

ANNA GELDERD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1 0AA

**Anna Gelderd MP Tamar Tolls Public Inquiry Statement 15/10/2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the following statement on an issue that deeply affects the people and businesses of South East Cornwall.

The Tamar crossings (the bridge and ferry services) are essential infrastructure, connecting Cornwall to the rest of the UK and providing a crucial link for our communities, our families, and our local businesses. As the crossings are frequented by millions of travellers annually, it is key that the upkeep and future upgrades are carefully considered.

However, the current toll structure presents significant challenges for many local residents due to the unique economic and geographic position of South East Cornwall. Residents often face unavoidable setbacks due to their reliance on the crossings for work, education, and healthcare.

Whilst we are Cornish, our access to vital services often requires the use of the Tamar crossings and paying the toll. The TamarTag system does provide a discounted rate. However, the fact remains that it is South East Cornwall residents who rely most heavily on the bridge and ferry, and therefore, shoulder the greatest proportion of the toll cost.

As South East Cornwall's MP, I created an impartial survey to collect the views of local residents and businesses on the impact and financial burden of the current Tamar tolls, as well as the proposed rise. Having received almost 900 responses, it is clear there is a strong sentiment of dissatisfaction and frustration among constituents and businesses, who feel disproportionately impacted by the toll charges, which also act as a barrier to accessing healthcare, business operations, and daily commuting.

Residents who have no alternative but to use the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry find this a significant financial burden, with over 75% estimating that they spend between £100 and £500 a year on this aspect of their travel costs. For those on lower incomes or with essential travel needs, the tolls present an additional strain on already stretched budgets. This is especially true in Cornwall, where median incomes are around 20% lower than the national average.

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I urge the inquiry to carefully consider the broader economic and social implications of these tolls on local residents and businesses. Greater transparency around toll revenue is essential, particularly for a constituency that relies on this infrastructure while bearing a disproportionate financial burden. I also recognise the need to maintain services and it is vital that we do not cut the Torpoint Ferry services. Our infrastructure must serve the needs of all our residents, not just those who can afford it.

The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry are not just crossings, but an essential lifeline for South East Cornwall. I object to the upcoming toll rise and will continue to work with all stakeholders toward long-term change that ensures residents on the Cornish side of the Tamar are not disadvantaged financially or geographically.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna".

**Anna Gelderd**

Labour MP for South East Cornwall

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