight services from Belfast to Cairnryan and Liverpool, Dublin to Holyhead, Rosslare to Fishguard, in addition to the dedicated freight only routes from Belfast to Heysham and Dublin.

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**Stena Line** is one of Europe's leading ferry companies with approximately 40 vessels and 20 routes in Northern Europe and the Mediterranean Sea, operating 25,700 sailings each year. Stena Line is an important part of the European logistics network and develops new intermodal freight solutions by combining transport by rail, road and sea. Stena Line also plays an important role in tourism in Europe with its extensive passenger operations. The company is family-owned, was founded in 1962 and is headquartered in Gothenburg. Stena Line has 6,200 employees and an annual turnover of 19.5 billion SEK. For more information please visit [www.stenaline.com](http://www.stenaline.com)