

The Parish Council's response to Geoff Weir's letter to the Bulletin

The Whitchurch Parish Council strongly object to the recent increase in the concessionary toll fee to 20p.

The Inspector's report correctly records the undertaking of the WBC, which they put in writing after the inquiry, not to increase the toll beyond 20p before 1/1/13.

The Inspectors made the following comments in his report

"it will be possible to reduce the impact on regular users by only gradually increasing the concessionary toll to a level of 20p by 2012"

" Furthermore the company proposes a gradual increase in the concessionary tolls charged"

" While the Company retains some flexibility in determining its revenue through its control of the concessionary element of the tolls, it has made significant commitments on the discount".

The WBC has raised the card toll to 20p within a year of the Inquiry and offered frequent users a toll discount which we suspect no one will take up as few people can use the bridge often enough to justify this. We would be grateful if you could supply us with your figures which show how many people use the bridge often enough to benefit from this.

The excuse given for increasing the toll to 20p now is the delay caused by the public inquiry in introducing the 40p toll. This is unacceptable as you knew perfectly well that a public inquiry was likely to be held - an inquiry has to be held if there are objections, and WPC was not only perfectly entitled but effectively obliged to object given the feelings in the village. WBC should therefore have anticipated this and made the application for the toll increase sooner than they did.

The WBC should not have made an undertaking at the Inquiry that the very existence of the Inquiry itself made it impossible to grant due to WBC having to pay for the Inquiry. The WBC must have known at the time that they made the undertaking that they would be unable to abide by it.