

# **TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE FORUM MEETING**

## **Minutes**

**WEDNESDAY 13 January 2021 – 10:30AM (Microsoft Teams)**

### **ATTENDED**

<b>Drivers/Operators</b>	<b>Winchester City Council</b>
Barry Hussey Steve Eckton Imran Khan John Fairey Marouane El Mamouni	Carol Stefanczuk – Licensing Manager David Ingram – Service Lead - Public Protection Claire Humphreys – Licensing Officer

Carol Stefanczuk welcomed the group to the first Forum meeting of 2021 and thanked everyone for taking the time out to attend. Claire Humphreys apologized to the Forum members that the link she emailed for the meeting wasn't received by the Forum Members. It was agreed that the link would be included within the Agenda next time.

#### ***Licensing Office – During National Lockdown***

Carol Stefanczuk informed the group that during the latest National Lockdown the office would be attended once a week for printing of plates and post etc. Reception is still shut and the office has just a skeleton staff. Barry Hussey pointed out that the postal system is also in disarray in some areas so drivers need to apply for renewals in plenty of time. Carol agreed and replied that the expiry on the licence plate/badge would be taken into consideration as to whether we post first class or second class post. She confirmed we would always help where we can.

#### ***HC PH Driver, Vehicle, Operator Conditions – Consultation***

Carol Stefanczuk asked the group if they had all received the email regarding the conditions that are in consultation. She explained that they are in line with the policy changes that were adopted at Cabinet in November 2020. The group confirmed they had no questions. Steve Eckton asked what was happening with the door signs and suggested they are in line with the WCC Logo on the roof sign.

Carol Stefanczuk responded that the draft designs due for approval are along the same lines. She said that there had been a delay with the design team with regards to the design. She confirmed as soon as they are available they will be sent out to the Forum Members for feedback and hopes that they will be with the Members to view and make a decision within the next week.

Steve Eckton suggested they need to be obvious but simple and to be completely different to the Private Hire vehicles. Claire Humphreys commented that this would be the case. He also said that the company he suggested to Carol Stefanczuk

thanked us. Carol Stefanczuk said it will be a similar process to the one we have in place with our three MOT testing centres.

Barry Hussey pointed out that if the sign is on a white background, we need to be mindful that there are many variations of white, so even on a white vehicle the sign might not look like livery but a sign stuck on. He suggested that having the design on a transparent background would work better. Carol and Claire thought this was certainly a point to consider and will make contact with the sign companies.

Mario El Mamouni joined the meeting and apologized for being late. Carol Stefanczuk and Claire Humphreys welcomed him to the meeting. Carol Stefanczuk quickly re-capped and checked if he had any questions with regards to the conditions in consultation. He confirmed he had no questions or comments.

### ***Station Permits***

Carol Stefanczuk asked the Hackney Carriage Forum members to give an update on what is happening with regards to station permits.

Imran Khan updated the meeting and said that apart from one driver, no other drivers have paid for a station permit for 2021. They are waiting for a solution to be found. Barry Hussey commented that the one driver who had paid for his permit, was just protecting his family. He pointed out to the meeting that there is no sign at the rank saying, "taxis with permits only"

Steve Eckton updated the meeting that he had been in touch with Steve Brine MP who had taken note of his comments, but had not replied with any news to date. Steve Eckton agreed to keep us up to date with any news.

Carol Stefanczuk advised the meeting that Claire Humphreys had been in contact with Southampton City Council. The rank at Southampton station borders SWR land so their drivers don't have to pay permit fees. Eastleigh Borough Council are in the same situation as us and received the same reply from SWR.

David Ingram said that WCC could look to move the rank to the opposite side of the road. There is a correct process to go through but he advised that he would be happy to do that. His only concern was that by moving the rank, would SWR use the rank for Private Hire, Uber drop off or others, which might then cause an issue for our Hackney Drivers. Barry Hussey replied he was under the impression that Network Rail could only lease that land to be used as a taxi rank. Private Hire drop off anyway so it wouldn't really make a difference.

It was agreed by the Forum members that we need to start the process of applying for a new taxi rank, so we are prepared. David Ingram reminded the group it is not a quick process but if we get approval it gives us some leverage for possible negotiation with SWR.

Carol Stefanczuk commented that this doesn't have to be the main rank if the hackney drivers and SWR come to an agreement, it could then be used as a feeder

rank. She also reminded the meeting that this area may be re-developed, so this could change things in future.

Carol Stefanczuk asked Barry Hussey and Steve Eckton to keep us in the loop with any updates from SWR and Steve Brine.

### ***Winchester City Centre Regeneration***

Carol Stefanczuk asked the Forum members if they received the email informing them that of the re-generation consultation end date which was 12 January 2021. They all confirmed they had.

The Forum members confirmed they had not commented in anyway as Veryon Lyons had covered everything they needed to know in the last Forum meeting. Carol Stefanczuk reminded the Forum members that this was a public consultation and we would report back to them with any feedback.

### ***Any Other Business***

Carol Stefanczuk ask the Forum members how things were in general with relation to Covid and the National Lockdown. Are there many Hackney's on the rank? Is there much work for the Private Hire's?

Imran Khan reported that at most there are 4 to 5 cars on the Station Rank and Broadway. Steve Eckton added there are not even many Uber about. Very quiet, the trade are really struggling. Drivers are doing all they can to make ends meet.

Mario El Mamouni advised it is not much better out there for the Private Hire drivers. Most of the work is hospital staff and shopping trips. It is really tough out there and there's not enough work for the all of the Private Hire Drivers.

From a rural operator perspective John Fairey reported that there is no school contract work for his drivers. They don't transport any vulnerable children within their contract. He went on to say that it is really difficult to make plans due to having no end date to this lockdown. He is anticipating it is going to be Easter. His employed drivers are furloughed.

John Fairey informed the group that Hampshire County Council are reviewing contracts which is adding further uncertainty to Operators. Carol Stefanczuk added that we are trying to find out what HCC long term expectations are with regards to air quality and how this might affect future contracts.

David Ingram advised that Portsmouth City Council's proposals for a Clear Air Zone consultation starts in July. If adopted into policy this would mean if vehicles don't meet the criteria they would be charged a daily fee.

Carol Stefanczuk will keep all updated when we hear back from Hampshire County Council.

***Next meeting TBC***