

TAXI LICENSING

MINUTES OF A TAXI FORUM MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2009

Venue: Meeting Room, Municipal Buildings, Boston

Present:	Councillor Brenda Owen	Chairman of Regulatory and Appeals Committee
	Councillor Gerry Clare	Portfolio Holder for Licensing
	Fiona White	Boston Borough Council
	Mr Ray Smedley	Secretary of Boston Hackney Carriage Association
	Mr Steve Potts	Treasurer of Boston Hackney Carriage Association
	Mr Bryan Savage	Chairman of Boston Hackney Carriage Association
	Hiedi Wilkinson	Consultation & Communications Officer

Note taker – Shaun Sharp

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Owen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Helen Staples and Mr Ray Barton (BHCA).

3. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Fiona had drafted a Terms of Reference. It was agreed that she would go through each section and ask for comments/additions.

1. Fiona asked how many members the BHCA had on its books. Currently there are 42 members but it has been up to 50 – this is a 1/3rd of the total number of licensed proprietors. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a representative from Acorn on the Forum (most of the other larger firms already had a BHCA member). Fiona to invite Acorn Taxis along to future Forum meetings.

[Fiona to Action]

2. Agreed.
3. Agreed.
4. Change the number 3 to '4' members of the BHCA and include the wording 'or other taxi firms' after the word Highways.
5. Add in the word 'to' at least 7 days prior **to** a meeting.
6. Agreed.
7. Add in the following wording at the end of the second sentence – 'however, any items raised at the Forum and not on the agenda will be carried forward to the next meeting'.
8. Agreed.

The document would be amended as agreed and will be circulated with the minutes.

[Fiona to Action]

4. REFURBISHMENT OF MARKET PLACE - CONSULTATION

Fiona welcomed Hiedi Wilkinson (Consultation & Communications Officer) to the meeting. Hiedi is currently working on the consultation for the proposed refurbishment of the Market Place. Fiona indicated that this would be an ideal time for the taxi drivers to have their say with regard to the location of the taxi rank and to put forward new suggested locations.

Hiedi briefly outlined the background to the proposal – there are three conditions that cannot be changed to any enhancement – a road needs to run through the Market Place, it still needs to house the Wednesday and Saturday markets and the total cost cannot exceed £2 million.

Hiedi explained the Design Team for the scheme is based at Lincolnshire County Council but the Boston Borough Council is responsible for the consultation.

She indicated that she would like to hold a separate meeting with the BHCA/taxi drivers (away from this Forum) to discuss any views they may have. It would be really useful to meet as many taxi drivers as possible and she would also invite Ian Martin (Town Centre Manager) and a County Highways representative.

To get an idea of the issues the BHCA/taxi drivers may wish to raise, a short discussion followed about the scheme:-

It was agreed that the current taxi rank is not in an ideal location and also there are currently not enough spaces. It was suggested that perhaps the taxi rank

could be re-sited on the opposite side of the road. Currently, the public have to walk round the vehicle to get into the passenger side – if the rank was on the other side then they would be getting into the vehicle from the pavement, which was safer. Also taxis had to join the traffic from the wrong side of the road which has proved quite dangerous at times.

Also, when buses come through the precinct and stops at the bus stop and there happens to be a lorry parked outside the Edinburgh Woollen Mill shop then traffic gets backed up from all ways.

Fiona commented that if the taxi rank was able to be moved across the road then this could possibly cut down the evening/night-time anti-social behaviour problems.

Ray Smedley explained that often in the evening the food premise adjacent to the taxi rank has a queue that mixes in with the taxi queue. The Skegness Vocational College also has their office adjacent to the rank and at break and lunchtimes there are often groups of youths hanging around on the benches. Fiona suggested that if this was causing problems then it needed to be reported to the Police (which it has). She said she would make sure it was also reported to Peter Hunn in Community Safety.

[Fiona to Action]

5. HACKNEY CARRIAGE RANK SPACES – WIDE BARGATE

Fiona read out a letter she had received from a hackney driver with regard to the taxi rank in Wide Bargate enquiring as to whether the number of spaces (currently two) could be increased.

She is aware that when drivers cannot get onto the rank they usually park in the area outside W H Smith which is a designated loading bay. She has visited the site and in her opinion there was ample space to increase it to four spaces but it would then decrease the number of pay and display spaces. She asked for suggestions on how additional spaces could be found without compromising the parking income.

Ray made the suggestion that perhaps the taxis could park in Parkgate where the yellow lines currently are. Fiona's concern was where the taxis would have to turnaround – it would be near the Park gates and a lot of parents with young children use that entrance to get into the Park.

Bryan Savage pointed out that years ago the Post Office lorries and vans came in and out of that area with no problem, why not taxis?

Ray made a suggestion that perhaps if the yellow lines were de-regulated from the County Club side of Parkgate then it could be used for pay and display purposes, thereby allowing the extra two spaces to be added to the current rank.

It was agreed that Fiona would arrange a meeting with Ian Martin (Town Centre Officer), the Portfolio Holder for Car Parking (Councillor Dungworth), Councillor Owen and a County Highways Officer to discuss the most suitable solution.

[Fiona to Action]

Councillor Owen thanked everyone for attending this first Taxi Forum. All present said that it had been a successful meeting. Fiona asked the Forum about the frequency of these meetings – it was agreed that it would be every four months.

DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

10am – Thursday, 21 January 2010
Committee Room, Municipal Buildings, Boston

Agenda Item for the Next Forum

1. Hiedi Wilkinson to attend to update on the Market Place Enhancement consultation.