

LICENSING LIAISON PANEL – 29 January 2007

PRESENT Councillor Iris Smith, Councillor Edward Smith, Howard Bee, Janet Brereton, Keith Ogden, Shakail Ahmed, Yaqoob Illahi, Julie and Antony Price, Brian Crompton, Abdul Manan, David Hamer, Peter Verhaege, Mohammed Siddique Ahmed.

1 **MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING** –

Blue Bin Update – Howard Bee explained that he had spoken to Lancashire County Council regarding the problem with the bins in High Street. There was an issue regarding enforcement and he was waiting to hear further. He understood that the situation had improved slightly in that the bins were now lockable, but a panel member pointed out that they could still be pushed into the road and cause an accident.

2 **ADDITIONAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE PLATES** – Howard Bee informed everyone that the dates had now been set for interviews, namely the 19 and 20 February 2007. Thirty-six people had been invited to interview. The three councillors sitting on the panel would make the decision and there would be no officer involvement in the decision. All questions will be based on the criteria and a scoring system may be used so that the process of selection is transparent and it will be possible to show why an applicant has been successful or unsuccessful.

3 **TAXI RANK/SIGNAGE** – Janet Brereton updated the panel following a meeting with Legal on 9 January 2007. It had been agreed that the signs on the rank should be “No waiting except taxis” and “No stopping except taxis”. This was so that the St Catherine’s Hospice Shop would not be penalised, but the necessary signs and yellow lines should stop members of the public parking on the rank. It had been noted where the double yellow lines needed to be repainted and the Legal Section would be contacting Lancashire County Council requesting the signs and the yellow lines. The Licensing Section will continue to monitor the progress of this. Keith Ogden pointed out that hackney carriage drivers need to be aware that they would not be able to park/leave vehicles unattended on the hackney rank, although toilet breaks are necessary. The Licensing Section would be able to speak to Parkwise on this matter. A panel member pointed out that there is very little signage to point out where the taxi rank is and it was agreed that Howard Bee take this forward to the next Town Centre Working Party.

4 **UPDATE ON DRIVER TRAINING** – Keith Ogden informed everyone that a report would be presented to the Licensing and Safety Committee on Wednesday 28 February 2007 (time to be confirmed) regarding driver training. A representative from Runshaw College would be attending to give a presentation of the BTEC course and a representative from Preston City Council who had been involved in introducing it in Preston. Representatives of the hackney carriage/private hire trade would be able to attend and put forward their views. A copy of the report would be

circulated as soon as possible. A general discussion followed regarding the cost of the training, possible future savings on insurance and raising the profile of drivers.

- 5 DRIVERS' MEDICALS** – Keith Ogden explained that following an article in a recent Private Hire Monthly, he had contacted a medical firm offering medical examinations anywhere in the country at a considerably reduced cost, namely around £40. The DVLA accepted such medicals for PSV and HGV purposes. Keith Ogden said that he would be taking a report to the Licensing and Safety Committee on 28 February 2007 which would ask the Members to consider relaxing the condition which states that medicals must be carried out by a family GP. Keith Ogden understood that there is a centre within reasonable travelling distance. All those present felt that any move to make applying for a badge less expensive was a good idea.
- 6 CRB ONLINE** – Janet Brereton informed everyone that the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) had recently launched an online service that allowed applicants to track their application. Applicants would need their form reference number which would be given to them, along with details on how to search. The website address for an online search is www.crb.gov.uk
- Go to 'Quick Links' (at top of home page)
 - select – 'Online Tracking'
 - Go to end of page, select 'Click here to use online tracking'
 - Enter details as requested
- 7 SMOKEFREE CHORLEY - UPDATE** – Janet Brereton explained that she was a representative on the work group. She had attended a smoke-free work group last December to look at the ways the Council should approach the legislation (which comes into force on 1 July 2007) and how to publicise it. There is a website www.smokefreeengland.co.uk for anyone requiring further information. Howard Bee handed round a card which he had picked up in Preston which could be incorporated with information about the taxis and advice regarding stopping smoking. Concerns were raised about potential trouble from customers who refused to put out cigarettes and it was mentioned that this might form part of the case for Taxi Marshalls being made available at the Rank. There was also a discussion about a possible Taxi Watch scheme, similar to that of Pub Watch which banned well-known troublemakers. From the discussion that followed it was agreed that the following items should be taken forward to the next Smokefree Chorley work group which was due to take place on Wednesday 31 January 2007.

Enforcement issues/tolerance/lead in period

Provision of information about smoking shelters – how to meet all criteria.

Benches outside drinking areas

- 8 ROAD SAFETY ACT 2006**– Keith Ogden explained that under current legislation, if the Council suspends a person's licence to drive hackney/private hire vehicles for whatever reason, that person has 21

days to appeal and during that 21 days is able to drive. If an appeal is made within the 21 days, that person is able to continue to drive until the appeal is heard. However, under the new Road Safety Act 2006, the Council would be able to make it immediate if necessary. This would be at the Committee's discretion and be used where public safety is at risk. The second change was the way 'chauffeur driven' firms who have contracts of not less than 7 days operate. This part of the act would be repealed and anyone providing a vehicle and driver would need to be licensed. These changes are to come into force between 1 May 2007 and 30 November 2007. Keith Ogden pointed out that funeral cars and wedding cars would still be exempt.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Best Bar None Initiative– A panel member raised the Best Bar None Initiative and Howard Bee said that a meeting was taking place at South Ribble Borough Council on Monday 5 February 2007 regarding rolling this out. Janet Brereton was attending this meeting on Howard Bee's behalf and would report back.

9.2 Door Staff – A panel member raised issues regarding licensed premises with no door staff and Pub Watch membership. This matter was discussed and it was agreed that Councillor Mrs Smith and Howard Bee speak to the police regarding this.

9.3 Café Culture – A panel member asked about the Street Cafe Policy that was being drawn up to create a vibrant night-time economy. It was understood that this was in the process of being consulted on. Other matters were raised concerning the Supermarket Pricing Policy which allowed supermarkets to sell alcohol at a loss and it was suggested that this was a matter for the Member of Parliament. It was agreed that Howard Bee take this matter forward to the Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services, Andy Docherty, as it may be an area the Alcohol Harm Reduction Officer would be involved in.

9.4 Traffic Lights at Hartwood Roundabout - A panel member asked whether it would possible to have the traffic lights at the Hartwood Roundabout operating on a part time basis as was the case at other major junctions. He pointed out that at 4am, there seemed little benefit in having the traffic lights in operation. Janet Brereton was asked to contact Lancashire County Council to ask about the possibility of this.

9.5 Decking outside No 15s– A panel member asked about the decking outside No. 15s and a previous email was read out. This matter would be addressed by the Street Café Policy in due course.

9.6 Benches outside drinking areas – This matter will be taken to the forthcoming Smokefree Work Group.

9.7 On-Street Drinking Ban – The merits of this were discussed, but it was generally thought that the Council had to show why a drinking ban would be beneficial in a specific area.

9.8 Overseas Applicants for Hackney/Private Hire Licences – A panel member asked for clarification on the policy for the above. The policy states that if an applicant has resided in the United Kingdom for less than five years or has spent six continuous months or more overseas he must

produce evidence of a criminal record check from the country or countries in which he has previously resided. Where the evidence is not in English it must be translated into English by an accepted translation body.

9.9 One Stop Shop – A panel member raised concerns about the length of time some hackney/private hire applications are taking to process.

Howard Bee noted these concerns and explained that he was attending a meeting that afternoon to discuss these issues and he would report back.

9.10 Town Centre Forum – A panel member asked for the date of the next Town Centre Forum. This is 7 March 2007 in the Lancastrian Room, Town Hall at 5.45pm

10 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** – the next meeting will take place on Monday 2 April 2007 at 10.30am in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley.