

TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE FORUM MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday 11 May 2022 – 14:00

Wessex Room – City Offices

ATTENDED

Drivers/Operators	Winchester City Council
Imran Khan	Briony Appletree – Interim Licensing Manager Claire Humphreys – Licensing Officer

APOLOGIES

Yaqoob Ali Saddiq

Briony welcomed Imran Khan who was the only Forum member in attendance at the meeting.

Updates for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade.

Policy review

Briony informed Imran that following the required changes to policy from the Department for Transport, there were only a few very minor changes that needed to be implemented to our Statement of Licensing policy. These included 6-monthly enhanced DBS checks and a requirement to join the DBS update service, and the requirement to display the Council contact details for the purposes of providing feedback/complaints in all Winchester City Council licensed vehicles.

This policy review went into consultation for four weeks from 14 February; notification was sent to all Forum members, letters and emails were sent to all WCC licensed drivers and Private Hire Operators. Briony informed Imran that she received 7 responses to the consultation, and that none were against the proposed changes.

The Policy changes will be reviewed by the Licensing and Regulation Committee at a meeting being held in June. Imran asked if anyone could attend the hearing to speak and what time of day it would be held. Briony advised it would be an evening hearing usually starting at 18:00. Briony confirmed it would be possible by prior arrangement for drivers to attend and speak at the hearing, however, Imran was reminded this would be to discuss changes to policy and not any other topics.

Fare review

Briony informed Imran there would be a fare review this year, following a request from the trade. Carol Stefanczuk (Licensing Manager on maternity leave) would be coming in for a day to explain the process to Briony as she was the last Licensing Manager to organise a fare review. Imran said the cost of running a licensed vehicle with the increase in fuel cost was so high, drivers were struggling to make a living.

Briony commented that Southampton and the New Forest had recently undertaken a fare review because of the increase in fuel prices.

Imran asked if this could be done as quickly as possible. Briony advised that there is a formal process that has to be followed.

- We propose the revised fares
- Put into public consultation for 2-4 weeks
- Publish notice in a local newspaper
- Proposals and consultation responses presented to a Licensing and Regulation Committee, where a decision is made.

Action - Briony felt it would be beneficial for the Forum to meet more often during this period.

Coach Park Toilets

Briony advised Imran she had raised a purchase order for the payment of a coded keypad which will be fitted to the toilet door in the Coach Park for the use only of WCC licensed drivers. The code will be passed on to WCC drivers via Forum members. It is anticipated that this will be fitted in the next 2-3 weeks.

Compliance Checks

Briony commented on how good it was to see so many of our drivers during the compliance checks being undertaken at the Coach Park over the last few weeks. It was a successful exercise.

Forum Nominations

Following the last attempt to nominate new Forum members, no nominations were received.

Action - It has been agreed that Forum Nomination forms will be sent out Monday 16 May 2022 via post and email to all licensed driver and Operators. Nominations forms will also be left at Reception and it was agreed for Imran to hand out forms in addition to this.

It was discussed and agreed this would run for four weeks. The following positions are available for nomination:

2 x Private Hire Drivers

1 x Hackney Carriage Driver
1 x City Centre Operator
1 x Rural/Executive Operator

Station Rank

Imran discussed that Hackney Carriage drivers had heard of a proposed WCC Private Hire Operator having a booth in the Station and the existing HC rank would be used as an extended pick-up and drop off point for the Private Hire. He said that Hackney Carriage drivers were concerned that the Private Hire vehicles would park and use the drop off and pick up as a waiting area for jobs. Imran asked Briony if she would be prepared to write to Station to ensure they follow the byelaws in place to ensure that private hire vehicles keep the required distance away from the Hackney Carriage rank as set out in the byelaws.

Action – Briony has already written to the Station but agreed to write another letter regarding upholding the byelaws. Briony assured Imran that this is on her priority list and that as soon as we are informed that this is going ahead, we will ensure we have Officers at the Station on the first day to observe.

Southampton Plate Exempt Vehicle

Imran spoke of a plate exempt vehicle that had been allegedly picking up with no booking and also picking up from the rank. Briony confirmed she had identified the driver of the vehicle who was a Southampton licensed driver, had liaised with Southampton City Council, who will be investigating and taking appropriate action.

Jewry Street Taxi Lines/Taxi Signage

Imran asked when the yellow lines would be re-painted. Briony advised that Jewry Street is on the next round of line painting but that it's not certain when this will be. With regards to having a larger Taxi sign erected, this is not possible. National legislation sets the size for traffic signs and therefore we can't just put up a bigger sign when we want to.

The meeting closed at 15:15

Next Date for Forum meeting to be confirmed.