

From: Nick [mailto:njmmboulter@btinternet.com]

Sent: 17 April 2020 11:29

To: NATIONALCASEWORK <NATIONALCASEWORK@dft.gov.uk>

Subject: Objection to proposed toll increase: Bournemouth - Swanage ferry: FAO of Sandra Zamenzadeh

Dear Sandra,

Whilst I have sent you an objection on behalf of Studland Parish Council, I also wish to submit an objection as a resident.

I have lived in Studland for 14 years, and am a regular user of the ferry. The ferry is an essential part of our life living in Studland: without it, we have to drive lengthy distances through Wareham to reach Poole and Bournemouth.

I have 3 main objections:

My first objection to the proposed toll increase is that the Ferry Company is already very profitable, and pays very high dividends to its Directors. The profitability – forecasted to rise to 36% - is very high by any standards, and more than sufficient to meet all the business needs to the Ferry Company is running a safe ferry.

My second objection is that the Ferry Company always seeks to justify toll increases by saying it needs the extra money to build up the Ferry Reserve Fund – to buy a new ferry. But this “fund” is now no higher than it was 10 years ago. The Inspector at the 2018 inquiry said he had no confidence that the Ferry Company has the method / process to build a fund, and so he rejected their claim for a toll increase. There is no difference in this claim. The reserve fund must be a proper escrow account or a trust fund with independent oversight – otherwise the Ferry Company will continue to do what it has done for the last 10 years: use the “reserves” as cash balances to fund other operational needs – often in the wider Fairacres Group.

My third objection is that the “discounts” for local residents are insufficient: with other operators – such as the Dartford Crossing – residents can get unlimited use for £20 a year. Such a scheme should be implemented here for Studland residents. While the details of this are being worked out, the current bulk purchase through the Sandbanks Ferry Ticket Card system should be extended indefinitely at today's prices.

My hope is that the DfT will reject this proposal for a toll increase in that it does not answer the reservations made by the inspector to the 2018 inquiry, and because the Ferry Company is already extremely profitable.

Thanks,

Nick Boulter

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