

LICENSING LIAISON PANEL – 2 April 2007

PRESENT Councillor Iris Smith, Councillor Edward Smith, Keith Ogden, Janet Brereton, Shakail Ahmed, Yaqoob Illahi, Julie and Antony Price, Ann Clitheroe, Mohammed Siddique Ahmed, Margaret Redshaw.

- 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO ‘NEW FACES’** – Keith Ogden explained that an invitation had been sent out to all Private Hire Operators to attend the Licensing Liaison Panel. Unfortunately, no new panel members attended.
- 2 UPDATE ON LICENSING SECTION** - Keith Ogden informed everyone that Howard Bee (Licensing Manager) had left for another post and that Keith would be Acting Licensing Manager for the time being.
- 3 MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING –**
 - 3.1 Traffic Lights at Hartwood Roundabout** – Janet Brereton passed around a reply from Lancashire County Council, which set out the reasons why the traffic lights at the Hartwood Roundabout could not be made part time.
 - 3.2 Signage in Town Centre** - following this matter being raised at the last licensing liaison panel, Janet Brereton had taken the matter to the Town Centre Working Party. She had been informed that there is to be an audit of all the signs within the town centre to see what is required.
 - 3.3 One stop shop – length of time taken to process some applications** – this matter had been raised at the last licensing liaison panel and Howard Bee had met with the manager over the One Stop Shop. It was felt that additional training would be of benefit and this had been arranged to place during April. However, the situation would continue to be monitored and be brought up again if necessary.
 - 3.4 Pub Watch membership** – this item was deferred as there was no one present for this discussion. It would be placed on the agenda for the next Licensing Liaison Panel.
 - 3.5 Café Culture** – deferred as above.
- 4 LICENCE FEES – INCREASE FROM 1 APRIL 2007** – Keith Ogden passed round the new licence fees showing the increase. He explained the reasons behind the increases. Discussion followed. A panel member asked about the amount outstanding for the unmet demand survey. He pointed out that as 6 licences out of the 7 additional hackney carriages had been issued, there was additional revenue from that which could be used to offset the survey fees. Keith Ogden pointed out that those licences had actually been issued in the last financial year, namely 2006/07. Keith Ogden said that he anticipated a reduction in fees next year.

- 5 DRIVER TRAINING** – Keith Ogden updated the panel. The report regarding driver training had been taken to the Licensing and Safety Committee on 28 February 2007 where it had been decided to obtain further information before taking it to a future meeting for a decision. Discussion followed regarding various options such as following the same line as South Ribble or Preston City Councils or reviewing and deferring a decision. The majority present took the view that whilst training was a good thing, they felt that the cost may put new applicants off applying for licences to drive. Keith Ogden asked everyone to put their views/objections in writing and they would be taken to the next Licensing and Safety Committee on 25 April 2007. Councillor Iris Smith reminded everyone that no decision had yet been made. It was an open table for discussion, where the proprietors/operators would be able to make their views known and they would be taken into account.
- 6 DRIVER MEDICALS (UPDATE)** – Keith Ogden informed everyone that this report had now been through Licensing and Safety Committee and it had been agreed that it was no longer necessary for applicants/licensed drivers to go to their own GP. The medical forms had been changed to reflect this and the for the purpose of private hire/hackney carriage drivers licences, the Licensing Section would accept any medical carried out by any registered medical practitioner. Keith Ogden said that if anyone was having problems finding a registered medical practitioner they should contact the Licensing Section for assistance.
- 7 SMOKEFREE CHORLEY/SMOKING SHELTERS** – Janet Brereton informed the panel that the smokefree legislation comes in on 1 July 2007. There would be no lead-in period and as from 1 July, it would be an offence to smoke in an enclosed public area or a public vehicle. A workshop had taken place in March to start the 100-day countdown. Samples of a ‘credit card style’ card were handed round. The card gave details of smoking cessation services on one side and made the holder aware that the premises/vehicle were smokefree. These would be available at no charge from 1 July 2007. The Council Officer in charge of bringing in the smokefree legislation would be attending a future meeting of the Licensing Liaison Panel. There is also a guidance sheet available from the Licensing Section giving information regarding smoking shelters for licensed premises.
- 8 BEST BAR NONE** – Keith Ogden explained that Lancashire Constabulary had taken the lead on this initiative and letters would be sent out to everyone concerned. The Council’s Alcohol Reduction officer was also involved.
- 9 CONTACT CENTRE** – Janet Brereton informed everyone that the Licensing Section could not now be contacted directly. The Council’s Contact Centre would take all telephone calls in line with the Council’s policy on bringing all services under telephone number. Email communication had not been affected and the section’s email address is licensing@chorley.gov.uk
- 10 INFORMATION FOR OPERATORS RE EMPLOYING ‘MIGRANT WORKERS’** – Janet Brereton pointed out that it was an employer’s obligation to check that staff were legal under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration

Act 1996. This would apply to staff other than drivers, such as radio operators for example. Further information is available at www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk

11 TALK OF THE TOWN PUBLICATION – Janet Brereton passed round a copy of this publication which was produced quarterly and circulated round the traders and business in the town centre. The Council's Communication's Officer had offered a page in each publication to the hackney carriage/private hire trade. It was generally agreed that this would be good publicity. Janet Brereton would look into progressing this further.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Parking on Rank – It was acknowledged that the additional hackney carriages meant that there was less room on the town centre rank. The law states that if there is no room available on a rank, drivers should drive on to the next available Rank. Keith Ogden suggested that the rank stay as it is at present. There was new development planned for the town centre and this may affect where ranks are required. The Hackney Carriage Association could take this matter to the next Town Centre Forum. It was noted that the Hackney Carriage Association had contacted the MP regarding the problems with parking on the rank.

12.2 Enforcement/Rank – A panel member suggested that the enforcement officer be issued with a uniform to assist with enforcement. It was noted that Sefton Borough Council use uniformed officers who are able to issue fixed penalties for vehicles parked on the rank. Keith Ogden explained that once the Licensing Section is re-organised and a new Licensing Manager in place this matter could be looked into further.

12.3 Additional Hackney Carriage Licences – A panel member pointed out 6 of the 7 additional licences had been issued and what would happen to the 7th licence. Keith Ogden stated that the successful applicants had until the end of April to take up the licence and if not taken up, the matter would go back to the Licensing and Safety Committee.

12.4 Vehicle Insurance – A panel member pointed out that it should be for the driver/proprietor to produce insurance documents on time and referred to recent press reports on a case which said that 5 cars had been suspended due to having no insurance. The general view of the panel was that the private hire company should have been named and shamed as such press reports affect the whole of the trade. Keith Ogden explained that it was a condition of the vehicle licence that the responsibility is on the vehicle's proprietor to supply the Licensing Section with up to date insurance documents.

12.5 Chorley Town Centre – there was a general discussion regarding concerns about the decline of trade in the town centre. Janet Brereton explained that there was a new Economic Development Officer, Cath Burns, and gave contact details to panel members.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting will take place on Monday 11 June 2007 at 10.30am in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley.