

Hackney Carriage Association Meeting

Wednesday 16th February 2022

Officers Present:

Carol Stos (CS)	Licensing Service Manager
Steven Knighton (STK)	Enforcement Manager
Elisabeth Spencer (ES)	Customer Service Manager
Sadiya Patel (SP)	Senior Licensing Officer
Samantha Kaye (SK)	Licensing Officer Service Support

Trade Representatives Present:

Fiaz Suleman	Bradford Hackney Carriage Taxi Trade Association
Sagheer Rehman	Bradford Hackney Carriage Taxi Trade Association
Tahir Riaz	Hackney Carriage Owners and Drivers Association
Shabbir Master	Hackney Carriage Owners and Drivers Association

1) Introduction

Steven Knighton opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. As it was the first webinar meeting representatives were advised that their microphones were muted and if they wanted to ask a question they could write this in the chat box or raise the hand icon and their microphone would be enabled so they could speak. This is to allow the meeting to flow naturally and avoid people speaking over each other.

2) Outstanding Actions

- The service will send the rank request form to Trade Representatives once it has been updated

This is on the agenda to be discussed and will be covered under the ranks section

- The service will contact the highways team for an update about Morley Street

There has been no update regarding the Morley Street Rank; this will be chased up and an update provided.

- Trade Representatives will put forward a proposal on how a mix of HC WAV and saloon vehicles can be accommodated.

The proposal has been received and is ongoing as part of the unmet demand survey. As any updates become available these will be communicated back to the representatives.

3) Licensing Service Update

Department for Transport (DFT) guidance

The DFT guidance is bringing in many changes nationally, these changes are mandatory, meaning they have to be introduced. One of the changes is that all proprietors of a vehicle, whether or not they have a licence to drive the vehicle must be DBS checked. The frequency of the check is also changing from annually to every 6 months.

The next stage of the DFT guidance is engagement with the trade. Comments will be requested and surveys sent by the Licensing Service. Please complete to ensure you have your say and share your views. If anyone has any questions and/or comments regarding the upcoming changes that you would like to discuss please email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk so a meeting can be arranged.

Customer Service

Working online is not always the easiest for some people, however the service is currently working towards a new system. Hopes are that it will be up and running and introduced to the trade within the next 6 months.

The new system will give a licensee more visibility on all licences they hold with the service. It will make it easier to track applications and their progress, and upload supporting documents. It will also allow the service to text applicants as well as email, to inform of important updates e.g. renewal reminders.

There will be more updates to follow in the coming months as the system is developed. Once there is a working system Elisabeth will be holding training seminars with the trade to demonstrate how the new system will look and work.

4) Enforcement Update

The Enforcement Team are now working to business as usual, patrolling the district and following up on any complaints that have been made.

Compliance

Over recent weeks there has been an increased number of complaints regarding drivers not picking up wheelchair passengers. Information has been sent on the requirements around wheelchair customers, please ensure that all drivers are aware of requirement and are following them.

The service has also received a complaint regarding several vehicles not meeting the vehicle specification with regards to seating requirements. All vehicles that have been mentioned within the complaint have been called in to the depot and are being inspected to ensure they meet the requirements and are complaint.

Highway Code

The highway code changed in January, please ensure that you, and the drivers within your association are mindful of the changes and are following the new guidance.

Bradford Bid Project

This project is about trying to improve the night life within the city centre and make it safer for everyone. This project is not run by the council but have asked for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire to be included in helping this improvement along. It is part of the Purple Flag Project that is run by the police and other agencies, below is a link to a survey we would like as many people as possible to complete, it is your chance to submit your views and contribute to the project and try help improve the city centre.

[Bradford Bid Project Survey](#)

Q) This sounds a bit like the Ambassador Project from a few years ago that we all got involved in, we put in a lot of hard work but then it went pear shaped so drivers are going to need a bit more of an incentive if you want them to leave the ranks and lose out on work to help with the project

A) The Bradford Bid Project and Purple Flag is a much larger project, we are not asking drivers to leave ranks and lose out on work, we would just like everyone to take part in the surveys and questionnaires that we send out so they can put their views and feedback forward for consideration. You as drivers see a lot more on the streets than what we do so your feedback will be valuable in helping improve the city.

Q) The Purple Flag project sounds like a good idea, however to make Bradford safer we need safe drivers and we seem to be lacking these in Bradford. There needs to be a bigger police presence tackling unsafe, non-roadworthy and non-legal drivers; there are many times I've had drivers pass me at 50/60mph with police around and they do nothing.

A) These are exactly the comments that we need included on the survey and questionnaire so we can use this feedback to tackle the most common issues.

Electric Vehicles

Bob Sayner from the CAZ team would like to speak to the trade as he has some training courses around electric vehicles that are all online, as well as having some electric vehicles he would like to demo and are available to test driver. Bob's details will be sent out – please liaise with him directly if you are interested.

5) Licensing Update

New Driver applications

There are a number of outstanding New Driver Applications that are being worked through as quickly as possible. The ratio of new Hackney Carriage Driver Applications to Private Hire Applications is unknown. There are a few outstanding which are being processed as fast as possible; however, these are worked in date order of when the application was received and then processed as applicants send in the requested documents.

Renewal Driver applications

When completing a renewal driver application or new driver application there are many checks that need to be completed; from the 04th April 2022 there will also be an extra check that will need to be carried out. This check is the Tax Conditionality Check and will be carried out on every renewal. It is to ensure that applicants have completed a tax self-assessment check.

Q) When is the check required?

A) The service will request the check at every renewal

Q) Did you say that the check starts in April?

A) Yes that's correct from Monday 4th April.

Q) What is required from drivers for the tax check code?

A) Drivers will be required to follow the guidance on the Government website. Once they have submitted their information a 9-character reference will be provided; it is this 9-character reference that will be required to be submitted to the service in order to obtain a new licence.

6) Ranks

Rank Locations

There have been quite a few updates regarding ranks that have been processed in the background. One of the requests from a previous meeting was that a document is published that outlines where each rank is in the district so the public are aware, making the ranks more accessible. This document has now been published and had the 'What 3 Words' added to each rank position information to make it easier for the public to find if they are not familiar with the area. The what 3 words location will take a person to the first available car on the rank.

Rank Request Form

This is still currently being updated, to make it more accessible and easier to complete. Once this is finalised it will be published and sent out to representatives.

Q) Parking on ranks, especially on evenings and weekends is getting worse with both the public and Private Hire Vehicles using them and due to the time we are unable to contact anyone until either the next day or on Monday. Would you be able to send out an email to remind everyone that they are not able to park and drop off on the ranks?

A) This was covered in the Business Operator Meeting and is noted so it will be sent out to all operators asking them to remind their drivers. Keep reporting any instances to Parking Services; they do work shifts and can arrange for a team to monitor certain areas that are causing the most issues, but they can only arrange for this to happen if they are aware of the issues.

Q) Can we take pictures of the offending vehicles and submit these to Parking Services so they can be dealt with that way?

A) Unfortunately this is not an option, any offending vehicles must be dealt with by authorised officers at the time of the incident.

Q) Sackville Street Rank – on weekends this rank has bollards up so we are not able to use this rank. Who runs these bollards and is there any chance these bollards can be lowered so we are able to use the rank again?

A) These bollards were introduced due to violence in the town centres, especially where vehicles were being used as weapons against pubs and security guards; they are run by the police

Q) If we are unable to use this rank for such large periods of time would it not be better to lose this rank and re-locate it somewhere else, e.g. in that pay and display park near sun pub.

A) It would make sense to re-locate the rank, to do this a rank request form will need to be submitted. Once this is received it will be looked in to.

Q) As long as we are somewhere visible, we do not want to be on a side-street somewhere as visibility is key for Hackney Carriage Drivers obtaining work.

A) The Rank Request form will be finalised so a formal request can be submitted

7) Unmet Demand

An email communication was sent out asking as many Hackney Carriage Drivers and Proprietors as possible to take part in an unmet demand survey. The Service has been informed that 53 drivers completed the survey and submitted their views.

There was also a wheelchair survey that was running alongside the unmet demand survey, There is no confirmation yet of how many people took part in this survey.

Alongside the surveys there are hundreds of hours' worth of ANPR data to validate, once all data has been gathered and finalised it will be submitted at a committee meeting. Following the committee meeting all results will be published and communicated with the trade.

Ian who is helping facilitate the unmet demand survey would like to speak to the association regarding the rank at Bradford Interchange, if any of you are interested in speaking to him and answering his questions. STK will forward on Ian's details and request that a member of the association contact him.

8) Agenda Points

Point 1 - Dual Hackney Taxi Badge

A request from Trade association can the Service look in to making Hackney badge a dual badge so it can be used for private hire and Hackney taxi's rather than making two badges if you want to drive Hackney and private hire; this will save cost and inconvenience.

Response: There are different laws and legislation that cover Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences, if the Service were to allow dual badges this would open licences up to condition technicalities for example Private Hire Drivers plying for hire.

We are aware that some smaller authorities allow dual badges but this is just not feasible in large scale authorities.

Q) There are only around 300 Hackney Carriage Drivers, if you are not able to create a dual badge would it not be good grace to waver the fee for a Private Hire Badge

A) If we did this for all Hackney Carriage Drivers we would have to offer the same to all Private Hire Drivers, which is another 4500 drivers. This is just not feasible.

Q) There are some Hackney Carriage Vehicles that park up on the ranks while displaying Private Hire Operator Decals, what is the rule regarding this? It is confusing many people and there have been some instances of confrontation on the ranks as drivers are getting irate. When parked on a rank should drivers not be made to remove decals? They should not be allowed to do both

A) What these drivers are doing is perfectly lawful. Hackney Carriages are unique in the fact that they are able to apply their trade as an individual but are also able to receive bookings through a Private Hire Operator. It is all about business opportunities. If people are still confused and getting irate please ask them to email the service and we will be happy to answer their questions and help remove any confusion.

Point 2: Public and Private Hire Parking on Ranks

This is now becoming a major issue on both Ilkley and Shipley ranks where public and PHV are using the rank on regular basis.

How can we stop this?

Response: Please see section 6, Ranks

Point 3: Parking Enforcement

Hackney carriage have no space as all the ranks blocked by the general public there is no one to enforce the parking system.

We tried to arrange meeting with parking services but they said ask hackney carriage department to arrange meeting

They also said whenever department ask for service we do provide.

We did discuss in last meetings but nothing has been done

Response: Please see section 6, Ranks

Point 4: Advertising on Hackney Carriage Vehicles

Any one apply for advertising he refused because the diagram which submit has not enough white colour in roof, Bonnet and boot.

As for as the policy concern Hackney carriages must have only front doors white

Response: All Hackney Carriage Vehicles must be unique and stand out from Private Hire Vehicles; this is why conditions state they must be white with the green stripe and crest on the front doors.

When drivers apply for advertising they must ensure that the front doors remain white with the green stripe and crest but the other panels are open to advertising.

Q) What about the bonnet, roof and boot? There are some vehicles that have been refused advertising because there is not enough white left on these panels?

A) We have had some instances where drivers have applied for advertising as they have bought a vehicle in a colour that does not meet our specification and they do not want to get this wrapped or sprayed, in some of these circumstances advertising has been refused.

Q) Can you look at the advertising policy and make it clearer?

A) Each advertising request is unique and is looked at individually.

Q) Every vehicle is looked at differently; some are passed for advertising where others are refused. There are no standard guidelines for us to follow.

A) We will have a look into the guidance that is already set out to follow and see if it can be amend to offer better guidance

Q) This would be helpful as I know of 2 vehicles, my own included that has passed with the same advertising but then when a third vehicle applied for the exact same advertisement it was refused as they stated the bonnet, roof and boot were not displaying enough white.

A) We will look into this and try offer better guidance.

Point 5: Price Increase

The Hackney Carriage Trade put in a request for a Price Increase last year that has gone through and that is good; however, it is still not enough with the price of living increasing. I would like to request the Licensing Service's help to implement a fare increase of 2.5% for the next 5 years at least, as the Hackney Carriage Drivers do not always agree and trying to get all drivers on the same page is not easy. It would be better and easier to come from the licensing service.

Response: This is not for the Council to say what the trade should be charging and/or doing. All requests for fare increase need to follow the same process you went through last time; the trade must agree and submit a formal request, this would then be looked at, advertised in the paper, go through committee and a decision will be made. If you would like a 2.5% increase for the next 5 years this would need to be stipulated in your proposal.

The Service cannot get involved, there is a process to follow and this must be done within the law.

9) Close

Thank you to everyone for attending this webinar meeting. Please send feedback on how you think it went as this is something we would be looking at continuing in the future.

From the chat the majority of people felt the meeting was a success however they would still like a face to face meeting every now and again.

10) Actions of Meeting

- Request an update regarding Morley Street Rank and provide an update to Trade
- Finalise the Rank Request Form so this can be published and distributed to the Trade Representatives
- Send Ian's details to the Trade Representatives so they can contact him and answer his questions around the rank at Bradford Interchange
- Update the Trade around the Unmet Demand Survey once finalised
- Look at the advertising process, and the guidance that is provided when applying for advertising to make it clearer for driver to follow.

11) Date of New Meeting

We will confirm the date of the next meeting and whether this will be held via a Teams Webinar or at Shearbridge Depot via email.