

# TAXI FORUM

## Notes of Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Present (Taxi Trade):** David Williams, Colin Jones, Tony Blews, Mick Skellern

**(SBC Officers):** Julie Wallace, Katie McKinney, Bryony Williams, Leo Parkes

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b><u>PART A</u></b></p> <p><b>1) Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>Introductions were made – Bryony introduced to the Trade.</p> <p><b>2) Taxi Marshal Update</b></p> <p>JDW reiterated that Licensing as a service aren't and have never been the provider of the Taxi Marshals and this was the Council's Community Safety Team. That team have withdrawn their side of the funding, as there have been no ASB issues reported and knife crime was deemed a higher priority. Unfortunately even though JDW has stated our case for the marshals, there can be no promises made at the moment as to whether the marshals will return.</p> <p><b>3) Lost Property</b></p> <p>As Stafford Police Station is closing and they are no longer taking lost property, JDW advised the trade that if any hackneys (mainly HCs as PH vehicles will normally hand in any property to the operator) do find any lost property to hand anything into our offices. Licensing Team will be leaving evidence bags on reception with labels on them, detailing driver name, journey details, etc.</p> <p>JDW asked CJ to spread the word about this and put this on the Forum. MS asked what would happen if the property was unclaimed, and JDW advised all that will consult our Legal team and put in place a proper process in case this occurs.</p> <p>Also, it was pointed out that the drivers need to be checking the vehicles after each journey to ensure nothing is left behind.</p> <p><b>4) Photos on renewal</b></p> <p>Drivers need to make sure photographs are up to date; this will be featured in the Policy as an amendment.</p> <p>The confusion regarding the length of a driver who is over 65 was also discussed and Licensing confirmed that we have changed the letter to reflect there is no choice in length for over 65s.</p>	

		ACTION
	<p><b>5) Taxi &amp; Private Hire Vehicle Licensing : Protecting Users</b></p> <p>New statutory guidance has been issued to Councils regarding protecting vulnerable children and adults resulting from the issues in Rotherham. Taxis have been deemed as a high risk environment for the public. JDW advised the trade that she is going to incorporate some of this guidance into the updated Policy, which will mean this will have to go back out to consultation.</p> <p>The guidance advises Councils to review the 'fit and proper' test, and to clamp down further in instances of doubts over a person's character, in the view of protecting the public.</p> <p>New 'Clean Air Zone' guidance has also been linked to the above document. JDW announced to the group that SBC, along with NULBC and Stoke on Trent Council, have been successful in winning approx. £780k to spend on electric charging points across the Borough. It is thought that approx. 8-10 charging points are to be put in primarily for taxi vehicles.</p> <p>This is not mandatory at the moment, as the points need to be put in place and then this will be reviewed.</p> <p>MS asked where the points were likely to be sited; JDW advised that they can't be on ranks due to logistics issues, however border boundaries were likely spots, as well as supermarkets.</p> <p>JDW reiterated that the electric vehicles survey that was sent out to the trade a few months ago was an important piece of feedback and this will be used to ensure the charging points are in the right places.</p> <p>CCTV was then discussed by the group. The guidance suggests that it is pushing for all Councils to make proper CCTV systems in taxis mandatory. The Council would become data controller under this new system which is a big issue.</p> <p>The trade asked for recommendations for CCTV systems, as a few members of the trade asked re dash cams (which aren't acceptable forms of CCTV and were discussed at the last Forum). <b>JDW to invite CCTV system providers to the next Forum.</b></p> <p><b>6) Future Forum Dates</b> confirmed.</p> <p><b><u>PART B Open Forum</u></b></p> <p>DW asked regarding drivers with medical exemptions who have WAVs and whether they are still required to help customers with luggage. The issue re being fit and proper and being 'medically fit' was discussed.</p> <p>A report of a driver who obstructed a passenger's photo as he was going to be reported to the Council was debated. JDW reiterated that we need reports and evidence in order to investigate non-compliant drivers and that SBC will continue to monitor drivers who are allegedly refusing fares.</p> <p>A report of a driver who charged passengers £60 to Little Haywood was</p>	<p>JDW</p>

		ACTION
	<p>also debated, and this led to a discussion on mystery shoppers.  <b>JDW to arrange this in the immediate future.</b></p> <p>CJ requested a lounge area at the Bridge Street rank.</p> <p>MS asked what was happening with the rank at South Walls. JDW stated the aim is to extend the rank and for the vehicles to go down South Walls towards Mill Bank. Unfortunately, the County Council are yet to make a decision on this and JDW has escalated this to RJS. SBC needs a County Councillor on board to get things moving.</p> <p>CJ mentioned an issue regarding the Police and the public parking on the corner by Peppers and blocking the exit out of the taxi rank on Bridge Street. <b>JDW to mention this at the next LRBG and will speak to Barbara in CCTV.</b></p> <p>JDW reiterated County Council should have the white list (re South Walls camera) and any fines regarding Hackney Carriages should be sent back and cancelled. TB stated Westside had had an issue with a couple of their vehicles receiving fines from the new camera.</p> <p>CJ brought up the fact that there are no unloading bays in the town and DW also stated that he has had issues with dropping customers off and that parking enforcement officers have threatened to issue tickets.</p> <p>JDW reported that extending vehicle life is being considered, as investing in proper wheelchair accessible vehicles with full conversions is expensive and to some, it is not financially viable to put these types of vehicles on under the current 8 year limit.  JDW will let drivers know when will consult on this as this will be an amendment to the policy and it is possible that certain drivers will be invited to a working group to discuss technical details in the near future. The current limit of 4 years when putting on a vehicle to be licensed was also discussed to extend this to 5 years.</p> <p>MS asked regarding the smaller cars that have been licensed previously and JDW stated that some small cars have been licensed; however SBC will be implementing into the vehicle inspections a more stringent 'size' element. KM and JDW reported that we did, as per the last Forum, contact the company mentioned but they weren't able to provide a wheelchair for use in inspections. <b>DW and CJ to enquire regarding obtaining wheelchair for this use.</b></p> <p>TB asked when the fares will be going up. JDW stated that we can't take any action on this without a formal written request from the trade.</p> <p>LP mentioned that the driver assessment is now part of the new driver application process. The Team also stated that if any complaints regarding existing drivers are received, or if existing drivers receive a</p>	<p>JDW</p> <p>JDW</p> <p>Trade</p>

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	<p>number of penalty points, those drivers will be asked to undertake this assessment.</p> <p>CJ brought up the situation in Stone re Lucky Seven and the lack of SBC hackney carriage vehicles. JDW reiterated to the Trade that more of a presence is required to force their way back in, and JDW will continue to notify if needed on night time visits but can only do so much without the Trade's full support.</p> <p>DW mentioned the complaint that was received about him and the Policy's dress code and asked if he could know more details. JDW is unable to provide these details.</p>	
	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>22nd May 2019, 12pm– Craddock Room, SBC</b></p>	
	JDW to invite CCTV system providers to the next Forum.	<b>JDW</b>
	JDW to mention parking issue on Bridge Street at the next LRBG and will speak to Barbara in CCTV	<b>JDW</b>
	HC drivers to have more of a presence in Stone going forward	<b>(ongoing)</b>
	Mystery shoppers to be used in future operations	<b>JDW</b>
	Wheelchair providers to be contacted for use in inspections	<b>Trade</b>