

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE TRADE MEETING

Wednesday 4 September 2013 – Council Chamber,
East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely
10.05am – 11.15am

PRESENT:

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| Cllr Michael Allan | Chairman of Licensing Committee |
| Lin Bagwell | Licensing Officer (Enforcement) |
| Elizabeth Bailey | Principal Environmental Health Officer |
| Liz Knox | Head of Environmental Services |
| Melanie Sage | Democratic Services Officer |

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

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| Mr Alan Cole | Mr Martin Lane |
| Ms Sandra Collin | Ms Sue Lindsay |
| Mr Steve Draper | Mr Jakub Pieczewski |
| Mr Colin Featherstone | Mr John Skipper |
| Mr Jamie Edmunds | Mr Paul Thompson |
| Mr Michael Humphrey | Mr Maciej Troc |
| Mrs Eve Humphrey | Mr Adam Wawryszewicz |

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| Gemma Charrington | Head of Operations (East) - Newmarket Racecourse |
| John Gutierrez | Traffic Manager at Newmarket Racecourse |

| Summary of Discussion | Officer Comments/ Action | Officer Comments/ Action subsequent to meeting |
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| Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and he invited those in attendance to introduce themselves. | | |
| Agenda Item 2 - Hackney Carriage Roof Sign Reminder Drivers were reminded that in addition to it being mandatory that Hackney Carriage vehicles carry a roof sign, as of 1 October 2013, on renewal, Hackney Carriage Roof Signs had to meet the following 'approved form': (i) That the roof sign is illuminated when available for hire; (ii) That the word TAXI in black capital letters is clearly legible on the front and rear side of the roof sign (iii) That there are no other markings on the roof sign | | |
| Agenda Item 3 – Newmarket Racecourse It was explained that Gemma Charrington, Head of Operations, and John Gutierrez from Newmarket Racecourse had been invited to attend the meeting. The Council had been informed that Newmarket Racecourse had: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaised with trade• Reviewed their traffic management plan• Had separate Hackney Carriage and Private Hire route and pick up points | | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received positive feedback • Few drivers refused to come on to the site • Would be beneficial to have details of East Cambridgeshire District based company names and telephone numbers. <p>As Gemma Charrington, Head of Operations, and John Gutierrez were late attending the meeting the discussion was deferred until their arrival (detailed later in the notes).</p> | | |
| <p>Agenda Item 4 – Railway Rank</p> <p>Angie Ross from Network Rail had been invited to attend the meeting. Unfortunately she was on annual leave. However, she had confirmed that she would attend the next meeting and had provided the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no increase in the amount of permits - continue to remain at 40 permits. • 30% of new permits will be for wheelchair accessible vehicles only. • If a driver accepts a permit that has been on the waiting list and does not have a wheelchair accessible vehicle, the driver will have 12 weeks to obtain a suitable vehicle and they will not be able to use any other vehicle until then. • So far 2 permits had been accepted. • Drivers already with permits, when changing their vehicles can stay as they are but as soon as they decide to change their vehicle to a wheelchair accessible vehicle the vehicle must remain a wheelchair accessible vehicle. • No one will be issued with more than 5 permits. However, if a driver decides to rent a radio from a company but owns the plate and vehicle they are driving then that will be permitted. • Permits are not transferable. Any driver found to be transferring permits will have their permit revoked and will be 'black listed'. | | |
| <p>Agenda Item 5 – Hackney Carriage Stands – ECDC</p> <p>At the previous Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade meeting concerns were expressed that there is insufficient taxi rank provision in the City Centre. Officers had spoken to Cambridgeshire County Council Highways about the process of increasing the number of taxi ranks and had invited a representative to attend the meeting. At this stage Cambridgeshire County Council had declined to attend, but would consider attending a future meeting should the matter be progressed.</p> <p>To establish a taxi rank:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the consent of Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority if the taxi rank is to be on a public highway. • Notice has to be given to the Chief Officer Police and a public notice displayed in the newspaper. If objections are received within 28 days of the public notice these must be taken into account, together with any comments of the Chief Officer Police. • Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 has limitations on the creation of stands. • There must not be obstructions or impediments caused by stands in relation to premises or buses or other Public Service Vehicles using the highway. • Stands on the public highway must be marked out and signed in accordance with Traffic Signs | | |

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| <p>Regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local contact at Cambridgeshire County Council is Sharon Piper, Policy and Regulation Manager, Local Infrastructure and Street Management. <p>The Council had received the following advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Highways regarding the provision of an additional taxi rank 'on the road', that the following must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain funds to pay for the design and construction of the project, Cambridgeshire County Council currently has no funding available for ad hoc requests. Costs will need to include design, the advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order and the subsequent signing and lining if the proposal is successful. Some grant funding might be available. A designer is required to undertake a design that is compliant with standards e.g. Atkins, who already work for Cambridgeshire County Council or alternatively an engineering designer, which could be in-house within the District Council. Obtain a mandate from the community that they want change via consultation etc. There will shortly be the opportunity to submit a request for jointly funded measures. The process for submissions will remain the same as last year; with communities putting forward their proposals to the county for assessment. Information on the initiative can be found on line via the following link together with a highway improvement price list: http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/localism/Local+highway+improvements+initiative.htm <p>The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained that in order to progress the issue it would be necessary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential areas for stands Liaise with County Highways and Police Cost out proposals Identify funding required Identify funding source – including submission of bid | | |
| The process to establish a taxi rank seemed overly bureaucratic. | Wherever an additional rank was sited it had to be logical in relation to where other ranks were sited. The reason for this was to prevent the driver having to drive an unreasonable distance and to allow a quick return to the rank. Unless a space was available at a rank a licensed driver should not park up and wait for a space to become available at the rank. If the driver did this the Police could issue a fine to the driver. | |
| It was suggested that the taxi rank in Market Street could be extended by including the 2 car parking spaces in front of Thing-Me-Bobs and that the disabled parking bays be re-located so that additional spaces can be created by Costa Coffee. | | |
| Alternatively could the disabled parking bays by Costa Coffee be transferred on a Friday and Saturday night into a taxi rank, which would assist in resolving | It was agreed that this would be a future agenda item. In the | |

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| the issues experienced on a Friday and Saturday night? | meantime drivers were requested to consider and submit suggestions to the Council as to where additional taxi ranks should be sited. A site visit with the trade would be scheduled. | |
| The suggested additional spaces were minimal in comparison to the number of licensed Hackney Carriages in the district. | | |
| An additional taxi rank in the High Street, Ely was suggested. | | |
| The Chairman of the Licensing Committee was invited to accompany the trade on a Friday or Saturday night from 10.30pm to gain an insight into the problems experienced by the trade at peak times. | Licensing Officers and the Chairman of Licensing Committee (or another Licensing Committee member) would accompany the trade on a pre-scheduled Friday or Saturday night. | |
| Agenda Item 6 – Disclosure & Barring Service | | |
| <p>The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is now known as the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).</p> <p>The DBS Update Service Applicant Guide, June 2013 assists drivers to make on-line registrations for the DBS update service within 14 days of receipt of the DBS disclosure certificate.</p> <p>By using the on-line update service means that drivers would not be required to subsequently complete DBS application forms provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the annual subscription of £13.00 continues to be paid to the DBS ➤ the DBS is advised immediately of any address or name changes ➤ the Council is provided with the last original DBS enhanced disclosure certificate, photographic ID and proof of address when 'status checks' are carried out to instantly identify if there have been any changes to the certificate <p>If the status check reveals that the certificate is no longer current as new information has come to light since the certificate was issued or the annual subscription has expired, a new DBS enhanced disclosure must be applied for.</p> <p>No further DBS check is required if no new information has been found since the issue of the last DBS enhanced disclosure certificate</p> | | |
| Confirmation was sought that by using the DBS Update Service no further DBS applications with the Council were required. | <p>Provided an individual continued to pay the subscription fee and did not receive any prosecutions, then no further DBS applications with the Council would be necessary. However, there was only a short time frame in which an individual could subscribe to the DBS Update Service.</p> <p>In order to subscribe an individual would submit a DBS</p> | |

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| | <p>enhanced disclosure application form as per the usual method. On receipt of the certificate, which was returned directly to the individual and had to be provided to ECDC Licensing Team, the individual had 14 days to subscribe to the DBS Update Service. If an individual did not subscribe within the 14 days the individual would have to wait until the DBS enhanced certificate next needed to be renewed.</p> <p>3 yearly checks with the Council were still required.</p> <p>The Licensing Officer (Enforcement) noted that it would be greatly appreciated if drivers renewing their DBS Enhanced Disclosure Certificate made an appointment as the Licensing Team were currently short staffed. If no appointment was made and the Licensing Officer (Enforcement) was unavailable, the individual was welcome to leave the paperwork for later attention.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 7 – www.taxiwatch.org.uk</p> <p>At the previous Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade meeting a desire for the establishment of a forum specifically for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade had been expressed. Information was provided on ‘Taxi Watch’ which was a web portal that was available to all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and operators – members of the public could not become members. The portal enabled subscribers to communicate directly with the hackney and private hire industry.</p> <p>The company was based in Birmingham and the Director had been invited to attend the meeting. However, he had been unable to attend as he was on annual leave.</p> | | |
| <p>One driver reported that he had subscribed approximately 10 days ago, but had not been contacted by the company, which reports that they aim to respond within 24 hours.</p> | | |
| <p>Believed that it was free for drivers to join ‘Taxi Watch’.</p> | | |

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| However, it cost companies £30 to join. | | |
| A web forum that was open to the whole hackney and private hire industry was not as useful as a forum that could be defined to a specified area. | | |
| Suggestion that the Council create a similar web based system to enable the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade locally to circulate information amongst themselves. | Due to the resource implications for the Council any such system would need to be operated by the trade. | |

Agenda Item 8 – Hackney Carriage Tariff Update

Following a request by the trade to amend the taxi tariff, consultation letters were circulated to all Hackney Carriage proprietors on 26 April 2013. The last day of 28-day consultation period for proposals/comments to be received by the Council was 31 May 2013.

At the Licensing Committee meeting on 10 July 2013 a variation to the taxi tariffs was agreed.

The proposed tariffs were advertised on 18 July 2013 for 28-day period for written comments/objections to be received by Council. Three objections were received during the consultation period and a mediation meeting was held.

The results of the consultation and mediation process will be presented to the Licensing Committee on 9 October 2013 for a final decision. Tariff changes will be implemented following the decision of the Licensing Committee.

New tariff cards will then be produced and letters circulated to Hackney Carriage proprietors informing them of the date that the new tariffs will be effective from and requirements for meters to be recalibrated.

Agenda Item 9 – On-line Licensing Register

Is now available on the Council's website, which can be viewed via the link below:

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do;jsessionid=778E2719C046EFC11A40B5CB325E9AFE?action=simple&searchType=LicencingApplication>

The register will detail the issue and expiry dates of the following licences issued by the Council:

- Joint Driver Licences
- Private Hire Operator Licences
- Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Licences

Agenda Item 10 – GP's Cambridge City Council

Following a request at the previous Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade meeting regarding the company used by Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers in Cambridge for medical examinations, it was explained that Cambridge City Council specified the following two GP's that

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| <p>their licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers should use for medical examinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huntingdon Road Surgery - 01223 364127 - £50. Appointments available Wednesday - Friday 8.00am - 10.00am and 2.00pm - 3.00pm. • Allways Medical - 01223 264200 - £70. Appointments available Wednesdays 9.00am - 2.00pm. <p>Using a GP from outside of the district would incur additional travelling expenses and potentially time, particularly as appointments were only available at specified times. However, using an individual's own GP had the advantage that the practice already had the driver's medical history.</p> <p>Currently the Council's Licence condition specified that a medical examination must be completed by the individual's own GP.</p> <p>The Chairman enquired how much a medical examination cost in the district. Those in attendance stated that they ranged between £96 - £110.</p> | | |
| <p>Irrespective of whether the medical examination was with an individual's own GP or another firm, the driver had to sign to confirm that the information they had provided to the GP was correct.</p> | <p>The consensus appeared to be that the trade wished for there to be flexibility in the licence condition which allowed a Driver choice as to where a medical examination was undertaken. This would require a change to the Council's Licence condition and therefore a report would be presented to the Licensing Committee for determination/consultation.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 11 – Wheelchair Training</p> <p>The Licensing Officer (Enforcement) stated that she had attended a MIDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training session which had been delivered by Sandra Collin, Fencabs Manager, who was a registered trainer for MIDAS.</p> <p>The training covers both theory and practical exercises regarding disability awareness, wheelchair handling, wheelchair restraints, use of vehicle tail lift and minibus driving skills.</p> <p>Drivers undergo an examination and a driving assessment which they must pass before being issued with the certificate enabling them to undertake County Council education school contracts.</p> <p>The Licensing Officer (Enforcement) had found the training to be both interesting and thorough and very relevant to school contract and routine hackney carriage / private hire work.</p> | | |
| <p>In response to a question, Ms Collin explained that vehicles undertaking County Council education school contracts had to be rear loading, not side loading.</p> <p>Ms Collin confirmed that all Fencabs drivers had received the MIDAS training.</p> | <p>In response to a question, it was explained that initially the Disability Discrimination Act stated that all licensed vehicles should be disability accessible. However, no particular type of vehicle was specified.</p> <p>The Act later specified that certain authorities would need to</p> | |

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| No drivers in attendance at the meeting knew of a situation where a disabled person could not access their licensed vehicles. | implement a policy where all licensed vehicles should be a certain specification. However, due to the size of ECDC a policy was not required. If the Council did implement a policy it would need to be reasonable and realistic for the needs of the district. | |
| One driver reported that he had a wheelchair adapted vehicle which had only been used once and therefore he did not consider it to be an economically viable purchase. | | |
| Other Issues Raised at the Meeting: | | |
| <p>Plate Return and Renewal and Driver Renewals</p> <p>Drivers were urged to ensure renewal applications were submitted in good time for both plates and driver renewals and not to leave renewal applications to the last minute. This would be greatly appreciated as the Licensing Team were currently short staffed.</p> <p>It was also requested that all expired plates were returned to the Council within 7 days.</p> <p>If a driver was not renewing a plate then the vehicle stickers and internal plate number card must also be returned to the Council.</p> | | |
| <p>Inspection and Testing of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles</p> <p>All vehicle licences granted by the Council were valid for one year for vehicles less than 3 years old and 6 months where vehicles are more than 3 years old.</p> <p>It was stated that this policy was unfair as every car had to undergo an emissions test every 6 months and that there was currently no incentive for drivers to use new vehicles.</p> <p>If vehicle licences could be granted yearly this would save the driver money.</p> <p>Drivers had to maintain their vehicles because if they didn't it would ultimately cost them more in the long run as well as for public safety reasons.</p> <p>There should be a discount</p> | <p>The age of a vehicle determined how often it was tested.</p> <p>Drivers were encouraged to submit ideas or issues in writing to the licensing team as they had firsthand knowledge. Unless issues were raised they could not be considered.</p> | |

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| <p>available to drivers with a vehicle that was less than 3 years old, especially if the vehicle was adapted for wheelchair use, and discounts available for vehicles with low emissions.</p> <p>Alternatively a policy could be introduced where vehicles would not be licensed if they were a certain age.</p> <p>Frustration was expressed as the cost of a vehicle plate had significantly risen from £75 to £150 without any consultation with the trade.</p> | | |
| <p>Hackney Carriage Fares Increase Proposals</p> <p>A number of drivers had submitted a proposal for amendments to the taxi tariff. However, it was not felt that this proposal had been adequately considered by the Committee.</p> <p>The trade had only been given one day notice of the meeting where this was considered.</p> <p>The difference between Rate 1 and Rate 2 of the proposed new tariff for the first mile was 50p, which was pointless.</p> <p>A fourth tariff was proposed and it was noted that some meters would not be able to accommodate another tariff.</p> | <p>The Chairman explained that all Licensing Committee meetings were open to the public. There was no intention of withholding information from the trade. The results of the consultation and mediation process regarding the proposed Hackney Carriage Fares will be presented to the Licensing Committee on 9 October 2013 for a final decision. The dates of all future Licensing Committee meetings were available on the Council's website and would be included within the notes of this meeting. It was noted that if there was insufficient business on the agenda the meeting was cancelled.</p> <p>The Licensing Officer (Enforcement) had been informed that the taximeters in use within the district would be able to accommodate an additional tariff and that there were very few 'old style' taximeters now in operation.</p> <p>The Licensing Committee agenda was published and available to view on the Council's website 5 clear</p> | <p>The dates of the remaining Licensing Committee meetings for this municipal year are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 9 October 2013 • Wednesday 13 November 2013 • Wednesday 11 December 2013 • Wednesday 22 January 2014 • Wednesday 12 February 2014 • Wednesday 12 March 2014 • Wednesday 9 April 2014 • Wednesday 21 May 2014 |

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| <p>If someone wanted to speak at the Licensing Committee meeting this would require pre-registration the day before the meeting.</p> | <p>working days before the meeting.</p> <p>This is correct and a report was being presented to the next Licensing Committee on revisions to its public speaking scheme.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 3 – Newmarket Racecourse – Item Resumed from earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>Gemma Charrington, Head of Operations at the Newmarket Racecourse explained that she had been in post for nearly 2 years. John Gutierrez was the Traffic Manager for CSP who Newmarket Racecourse contracted this work to.</p> <p>Since being in post Ms Charrington explained that she had spoken to hackney carriage firms, particularly the smaller companies in Newmarket, and revised arrangements for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire route and pick up points had been instigated.</p> <p>Ms Charrington invited comments/discussion from those in attendance at the meeting.</p> | | |
| <p>Which district is the July Racecourse situated?</p> | <p>The July Racecourse was situated within East Cambridgeshire district. The Rowley Mile Racecourse was situated within Suffolk. The location of the boundary between East Cambridgeshire and Suffolk was explained.</p> | |
| <p>Is there a Hackney Carriage Rank at the July Racecourse?</p> | <p>There are Hackney Carriage Ranks at both the July and Rowley Mile Racecourses. These are owned by the Newmarket Racecourse and situated on Newmarket Racecourse land.</p> <p>Newmarket Racecourse would welcome East Cambridgeshire licensed vehicles to the July Racecourse, particularly as the local firms struggled to service demand at peak times.</p> | |
| <p>East Cambridgeshire licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles wanted to be able to ply for trade at both the July Racecourse, particularly as it was within East Cambridgeshire district, and at the Rowley Mile Racecourse. If Forest Heath licensed Hackney</p> | <p>There were separate Hackney Carriage and Private Hire route and pick up points at the two Racecourses. These were not managed.</p> <p>Before East Cambridgeshire licensed drivers plyed for trade at the Rowley Mile Racecourse</p> | |

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| Carriage vehicles were plying for trade in East Cambridgeshire district then there should also be reciprocal arrangements – there were currently two sets of rules. | Ms Charrington wanted to hold a meeting with Forest Heath licensed drivers as she did not want relations damaged. Ms Charrington expected Forest Heath firms to be amenable as they struggled to cope with the demand at peak times. | |
| Suggested that Newmarket Racecourse issued permits to prevent potential problems between drivers when East Cambridgeshire licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles arrived to ply for trade at the July Racecourse. | Issuing permits would have resource implications. It was re-emphasised that the ranks did not belong to anyone other than Newmarket Racecourse. In conclusion Ms Charrington stated that she was grateful for the opportunity to attend this meeting, particularly as she had not been aware of these issues, and had been puzzled at the lack of East Cambridgeshire licensed vehicles at the Racecourse. | |
| An East Cambridgeshire licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver had been informed by a Forest Heath licensed driver that Forest Heath licensed drivers had jurisdiction at the Racecourses. | It was agreed that a meeting between Newmarket Racecourse, Forest Heath licensed drivers, East Cambridgeshire licensed drivers and the respective licensing officers would be arranged to discuss the issue of plying for trade at the Rowley Mile Racecourse. Ms Charrington stated that the names and telephone numbers of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire companies in East Cambridgeshire would be made available on the Newmarket Racecourse website if details were emailed to her at the following email address: gemma.charrington@thejockeyclub.co.uk Gemma Charrington Regional Head of Operations - | |
| Is permits were unviable then a letter of permission from Ms Charrington was requested which drivers could carry with them should any issues arise. | | |

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| | East Newmarket Racecourses Commercial Office Rowley Mile Racecourse Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 0TF Tel: 01638 675306 Mob: 07855 410686 | |

The next Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade Meeting will take place on Wednesday 5th March 2014 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber at East Cambridgeshire District Council Offices.