



Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter January 2019



Welcome to the first Taxi and Private Hire newsletter update of 2019. We hope that the licensed trade enjoyed the 'Festive Season' and we would like to wish all members a belated Happy New Year.

As many of the trade will be aware, we had the very sad news of the murder of Lee Pomeroy on a train in our borough. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this awful time.

We anticipate that 2019 will be another busy year in taxi licensing and as we look forward to the coming year we are pleased to announce details of the first TAG meeting of the year. The newsletter also contains details of the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 currently in consultation. We are aware that there has been some media coverage of the fees, and have dedicated a section of the newsletter to explaining the fees. Fees will also be on the agenda of the TAG meeting.

Taxi and Private Hire Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting

We are pleased to announce that the next meeting of the "TAG" will be held on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 7pm at Guildford Borough Council, Millmead. We would welcome all members of the trade to attend and engage constructively with the Council on issues affecting the future of the taxi and private hire trade, both locally and nationally. We would be really keen to have representation from all across the private hire and hackney carriage trades. New members are more than welcome to attend.

If you wish to attend please email licensing@guildford.gov.uk so that we can anticipate numbers. Attendees are asked to ensure that they arrive promptly for a 7pm start.

BTEC Qualification Reminder

All drivers are again reminded that they should now have completed the BTEC Qualification "The Introduction to the role of the professional taxi and private hire driver". Drivers who have not completed the qualification may not have their licences renewed.

There is a list of BTEC Course providers available on our website. This has been updated recently to include new providers.

We would encourage all drivers to ensure that they have provided their certificate to the Council.



Fees and Charges for 2019/20

The following fees and charges were approved for 2019/20 by Licensing Committee on 7 January 2019.

In accordance with Section 70(3)(b) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, a copy of this notice will be available for inspection without payment between 18 January 2019 and 15 February 2019 at Guildford Borough Council's Offices, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4BB. The notice can be inspected between 8:30am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday and 08:30am and 4:30pm on Friday.

Any person wishing to object to the fees and charges should submit details of their objection in writing no later than 4:30pm 15 February 2019 to the Licensing Team, Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4BB or by email to licensing@guildford.gov.uk. If we do not receive any objections or all objections so made are withdrawn, the proposed fees and charges shall take effect on Saturday 16 February 2019 and any fees and charges previously made for the district shall cease to have effect.

If we receive objections, which are not withdrawn, the Licensing Committee will consider the objections on Monday 25 March 2019 and will set a date for the variation to come into force with or without modifications, as decided by the Council after consideration of the objections.

| | Proposed 2019-20 Fee | 2018-19 Fee | Variance |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles | | | |
| Hackney Carriage Vehicle Application and Renewal – 1 year licence | £249.74 | £220.79 | £28.95 |
| Private Hire Vehicle Application and Renewal – 1 year licence | £173.69 | £173.69 | £0.00 |
| Hackney Licence Vehicle Change | £24.05 | £15.55 | £8.50 |
| Private Hire Vehicle Change | £24.05 | £15.55 | £8.50 |
| Hackney Carriage Temporary Vehicle (3 months) | £89.25 | £78.76 | £10.49 |
| Private Hire temporary Vehicle (3 months) | £70.19 | £66.98 | £3.21 |
| Vehicle Licence Plates | £14.79 | £9.25 | £5.54 |
| Private Hire Vehicle signs (pair) | £20.80 | £16.10 | £4.70 |
| Vehicle Test | £57.00 | £57.00 | £0.00 |
| Private Hire Operators | | | |
| PH Operators Application and Renewal – 5 year licence | £970.97 | £548.54 | £422.43 |
| Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers | | | |
| Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver Application and Renewal – 3 year licence | £383.55 | £380.04 | £3.51 |
| Hackney Carriage - Knowledge test | £100.50 | £52.45 | £48.05 |
| Private Hire - knowledge test | £25.47 | £17.76 | £7.71 |
| Convert from Private Hire Driver to Hackney Carriage Driver | £18.60 | £18.60 | £0.00 |
| Private Hire Replacement Badge | £13.66 | £13.66 | £0.00 |



Proposed Fees and Charges Explained

Below we have highlighted the changes and explanation to the proposed fees and charges. By way of background, on 14 September 2016 the Licensing Committee endorsed a methodology for calculating taxi licence fees. This methodology has been brought about by previous challenges over the setting of taxi fees so that fees can be set in a transparent way in line with legislation. For each fee, this methodology takes the Council's costs such as overheads required to provide the service and Council's Licensing staff time for the year period, and divides this total cost over the number of licences issued over the previous year.

In calculating the fees for 2019/20, there has been a reduction in the number of licensed drivers, vehicles and operators. Whilst the number of applications has reduced, this has not been reflected in a reduction of time spent. The reason for the time difference is explained as follows:

Licensing Officers and Business Support staff (who carry out the administration and processing) have been using a different database since 2017, and have had a number of temporary staff in the Business Support team. Such members of staff may not be as familiar with the database causing an increase in time spent. Similarly, the number of temporary staff has taken additional time to train, and these staff are not familiar with the work which may have contributed to the increase in application processing time.

Licensing management are working to address these issues as a priority to ensure efficient processes. However, in the setting the fees, a considerable amount of temporary staff time has been removed from the calculations so as not to charge members of the trade for the increased time spent on the Licensing function.

In addition, the Council has also introduced a number of policies over the past year, including the revision of the convictions policy, CSE training requirement, card payment requirement and NAFN database. Licensing Officers have also spent considerable time responding to challenges, including the determination of the taxi fares challenge and subsequent implementation of the fares in late 2017, revision of the fares, and implementation of the livery policy. The Council is entitled to recover these costs through the licence fee.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers:

There is a small proposed increase of £3.51 for a drivers licence, making the cost of a 3 year licence £383.55.

Vehicles:

There is no change to the cost of a Private Hire Vehicle fee.

There is a proposed increase of £28.95 to the cost of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle fee. This is due to a reduction in the number of licences, meaning that costs are spread over fewer licences, and an increase in Licensing Officer time spent on responding to challenges to hackney carriage matters, such as over fares and livery.

Private Hire Operators:

For Operators, there is a proposed increase to the cost of an Operators Licence of £422.43 making a 5 year Operators licence £970.97.



The methodology has been updated to reflect the change from a 1 year to a 5 year licence in order to ensure that costs are recovered. The fee for the 5 year licence has been calculated using the last five years of support and officer time costs divided across the current total number of licensed operators:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Number of Operators | 61 |
| Total 5 Year Budget Costs | £33,986.25 |
| Total 5 Year Staff Costs | £20,401.38 |
| Cost per licence | £891.60 |
| General time Allocation Over 5 Years | £79.37 |
| Total fee per 5 year licence | £970.97 |

Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Training

We would again remind all drivers of the requirement for to complete the mandatory training in protecting vulnerable adults in children. This is part of a Surrey wide initiative to combat child sexual exploitation. All licensed drivers across Surrey will have to complete this course.

All drivers have been emailed with their log in details and password. As such all drivers should now be able to complete the course. If you have not received this email, please check your inbox and contact licensing once you have checked that you did not mistakenly delete it.

The course is on online course and is free to drivers. It should take about an hour. There is a multiple-choice test which must be passed at the end of the course. The course must be completed by 1 June 2019. Please send a copy of your certificate to licensing (by email is acceptable) once completed.

If drivers do not complete the course, licences may be suspended, revoked or not renewed from 1 June 2019.

Ideas, News and Contributions for the Newsletter

If any members of the trade have a good news story or have any ideas about the content they would like to see in the newsletter then we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Similarly, if you would like to contribute an article relevant to the Guildford trade then please let us know...after all this is your newsletter.



Testing Matters

This edition of Testing Matters, news and views from the Woking Road Depot is kindly provided by Tester Derek Furlonger and concerns emissions testing.

Overview

Since 20 May 2018, there are stricter limits for emissions from diesel cars.

You must test vehicles to the manufacturer's plate value (when present),
You must also give a major fault if you:

- can see smoke of any colour coming from the exhaust
- find evidence that the DPF has been tampered with

Tests now requires the use of the manufacturer's plate value (when present). The manufacturer's plate means either the VIN plate or a separate plate or sticker, which is likely to be within the engine compartment. The plate or sticker may be marked 24 R followed by a number to indicate the smoke limit (such as 0.24 in the example below). It's usually displayed in a box and often positioned in the bottom right corner of the VIN plate. My experience is that this labelling is always fitted by the manufacture and is only not present if it has been removed post manufacture.

0.24

I have seen licensed vehicles that have been trying to bypass the emissions standards by various unscrupulous and unsafe methods. I am now seeing vehicles that are now trying to further avoid emission standards by the removal or damage of the emissions portion of the manufacturers plate in an attempt to force the use of the higher pre-May 2018 standards.

Fortunately for the Taxi Test the licensing policy enables us to address this issue as follows:-

Appendix 5 Page 24 which details :-

- no modifications shall be made to the vehicle without consent from the council

As the labelling forms part of the original manufacturing of the vehicle I do feel we are in a position to insist that any missing manufacturer applied labelling is reinstated ensuring that the correct emissions standard is applied. As it can take some time to re-order a label from a manufacturer, if members of the trade are aware that their label has been removed, they are advised to make enquires with the vehicle manufacturer at the earliest opportunity.

If it is not possible to find the manufacturer's plate value while carrying out an MOT we are required to use the default values detailed by DVSA. These values can be many times higher than the manufacturer's plate. This doesn't apply to a Taxi Test carried out by GBC but it is clear that there is motivation to remove the manufacturers plate in the hope of the Tester reverting to the higher DVSA levels.



MPs Keep Up Pressure on Taxi Licensing Reforms

Following the publication of the Task and Finish Group Report, the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Taxis has written to the Transport Minister urging action on taxi licensing reform.

Wes Streeting, MP & chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Taxis, said in the letter addressed to Nusrat Ghani MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, that MPs from across the House "...displayed strong support for the full package of reforms recommended in the report" referring to the recently published task and finish group report.

Mr Streeting said that he and the APPG are looking forward to the Government's response that is "near completion" and that the APPG on Taxis will lend their "full support in bringing forward new primary legislation and implementing the Task and Finish Group's recommendation in full as soon as possible." The letter was co-signed by 25 other MPs.

Short-term Closure of Friary Rank

We have yet again been notified that Surrey County Council have given permission for a series of short-term closures of the Friary Taxi Rank to enable escalator replacement works to take place at the Friary Centre. The dates and times for these closures are:

24.01.19 Thursday night to Friday morning 23:59 – 08:00
25.01.19 Friday night to Saturday morning 04:00 – 08:00
26.01.19 Saturday night to Sunday morning 04:00 – 08:00
27.01.19 Sunday night to Monday morning 23:59 – 08:00
29.01.19 Tuesday night to Wednesday morning 23:59 – 08:00
31.01.19 Thursday night to Friday morning 23:59 – 08:00

Due to the times of the closure we do not anticipate that these will adversely affect the trade, however if there are any concerns then please let us know so that we can once again liaise with Surrey County Council.

Emailing the Licensing Team

Finally, once again we would request that when contacting the licensing email address, we are better able to help you if you provide the following information:

Name of Driver / Proprietor
Badge / vehicle number
A short email stating why they are contacting us

By providing this, you will ensure a quicker and more accurate response, and save time.