

**Speaking Notes to Public Enquiry into Bournemouth Swanage Motor Road Fare Increase**  
**Corfe Castle Parish Council**

I am Stephen Dru Drury and I am Vice Chair of the Corfe Castle Parish Council. I have been authorized by the council to attend this enquiry and represent their views.

First of all let me say that the Corfe Castle Parish Council supports the approach taken by the consortium and is happy to be considered as a supporter of their alternative proposal as presented and amended.

We are also pleased to see that the company in their response to the consortium's proposal have taken a green approach by undertaking to investigate alternative methods of propulsion and freezing the charges for pedestrians and cyclists as well as improving the discounts on pre purchased tickets.

The basis of Corfe Castle's objection is firstly that the fare increase is excessive in the early years although this has been levelled out in the later alternative submissions. We are concerned that a reasonably large increase in fares will cause drivers to increasingly cease using the ferry and get to Studland and Swanage by using alternative routes including the A351. I will expand a bit on the points made by Mr Parsons earlier.

We have already been shown figures at page 159 of volume 1 part 3 that it is clear that crossings by cars are reducing. There appears to be no evidence that this is linked to fare increases, but it is clearly happening. At the same time tourism to Purbeck is not reducing so the additional travel must be by road. We have also heard from the Pig hotel about their concerns about the negative impact of a large fare increase on their staff and customers; in addition we have been told by representatives of Studland PC – Mr Boulter and Mr Stobart - that their residents would use alternative routes in the event of a large price increase. Although 2020 has not been a typical year we have definitely seen an increased level of traffic through Corfe Castle.

If I may I would just like to draw your attention to some geography about the Isle of Purbeck. There are only two routes into Swanage, which, of course, is a major tourist destination; the first is the route via the ferry which we are currently considering and the second is to use the A351 which passes directly through Corfe Castle. Corfe Castle is a village with a population of some 800. The village is very picturesque and a substantial part of it, about two thirds, is a conservation area; it also lies within an AONB. The village receives around 300,000 visitors a year, many of them coming to visit the castle which is a national monument and is managed by the National Trust.

The main road which carries all traffic to Swanage including tourist traffic, local and residential traffic together with large delivery lorries, busses and up to 70 movements a day each way with lorries carrying stone from the quarries which all lie to the south of Corfe. The road has a clear choke point in the middle of the village where it turns at nearly 90° on the edge of the square. This road is already under extremely heavy usage and during the Covid crisis this year when the ferry was shut the A351 was subject to many substantial traffic jams and delays. This has a serious effect on the local economy as Purbeck needs to bring in staff often to lower paid work in the tourist industry. People from Purbeck also travel to work in the Bournemouth and Poole area using the ferry.

Our concern is that increased ferry prices will drive more people onto this alternative route and that additional use of the A351 will cause even more congestion on the narrow road where it passes through Corfe.

We accept that there is a clear need to replace the existing ferry at some point in the near future, but we hold that any ferry replacement reserve should be ring-fenced so that it cannot be used for any other purpose. Again we support the other councils who have already talked at this enquiry about this ring fence. I would also point out that the parish of Corfe Castle has within it the largest onshore oil field in Europe at the Wytch Oil Farm and collecting station. The operating company, Perenco, has a commitment to return the site to its original state when they finish extracting oil around 2038. I understand they have set up a ring fenced account to enable this to be done even if the company goes out of business or is sold. It might be possible for someone to investigate how this is done as it might be applicable to the discussions here.

We also support the proposal that there should be a green method of propulsion for any new ferry that is procured in the future and are pleased that the company will investigate new technologies as they become available.

On a final point, we are disappointed that Mr Kean told the enquiry that there were no plans for the new card system to be able to be used on a shared basis between friends and family. Tickets can be freely shared so not to also allow this for use of the card is a step backwards.