

Proposed Tamar Tag Admin Fee Increase Explained, and How to Contribute Your Views

Tamar Crossings is today providing further information about the proposed increase to the Tamar Tag administration fee, following significant public interest and concern

As part of the wider 2025/26 Tamar Crossings budget, the Joint Committee received a proposal for increasing the Tamar Tag admin fee from £0.80 to £2.00 per month. The budget proposal has received initial approval from the Joint Committee; it will now go forward to Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council for final consideration and approval.

We understand that many local people are concerned about the prospect of any increase. Tamar Crossings is committed to being transparent about why this change has been proposed, what the fee pays for, and how the public can continue to influence the decision.

This proposal is part of a democratic process, and members of the public are encouraged to share their views with their elected council representatives before a final decision is made. We welcome feedback and want residents to feel informed and heard throughout this process.

Why is an increase being proposed?

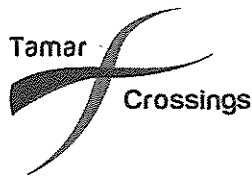
The Tamar Tag admin fee has remained at £0.80 per month since 2014, despite significant rises in the costs of running the scheme. After more than a decade of this fee, the current rate is no longer viable.

Even with the proposed increase to £2.00 per month, the fee still does not cover the full cost of operating the Tamar Tag scheme.

Some of the costs the admin fee helps cover include:

Tag equipment and postage:

Around £250,000 per year is required for new tags and holders, which are provided free of charge to new account holders. An additional £50,000 per year is spent on postage, including for customers unable to collect tags in person.

**Customer support staff at the crossing:**

Providing in-person assistance when customers experience issues with their tags or account balance.

Customer service teams:

Setting up and maintaining more than 90,000 Tamar Tags, processing applications, helping with top-ups, and responding to queries.

Digital systems and banking charges:

Maintaining the online Tamar Tag system, web hosting, licensing, and payment processing costs.

Replacement tags:

A significant number of tags are not returned when no longer needed. Returned tags can be wiped and reused; unreturned tags mean new units must be purchased, adding to overall costs.

We also want to address a common misconception; the Tamar Tag admin fee is not profit-making. It is designed solely to help recover part of the cost of running the tag system. Tamar Crossings does not make a profit from this fee.

Supporting local residents

We recognise the essential role of the crossings in everyday life for thousands of local people. Tamar Tag users currently receive a 50% reduction on the price of toll crossings – far higher than comparable schemes at other crossings:

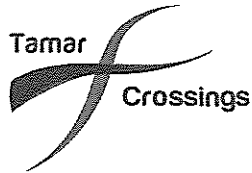
Humber Bridge: 10% discount for tag users

Dartford Crossing: 20% discount for tag users

We continue to offer a significantly greater reduction because we understand the importance of supporting regular local users.

Commitment to achieving toll-free crossings

The Joint Committee remains committed to pursuing a toll-free future for the Tamar Crossings. However, this is a complex and lengthy legislative process that will take time. In the meantime, we must ensure the service remains safe, reliable, and financially sustainable.



Quotes:

Philip Robinson, Chief Officer, Tamar Crossings:

"I remain committed to driving down the operating costs of the Tamar Crossings, where it is safe and compliant to do so. This requires greater transparency with those who rely on the crossing each day. Part of this process is ensuring that services are self-funding, which the tag system is not and has effectively been making a loss."

Councillor Anne Freeman, Joint Committee Co-Chair:

"Whilst it is disappointing that the TAG admin fee needs to be increased, the cost of running the scheme must be covered. We recognise that this is concerning, especially coming so soon after the Toll increase earlier this year. Plymouth and Cornwall Joint Committee members are committed to pursuing what we believe to be the right course of action, which is Toll Free crossing. We are working alongside MP's and Parent Authorities with regards to this. We are also exploring all options to look at reducing costs and how income can be maximised from other sources (not the Toll). We face a critical year ahead with recent changes to the Joint Committee, returning a balanced budget to both Parent Authorities and exploring Open Road Tolling further. Our Joint Committee is firmly behind our direction of being more open and transparent and we will be ensuring that meaningful engagement is undertaken with Stakeholders, local groups, Crossing users and the local Town Councils"

Councillor Andrew Long, Joint Committee Co-Chair:

"I am disappointed that Tamar Crossings are having to increase the Administration Fee for Tag Users. At a time when everyone is suffering from increased costs, this disproportionately adversely affects people from South East Cornwall, many of whom have no alternative but to use the Ferry and Bridge to access vital services in Plymouth. It remains the view of the Committee that the only long-term solution to this is to get a Toll Free crossing of the Tamar and we are pushing for the two authorities, the MPs and the UK Government to get a solution in place as soon as possible.

In addition, we are acutely aware that some of the worst affected are people who only use the Tag to access the hospital at Derriford and in the New Year we will be asking Tamar Crossings to see what can be done to support these people who should be able to access the NHS without a charge but this is currently not the case.



Finally, we will be working with the officers to continue to drill down on costs to run both services and, at the same time, explore other areas of revenue earning that do not penalise the users of the service.”

ENDS

Notes to editor:

The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee is a local government committee formed by five councillors from each of the two Joint Authorities, Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council. A special coalition between these two authorities began in 1950, when together they constructed a bridge across the lower reaches of the Tamar to secure the prosperity of the region. The Joint Authorities also took the opportunity to acquire joint possession of the Torpoint Ferry, at the time owned solely by Cornwall County Council, putting the control of these two vital local crossings of the Tamar together under the control of one governing body.

The Visitor and Learning Centre, Bridging the Tamar, opened in 2019 and showcases the heritage of both the 20th century Tamar Bridge and Brunel’s iconic 19th century Royal Albert Bridge.

The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry remain critical components of the region’s transport infrastructure helping to safeguard the economic wellbeing of Plymouth and South East Cornwall.

All marketing queries to be directed to: katherine.peberdy@tamarcrossings.org.uk

Marketing images can be downloaded here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YH-0Cjmgvq4QoFDDCQkegeN0R-pGydBH?usp=drive_link