

**Minutes of the Taxi Trade Meeting held on 3rd February 2009
At 10.30am at the One Stop Shop**

Present:

Tracy Brzozowski	-	Licensing Manager (RBC)
Clare Birtwistle	-	Acting Head of Legal (RBC)
Ann Kenyon	-	Rossendale Taxi Association
Glenn Bulcock	-	Rossendale Taxi Association
Frank Romasanta	-	Lancashire Constabulary
David Lawrie	-	Independent Taxi Association
Julie Haworth	-	RBC (Minutes)
Maxine Wilson	-	Skills Gap Training

The meeting commenced at 10.35am with introductions.
There were no issues from the minutes of the last meeting.

1. NVQ – Skills Gap Training

TB opened the meeting welcoming Maxine Wilson from Skills Gap Training. TB explained that MW was running the NVQ for Taxi Drivers and that is why she had been invited to the meeting to give an update on what was happening and to answer any concerns.

AK stated that she had sorted out her differences with MW prior to this meeting.

MW gave an update on the NVQ, advising that 35 drivers had signed up for the course, ready to go. Any driver who required information could see Khalid Mahmood in the first instance; he would advise and pass their details to MW.

TB gave an update to FR on the NVQ.

DL replied initially there was scare mongering within the trade about the NVQ and questions were being asked why it was compulsory. DL advised that KM is translating to those drivers concerned that it is a vocational qualification about doing their job, its voluntary and free of charge.

TB replied that the majority of drivers' were doing a good job and deserved accreditation for that. TB stated she wasn't aware of the scare mongering.

MW continued to explain how the NVQ consisted of seven mandatory units plus optional ones. MW gave examples of the standards required and advised that the drivers' were doing them everyday within their work.

DL said the biggest selling point was that the course was Free.

TB responded that drivers would have different skills and knowing it was a qualification may appear scary to some. They should be encouraged to ask questions as everyone would be at different levels.

MW replied that where help was required she would talk to them with other colleagues. MW explained that there was no pass or fail; it was about reaching a certain standard.

A short discussion followed on examples of what was expected, this was mostly what was already happening throughout their work as taxi drivers.

FR commented that it could open avenues for other areas. FR asked who was funding this.

TB responded that it is currently government funded.

2. Standards – Fire Extinguishers, First Aid Kits & Roof Signs

TB advised that JH had been researching these standards. There were British and European Standards and a minimum standard would have to be agreed between the Licensing Unit and the Taxi Associations.

CL advised TB to speak to Human Resources.

TB said a minimum standard was required and gave examples of fire extinguishers and first aid kits which were being swapped around from vehicles.

AK replied that the vehicle registration should be marked on them.

CL advised TB to speak to Lee Childs.

FR advised that the registration number should be marked on the spare wheel as well.

A short discussion followed on examples.

TB advised that once the standard was agreed on First Aid Kits, it would be taken to the trade and the Licensing Committee.

TB advised that the standard for Fire Extinguishers and Roof Signs were easier and once agreed would talk about how to apply them with the minimum of costs.

AK replied that Roof signs should have the word "Taxi" on the front.

GB advised that the biggest fear within the trade was if the colour of the Roof sign was standardised.

GB advised that normally they buy the cheapest.

TB advised that there were no complaints on the colour of Roof Signs.

DL gave an example of where DD had advised the colour be green.

TB advised that had DD done this, it would have been a suggestion only. The Licensing Unit was not looking at the colour of roof signs, only the wording. TB stated that there had been no complaints on the colour other than the yellow writing which doesn't stand out.

3. Queens CCTV

LF was not present at the meeting today therefore items 3, 6, 7 and 8 would be carried over to the next meeting.

4. Role of Elected Representatives of Trade Associations

TB stated that the condition not to Licence MPVs' in the interim period was what was offered by the Trade Associations'. TB therefore felt it was inappropriate for a representative from one of the associations to contact her requesting she makes an exception using discretion.

GB responded that he agreed with what TB was saying.

TB replied that the driver concerned had been invited to the January Licensing Committee and still changed his MPV vehicle for a newer one. Knowing the circumstances he should have checked on the current situation of MPVs' or spoken to the Licensing Unit prior to purchasing the new vehicle for advice. TB continued if she had given an exception this would have opened the flood gates.

DL commented that in hindsight grandfather rights should have included transfers of MPV for MPV with a valid reason.

CB replied that the decision had been agreed and the situation was as it is now.

TB advised the trade representatives to tell the trade to talk to the Licensing Unit when things happen. It is too late for something to be done when a Licence expires – speak to the Council when they are aware of problems occurring.

DL added that in defence of the issue he wasn't aware that the driver had been at the Licensing Committee.

5. Taxi Safety Camera System

TB advised that information had been flooding in about Taxi Safety Camera Systems, after an article was published in the Lancashire Evening Telegraph. TB reiterated as discussed recently, that Rossendale was a small Council which was unable to fund these however, rather than throw these flyers in the bin they had been copied to be distributed to the trade if interested.

DL commented that his brother was currently designing something similar.

FR stated that if he owned a taxi he would install a camera.

6. Bus Interchange Update

To be forwarded to the next meeting

7. Update Train Link & Park and Ride

To be forwarded to the next meeting

8. Valley Centre Update

To be forwarded to the next meeting

9. MPVs'

TB gave the details of what had been agreed at the last liaison meeting and that the Licensing Committee had agreed to defer the condition not to Licence any further vehicles until resolved.

TB advised that all drivers' had been notified by letter of what was currently happening.

A short discussion followed on the way forward.

TB stated that the final decision would be the Licensing Committee determination.

GB responded that there was a proposal from the trade to fit a handle inside on the back door.

TB asked how passengers would get out; they (the passenger) would have to be advised of the handle.

DL stated that there'd been a meeting with 70+ members; an updated members list was given to TB. They had agreed to reach a compromise and fit a handle to the inside back door.

A short discussion took place discussing this.

DL advised that their members had voted at the meeting with the following results from the options offered on the report;

- Options 1, 2 and 3 - no votes
- Option 4 - 70+ votes

TB asked whether there were any other proposals. No other proposals were put forward.

TB advised that ultimately it was not her decision however she would enforce the Committee's decision.

GB said they had to move forward quickly; one month had past without any decisions being made.

TB apologised to the trade for this and clarified the position stating she didn't want to go into consultation without first discussing this at liaison. Bringing it back to this meeting was done in good faith. TB proposed a letter go out this week with a 21 day consultation period commencing Monday 9th February.

CB agreed with the 21 day consultation period from Monday 9th February.

GB asked whether the consultation period could be reduced to 14 days.

CB agreed that 14 days could be done.

TB proposed 4 options which would be emailed to the trade once drafted, she also asked for suggestions from the trade. TB advised that she wasn't in the office all week and if there were anything pressing she would meet urgently with them.

DL said that the consultation period would be over before the next meeting.

TB advised it would be a public item at the Licensing Committee and anyone wishing to do so could register to speak on the night.

10. Future Items

- Vehicle and Driver Conditions
- Rossendale Test

- Longholme Road
- Vehicle Transfer
- 6 Monthly Test

The meeting closed at 12.02.

The next meeting is 3rd March 2009, commencing at 10.30am at The Council Chamber's at Harman's Mill

**Minutes of the Taxi Trade Meeting held on 6th January 2009
At 10.30am at the Council Chamber, Hardman's Mill**

Present:

Linda Fisher	-	Executive Director – Business (RBC)
Tracy Brzozowski	-	Licensing Manager (RBC)
Lucy Kershaw	-	Traffic & Parking Manager (RBC)
Ann Kenyon	-	Rossendale Taxi Association
Glenn Bulcock	-	Rossendale Taxi Association
Gareth Henderson	-	Lancashire Constabulary
Louis Grant	-	Lancashire Constabulary
David Lawrie	-	Independent Taxi Association
Julie Haworth	-	RBC (Minutes)

The meeting commenced at 10.35am with introductions. GH from Lancashire Constabulary was present; therefore Agenda items 6 and 8 were discussed first for his input.

8 Longholme Road

TB gave an update advising that an objection had been received regarding the proposed Longholme Taxi Rank and that LF and she had attended an evening meeting at the Mosque to listen to their concerns.

LF added that she found the situation embarrassing because when asked through taxi liaison, she had been told there were no objections to their being a taxi rank on the same road as the Mosque.

LF advised that listening to the views at the meeting, had she known about them sooner she wouldn't have taken the rank forward.

GB responded that he was not aware of any objections and this had been DL's baby.

DL had not arrived at this point.

LF advised that this was a sensitive issue because of the Mosque being on the road and as a Director she couldn't give her approval.

GB stated no objections had been received until the expiry date.

TB advised that there had been confusion and that the objection had gone to LCC first before being received by Licensing.

LF advised that the Mosque wanted to work with the Council and the Trade.

GB responded that if the rank was not going ahead, then another location was needed.

LF agreed that a solution was required with an alternative site. LF advised that things were happening with the demolition of the Valley Centre.

AK enquired about the Bus Station rank.

TB explained that the rank on the bus station was a legally adopted rank.

LF stated that as Longholme Rd was a no go other alternatives would be explored.

6 Queens CCTV

LF advised that the money for the CCTV in the area of Queens was available.

A short discussion followed regarding CCTV. LF requested both the police and the trade to write into her with their requests.

TB asked whether there were any further ranking issues at the Queens?

GB advised there had not been any issues over Christmas.

GH advised that the police had monitored the area last weekend.

LK advised four tickets had been issued.

GH advised that FR had spoken to the licensee of the Queens on the Ranking up issue.

TB advised that she had had a meeting with AK Taxis and she had made a request that they returned to the Rank and there be no more than two cars on the Queens car park.

GH commented that the rank at the bus station was only for four taxis however was doing a good job taking people from the centre.

LF advised that the Council supported the Bus Interchange proposals and CCTV.

1 Bus Interchange Update

LF advised that nothing had changed; they were looking at demolition the old cinema.

2. Update Congestion Charge, Train Link, Park and Ride

LF advised that the congestion charge was a no go because of the vote. LF said she had a meeting with Fraser Nash and Network Rail – the investment pressure was on with meetings January/February continuing to lobby.

LK asked how this would affect Park and Ride?

LF advised that they were all linked and the council were constantly chasing the situations.

DL entered the meeting at 10.50am apologising for his lateness.

3 Valley Centre Update

LF advised that consultations were ongoing.

LF gave an update on the previous items to DL.

DL asked why the objections had been raised to Longholme Road proposed rank.

LF advised on the objections raised

A discussion followed regarding the objections.

4 Standard – Fire Extinguishers and First Aid Kits

TB advised that JH was working on the standards which would be brought to the next meeting for the trades' input, this would include the roof signs as previously discussed.

7 MPVs'

TB advised that this item went to the Licensing Committee in December and the decision not to licence these vehicles was deferred.

GB advised that their Taxi Association meeting was yesterday evening and was poorly attended by representatives from the valley. GB advised the report was read to all members, giving them each option. Following a lengthy discussion a show of hands went for option 4 against his recommendation. He advised that as Chairman he can only put his views forward to members. 25 members attended the meeting of which 23 voted.

TB asked how many members had been invited.

AK responded stating that 150 invites had been issued via a flyer.

GB advised that this did not include those of the Independent Taxi Association.

DL advised that his meeting had been in December prior to the Licensing Committee however the general feeling was option 4. 37 members had attended the meeting and were ongoing on the rank where the same opinion was voiced.

TB asked for confirmation of the numbers and advised that the Licensing Committee was expecting a proposed workable solution. With less than 25% of drivers voting option 4 she proposed a letter to vehicle owners to start the consultation process, which would go to the Licensing Committee. TB asked the trade whether they agreed that new MPVs' would not be licensed until after the committee. TB agreed to update the Licensing Committee in February with the current situation.

The trade agreed to this, which followed a short discussion of whom to write to.

TB agreed that all vehicle owners would be advised by letter of the current situation.

DL advised that there was a demand for MPVs.

GB stated it would help tremendously if they had guidelines.

TB replied that she was hoping the Committee would determine them.

LF advised that having the guidelines would help the Committee.

GB stated he did not like the way that this was going as the trade were in fear of losing their vehicles and he was more than happy working with TB.

A short discussion followed on the guidelines.

Actions

1. Letter to vehicle owners advising them of the current situation.
2. Licensing Unit and the Trade to work together to take forward.
3. Suggested Guidelines
4. Consultation with all vehicle owners

LF reiterated that there was no risk to vehicles already licensed at the moment.

Future Items – No

LK asked whether there were any parking issues?

AK advised that it was different in Haslingden.

LK stated that they were working to the 10 minutes rule.

The meeting closed at 11.30.

**The next meeting will be held on 3rd February 2009, commencing at 10.30 at
Stubbylee Hall**