

**Taxi Drivers' Forum minutes**  
**30 October 2019**  
**West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds**

## **Introductions**

Gary Moran, Licensing Officer (Chair)  
Natasha Wade-Guest, Licensing Team Leader  
Jamie Livermore, Licensing Officer  
Brenda Wright, Licensing Officer  
Jakob Wimpenny, Licensing Support Apprentice

## **Items**

Gary Moran chaired the meeting and the team introduced themselves. It was explained that there are no longer specific Enforcement Officer roles within the licensing team and that all Licensing Officers do enforcement.

## **Wheelchair accessible requirements**

The ability to be able to use a rear loading ramp was suggested.

The question was asked should all taxis be wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)?

## **Vehicle inspections**

Concern was raised regarding how different garages appear to be working towards different standards. An issue was raised concerning MPVs and the seating configuration. It was suggested that the garage checklists are conflicting with the taxi policy (Licensing Team to investigate).

Concern was raised about how some garages are performing taxi meter tests.

## **Environmentally friendly vehicles**

Matthew Axton, Environment Officer gave a presentation which included the following:

- Electric and hybrid models available
- The percentage of grant a business can expect to receive
- Charging points.

It was highlighted that there are not enough electric WAV vehicles available.  
Grants are available:

- <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/Business/Funding/West-Suffolk-Green-Business-Grant.pdf>
- [https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/upload/Bee2-Anglia-Taxi-A5-Leaflet-FINALb.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/Bee2-Anglia-Taxi-A5-Leaflet-FINALb.pdf)

Grants cannot be paid retrospectively, so ensure approach BEE Anglia or West Suffolk Council early in the process.

Please contact Matthew Axton for more information. Email:  
[matthew.axton@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.axton@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

## **New driver applications**

New drivers must make an appointment to see an officer when submitting their application.

## **Renewal applications**

Applications to be submitted a minimum of 14 days prior to expiry date.

Vehicle renewal applications that are submitted after their expiry date will be rejected and new applications will be required.

Please ensure documentation is completed correctly and signed by the correct person.

## **Newsletter**

There will be another licensing newsletter sent out before Christmas.

## **Any other business**

There is a local taxi drivers Facebook page and it was flagged that some of the content is offensive. Whoever is admin for the page should be taking these posts down and possibly removing these people from the group. If anyone has concerns about anything offensive on this Facebook page, please report directly to the Police.

The question was asked if insurance is valid for a vehicle if someone has had their badge revoked or suspended. This has no influence on insurance validity at all. This is only relevant if the suspended or revoked driver chooses to drive the vehicle. They can have someone else who is licensed named on the insurance to drive the vehicle.

It was highlighted that Police are not acting when issues are reported to them and that there is not enough Police resource.

Some passengers think that the larger vehicles are going to be more expensive which means WAVs are being discriminated against. Unfortunately, this is customer perception.

There is an issue with private hire vehicles sitting outside Pizza Mama Mia, Bury St Edmunds. Licensing Officers have been out and witnessed this and the vehicles drove off. It was mentioned that on one occasion there were 11 vehicles parked up after midnight. Licensing team to monitor.

It was felt that there is not enough resource within the licensing team to carry out the enforcement which is required due to the amount of problems there are. Licensing were out in Bury St Edmunds on the rank from 11pm until 2am which was very useful.

It was requested that the Newmarket rank have an evening visit. Licensing team to arrange an evening visit to Newmarket.

It was felt that trade in Bury St Edmunds is at an all-time low. There is not the income in town to accommodate taxis.

It was alleged there is an unlicensed taxi working in Mildenhall and the details were given to the Licensing Team. Details have been passed to the Police and the Licensing Team have visited the rank and will continue to keep an eye out for the vehicle.

Would be helpful if the lines at the Newmarket rank could be repainted as they have faded. Licensing team to contact Highways Department.

It was highlighted that mirrored meters can be tampered with; this could be a problem with the software and this needs to be reviewed. Licensing team to investigate.

It was alleged that the racecourse has said that drivers were taking lump sums from customers for driving short journeys. It was suggested that the Licensing Team arrange for some test purchasing to be done. Licensing team to consider carrying out a test purchase exercise.

It was asked if the council can obtain some "No Excuse for Abuse Stickers" for drivers to display in their vehicles. Licensing Team to investigate.

Concern was raised under safety that the lights at the Mildenhall rank switch off at 11pm. Licensing Team to investigate.

Action for all drivers – this forum is specifically for drivers and therefore although the council are happy to provide a venue and be in attendance, the drivers need to elect a Chair and representatives in readiness for the next meeting. Please email [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk) with details or for more information.

## **Date and time of next meeting**

17 February 2020 – West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU.