



fair telecoms campaign

open message



**To: Bournemouth Borough Council (cc: Bournemouth Echo)
Retention of fee for telephone access to Tourist Information**

to: [Jon Weaver, Head of Resort Marketing and Events, Bournemouth Borough Council](#);
[Chris Saunders, Seafront & Business Development Manager, Bournemouth Borough Council](#)

cc: [Andy Martin, Head of News, Bournemouth Echo](#);
[Melanie Vass, Bournemouth Echo](#)

Jon / Chris

Retention of fee for telephone access to Tourist Information

I was very disturbed on reading the **Bournemouth Echo** article "[Bournemouth's new tourist signs need changing AGAIN - because they don't comply with new rules on 0845 numbers](#)".

The cost you incur in providing telephone access to the **Bournemouth Tourist Information Centre on 0845 051 1700** is subsidised at the rate of 2p per minute by all callers.

New **Ofcom** rules will require this "**Service Charge**" to be declared with effect from 1 July.

Callers to this type of number also pay an "**Access Charge**" to their telephone company.

These rates will have to be simplified and declared separately under the new arrangements.

They currently range from zero to around 40p per minute and will probably remain at around the same levels.

The **fair telecoms campaign** has been instrumental in pressing for these new rules and supporting their implementation. They not only make the situation clearer to callers, but also **compel providers of services accessed by telephone to think about what they are doing**.

You will know by how much the (ex-VAT) value of this subsidy offsets the cost to residents and businesses of providing the Tourist Information Centre services.

I trust you have also assessed the impact on tourists of the consequent effect of a total charge of up to around 42p per minute, which is incurred by callers.

It is however for the Council that will be elected next Thursday to answer for a decision to perhaps continue to follow the advice you provided to its predecessor.

Bournemouth Echo readers may be interested to know how a decision to retain this charge for accessing Tourist Information formed part of the recommendations that were endorsed by the **Economy and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Panel** on 17 December 2014 (see [minutes](#)).

Chris is quoted in the article as confirming, "*We are aware of the new ruling from Ofcom ...*", so this was clearly an informed and deliberate decision.

I wonder if the new Council will be happy to confirm a decision to continue to impose its own additional telephone **Service Charge** on tourists!

David Hickson



Sunday, 3 May 2015