

Drivers and Operators Forum

Chair: Marianne Rolfe

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Minutes: Meeting – 1st December 2015 at Riverside House

		Action
1.	<p>ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES.</p> <p>Present: Marianne Rolfe, Rachael Russell, Amit Sidhu, Phil Court, A Rafiq, Simon Brook, Maid Ali, Pritpal Bains, Afsin Bakar Ozeker, Amrit Sidhu,</p> <p>Apologies:, Sgt. Pittam, PC Ward, Paul Tunney, Issac Leigh, Safety Net, Chand Mubarak, Alan Lewis</p>	
2.	<p>PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES</p> <p>Agreed</p>	
3.	<p>DISABILITY AWARENESS COURSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten drivers are still outstanding. Three drivers have recently not had their licence renewed due to them failing to attend course. If they wish to become licenced again they will be treated as brand new applicants. The forum agreed with this view. • A report is to be sent to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee asking for views on what course of action should be taken against licenced drivers failing to attend. • The course has now been updated to include Dementia Friend training. Forum suggested that drivers might be interested in attending refresher course to cover Dementia Friend training. 	
4.	<p>DEREGULATION BILL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators fees to be set for a five year licence. • Operators can request a lesser time but will need to go to L&R Committee to have their case heard. • MR has requested that the Committee give her powers to be able to issue shorter operator licences on a case by case basis. 	
5.	<p>FEES AND CHARGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016 fees have been split to reflect an application fee and a licence fee. If the applicant is unsuccessful in obtaining a licence then the licence fee can be refunded. • Hackney Carriage fees have increased due to the needs survey being carried out. • There is a difference in PH vehicle fees depending if the vehicle has a plate dispensation .This is because extra work 	

	<p>has been created for the Licensing Team investigating current dispensations and any new dispensation applications. Evidence will be required that each vehicle applying for a dispensation can be on the road exclusively for chauffeuring work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New driver application fee does NOT include the DBS application fee. As on January 2016 ALL DBS applications including payments must be made online. • Knowledge Test fee is increasing. This is due to it being revamped. RR is hopeful that a sample paper is available for the forum sub-committee in the new year. • The WDC Licensing pages on the website have been redone. Please take a look. All application forms are now available to download from the website. 	
6.	<p>REPEAT VEHICLE INSPECTION FALIURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum have previously been asked to think about what action should be taken absent vehicles that are repeatedly failing inspections. It is the drivers responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition. • Forum suggested that those vehicles who have repeated inspection failures should be immediately suspended until the issues are corrected. • MR asked the forum for their opinion of a points system (eg employed by Whealdon District Council). This system is used as an evidence gathering tool not a punishment tool but would assist in the circumstances under discussion. 	
6a	<p>CSE AWARENESS TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MR has secured six training sessions potentially free of charge. This will be a short course, a maximum of two hours. Letters will be sent to drivers shortly. MR is trying to get additional funding to cover any potential costs so it remains free of charge for drivers. The sessions will be run in the morning and afternoon on the following dates at the Town Hall, Leamington Spa; • Wednesday 13th January 2016 • Tuesday 19th January 2016 • Thursday 21st January 2016 • Drivers will be encouraged to book early as it will be first come first serve. Each session will seat up to 70 drivers. After these sessions it is expected that a report will go to L&R Committee recommending that the course becomes mandatory for all existing and new drivers. • Several larger operators have call handlers that are not licenced drives. Would these people need to attend training? Forum suggested leaving any training for call handlers to the operators. 	

7.	<p>DRIVERS BADGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badges that are worn round the neck by each driver will be remaining. • If any additional identification badges are introduced i.e. hanger badges then these will need to be displayed at all times and will be treated as mandatory. The forum agreed that on the whole this was still a good idea. SB suggested an alternative to the 'New York' style hanger badge. An identification badge that clipped on to the vents in the front console of the vehicle. MR stated a meeting would be arranged with our plate provider and samples to be bought to a future meeting to discuss. 	
8.	<p>TAXI RANKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting took place between Licensing, Town Centre Management, Highways, Parking Enforcement and Warwickshire Police. This is a large piece of work required to understand how our ranks are enforced and where they should be. The Needs Assessment survey will feed into this and help provide us with valuable information. All the issues with taxi ranks have been aired and everyone is working on it. 	
9.	<p>REFUSAL OF FARES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of complaints received about members of the public being refused a short fare journey for no reasonable cause is still increasing. This has been confirmed by reports received by Street Marshalls. Several incidents of lone females being escorted home by Street Marshalls. • This behaviour is <u>not</u> acceptable and <u>will not</u> be tolerated. • An enforcement activity has been planned to target this unacceptable behaviour. If anyone is caught refusing a short fare then they will be sent to L&R Committee. • Licensing will be recommending severe action is taken against the licence of these drivers. • Similarly if drivers are having more than one complaint made against them regarding this issue then they will also be sent to committee. 	
11	<p>NON DECLARATION OF CONVICTIONS AND CAUTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RR wanted to remind drivers of the importance of informing the Licensing department of any convictions/cautions within the 7 day deadline as per the condition on the drivers badge. • Several drivers attempting to renew their badge have recently had their renewal application refused at Committee due to the nature of their convictions and their failure to declare them. • Several drivers have been successful in getting their badge renewed at Committee, however they have been unable to 	

	<p>drive for some months prior to this whilst waiting to go to Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Operator application was refused at Committee in July. This decision was appealed at Magistrates in November. Magistrates upheld WDC Committee decision. • A driver was successfully prosecuted in October for failing to have the necessary licences whilst operating as a Private Hire Operator. Licensing will not hesitate to prosecute anyone breaking the law. 	
12	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on needs assessment survey. • CSE Awareness Training feedback. • Samples of additional ID badges. • New samples of revised Knowledge Test. 	
13	<p>NEXT MEETING 8th March 2016 at Riverside House 2pm</p>	