

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting between Members, Taxi Proprietors and Officers held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 27 October 2010

Present:

Councillors:

Chris Gibbings (Chairman)
Steve Hall (Vice Chairman)

Taxi Proprietors:

Alan J Hill - AJ Taxis
Brian Bailey - AJ Taxis
Charlie Stone – Coastal Cabs
Steve Dean – Dean's Taxis
Steve Elliott – Elliotts Taxi Service
Mike Biggins – Legend Cars
Nina Peters – Sid Valley Cars
John Tucker – Sid Valley Cars
Gary Saxton – Swift Cars

EDDC Officers:

John Tippin – Licensing Manager
Douglas Jackson – Licensing Officer
John Loveridge – Licensing Officer
Rachel Perram – Democratic Services Officer

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 3.20pm.

54 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Adrian Philips and John Huffer (East Devon Taxi Association).

55 **Report of last meeting**

The report of the meeting held on 7 April 2010 was received as signed as a true record.

56 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

57 **Exmouth and Honiton Taxi Ranks**

Exmouth Ranks

The Licensing Officer reported that a new rank (situated outside AJ's Taxi offices) was now operational, which resulted in more rank spaces being available than prior to the Strand re-development. Drivers were encouraged to work with the new arrangements. If after a period of time there were still areas of concern, drivers were asked to make group proposals for change to Devon County Council (DCC) and the Police.

In response to a question regarding any problems with ticketing and the Police, drivers expressed concern over the number of vehicles that were licensed. This resulted in

problems at all times with waiting for access to the rank's spaces. It was pointed out that especially in the evenings a queue of taxis built up along Victoria Road as they waited to get onto the main Strand rank. It was understood that the Police were aware of this problem, but would only issue tickets if vehicles caused obstruction. It was suggested that the existing rank in Victoria Road should be extended to accommodate more vehicles.

- ACTION:**
1. Douglas Jackson, Licensing Officer to contact Paul Wilson (DCC Highways) regarding the provision of 4 taxi spaces on Victoria Road, which had been agreed at a previous site meeting. (Currently 2 spaces).
 2. Douglas Jackson to investigate the possibility of timed provision for late evenings of additional rank spaces on disabled parking bays and areas where parking restriction normally apply.

Honiton Ranks

Members of the Committee noted that despite promises from DCC that work on the creation of the new ranks would be completed in 6 months, these were not finished.

- ACTION:** Douglas Jackson to monitor and chase DCC as necessary.

58 **Late night noise from taxi drivers and rank etiquette**

Douglas Jackson, Licensing Officer, asked all drivers to remember that ranks were in many cases situated in residential areas. Late night vehicle noise and conversation could be heard and drivers were asked to be considerate to residents. (All drivers should note that this advice equally applies throughout the district).

59 **New CRB system**

The meeting heard that the fee for the updated CRB reports would remain at £59. Due to recent changes in Government agencies, the ISA had been scrapped, meaning that drivers did not need to complete this section of the form. Drivers were reminded that they needed to produce both parts of their driving licence and 2 recent utility bills, for proof of address when submitting their completed documentation as a minimum.

60 **Smoking Legislation**

Drivers were reminded of their legal obligation to display 'No Smoking' stickers/signs in both the front and back of their vehicles.

61 **MOTs for vehicles over 8 years old**

The meeting were reminded that MOT test certificates for vehicles over 8 years old were required twice a year.

62 **Recent Legislation Updates**

Equality Act 2010

Members of the meeting were advised that this Act was now in place and required all drivers to be seen to be fair to all clients. The law states that you cannot treat anybody less favourably than you would anyone else. Private Hire Monthly magazine and the 'Cabserve' website provided further information on this Act.

63 **Fares**

John Tippin, Licensing Manager, reminded those present that a meeting had taken place with the trade to discuss a proposed fare increases. As a result the trade had proposed a tariff structure that equated to an approximate 20% increase. This proposal together with three other tariff options had been considered by the Licensing and Enforcement Committee at its meeting on the 7 September. Members had agreed to the tariff increase proposed in 'Option 3' in the report. As required by legislation this decision had been advertised in the newspaper which had resulted in 3 objections to the proposals. This meant that unless the objections were withdrawn, a report would be taken to the next Licensing and Enforcement Committee on the 23 November so that Members could re-consider their original decision.

Members were reminded that tariff increases indicated maximum prices and the decision to levy an increase was at the discretion of operators.

ACTION: That a meeting with the taxi trade be arranged in August each year to prepare a proposed annual fare increase for consideration by the Licensing and Enforcement Committee.

64 **Any other business**

Strand Re-development

Members commented on two particular problems that were being encountered as a result of the on-going works to re-develop the Strand area of Exmouth:

1. That slippery surfaces for pedestrians outside the AJ Taxi office was dangerous for pedestrians.
2. That right angled pavement edges to each end of the Strand taxi rank made it extremely difficult for vehicles to pull in and out of spaces. Members proposed that this be amended to 45 degrees to prevent damage to vehicles and the pavements.

ACTION: That a letter be sent to DCC Highways expressing concern over the slippery pavements and regarding proposed amendments to the splays at the ends of rank.

65 **Next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 20 April 2011, in the Council Chamber, Knowle.