

Press release 08/03/19

On Tuesday 5 March, Mike Kean, a director and family owner of the Sandbanks Ferry Company, and Nick Purchase, ferry Operations Director met local residents and councillors (see list of attendees below) to discuss the future of the Sandbanks ferry.

The ferry is a vital link for communities on both sides of Poole Harbour.

Attendees acknowledged that, until recent events, the service had been reliable and consistent.

However, Mr Kean accepted that the last few months have been challenging as a result of a series of unexpected mechanical and other issues following the refit at the end of last year.

"I hope the worst is now behind us and, barring unforeseen circumstances, we can have the ferry fully operational on a timetable within a few weeks" said Mr Kean. "We intend to resume a full service as soon as possible, knowing how many people rely on the ferry and its importance to the communities it serves."

Attention at the meeting was focused on the long-term future of the ferry service. The ferry has a finite life and will need to be replaced in the not too distant future.

"We are exploring all the options to finance the cost of a new ferry" said Mr Kean. "It's too early to say exactly when the ferry will need to be replaced - we are working on that with our naval architects - but we are committed to finding a sustainable replacement solution that makes business sense."

Local Sandbanks councillor Mohan Iyengar said "We are pleased to be having constructive discussions with the ferry company about the future of the service. This is an important community asset that many people depend on. We want to ensure a reliable, reasonably priced ferry service which is financed on a long-term sustainable basis."

Gary Suttle, Leader of Purbeck District Council said "Many people from our side of Poole Harbour have livelihoods and businesses that depend on a reliable ferry service. We are concerned by the recent interruptions to service. However, we recognise the company's commitment to restoring full service as soon as possible. We also recognise the longer-term challenge of ensuring an enduring service on a sustainable basis at a reasonable cost. We are committed to working with the ferry company to find workable solutions."

Attendees at the 5 March meeting:

Mohan Iyengar, Councillor Canford Cliffs Ward, Borough of Poole
David Morley, Chairman Sandbanks Community Group
Matt Moffat, Sandbanks Community Group – Committee Member
Gary Suttle, Leader of Purbeck District Council
Martin Ayres, Chief Executive Swanage Town Council
Nick Boulter, Councillor Studland Parish Council
Philip Eades, Councillor Branksome West Ward, Borough of Poole
Steve Clarke, Councillor Corfe Castle Parish Council
Mike Lovell, Councillor Langton Maltravers Parish Council