

Train Ticket increases between Tonbridge and London

Tonbridge Line Commuters is very concerned by the increasing costs of train travel between London and Tonbridge. Since 2007 the cost of an annual season ticket between Tonbridge and London has increased by 35%, when the RPI has increased by only 14%. A season ticket now costs £3408 which for many people is their greatest annual expense. Increasing rail costs could have a severe impact on the Tonbridge economy as this may deter tourism and inward investment from other parts of the UK.

Most people believe that season tickets and other “protected fares” are limited to increases of “RPI + 3%”. However, this is NOT the case. This figure corresponds to the allowable increase in overall ticket revenue from a “basket of fares”. Therefore if less people travel by train, the Department for Transport allows the train operator to increase fares by more than “RPI + 3%” to make up for this revenue shortfall and to reduce the subsidy it pays. The increase of an individual ticket is actually limited to “RPI + 3% + 5%” – i.e. “RPI + 8%”.

- **RPI + 3%: Limit of increase of OVERALL REVENUE**
- **RPI + 8%: Limit of increase on any SEASON TICKET and PROTECTED FARE**

This explains why season tickets have increased so much above inflation in recent years. For further information please read the excellent publication by Sevenoaks Rail Travellers’ Association

<http://www.srta.org.uk/Why%20have%20fares%20increased%20so%20much.htm>

If season tickets continue to increase at the present rate, then in 2014 a season ticket will cost GBP4788. This will likely damage the Tonbridge economy

year	Tonbridge to London annual season ticket cost GBP	RPI in July	RPI of previous July	normalised Tonbridge season ticket price	normalised RPI of previous July
1995	1864	149.1			
1996	1928	152.4	149.1	100	100
1997	1964	157.5	152.4	102	102
1998	2072	163	157.5	107	106
1999	2104	165.1	163.0	109	109
2000	2180	170.5	165.1	113	111
2001	2200	173.3	170.5	114	114
2002	2200	175.9	173.3	114	116
2003	2240	181.3	175.9	116	118
2004	2312	186.8	181.3	120	122
2005	2364	192.2	186.8	123	125
2006	2436	198.5	192.2	126	129
2007	2532	206.1	198.5	131	133
2008	2740	216.5	206.1	142	138
2009	3000	213.4	216.5	156	145
2010	3048	223.6	213.4	158	143
2011	3408	234.7	223.6	177	150
2012***	3817*		234.8*	198	157
2013***	4275*		246.5*	222	165
2014***	4788*		258.8*	248	174

Table 1 – Table showing Season ticket prices between Tonbridge and London and the RPI over the same period. RPI data from the Office for National Statistics.

*** Estimated values: It is assumed that RPI will be 5%, and that falling overall revenue will result in fare increases of RPI + 8% - i.e. 13%.



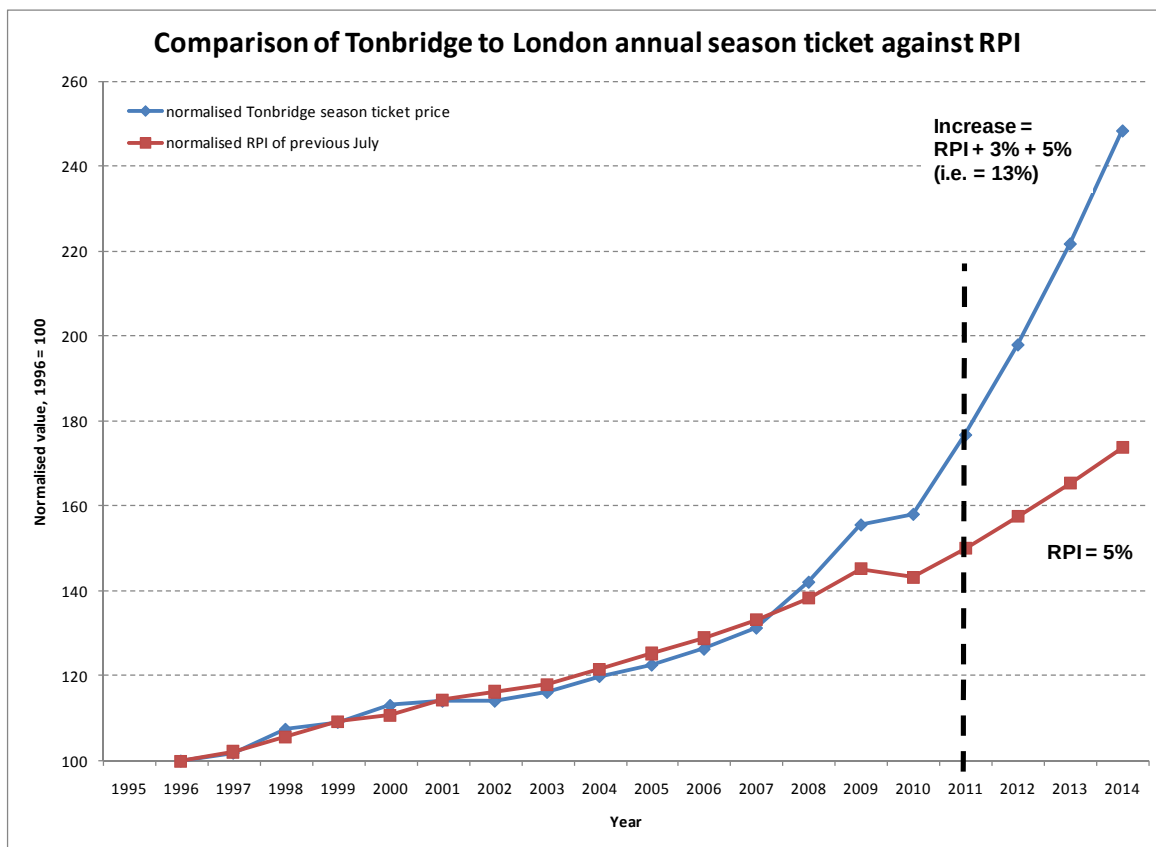


Figure 1 – Graph showing how season ticket prices have risen far higher than RPI since 2007

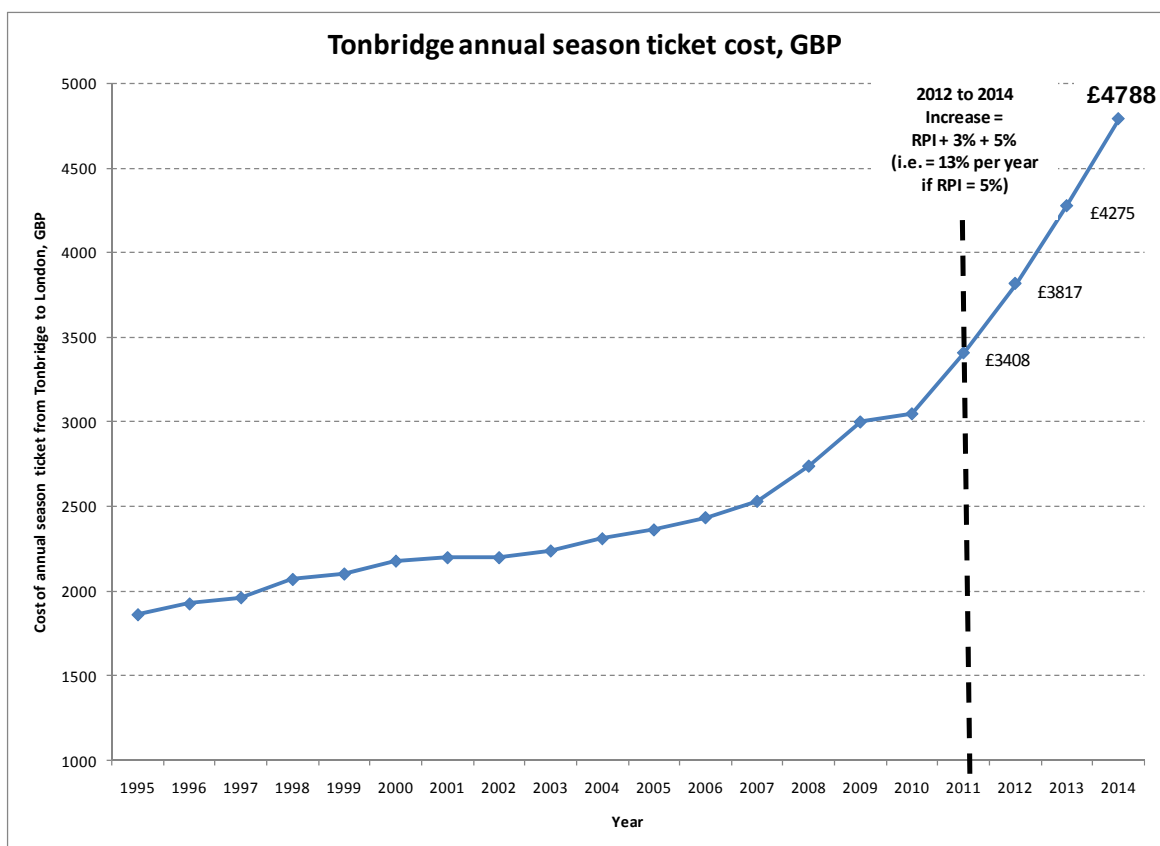


Figure 2 – Graph showing season ticket prices from Tonbridge to London. At the present rate, in 2014 a season ticket will cost GBP4788 per year. This could severely impact the Tonbridge economy.

