

TAXI LICENSING

MINUTES OF A TAXI FORUM MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2010

Venue: Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Boston

Present:	Councillor Brenda Owen	Chairman of Regulatory & Appeals Committee
	Councillor Gerry Clare	Regulatory & Appeals Committee Member
	Councillor Helen Staples	Regulatory & Appeals Committee Member
	Fiona White	Boston Borough Council – Licensing
	Mr Ray Smedley	Boston Hackney Carriage Association
	Mr Steve Potts	Boston Hackney Carriage Association
	PC Andy Heath	Lincolnshire Police (Licensing Officer)

Note taker – Shaun Sharp

Introductions were made around the table.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Bryan Savage, Gary Chamberlain and Acorn Taxis.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true record of events with the exception of one correction:-

Top of page 4, first paragraph – it was agreed that the wording would now read:-

“Fiona explained that years ago there was a cap on vehicle numbers but following a request it was de-regulated.”

3. MATTERS ARISING

- 4 Sign on Market Place Taxi Rank
Fiona reported that the sign that had been removed following vandalism was not an official sign and because it was originally on a County Council post she is unable to do anything about replacing it. She confirmed that the official sign was displayed.
- 5 Bylaw Infringements
Fiona confirmed that the website address was now included within taxi renewal letters.

Before the next Agenda item was discussed the Chairman read out the following paragraph. All Forum members were to be informed for Data Protection purposes:-

“Will all members of the Forum please be aware that as agreed on the 28 May 2010 the minutes will be published on the taxi website once they have been approved and will contain names in full. If you do not wish for your name to be included in the minutes (whether in a particular section or not at all) please contact Fiona White in Taxi Licensing following this meeting.”

This wording will be placed on all future Agendas for at least the next 12 months.

Where a name within a company is mentioned and they are not Forum members then only the company name will be used.

4. REFURBISHMENT OF THE MARKET PLACE

Fiona read out an email she had received from the Economic Development Manager who is co-ordinating the market place enhancement scheme:-

“A report is being taken to Full Council on 20th December to seek approval to continue with the project. Subject to approval we will start the second round of consultation in January 2011. Work will not start now until mid 2011.”

Until the 20th it is unknown whether the scheme will go ahead. If it does not then Fiona will speak to Lincolnshire County Council with regard to getting the current taxi rank re-marked.

5. TIMESCALES FOR APPLYING FOR DRIVER BADGE RENEWALS

Fiona asked if the BHCA could remind their members it is beneficial for them to apply for their driver's badge at least one month before expiry. The issue is with the CRB in which responses can take quite a while. The Council is then put in a position where a driver is driving on an expired badge without a current CRB check. She confirmed that reminder letters are sent out in plenty of time for drivers to do this.

[BHCA to Action]

6. MARKET PLACE TAXI RANK – LETTER FROM WYBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Fiona read out a letter she had received from Wyberton Parish Council, which arrived after the last Forum, in which one of the items related to taxis:-

“Market Place Taxi Rank – perpetual hooting of vehicle horns by taxi drivers and offensive language of taxi drivers.”

No further explanation was in the letter but Fiona wanted to bring the matter to the Forum's attention.

This was noted.

7. ILLEGAL TAXIS OPERATING IN BOSTON

Ray Smedley indicated that illegal taxis were still operating in the town. It seems they are now parking away from the Market Place in the Pump Square area. At one stage licensed taxi drivers could keep an eye on any potential illegal drivers and note down any registration numbers, but as Pump Square is not often on their route it is very difficult now to obtain numbers.

With regard to the registration numbers already passed through to her from BHCA, Fiona confirmed that driver's checks were done for the registered keepers and those that were identified were contacted with one registered driver being visited personally by herself and PC Heath.

Police have also released a Press Release in the local press advising the public to only use licensed taxis.

BHCA agreed to keep taking registration numbers of suspected illegal taxi drivers and to pass these through to Fiona.

Councillor Staples asked if BHCA had visited the CCTV Control Room – Ray said they had not and said he was sure the BHCA members would be interested in a visit. Fiona to speak to the CCTV Manager and ask him to contact BHCA to arrange a suitable date/time.

[Fiona to Action]

8. MAIN RANK SIGN

Ray asked if a noticeboard could be placed on the main rank, like the board that is currently located next to the Wide Bargate rank. Fiona confirmed that unfortunately Licensing has not got a budget for this but she would speak to Ian Martin to see if this could be something that could be added as part of the Market Place Enhancement Scheme. Ray asked how much would a noticeboard cost. Fiona indicated she would find out but asked if this could wait until after the Full Council meeting on the 20 December.

[Fiona to Action]

9. FARE INCREASE

Ray asked on behalf of BHCA if a fare increase could be looked at early next year. What with the 20% VAT increase coming into force on the 4 January and the continual rising costs to run a working vehicle proprietors were finding it more and more difficult to earn a living.

Fiona confirmed that a fare increase had not happened for two years and asked BHCA to write to her with their request. Once she had received this request she would then have to take it to Committee.

[BHCA/Fiona to Action]

DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

10am – Friday, 9 September 2011
Committee Room, Municipal Buildings, Boston