

PRESS RELEASE
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SANDBANKS FERRY PASSENGERS DIG DEEP FOR DORSET MIND

Sandbanks Ferry passengers dug deep at Christmas to raise almost £1,800 for Dorset Mind, which has continued to provide vital support services in the county at a time when the pandemic has put extra pressure on many people's wellbeing.

Employees of the Ferry Company nominated [Dorset Mind](#) as their 2021 annual charity partner. To kick-start the partnership, the Sandbanks Ferry Company offered free travel to all passengers on Christmas Day, following the success of the initiative in 2019 for their previous charity partner, Forest Holme Hospice.

Passengers who wished to could choose to donate their toll fee to Dorset Mind via collection boxes on board the ferry on Christmas Day. This collection raised a total of £1,793.65, which has now been given to Dorset Mind - in a COVID-safe way.

These funds could pay for a term-long school mental health education programme, reaching up to 2,500 young people, parents, and teachers.

Commenting on the final total, Marianne Storey, CEO of Dorset Mind said: "We're very grateful to the Sandbanks Ferry staff for collecting and raising donations, this year in particular when finding funding for charities is very uncertain and so planning for the future is difficult.

"This donation will help local people in many ways: we could deliver a whole-school programme of education and wellbeing support that positively impacts a young person's ability to develop life skills. We could deliver an education campaign that teaches young people about how to differentiate between normal emotions and mental ill health - and how and where to find life-changing support if needed. It could pay for someone experiencing distress to attend counselling or receive weekly check-ins from our team of volunteers; we could help parents struggling to find ways to talk to their children by running an informative wellbeing workshop; we could support teachers to focus on their mental health, that in turn enables them to effectively deliver their lessons; or we could empower young people to become peer supporters or ambassadors to support each other.

"There are so many ways in which this money could help - without donations like these, we simply can't do what we do."

Jason du Toit, General Manager of the Sandbanks Ferry, added: "We are so pleased that so many of our Christmas day passengers were able to give generously for Dorset Mind, helping to raise an incredible amount at a time when the support the charity provides is needed more than ever.

"We are looking forward to continuing our support for Dorset Mind throughout the year as we all slowly return to normal life following the end of the current COVID-19 lockdown."

Dorset Mind, a local mental health charity, educates, challenges mental health stigma and inequality, and promotes recovery by empowering individuals to develop resilience. The charity provides a wide range of services including befriending, counselling, mentoring and support groups for adults and young people.

The Sandbanks Ferry is partnering with Dorset Mind throughout 2021 to help raise much needed funds and awareness of the charity among Ferry passengers and staff. The Ferry Company will be providing Dorset Mind with free on-board advertising space and Dorset Mind will also be collecting donations during key weeks of the year (restrictions permitting), such as Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2021.

The Sandbanks Ferry is running a daily service from 7.00am to 9.00pm until 31st March 2021. From 1st April onwards, the ferry will return to full normal operating hours from 7am to 11.10pm. Further timetable information can be found at: <http://www.sandbanksferry.co.uk/timetable.php>.

Visit the Sandbanks Ferry Company at www.sandbanksferry.co.uk, on Twitter @sandbanksferry and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sandbanksferry .

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Notes to editors

1. **About the Sandbanks Ferry Company:** The Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company, known as the Sandbanks Ferry Company, was established in 1923 to run a chain ferry service between Sandbanks in Poole and Shell Bay in Studland, near Swanage. The Sandbanks Ferry Company has been in the same family ownership since 1983 and is headed up by managing director, Mike Kean.

The present ferry, 'Bramble Bush Bay' came into service in January 1994 and is the fourth ferry to operate this service. 'Bramble Bush Bay' is 242 feet in length and has a nominal capacity of 48 cars.

2. **About Dorset Mind:** Dorset Mind charity educates, challenges mental health stigma and inequality, and promotes recovery by empowering individuals to develop resilience. Their 1-2-1 and group support includes counselling, mentoring, support groups, active monitoring, and an accredited befriending service. These all help people regain social skills and confidence. The charity also delivers educational wellbeing programmes for schools and workplaces and provide volunteer opportunities across all areas of the organisation. For more details, see dorsetmind.uk.

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