

Minutes of Private Hire Meeting – 30th October 2014

Present

Carol Stos	Licensing Manager
Geoff Binnington	Principal Officer, Fleet and Transport Services
Matthew Bibby	Licensing Support Officer (Minute Taker)
Phil Brook	Enforcement Officer
Stuart Hastings	Keighley Private Hire Association
Steve Carter	Keighley Private Hire Association
Pervez Naik	Keighley Private Hire Association
Nadeem Ahmed	Independent Private Hire Association of Bradford
Asif Shah	Girlington Driver's Association
Khurram Shehzad	Bradford Private Hire Liaison Service

1) Welcome and Introductions

Officers opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Training – Vehicle Checks

In June's newsletter, prior to all the training that took place over the summer; an article was put in the newsletter and on the website regarding how to carry out vehicle safety checks. A link to a VOSA DVD was also included.

Around 600 drivers have since attended driver training with the majority learning how to carry out checks.

The link will be resent out in October's newsletter and will be given out at the counter at Shearbridge. The service will also be writing directly to every single licensed person. All drivers who come to future training sessions must have looked at the DVD clip online to be sure of how to carry out the vehicle checks.

3) Knowledge Test

The Knowledge Test has now been reviewed following the 'new style' test which was introduced a couple of months ago. Applicants who are to take the test need to have a good knowledge of key places and landmarks in the Bradford District. These places include hotels, restaurants, parks etc.

Applicants will be able to find some sample questions on the website by visiting www.bradford.gov.uk/taxiandprivatehire

This information will also be included in the letter that is to be issued to all licensed people.

4) Customer Survey Feedback

Results were given. Nearly 1000 customers attended Shearbridge over the period of the survey. 346 completed the survey with about 90% being very happy with the service they received. Less than 1% of people were dissatisfied with the service they received.

Almost 10% of drivers felt that Operators do not keep them informed. Just over 15% of drivers believe that there is not enough communication from trade representatives.

There are plans to hold 2 further surveys in coming months, perhaps 1 before Xmas and 1 into the New Year.

5) Workshop – Drop in sessions

As documented in September's newsletter, the service is holding 'drop in sessions' at the workshop on a fortnightly basis. The sessions are Wednesday afternoon 1.30pm – 3.30pm. Drivers or vehicle

owners can drop in and ask questions about their vehicles. The next sessions are 12th November and 26th November. Representatives were unsure as to whether these sessions are worth while. As to date there has been no take-up from these sessions the service will be reviewing the position.

-Reminder- drivers buying new /second hand vehicles need to ensure they have THE CORRECT PAPERWORK. The Vehicle Specification require that vehicles presented for licensing have the correct certificate or that the owner understands they budget in the cost for IVA when purchasing that vehicle.

6) **Snap**

The survey will be sent out via website link for all Drivers / Operators / Proprietors to look at. The details of the pass code they will need to enter in order to complete the survey will be provided with the letter that we send out to all licensed individuals.

7) **Church Street – Actions**

There are many alleged problems on Church Street involving PH vehicles, out of town vehicles and also private vehicles.

The numerous issues require specific complaints to be made to each service area of the council as they involve parking services about illegal parking, environmental health about the noise pollution, the Police about obstruction. Unless specific vehicle details and time can be provided it is hard for a complaint to be effectively dealt with.

8) **DBS**

A query was raised as to if DBS checks could be done annually because of some issues that have come to light for certain operators. The current Policy says a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check covers a person for 3 years. The procedure for new drivers is that the initial DBS has to have been checked before a badge is issued. The conditions book does also say that if a person is charged with an offence they must declare it.

The easiest and cheapest way for people to do DBS forms is by using the DBS update service online. There is a small annual charge for this service and it is paid by direct debit. It is a much quicker way to work than coming to the counter 8 weeks or more in advance and then waiting for it to be returned. Once signed up to the DBS update service no further check forms are needed (provided no convictions/cautions are recorded)

9) **New Systems**

Tensator (the Queue management and appointment system) has unfortunately not yet been made available for full use though we are nearing conclusion of this project. The external company have had a number of technical problems in delivering the online bookings part of the system and the service offers apologies on their behalf for these issues.

An update to this is that we have now got user guides and helpful questions and answers on our website and we do plan to visit operator bases in the near future to train companies on how to book their drivers in.

APP (the new licensing system) which will replace the current LALPAC system is also being delivered by an external company. Work between Council services and APP are also nearing conclusions and we hope to be able to complete that system change in early 2015.

10) **Council review for conditions**

There is no date yet. The survey will happen first, the results will then be analysed, reviewed and feedback. A meeting about the results and proposals will be arranged for early December.

11) Membership Lists – increase

Membership lists are expected annually and each year they will be spot checked from each association was accuracy. It will also be reasonable for the service to accept that there will be a small percentage of declarations that will not be accurate due to constant moving. It is recognised that the representatives do work hard to keep details as accurate as possible.

12) New Condition – MOT

Officers updated on the history of the vehicle tests / fees. It use to be £350 annually for 2 tests and then at the request of the trade it changed to £175 annually for 1 test (under 6 years old) and £250 annually for the vehicles over 6. The fee for the older vehicles covers the random vehicle tests that are carried out.

MOT's are different to vehicle inspections. If a vehicle fails an MOT then the car is automatically off the road until it gets fixed. The vehicle inspections give the reassurance that if there are minor issues these can be sorted and retested without losing the ability to work. There were also a lot of timing issues surrounding MOT's in the past and there were often delays of 3 weeks or more in getting vehicles in to test.

13) Seating – new condition

The seating conditions (vehicle spec) are available for anyone to view on the website. It is strongly suggested that if people have queries they attend a free seating check or attend one the 'workshop drop in sessions' (Agenda Point 5).

14) Financial Accounts – profit / loss (fees)

There are rumours that fees are to be increased. Such rumours can categorically be denied by officers. Despite the fact that the service has been able to put up fees if needed in line with inflation there has been no increase since 2009.

15) Statistics

The service and representatives are continuing to work on improvements to pass rates.