

Ferry Company application to increase tolls / introduce new toll booth on Ferry Road

Studland Parish Council objects to the new application on the following grounds:

- Financially it is not necessary
- It is very detrimental and hostile to the residents of Studland, Swanage and other areas in the Isle of Purbeck:
 - It seeks to charge £6.26 for access to large areas of Studland that are within our Parish boundary: Shell Bay, Shell Bay restaurant, Poole harbour, the heath land. This will affect use of the NT car park at Shell Bay, have a detrimental impact on Shell Bay restaurant, charge residents exorbitant sums to residents to park throughout this large area, or to walk or cycle.
 - It seeks to greatly reduce the discounts for bulk users – local people who are dependent on the ferry for work, for medical access, for shopping, etc.
- The proposed tolls represent a huge inflationary increase: a 75% increase immediately for foot passengers and cyclists: from £1 to £1.75; a 18% increase for cars: from £5.30 to £6.26; and a 18% increase for larger passenger and good vehicles, from £10.60 to £12.52
- The current tolls are the ones that the Ferry Company applied for in their 2020 application, and that were awarded by the then inspector: these tolls were not imposed on the Ferry Company, but ones that they hired a very expensive QC to argue for

Studland Parish Council calls on the Ferry Company to withdraw this application.

Until the Ferry Company withdraws this application, SPC calls on Dorset Council, BCP, neighbouring Parish and Town Councils, the National Trust, the PTAG and all representative bodies, plus residents and employers, to object to the application.

While the application is particularly detrimental to residents in the Isle of Purbeck, it is also highly detrimental to residents in BCP: as well increases in tolls for cars by 18% (from £5.30 to £6.26), BCP foot passengers and cyclists will face an incredible 75% increase in tolls (from £1 to £1.75).

Financially the application is not necessary:

- The application shows, based on current tolls, a shortfall of only £350,000 in the Ferry Reserve Fund by 2034
- The Ferry Company has borrowing limits of £4.965m set by a 1986 Act of Parliament: this is the equivalent of £19m if adjusted for inflation by 2034. Rather than trying to extort higher tolls from ferry users, the Ferry Company should lobby to increase its borrowing requirement
- Any shortfall in monies needed for a replacement ferry are because the Ferry Company has consistently transferred money elsewhere within it's parent company: this was highlighted by the Inspector in 2018. The Ferry Company has been used as a cash cow by its parent organization

If this application is awarded, what is to stop the Ferry Company coming back in 3 years and asking for yet higher increases? The 2021 order was designed to provide certainty until 2034 by providing annual increases of up to 3%. Clearly this is not the case. Presumably even if a new order is given following this application, there is no binding obligation on the Ferry Company to provide a new ferry in 2034.

Nick Boulter, Chair of Studland Parish Council
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