

SANDBANKS FERRY PRESS RELEASE

PUBLIC INQUIRY: FAST FACTS

DECEMBER 2024

- The Public Inquiry to determine proposed price increases for The Sandbanks Ferry will begin at 10am on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at the Poole Harbour Commissioners Terminal North Lounge
- The Public Inquiry will run over six days, taking place on Tuesday 21st, Wednesday 22nd, Thursday 23rd, Friday 24th, Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th January 2025
- An evening session will be held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025 at 6:30pm in the Springfield Country Hotel in Wareham
- The Public Inquiry and evening session will be live streamed via YouTube and made available for subsequent viewing
- According to the Planning Inspectorate, objectors who have already indicated that they wish to speak will be able to do so in dedicated sessions related to the Public Inquiry. These sessions include the evening event at the Springfield Country Hotel on Wednesday 22nd January and provisionally, on Tuesday 28th January 2025
- On Tuesday 28th January 2025, the Ferry company will run a bus from Swanage (via Studland) to the Inquiry and back free of charge, for those wishing to speak
- The bus will leave Swanage at the Main Beach Car Park on Victoria Avenue at 8am (Studland Village Hall at 8:15am) and return (departing the Inquiry venue) at approximately 5:00pm
 - The bus is offered on a first come first served basis to those who contact the Ferry Company via community@sandbanksferry.co.uk to reserve a seat
- Each day of the Inquiry, the Ferry Company will provide free, one-way (Sandbanks to Shell Bay) car travel for anyone who has attended the Inquiry that day, and who provides their used parking ticket for the Poole Harbour Commissioners car park
- The Poole Harbour Commissioners Terminal North Lounge was chosen by the Ferry Company after a significant venue search across Poole, Bournemouth and the Isle of Purbeck
- The venue had to comply with extensive criteria set out by the government, including:

- Availability
- Size (with regards to sufficient seating for all who wish to attend, and an additional sizeable space for hosting the Inquiry proceedings)
- Accessibility
- Suitability for the purposes of the Inquiry.

All updates related to the Public Inquiry, including the YouTube streaming link, will be available to view at <https://www.hwa.uk.com/projects/bournemouth-swanage-toll-public-inquiry/>

PROPOSALS

Background

- The current Ferry, 'Bramble Bush Bay', will reach its 40th anniversary in 2034
- A replacement vessel is needed to ensure the Ferry service continues to operate safely and reliably
- The Ferry Replacement Reserve currently stands nearly £5 million
- The Ferry Company needs an estimated £18 million to fund a new Ferry, to be delivered in 2034 (taking into account predicted inflationary costs for materials and manufacturing)
- The new model will be a diesel electric vessel
- The current Ferry requires essential periodic maintenance and refits to ensure its safety and maximise service uptime (mechanical service uptime currently stands at over 99%)

2020/1 Inquiry

- The Sandbanks Ferry budgeted for 3% inflation every year in the 2020/1 Inquiry
- Various unforeseen circumstances have occurred since, including:
- Rising costs for maintenance and refits, which have increased by an average of 6.8% between 2018 and 2024, exceeding Consumer Price Index (CPI) average increases of 3.78% over the same period
- Increased statutory costs, including:

- Corporation Tax
- Employer's National Insurance contributions
- National Minimum Wage
- Poor weather in July and August 2022 and 2023, causing a significant drop in profitability

Proposed changes

1. Reintroduce the historic charge for the use of the Motor Road

The proposed toll would:

- Cost £6.26 per vehicle (in line with the cash toll charge for a car) for periods of up to 24 hours
- Cover the 2¼ mile Ferry Road from Shell Bay to the junction of Ferry Road & Hardys Road
- Be applicable from 1st April 2025
- Not be charged to:
 - Pedestrians and cyclists using the road
 - Vehicular traffic using the road to access other businesses or car parks
 - Vehicles that have paid (or pay) to use the ferry on the same day

Proposed road toll implementation:

- A 30-minute grace period would allow for short journeys on the road, including dropping off or collecting passengers
- There will be no pay and display machinery on the road, no new toll boxes, and no existing toll boxes will be moved
- Signage will be placed at either end of Ferry Road to alert road users to chargeable areas
- Users will be able to pay the road toll using an app
- An alternative payment method will be available for those who cannot access the technology (details TBC)
- ANPR cameras will identify vehicles using the Ferry, to ensure no incorrect charges are imposed on ferry or road users

- A mobile marshal will be responsible for enforcing the road toll and monitoring road users

2. Increase Ferry use tolls

Single charges

Group	Current toll	Proposed toll from 1 st April 2025 (followed by annual CPI inflation increases)
Pedestrian (one way from Shell Bay, Studland)	No charge	No charge
Pedestrian (travelling one way from Sandbanks)	£1	£1.75
Pedal or motorcycles (bikes)		
Passenger vehicle less than 16 persons (cars)	£5.30	£6.26
Goods vehicle less than 3,500 kg (vans)		
Passenger vehicles more than 16 persons (coaches & buses)	£10.60	£12.52
Goods vehicles 3,501 kg to 20,000 kg (trucks)		

3. Gradually reduce bulk ticket discounts

Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists

Package	Current discount	New proposed discount from 1st April 2025	New proposed discount by 2029	Previously proposed discount by 2029
Multiples of 50	10%	43.18%	24%	15%
Multiples of 100	15%	46.32%	28%	20%

Cars, goods vehicles, and buses

Package	Current discount	New proposed discount from 1st April 2025	New proposed discount by 2029	Previously proposed discount by 2029
Multiples of 10	28%	36.03%	24%	15%
Multiples of 50	32%	39.57%	28%	20%

THE FAIRACRES GROUP

- The Fairacres Group is a family-owned business run by the Kean family
- The Sandbanks Ferry is one of various businesses contributing to Fairacres Group's success
- Profits in the 2024 Financial Year exceeded £1.9 million, a quarter from the Ferry in a non-refit year
- The Sandbanks Ferry shareholders have not received a dividend since the 2018 Financial Year
- If the new application is approved, the first dividend is unlikely to be paid until 2031

FERRY REPLACEMENT RESERVE

- The Ferry Company will not distribute any dividends unless the Ferry Replacement Reserve is in surplus in any given year
- Any distribution of dividends will not exceed 6% of the net asset value of the Company

ENDS