

PRESS RELEASE

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Sandbanks Ferry introduces automated vehicle toll system ahead of summer

The Sandbanks Ferry will introduce Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology for all vehicle (including motorcycle) crossings from 1 July 2026, bringing a faster and simpler experience for passengers.

The new system uses ANPR cameras to automatically read Vehicle Registration Marks as vehicles approach the ferry; removing the need for barriers and for vehicles to stop. From this date, vehicle crossing payments in person by card, paper ticket, or by Sandbanks Ferry Toll Card (SFTC) will no longer be possible, and all vehicle toll payments will move online. The cost of crossings is unchanged.

Mike Kean, Chairman of The Sandbanks Ferry, said: "We recognise that the Ferry plays a critical role in the local community and is essential for the local economy. We are investing to make sure this business is fit for the future, and part of that means upgrading our systems to meet modern standards. Our current tolling provider is withdrawing service at the end of June, so this was absolutely the right moment to move to a faster, more capable system.

"We also know that at peak times, there can be congestion with vehicles queuing to pay. We are confident that this free-flowing traffic system will make a real and noticeable difference, getting people across the water faster and reducing pressure on local roads."

Customers can pay online at SandbanksFerry.co.uk/Pay, choosing from three options: pay after travel, buy tokens in advance, or regular users can set up an account, with discounts available for bulk purchases. SFTC account holders will need to set up a new ANPR account prior to 1 July 2026 before their Passes expire to travel, and any unused Passes will automatically be converted into ANPR Tokens. Paper tickets can be credited onto ANPR Accounts at the Ferry Office before 31 March 2027, where staff will be on hand to assist with the transition.

Toll prices are unchanged, and pedestrians and cyclists are not affected.

Mike added: "We know there will be a settling-in period and we want to make sure every passenger feels confident using the new system. Extra staff will be available on board and in the Ferry Office to help passengers through the change, and full step-by-step guidance is available on our website. Anyone with questions is very welcome to come and talk to us."

The payment website will be live prior to 1st July 2026, allowing passengers to set up accounts and familiarise themselves with the system in advance.

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