

Taxi Liaison Group

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Location: Dings Crusaders Rugby Football Club, Shaftesbury Park, Frenchay, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, BS16 1LG

Chair: Councillor Alex Doyle (AD) alex.doyle@southglos.gov.uk

Attendees: Councillor Keith Cranney (KC), Sidy Sylvanielo, Daniel Pop, Owen Clifford, Mike Worley (MW), PC Patrick Quinton (PQ), Kayleigh Morris (KM), Kevin Barley (KB), Saadane Sailer, Lily Brine (LB)

Apologies: Tony Lidbury (TL), Sharon Shaw (SS), Kerry-Dee Harding (KH)

Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome and Apologies	AD welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Councillors and SGC staff.
2	Previous minutes, matters arising and table of actions	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting of 13 March 2024 were confirmed as a true record</p> <p>Q - Broad lane, toilets and new office, is there an update? A – No, but it will be kept under review.</p> <p><i>Inspections and bookings update</i> The garage wait is 6 weeks, office appointments are 8 or 9 days.</p> <p>Q – Could 6 monthly fitness tests be reviewed; they cause 3,200 extra appointments a year? A – This can be reported as part of the consultation.</p> <p>Action points <i>Taxi stand, Yate - PQ to share TRO drawings with SS.</i></p> <p>PQ had sent the information to SS, all seems to be working properly now as the West Link buses are going into the bus terminal and not using the taxi rank.</p> <p>Item closed</p>

	<p>Q – There are reports that West Link is charging £2.50 for an airport run. The web site says they don't cross zones. If this is correct, it is a very big issue? A – This can be fed back to our WECA forum</p> <p><i>Lost property</i> PQ had circulated an information sheet to update drivers what to do with lost property. This continues to be a concern with on average seven reports a month accusing drivers of stealing.</p> <p>Drivers need to check their vehicles after each journey, and any high value items found in hackney vehicles should be handed into a police station. Item closed</p> <p><i>Card payments</i> KM had raised this with the IT team, It is being looked into, but it won't be fixed overnight. No driver's cards are taken into the office.</p> <p><i>Fees</i> LB confirmed that all the information is on the website, and was also sent to all drivers via Mailchimp last week. Item closed</p> <p><i>Duplicate plate</i> LB confirmed that double checks are now in place Item closed</p> <p><i>Taxi plug-in grant</i> LB confirmed that this information went out on an additional newsletter 4-6 weeks ago, and will ensure it is on the website Item closed</p> <p>Q - Does correspondence have to be by email? A - LB could print some and put them in the office where they could be picked up</p> <p><i>Safeguarding refresher training</i> LB confirmed refresher training will be reviewed under the policy which will shortly be out for consultation. It is mandatory, and there is a need to ensure that all taking part are engaged Item closed</p> <p><i>Service staff update</i></p>	<p>AD to feed this back to the WECA forum</p> <p>KM to chase again and update</p> <p>LB to print newsletters to be available in the office</p>
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		<p>AB reported that given the demands on the enforcement function, they are recruiting two licencing enforcement officers and a licensing services manager, who will be the lead licensing professional for the council.</p> <p><i>Newsletter</i> This was sent to all licence holders by Mailchimp on 26th June 2024. Item closed</p> <p>Q - Will drivers need first aid training? A - LB to raise at the regulatory meeting</p>	<p>AB to report back and update</p> <p>LB to raise and report back</p>
3	<p>Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing enforcement update (March to July 2024) – update from PC Patrick Quinton and Licensing enforcement team</p>	<p>PC Quinton’s update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over last couple of months he has not been out on the road as much as he would have liked, due to catching up with paperwork • Last month he issued 5 tickets, suspended 2 licences, stopped and checked 39 vehicles on the road. There are 29 investigations underway, 5 prosecution files, and he helped 6 other officers with 49 contacts from drivers seeking help and support. So less time on road, but more time helping drivers • Issues have a 2 month backlog, so he is helping drivers get CCTV etc where it is available to help with insurance claims. This means he has been able to support drivers more, but has not been out catching them • Crime investigating has gone up, 31 at the moment, but he is hoping it will come down fairly quickly and to be back on the road more by September • He has been involved in the DVSA operation to stop and check every couple of months. <p><i>Parkway Station – GWR private land</i> PQ and LB met with Apcoa and confirmed that the taxi waiting area is for GWR permit holders only. He has messaged the station manager to ask them to improve the signage there.</p> <p>Apcoa can fine drivers going through no entry signs, but has limited officer ability to do so.</p> <p>Also ANPR cameras allow 20 minutes before tickets are issued automatically.</p>	

The police don't have any power of enforcement, it is private land. The dropping off space is very limited, and the waiting area could be better used, but they can't create a private hire rank as this land may be redeveloped at some time in the future as part of a wider scheme at the station. There are only 49 GWR permit holders.

Problems at the airport

PQ always asks councils to consider private hire, but they are usually not considered.

Problems with attitude of blue taxis in Bristol

PQ can understand both sides of this problem, and confirmed that anyone shouting at or threatening you is committing a crime.

Q - Outside the Bristol Hotel, PH cars cannot use the taxi rank, but the whole street is double yellows?

A - One rank is only part time, and there is an exemption for dropping off or picking up on double yellows. The loading bay also doubles up as a taxi rank. Also, there are the same problems in Bath

Q - Tensions, is there anything we can do to work with colleagues in Bristol?

A - AB and PQ to speak with BCC.

A - PQ acknowledged that private hire in central Bristol is really difficult, but he does his best to encourage the council to think ahead.

Uber age restriction policy, for under 18s

Q – Concerns that Uber is not protecting the public or drivers.

A – Under the terms of your licences there is nothing to prevent you carrying under 18s, so that is an Uber choice.

A - Uber should have more presence at these meetings to hear the concerns of the drivers; they have been to these meetings, but wanted one to one meetings with SGC which the other drivers were against.

Enforcement

LB reported a number of ongoing public safety issues, and high number of traffic enforcement issues. Because of the current level of service demand, they are triaging enforcement to prioritise public safety issues. When the new Licensing Enforcement Officers are in post they hope to get

		<p>back on top of it. However, they are still out and about to have a visible presence for the public.</p> <p>PQ noted that SGC licensing team enforcement has more people going out at more times than any other council in our area.</p> <p><i>Taxi Cop WhatsApp group</i> PQ invited all drivers to join this. You will then get traffic news, upcoming road closures, updates on the law and council rules, information about PC Quinton's work and more. It also provides you with a way to get answers to your questions and ask for help. No-one can see who is on the group, and any messages you send go to PC Quinton only, not the rest of the group so your privacy is protected and you aren't deluged with messages.</p> <p>To join, just send your name and badge number to 07469 400832.</p>	
4	Home to school transport update	<p>No particular issues have been flagged up. A briefing note about school transport has been prepared for the Regulatory Committee meeting. Once Officers are in place they will be going into schools to do inspections.</p> <p>They are working with Paul Kelly to ensure the public knows as well.</p>	
5	Licensing Office - current service demand, and over-the-counter service updates	<p>The garage is the only real issue as there is so much demand that there is a 7 to 8 weeks wait, which long term is not going to improve.</p> <p>AB will speak to the garage. There is a waiting list as well; we need to look to build capacity. The 6 month fitness is not helping but is there for a reason. Renewals are sent out 3 months in advance, so there is time to get booked in.</p> <p>Q - We can't communicate apart from by email, or make any choice of time? A - They could ask on the form, but if it is left until the last minute the garage can't always do it.</p> <p>Q - Driver reported being threatened by office staff, he had to go to a second office to be helped and it ended up costing him over £1,000. He has the name of the officer. A - Please follow it up, drivers need to feel safe.</p>	AB to report back and update

		<p>Q - Is it true that we are treated as a number and licences are removed? A - No and we have gone against officer recommendation to not remove a licence. Please let us know if this happens, and apologies if it has.</p>	
6	Policy development	<p>This is the required 3 year review of the whole policy which will go back to Regulatory Committee in November</p> <p>The consultation is due to start on Monday 15th July. All licence holders will be consulted by letter and PQ will put this on the WhatsApp group.</p> <p>Now is the time to comment.</p>	
7	Revisiting historical items	<p>Q – The newsletter has gone out, was the consultation in there? A - Yes, it was pending, but there will also be a separate letter.</p>	
8	Any other business	<p><i>Charging differently from meter</i> KB explained that for school contracts you can pre agree a fare higher or lower than the meter, but the meter must be running as licence condition. PQ has an information sheet that is published on the council website for service users to follow, 10 HCs doing PH work v4.pdf (southglos.gov.uk), including reference to school transport work.</p> <p><i>Meeting reminders</i> Q – No reminders were sent for this meeting, please could we have them going forward? A - It was in the newsletter. Going forward all correspondence will be by the newsletter, not emails. If date changes there will be an additional update by Mailchimp. A - Any specifics queries please let LB know.</p> <p>Q - Can the 10 years vehicle age be extended? A - Feed this back to the consultation.</p> <p>Q - Can members be copied into the newsletters before the meetings? A - Yes</p> <p>Q - What can we do to make this meeting more attractive to drivers? A - Any thoughts please let us know</p>	<p>LB to arrange</p> <p>All to consider and feedback</p>

9	Next meeting	Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 10:00am Dings Crusaders Rugby Football Club, Shaftesbury Park, Frenchay, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, BS16 1LG (Function Room)	Booked
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