PRESS RELEASE – 17TH APRIL 2020

SANDBANKS FERRY TO WITHDRAW SERVICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Service withdrawn following Government announcement on continued COVID-19 'lockdown'

The Sandbanks Ferry Company, which runs the chain ferry service between Studland and Poole, has announced that it will be withdrawing the service from Tuesday 21st April until further notice.

The Government-directed 'lockdown' in response to the current coronavirus health crisis has led to a significant reduction in ferry passenger numbers. It was announced on Thursday 16th April that this 'lockdown' would continue for at least three further weeks. As a result, it is no longer economically or environmentally viable to continue to run the ferry service during the coronavirus crisis.

The final crossing will be the 19.10 from Studland on Monday 20th April. Timings on the return of the ferry service will be provided in due course.

Mike Kean, Managing Director of the Sandbanks Ferry Company, said: "It is with great sadness that we have had to make the decision to withdraw the ferry service. We have been tirelessly exploring all avenues over recent weeks to try to secure financial support from central Government through this unprecedented time, but this has not been forthcoming, and we have had to make the very difficult decision today to withdraw the service. We were prepared to continue to operate at a financial loss to support key workers, but without greater support, this is no longer possible.

"While I know this will be difficult for the small number of key workers that are still using the service to get to work, I hope they will understand why this decision has been taken. We would like to thank them, and Dorset Council, for their support and understanding through this difficult time.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our staff who have worked fearlessly over the last month in jobs that by their nature involve close contact with colleagues and customers alike."

While the ferry is out of service, maintenance work will be carried out that where possible is intended to reduce the amount of time needed for the ferry refit later this year in November.

Mike Kean added: "We will continue to closely monitor the current situation and look at ways to return the ferry to service as soon as possible, when we look forward to welcoming our passengers back once it is safe for them and our staff to do so."

ENDS