

Report received from Harwich Harbour Ferry Service July 2020

The Ferry is plodding along and we keep going as good as we can. Our license for the Ferry expires every year in March and this year the lock down started on the day of my appointment with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyor.

This meant we were forced to be shut until 16.May.2020 when we finally managed to get a special short term certificate to allow us to operate for three months.

Since 16.05.2020 the Ferry is operational. The footfall in June was small and we reduced the Service to Friday to Monday only. From 01.07.2020 we operate 7 days a week. Unfortunately the Ferry is operating on a loss. Hopefully with the new social distancing rules our trade will pick up.

Today I had a meeting with HHA about the shallow water in front of Felixstowe beach. The water depth in low tide was 8 years ago minus 12 meter, the same spot today is plus 0,1 meter. In a very short time it has filled up with a huge amount of mud. Our little Ferry has a low draught but still does run aground in low water about 40 meters away from the beach.

For the time being the ferry is unable to operate in low water. We have tried it and damaged some parts of the engines cooling system which relies on constant seawater flow from underneath the boat.

John Brian from HHA agreed to deepen a V shape approach for the ferry with a dredger. This will be in front of the green kiosk on the car park of land guard point.

The dredger is back at the end of August when they try to help to clear a path. Because the dredger is coming to Harwich for the Shipping channel anyway the cost of dredging will be "only" £500 per hour and HHA has offered to pay 2 hours of dredging.

The experts from HHA told me that they are in doubt that this will work for the Ferry for the long term. The mud will rise and it will get worse every season until the dredger is unable to access the shallow water. It is now time to think about a solution otherwise the ferry service will be history within the next 2 to 3 years.

Solution: The council helps to make sure that the port of Felixstowe erects the promised Ferry berth or the council provides a Ferry berth.

Figures 2020

April total passengers 0

May total passengers 693

June total passengers 1259

Figures 2019

April 3983

May 3594

June 3713

At our last meeting I promised our accounts for 2019 which is now finished and filed. Please see attached the 2019 accounts.