

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FORUM Meeting

Venue: City Hall Library Room

Agenda: 23rd January 2020

Attendee	Representing
Cllr Ruth Pickersgill (RP)	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
Jonathan Martin (JM)	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
Sarah Flower (SF)	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
Stephen Pick (SP)	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
Patrick Masih (PM)	<i>Chair – BBLTA</i>
Alan Dyte (AD)	<i>BPAC</i>
Gary O'Neil (GO)	<i>Private Hire Driver</i>
Mahad Jama (MJ)	<i>HC Trade Representative</i>
Steve Lohia (SL)	<i>Prestige Cars</i>
Saif Hussain(SH)	<i>Hackney Carriage Driver</i>
Eugenie Teasley (ET)	<i>Uber</i>
JJ Asante (JA)	<i>Uber</i>
Fred Ali (FA)	<i>Hackney Carriage Driver</i>
Desmond Broster (DB)	<i>VCars</i>

1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

- Apologies
Patrick Quinton – Taxi Compliance Officer

2. Minutes from last meeting

- Minutes were agreed as a true record.
- Previous Actions

SP to look at Watershed area as this has not yet been actioned. Complete by end of February – **Action A**.

SP to walk around Centre with PM as still previously agreed. – **Action B**

- JM – to request an officer from Parking Enforcement to attend Forum in respect of enforcement action at Greggs rank. **Action C**
- Trade to raise awareness of 2 vehicle rank outside Greggs. PM advised that the Trade are now aware and not using this rank. RP commented that she has driven past on numerous occasions and found that Hackney Carriage vehicles are still using parking outside of the Hippodrome and not using the rank in the evenings. It was brought up that drivers sometimes have to wait up to an hour for a job. We will now refer to the new rank as the “Greggs” rank for clarification as to the location.
- BPAC to make comments on consultation re disabled access at BRI rank. The consultation had closed without any comments or representations. A colleague of SP had emailed but had received no response, SF to provide SP with AD email address.
- Taxi conference review notes have not yet been finalised and must come to next meeting JM **Action D**

3. Terms of Reference

- Members of the Forum were reminded of the Terms of Reference RP mentioned that it was not the intention of this Forum for disabled people to play a significant role and be full members of the Forum as accessibility issues are meant to be raised at the Public Transport Equality and Safety Group (chaired by BCC and SARI). AD commented that he was originally invited to this Forum to help with the design of taxis etc and help disabled people with their access into vehicles.
- PM felt that it was a good idea for AD to remain part of this Forum as all HCV are wheelchair accessible and try to support disabled people . RP agreed that we would formally co-opt BPAC to the Taxi Forum.

4. Transport/Taxi Ranks Update

- The consultation for the ranks at BRI, Greggs, Baldwin St and Avon St ran from 16th December 2019 to 17 January 2020 and there were no objections. AD was

invited to the BRI to see the transport officer and he was happy that as long as the disabled parking was not penalised.

- JM clarified that the BRI has 2 spaces, Greggs has 5 spaces (which also has had the time extended to start from 16:00), Baldwin St has 3 spaces and Avon St has 18 spaces. RP stated that these ranks need to be promoted which would be done via Destination Bristol and the next newsletter. She said there also needs to be a media campaign

PM advised that a lot of work has been done in the past to publicise ranks, however it was felt that the ranks were not being used due to PHV parking there. JM explained there would be enforcement action taking place on ranks and also outside of the Hippodrome and Denmark Street, ANPR would be used and tickets will be issued the same as they are in respect of bus lane fines.

GO said that South Gloucestershire Council have traffic wardens to enforce their ranks why can't BCC do the same. RP maintained that BCC do have traffic wardens but they are not always available into the night time, however, we are looking into taxi marshalling again. It is important to remember that enforcement is always reactive, during the past year 2756 bus lane tickets have been issued, 290 of these have been cancelled on appeal and this is mixture of all vehicles that have been issued with PCN's. SL felt that the majority of the issues are being caused by South Glos PHD not BCC and he is fed up with South Glos doing what they want with no implications. His view is that BCC drivers are getting no support and South Glos don't want to know either.

- RP is aware that PHV numbers have gone up in South Glos but Bristol CC is not responsible. The Council needs to look at the recommended National Licensing Standards and the Government need to set a timescale to implement them, and it is important that drivers lobby MP's as BCC cannot influence this GO insisted that he heard that the National Standards would be in place within 6 months but this has not happened, JM confirmed that he did not recall seeing anything regarding timescales before and this was not in the Queens speech, but reiterated that the changes cannot come from local authorities. All BCC can do is to help the Trade but explaining where to take representations to South Glos Council and RP can bring MP's together to form a discussion so they can lobby the Government .
- DB felt that this has been going on for some time now alongside the IOL and LGA and we are still no further on. There has to be a meeting with all other authorities to draw a line under this and move forward.
- PM expressed some concerns regarding the traffic lights on Baldwin Street being slower changing on one set than the other which has been causing accidents. SP is aware of this and has arranged a site meeting with colleagues.
- There was a discussion around vehicles not being able to turn right into Temple Meads at Temple Gate from South Bristol. SP commented that the Temple Circus

scheme is going to be re-evaluated and they are trying to accommodate everyone.

5. Policy Updates

There are 4 items being brought to Public Safety and Protection Committee on 18th February 2020. Members will be asked if Licensing can commence consultation on the following:

- **DBS Update Service** - To amend the fit and proper persons policy to require drivers and applicants to sign up to the online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service.

Currently, the Licensing Team contact applicants approximately three months prior to expiry to advise they need to submit their DBS check promptly and that if this check has not been completed we may not be able to renew their licence due to delays in the turnaround time of DBS applications from the DBS.

For an annual subscription of £13 applicants/ drivers can register their DBS certificate with the DBS update service within 30 days of its issue or applicants can sign up provided DBS receive their application form within 28 days of signing up. Provided that the annual subscription is maintained their DBS certificate becomes 'portable' and can be taken from role to role within the same workforce

This will

- Save time for drivers completing applications
 - Give drivers the ability to take the DBS Certificate from role to role within the same workforce
 - Allow drivers to be in control of their DBS Certificate
 - Ensure less delay with applicants awaiting DBS applications to be processed and certificates being issued
- **Card Machine Payments in Vehicles** - The proposal is that
 - a) Any hackney carriage must have a card payment facility to accept debit/credit and contactless card payments

- b) The card payment facility will be stored in a transparent plastic holder which will be affixed so that the card machine is always in prominent view of the customer
- c) The card machine must be stored in the holder at all time when the driver is available for hire.
- d) All vehicles must also display the issued card facility signage that should also be affixed to the partition of the hackney carriage so that it is prominently on view of passengers.

This means:

- a. Card payments would lead to an easier and quicker method for customers to pay taxis fares, While stopping the need for customers to ask Hackney Carriage drivers to stop off at cash machines if they need extra cash to pay a fare
- b. Having a card payment facility for passengers would improve public safety for Hackney Carriage customers in Bristol. Customers would not have the need to stop and use cash machines late at night and therefore reduce the risk of robbery or other associated crimes
- c. This technology can be beneficial if a customer were to lose their cash and debit cards. The customer can if they wish use their smartphone device to pay a fare as if using a contactless debit card. This could stop the need for vulnerable people walking home at night and putting themselves in a potentially unsafe situation.

This policy was suggested due to proposals from BBTLA at a previous meeting. A number of concerns were raised including that this would not work for HCV proprietors due to some companies renting out their vehicles and when the end of the journey was reached the passenger may not have a signal on their phone to pay for the journey. *Was this not that the pay machine would not have a signal not the passenger?* JM confirmed that there would be solutions around this and there are very few places in Bristol where you cannot get a signal. ET mentioned that this had been implemented by other Councils and the wording was changed to 'cashless payment facility' to cover a wider range of devices.

RP commented that from a customer's perspective this is a good way forward as more and more people are using card payments rather than cash.

- **Private Hire Operator Policy**

The introduction of a Private Hire Operator Policy and amendments to conditions for Private Hire Operators will introduce a number of requirements for Operators to enhance the safety of the public. These requirements include policies in respect of training, complaints, Fit and Proper Person policy for staff working on behalf of the operator, information that shall be held by the Operator and information that should be disclosed to the Council.

The current standards for a Private Hire Operator mean that a driver convicted of an offence could work for another PHO, this policy will prevent that. DB welcomed the opportunity to talk to other operators and felt that there should be a quick reporting route without undue delay. PH operators present welcomed the policy.

- **Tint Policy**

The proposal to amend a Private Hire vehicle policy and vehicle inspection standard so that tints are allowed in the rear windows of private hire vehicles. For clarification this is only in relation to factory fitted tints much are fitted as standard when the vehicle is purchased, and not to allow film tints.

JM advised the current policy is costing drivers a lot of money to replace the tints, and causing them to seek to be licensed elsewhere but we are aware of the current position and recognise the impact on disability groups. He went on to say that he recently met with Alun Davies from the Pocklington Trust who stated that he would consider tints on vehicles in Bristol but he would prefer to know that the vehicle that he was booking was a BCC vehicle and not South Gloucestershire.

GO felt that there was no point to a tint policy consultation as South Glos will do whatever they want anyway in respect of their vehicles. JM confirmed that it is not true that PHV's are going from Bristol to other authorities; a lot of drivers who were previously licensed by Welsh authorities and Transport for London are going to South Glos.

DB raised concerns that 50% of the population are female who want to be seen in vehicles. As part of the consultation it is felt that s Transport Services should be approached.

6. Issues from Hackney Carriage Trade

- PM advised security guards from SWX have been parked on the rank outside of the premises and HCV have to park behind them. **Action E** NET to visit premises to advise staff should not be parking on the rank.
- GO had concerns that Cllr Kye Dudd and Marvin Rees mentioned at the Taxi Conference in November that they would find ways to advantage Bristol taxi drivers in favour of S Glos, but the next day it was mentioned how much to charge vehicles to come into the Centre zone. He said it was important to give an incentive to Bristol drivers to stay in Bristol, currently there is none.
- RP commented that we know there is a problem and we are doing all we can but that the reason behind the Clean Air Zone is the Government have insisted some local authorities with the most pollution do this and all cities are having to look at air quality, across Bristol at least 300 people die annually due to poor air quality.

JM went on to say that BCC acknowledges the problem with South Glos. BCC is the first authority to review standards for vehicle policies knowing the air quality consultation was coming into force. Drivers will be able to drive without charges in the Clean Air Zone if your vehicle already complies to Euro 6 so we are way ahead of other authorities.

- PM commented that they have been advised that they will be charged if entering the Clean Air Zone. JM confirmed that as Clean Air Zone implementation approaches, more vehicles will be nearing their 10 year life limit meaning they will require replacement anyway and will therefore be exempt.

7. Issues from Private Hire Trade

- DB asked that in regards to the private hire conditions, could any reference to employment be removed. JM agreed.
- DB asked that it be noted that the standards that BCC have in place are good standards, but we always talk about safeguarding, but this includes ensuring that your vehicle is recognised and marked up accordingly. Drivers can go and work wherever they wish but we need to make it safe for customers to identify the vehicle.
- JM recognises that there may be advantages for permanent markings on vehicles; some vehicles have been spotted with 3 or 4 different operator names on their vehicles.
- GO raised concerns that there is nowhere to drop passengers on Whiteladies Road and Baldwin Street, sometimes passengers have a far way to walk and this is difficult if you have passengers with a disability. JM pointed out that it is the driver's obligation to comply with the law with regard to parking and there can't be designated areas.
- AD commented that many drivers may be unaware that it is a legal obligation to pick up disabled passengers; RP advised that this has been raised in the taxi newsletter and PM stated that there is a zero tolerance where HCD are concerned.

8. Fare Increase

JM is preparing a report on the proposals for an increase to go to Cllr Kye Dudd as Cabinet Lead on Transport prior to consultation with the Trade.

9. Taxi Cop Update

Members of the Forum will be aware that PC Quinton has a WhatsApp group in which he regularly provides updates. He will be trialling uploading videos which he feels may be more beneficial for drivers to learn from. RP has requested that a video be made available on how drivers should approach a visually impaired person – maybe working with AD. **Action F PQ**

10. AOB

- JM Test purchasing will be taking place with the assistance of disability and visual impairment groups, so this will be a warning to all drivers to please pass on this message that the Public Safety and Protection Committee take refusal of passengers in these areas very seriously.
- DB pointed out that we are very lucky in Bristol to have a Taxicop, especially in the way he treats everyone, and this is very good to see.
- SL asked if enforcement officers from South Gloucestershire Council work in BCC. RP said she will explore various options available to us to raise concerns with South Glos Council but BCC does not have any power over any other authority. However, anyone can attend a full Council meeting as they are public meetings and this matter can be raised directly by drivers with South Gloucestershire Council..
- JM pointed out that we are coming into the event season and asked that all drivers be mindful of the ranks etc around these events and adhere to the plans for the event.
- SH asked if there a minimum amount that can be taken on a card machine. To be confirmed.

11. Actions for next meeting:

Action Point	Matters arising	By Whom	Completed?
A	SP to look at Watershed area as this has not yet been actioned	SP	
B	SP to walk around PM as previously agreed	JM & PM	
C	Request an officer from Parking Enforcement to attend Forum in respect of enforcement action at Greggs rank	JM	
D	Taxi conference review notes to next meeting	JM	
E	NET to visit SWX and raise concerns regarding staff parking on HC rank	NET	
F	Video to be prepared showing drivers how to approach a visually impaired person	PQ	

Next meeting: 19 March 2020