



Harwich Harbour Ferry Grant report for 2024 season

Thankyou again for your ongoing support of the ferry service. As you know the ferry plays a crucial role in local transport, providing essential connectivity for residents, visitors and businesses in the region.

2024 season was a good season with a steady but plateaued footfall, but we are feeling the pressure of inflation and cost increases in the last decade, in particular the last two or three years have hit us strong. We really want to widen our marketing capabilities to fill out the ferry in the non school holidays.

We have provided necessary skipper training programmes to our staff in 2024 of over £4000. This year we are training up a new skipper. Your grant of £1000 was a great contribution to one of the training courses they attended at an excellent Maritime and Sea School in Southampton in March. It paid for their Boat Master Preparation Course! What makes this all the more worthy, was this trainee struggled in school and wasn't able to take their GCSE's but now they are well on their way to being a skilled skipper, with qualifications under their belt.

We hadn't raised fares for a number of years because we knew how it would affect our customers, but inflation is affecting how much we can put back into the service. It is a continual surprise to us how many local Colchester and Ipswich people have never heard of the ferry. We hear this daily.

For this reason, we are desperate to put more into marketing so this service can reach its potential at connecting more people between Essex and Suffolk. With a potential increase in passenger numbers through a well needed marketing campaign, we could cushion the effects of cost increases.

We have had to effectively put the business into austerity in the last 3 years and cut back on things which are desperately needed, such as marketing and staffing, to take the strain off. We don't want to stall and stunt the service; we want to invest in marketing, people training and vessel, to push it forward.

Last season was our 10th year operating the ferry service, and since we took the ferry on 10 years ago, we have experienced a significant increase in costs. From fuel, insurance, crew costs, maintenance costs and everything in between.

- Overall costs increase due to inflated maintenance/parts, fuel, labour (£7000 in 2015 up to £160,000 costs in the last few years)
- Insurance hikes, from £1500 in 2015, creeping up year on year to over £9000 annually.
- Maintenance costs form £6000 to over £25000 annually.

The councils face financial pressures in all sectors, so for this reason Felixstowe's grant of £1000 is a very appreciated and vital contribution.

We are currently looking at ways to finance a very much needed, new website. We feel the current website isn't user friendly and doesn't portray how fun a trip on the ferry is.

We are excited to start the 2025 season (loyal local residents endearingly call the summer "The ferry season") and hope for good weather and to see lots of happy customers again.

Much Appreciated

Lucy Zemann

Harwich harbour Ferry Services Ltd.