NOTES OF THE TAXI LIAISON GROUP
Wednesday 13th April 2016 at 10.00am
Council Chamber, Crescent Gardens

Attendance
Gareth Bentley Food, Licensing and Occupational Safety Manager
Cllr John Ennis Chair of Licensing Committee
Chris Doyle Taxi Licensing Enforcement Officer
Kevin O’Boyle Central Taxis
John Higgins Spa Taxis
Garry Sadler-Simpson Mainline
Steve Rogers Parking Services – Harrogate Borough Council
Paul Rushton Blueline

1 INTRODUCTIONS

2 APOLOGIES
Dave Travis

3 RECORD OF LAST MEETING (3rd February 2016)
CD advised that he had spoken to Rudding Park and issued a letter advising of their obligations if using a vehicle to transport guests.

GB advised that there would be no change to Sunday trading laws as had been previously thought.

The notes produced are an accurate record of the meeting

4 TAXIMETER POLICY
KOB states that he was aware of changes being made to Taxi Meters from October 2016. GB/CD stated that they were not aware of this and would make further enquiries and report back.

GB advised that Mervyn was still fitting taxi meters and that there are no reasons this will stop. CD advised that Mervyn had stated that there had not been much demand to have meters calibrated following the recent changes in fares.

5 REMOVAL OF PLATES
KOB advised that he had information that CD had been removing plates from licensed vehicles and quoted two instances. CD advised that KOB had been mis-informed and that these events had not taken place as described.

6 UBER UPDATE
CD advised that UBER have submitted an application to operate in the Harrogate District and that he was waiting on Uber to allow an office inspection before any
further progress could be made. KOB gave some background information to the group that he had gleaned from a meeting he attended in Bradford in relation to Uber.

7 DEREGULATION ACT UPDATE

GB advised that new drivers licenses had been issued in a staged method as had been agreed adding that operators licences will be issued in a phased approach over the next 12 months. GB stated that there had so far been no issues generated by sub-contracting. The group reported that they had not heard of any issues.

CD advised that there had been no increase in drivers not renewing their dual drivers licence despite the change in policy. The number that have not renewed is in fact 42.

KOB asked if there could be any concessions in fees for new drivers applying for a licence adding that it is a lot of money to lose if a three year licence is issued and a driver does not like the job.

GB advised that legislation states that licences must be issued for a period of three years. Licenses can be issued for a lesser period but only on a case by case basis. There can be no blanket policy for issuing licenses for a lesser period. DFT have yet to provide any guidance on the new legislation. JH asked if a one year licence could be issued to a new driver that was unemployed. GB advised that although he is sympathetic to the problem there can, as he previously stated, be no blanket policy. GSS asked if there could be an “instalment plan”. GB stated that this was not possible as it leads to debt collection issues and court costs adding that a licence cannot be revoked once issued should a driver fail to pay the next “instalment”. The group stated that the increased cost was having an impact on driver recruitment.

JH asked about planning permission and non domestic rates for new operating offices at individuals homes etc. GB and CD were not aware of exact criteria that apply here but this could not prevent the issue of a licence. GB advised that data sharing does take place and that these instances would be picked up by relevant departments.

KOB asked that as operator licences are only issued to addresses in the Harrogate District could this not apply to H/C licences. GB advised that this could not happen. This is not covered by legislation etc.

8 NEW TAXI FARES

GB advised that the new fares had been implemented at 1.5% on the running mile and waiting with no change to flag fall.

9 TOUR DE YORKSHIRE

GB gave brief details of the route of the Tour de Yorkshire which will pass through Knaresborough, Ripley and then continue on to Nidderdale on Friday 29/04/2016. Greenhow Hill would be the only road closure with a rolling roadblock operating on the rest of the route.

SR stated that on Sat 30/04/2016 the race would start in Otley and would take in Harewood and Collingham so there may be issues getting to LBA.

Full details are on the Tour de Yorkshire website.
10 **ENFORCEMENT**

CD advised that there had been an operation on 22/03/2016 involving HBC, Police, DVSA and HMRC. Vehicles were pulled up and inspected. The standard of vehicles was generally good with only one vehicle being taken off the road due to safety issues.

CD advised that a drivers licence had been revoked. It had been deemed by Licensing Panel that this driver was not fit and proper to hold a licence.

A driver had been prosecuted for carrying out a private hire booking without first obtaining a dual drivers licence or private hire vehicle licence.

Instances of plying for hire had been reported and investigated. In all cases, except one which is currently being investigated, prior bookings had been in place.

GB stated that a driver who had his licence revoked by panel had appealed. The appeal was due to be heard in the Magistrates Court on 20/05/2016.

CD advised that he had learned that long standing Taxi Driver Graham Todd had sadly passed away.

JH referred to private cars parked on the new Parliament Street rank. SR stated that enforcement action is taking place and the vehicles are being ticketed. This is an ongoing problem and new signage and a press release is planned.

JH asked if money could be invested in a “sting” operation outside Bambinos. GB advised this could not happen and as has been advised on many occasions obtaining evidence to secure formal action against a hackney carriage is very hard to gather but that the area is monitored and action taken when possible.

11 **NEXT MEETING**

*Wednesday 8th June 2016 – 10.00 am Crescent Gardens, Council Chamber.*