

Drivers and Operators Forum

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Minutes: Meeting - 8th September 2015 at Riverside House

		Action
1.	<p>ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES.</p> <p>Present: Marianne Rolfe, Rachael Russell, Amit Sidhu, Phil Court, A Rafiq, Simon Brook, Chand Mubarak, Maid Ali, Pritpal Bains, Alan Lewis</p> <p>Apologies: Sgt. Pittam, PC Ward</p> <p>Richard Weare and PC Mann have retired from the committee. Thank you for your contributions to the committee.</p>	
2.	<p>PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES</p> <p>Agreed</p>	
3.	<p>NOMINATED GARAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five applications were received during the tender process. Two were not suitable.• There is one vacant garage position, this will now remain vacant until the next tender process.• Three nominated garages are Tyreman, HM Bryan and Gas Guzzlers.• Be aware the prices are different between these garages.	
4.	<p>DISABILITY AWARENESS COURSE PROVIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tendering process took place for the Disability Awareness Course. Current course provider Guide Dogs for the Blind were successful. The course will now include dementia training so all driver's will be Dementia Friend qualified. There will be a small increase in course fee. Confirmation of price to follow.• Two drivers have recently had their renewal applications refused due to them not taking the Disability Awareness Course as per the condition on their application. Will continue to refuse any renewal applications that have not met this condition.• Letters are sent out to drivers before each course, Licensing have also write to drivers. Suggestion from operators that if they are known to be working for an operator then to contact their employer who can chase up driver.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who have not attended course within 12 months of obtaining licence will be attending L&R committee hearing to explain their reasons for not attending. 	
5.	<p>UNMET DEMAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A provider has been nominated following a successful tendering process. Following the agreement in the petition to pay the cost - It is proposed that the vehicle licence fees will be split in to separate Private Hire and Hackney Carriage in order for the survey fee to be passed on to Hackney Carriage's only. A survey will be sent to all driver's and PH operators. Please can these be completed and sent back, the more information received the more accurate the survey results will be. The survey will begin to be undertaken over the coming weeks which is a lot sooner than originally anticipated. However please be aware this is a long process. Once the survey is completed the results will need to be analysed before a report can be written. This report then needs to be presented to the L&R Committee and then the Executive Committee so please be patient. 	
6.	<p>DEREGULATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice has suggested that Private Hire Operators are issued for five years. This is a big increase with the effect being a significant increase in the operators fee. PC suggested that five years was too long. MR suggested three years that was on par with driver badges and DBS. AR suggested offering operators a choice of three years or five years. however MR believed that Cllrs would only like one or the other. Following discussion the Forum agreed that a three year operator's licence would be acceptable. Any new Fee's will come into force on 1st January 2016. Once fees have been approved these will be advertised. 	
6a	<p>NEW ONLINE DBS PROCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online DBS is to be introduced. This will save officers and drivers time and allow the application process to become more efficient. Renewal documents for January 2016 renewals will be sent out once the new fees have been agreed and these will include online DBS instructions. As of January 2016 the DBS process will only be able to be completed online. Once the online DBS has been verified by officers and sent, 	

	<p>Licensing will receive an email within two working days to state if DBS is 'clean' or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the DBS is clean then the application will be processed. The DBS certificate will still need to be bought in but this can be done when the driver collects their badge. • If the DBS is not clean then the Licensing department will still require a copy to be bought in before the application can be processed as is the current system now. • ID documents will still need to be manually verified by officers, it has been decided that ID surgeries will be in place for drivers to come in to Council offices and get their ID checked once they have completed online DBS application. <p style="text-align: center;">There will be three surgeries per week; Monday 10:30-11:30 Tuesday 13:00-14:00 Thursday 10:30-11:30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A computer will also potentially be available in reception in order for drivers to complete online DBS if they are unable to do so elsewhere. • Please note that officers will not be able to help people complete their online application. All drivers will need to contact the DBS provider if they have any queries. • Also the intention to move to online payments in the future. Application forms and documents will be available to download from the website within the next fortnight. Looking at reducing the amount of paper that is sent out and improve procedures. 	
7.	<p>REPEAT FAILURES OF VEHICLE CONDITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the last meeting it was mentioned that in general the conditions of licenced vehicles are improving since the introduction of Fleet Inspections and the Wear & Tear guide. • Forum was asked what action should be taken against vehicles that repeatedly fail their inspection. Forum stated that if the failure was a new issue that had not been addressed previously then should be treated like a normal inspection. If the failures are the same issues that have been addressed previously then harsher penalties are included. This could include immediate suspension until issues are corrected. MR informed forum that small test cards were currently being trialed at the garages. If these were successful then drivers could potentially have one for their vehicle in order to keep on top of dents/scratches etc. 	

8.	<p>CHILD SEX EXPLOITATION 'SOMETHING NOT RIGHT' CAMPAIGN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry City Council have introduced mandatory CSE training for all drivers. • Forum was asked for their ideas on how to ensure all WDC drivers receive CSE training and how/who this is delivered. • AR stated as part of his school contract he has had awareness training run by WCC. • CCC did run free courses for drivers for set period of time. Fees were then introduced. Forum suggested this was a good idea and gives current drivers an opportunity to attend free of charge. Was agreed that any CSE training introduced should be mandatory for all existing and new drivers. • Forum agreed professional organisation should run any potential course. • Also agreed with suggestion that a small handbook to put in the glove box that contained useful numbers such as Police, Social Services etc. would also be a good idea. 	
9.	<p>DRIVERS BADGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of drivers badges has been mentioned before, some think that additional identification badges should be considered. • All lanyards issued by WDC have a 'snap off' piece for safety reasons. • ID badges must be worn at all times. • Suggestion of additional 'New York' style badges to be placed in vehicles similar to those at Stratford District Council. • Were concerns from forum that if more than one driver was driving the vehicle in a day then this could lead to other issues. • Suggestion of a small badge similar to the Chiltern Pass showing picture of driver to be placed facing inwards in vehicle. • RR stated she would ask SDC for a copy of one of theirs to bring to December forum. The issue be returned to at that meeting. 	
10.	<p>TAXI RANKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting is planned with Town Councils, Highways, Police, Town Planning and Parking Services to discuss the rank issues District wide. 	

11.	<p>REFUSING FARES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has recently been a spike in the number of complaints regarding refusal of fares for a short distance journey. • If any vehicle is pre booked then it should not be sat in any rank, Warwick Street included. • If anyone is found to be refusing fares then severe action will be taken by the Licensing department. • Also received complaints that HC vehicles are overcharging. • To clarify, ALL HC journeys, if within the WDC boundary should ALWAYS have the meter on. You cannot charge more than the fare showed on the meter. Does not matter if you are pre-booked or not, if you are a HC vehicle acting as a PH vehicle you HAVE to use your meter. To do so would be breaking the law and WDC will have no choice but to take action. 	
12.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By December MR will hopefully have sent out draft policy and procedures to forum. Specifically looking at driver conditions currently. • Member of forum asked about reinstating Sunday fare. • MR stated that drivers have had a recent fare increase and members of the Executive Committee were fully aware when considering the fare increase of October 2014 that this meant the removal of the Sunday tariff. • MR does not believe the trade would be looked on favourably if another fare increase was requested regarding Sundays given the issues of refusing fares/journeys/overcharging. 	
13.	<p>NEXT MEETING 1st December 2015 at Riverside House 2pm</p>	