

Response from Mr Gilbert Forbes
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Firstly, I must state my general opposition to the continuation of toll bridges on the East Coast of Scotland. For 40 years, while living in Aberdeenshire, Fife, Edinburgh and Livingston I have faced the cost and congestion involved in tolls while travelling up and down the East Coast of Scotland.

I believe the supposed basis for charging is that people will pay for the convenience of avoiding time consuming detours. That argument was always weak and has been well and truly sunk by the suicide threat on Edinburgh's North Bridge. This caused the closure of the bridge and massive disruption - with lengthy delays and detours. To reinforce my point, Edinburgh's bridges are presumably considered short and of little benefit - but what if they were all closed? By this I include North and South Bridge, Waverley Bridge, George IVth Bridge, the railway bridge over New Street and all the multitude of other bridges. This also includes all the flyovers on the ring road.

Quite simply Edinburgh could not function without bridges, yet tolls are not charged. Further, the Scottish Office/ Executive happily builds more bridges to service the M8/M9 junction, the M90 interchanges at Perth, the Friarton Bridge, the Forfar junction on the A90, etc. - all without tolls. (I do not disagree that they were needed but they are all major works).

Secondly, if we have to continue with tolls, they should only be used for the direct maintenance of the bridges. They certainly should not be used for massive reworking of the toll booths as are proposed for the Tay and Forth Bridges.