

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor Iris Smith, Yaqoob Illahi, Mohammed Siddique Ahmed, Shakhail Ahmed, Julie and Antony Price, Lynne and Philip Cooper, Howard Bee, Jayne Day, Keith Ogden, Janet Brereton.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillor E Smith

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING – Howard Bee updated everyone on the following items:

Blue bins – after contacting the Council's Environmental Commercial Section, it would appear that this is a matter for LCC Highways. Howard Bee will be contacting the person responsible and will report back to a future meeting.

Additional Hackney Carriage Plates – since the criteria was set in April/May regarding the issue of the additional plates, it has come to the Council's notice that best practice requires us not to specify one particular vehicle. The criteria has been changed to allow any suitable wheelchair accessible vehicle that is new or with no more than 500 miles on the clock. The Licensing Section will be sending letters out regarding this early next week and will apologise to those who had already registered their interest. Discussion followed regarding the criteria being set to only allow a new vehicle.

Outdoor Drinking – the town centre strategy had now been approved and the next stage will be to look at a policy regarding outdoor seating areas etc. The Highway Authority will also be consulted.

3 TAXI RANK/SIGNAGE AT CLEVELAND STREET/ROAD TRAFFIC ORDER (Progress Report) - Janet Brereton explained that the deadline for objections to the re-designation of the Rank on High Street had passed without objections having been received. She said that the Highway Authority had ordered the necessary signs and she had been told that they should be in place by 28 November 2006 at the latest. Keith Ogden would be checking that they were in place. Janet Brereton has now had chance to update the panel on the position regarding the Road Traffic Order. It would appear that although the Police and the Highways Authority had been consulted, they had not yet replied and the relevant officer would be chasing them up. Yaqoob Illahi pointed out how frustrating the situation was. He also informed the panel that a member of staff from the Tut 'n' Shive parked at the night rank outside the public house and Keith Ogden agreed to speak to the new licensee of the premises about this.

4 AGE LIMITS ON VEHICLES – Keith Ogden pointed out that the position regarding age limits on vehicles had not changed, but the Council would be sticking strictly to no more than 7 years old for a purpose built hackney

carriage or 4 years old for a saloon type vehicle. He said that for an older vehicle to be considered it must be in exceptional condition for its age. The vehicle registration document and vehicle service record must be made available and the vehicle must be produced by appointment for inspection by the Licensing Section. A checklist for vehicles over age has been produced. If anyone wishes to have a copy, please contact the Licensing Section.

- 5 **USE OF ILLUMINATED SIGNS IN PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES** – Keith Ogden pointed out that one or two private hire vehicles have been using illuminated signs. It is one of the licence conditions that no signs should be used which appear to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage. Discussion followed regarding the use of roof signs on private hire vehicles in other neighbouring towns, but it was generally agreed that this was because they have a purpose-built hackney carriage fleet.
- 6 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE – WILL THERE BE A REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN FARES** – Keith Ogden asked whether the hackney carriage trade would be requesting an increase in fares. He reminded everyone that a request would have to go the Licensing and Safety Committee for consideration and if agreed would need to be advertised so it would take at least a couple of months for an increase to be put in place. Yaqoob Illahi, on behalf of the trade, said that he was not aware of any request, but would canvass the hackney carriage proprietors for their views.
- 7 **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (DDA)– RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRANSPORT PROVIDERS** – Keith Ogden reported that the government had recently included taxi and private hire companies as people who are responsible under the above Act. He pointed out that the act came into force at the beginning of December. Under the DDA it is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person. Discrimination is defined by Part 3 of the DDA as:
- Refusing or deliberately not providing a service to a disabled person because they are disabled.
 - Offering a service at a lower standard to a disabled person because of their disability
 - Offering a service on different terms to a disabled person because of their disability.
 - Failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person

Further information can be found on the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) website: www.drc-gb.org

Discussion followed and it was pointed out that whilst it was difficult to enforce, everyone concerned needed to be aware of the consequences if someone complained.

This led on to the subject of **TRAINING**. Keith Ogden explained that Preston City Council was now making it compulsory for all new drivers to have training in such matters. South Ribble and Chorley were also considering this option. A full discussion took place including the following points:

- Costs would be around £150 for four days of training
- National Private Hire Association is in favour of training
- A request was made for a syllabus for information and this is now attached.

It was agreed that this item would go back to the next meeting of the Licensing Liaison Panel in January with a view to including everyone's views and concerns on the proposals. The Licensing Section would make information available to help those concerned form their response. The report would go to Licensing and Safety Committee which is due to take place on 28 February 2007. Councillor Smith informed the panel that representatives from the private hire and hackney carriage trade would be able to attend.

- 8 **LEAVING HACKNEY CARRIAGES ON THE RANK UNATTENDED** – Keith Ogden reminded everyone that hackney carriage drivers should not leave their vehicles unattended. He accepted that there may be occasions when a driver would be away for a very short time, but it was not acceptable to park up on the rank. Once the necessary road traffic order was in place, anyone could be given a parking ticket for parking on the rank. Mohammed Ahmed pointed out that in Preston, there were designated parking areas set aside for hackney carriages.
- 9 **FEES/CRB CHECKS** – Keith Ogden informed everyone that the licence fees were due to increase from April 2007. He explained that the increases would be advertised and that there would be a period for objections. Yaqoob Illahi asked if it was possible to have a breakdown of the budget figures and Howard Bee said that if anyone makes a Freedom of Information request that information would be provided. Keith Ogden also went on to explain that the increase to the fee for a renewal private hire/hackney carriage driver's licence was so that the three-yearly CRB checks could go ahead without having to charge individual drivers. He also reminded everyone that if any drivers who had recently had a CRB check by LCC brought them in we would update our records.
- 10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS –**
- Councillor Iris Smith pointed out that there had been a recent press release from the Council reminding the public to use properly licensed vehicles over the festive period. Those present had seen the article. Howard Bee informed everyone that the Licensing Section had been asked to be represented on a smoke-free legislation working group. He went on to say that the implementation date could be as early as 4 June 2007, although this date was unconfirmed. Janet Brereton was attending the working group and would feedback to the next panel. There being no other business, Councillor Mrs Smith thanked everyone for their attendance.
- 11 The next meeting will take place on **Monday 29 January at 10.30am** in the **Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley.**