



DENBIGHSHIRE LICENSED TAXI TRADE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

I cannot be held responsible for any error, omission or misstatement contained in this newsletter. DB

TAXI RANKS IN RHYL

It seems Licensing Officers use whatever thin 'evidence' they can to persuade the Licensing Committee there is no need for more ranks in Rhyl. So now, we will be asking Licensing Committee to carry out an independent survey on the ranks in the county.

At the time of a shady presentation to the Committee by, yes, you know who, there was 264 hackney licences sold, and rank spaces for 61 (not 69 as we've been told) of them. Oh! And don't forget, this number decreases by approx 9 after 6 a.m. for some ranks in Rhyl.

As at 1st October the number of taxi licences sold stood at 256.

They still favour a new rank on Queen Street, but Highways have told us there are no plans for this in the next 12 months. We asked again for this new rank by way of the Licensing Committee – not Highways (*remember the High Street Rank Shuffle? That was Highways*).

And after asking about the new part time rank (6p.m. – 6 a.m.) on the top of Water Street, we were told it's all signed and ready to use. (not when I drove by it tonight 2nd Nov.) Private cars parking on this new rank will receive letters pointing out that they are parking on a rank – *if anyone knows of a car that can read, Clarkson will be interested to hear from you!!*

We await a reply on the extension to the current rank in Water Street.

We are on Face Book

Please log in and suggest us to others in the trade. It's another way of recruiting members as well as keeping everyone up to date with what's going on.

Search "Taxi Denbighshire" (It's Linda really!)

GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

The first General Meeting was held on 15th September.

Although nomination papers were posted to all members, only one Member was willing to stand for Chair – Drew Bloor.

As Drew's nomination was uncontested, he was appointed Chair.

We gained some new Members and managed to keep to the Agenda without too much trouble.

Some may have been disappointed as it was a meeting and not a talking shop, if we talked about the Council and how it has ruined the taxi trade, we'd still be there! It was felt it would be more beneficial to plan ahead rather than discuss old issues again.

The decisions made have been carried out and replies from DCC will be emailed to Members.

WHO ARE YA?

With the number of changes in council staff dealing with HC/PHV licensing, we have asked – who are these people? We want names, employers (DCC or CCBC or both) and job titles. We'll let you know.

CCTV FOOTAGE

We are asking, on behalf of a Member, for release of CCTV footage. You can request this by way of the Data Protection Act 1985.

If you are in doubt as to the "version of events" as told by Council Officers, let us know and we'll make the request.



You will need some ID, and we'll need your permission in writing that we are acting on your behalf, and it costs £10 (payable to DCC).

POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE ACT 1985 - INTERVIEWS

If you are asked to attend the council offices are a PACE Interview – be careful. We have lodged complaints regarding the way Officers are carrying out these interviews, i.e. NOT in accordance with the law.

If it happens to you, let us know. All information is held in the strictest confidence.

A note showing your rights can be viewed on www.d-t-n.co.uk

CRB CHECKS

We've asked: I note from the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 14th September different level of CRB checks are carried out for different licence renewals. (Minute No.8 (a) refers)

This is causing some concern amongst our members; in as much members consider this a lapse in the process of ensuring the taxi and private hire trade is, and is also seen as a safe and reliable service.

The level of CRB check is of course at the discretion of the council, but we would argue that it is nigh impossible to determine if a driver will, or will not, come into contact with children or vulnerable adults and would hope the Council will serve the intention of the licensing function and ensure the protection of the public by requiring enhanced checks in all cases.

I would be grateful if could provide the rationale behind this difference; how this is seen as protecting the public and what can be done to improve this protection.

DON'T IGNORE US

On the 14th October, we sent this to the Chief Exec of DCC, the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Duffy and Cllr. Thompson-Hill:

Sirs,

This is a short note to advise you of the problems faced by the 64 taxis working in Prestatyn. Due to the Council continually ignoring the needs of the taxi trade, there is now only 4 vehicle spaces for taxis.

The taxi owners need to continue to circle around the town looking for a space from which to ply for hire.

As you can imagine, this is not an efficient use of resources for the taxi owners and in addition to wasting fuel and causing pollution it will block up a town already suffering from traffic flow problems.

I urge you to make room for the taxis; after all the Council sold the licences, it is only just that adequate working space is made for them.

D. Bloor, Chair.

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No response, so 16th October, we sent this:

Sirs,

As our voice has once again been ignored by the licensing authority the taxi trade in Prestatyn has been left with no alternative but to create its own rank.

This will allow licensees to be able to ply for hire and serve the public whilst also making a living.

For your information, the matter has been reported to the Press and a meeting with a reporter and photographer is due to take place this week.

D. Bloor,
Chair

The response then came:

FAO: D. Bloor

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your email to Mohammed Mehmet dated 14/10/2011. I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

Nov 2011

As you will be aware, when the work was being undertaken to the bridge at the Railway Station, taxis were allowed to use the bus station on a temporary basis. Following the opening of the new bridge, and subsequent closure of the bus station, the overall provision of taxi ranks has simply reverted back to how it was before the bridge works were undertaken.

We are, however, aware of the desire of the taxi association for more rank spaces within Prestatyn. It is for this reason that, as part of the shopping park development, we are proposing to provide a net increase of three rank spaces at the bottom of the High Street and a further two spaces in the car park on the northerly side of the station. This latter improvement is due to be implemented by the end of this financial year. These extra spaces will, of course, be in addition to the existing four spaces at the bottom of the High Street and the two 'part-time' spaces at the top of the High Street.

Please also note that owing to the timescales involved in the above works, the Council is currently looking at providing an additional 3 or 4 spaces at the bottom of the High Street on an interim basis. These spaces would be located on the opposite side of the road to numbers 12-24 High Street. Initial consultation with Prestatyn County Councillors is currently being undertaken on this proposal as to create these taxi rank spaces will require the removal of existing parking bays, which businesses may object to.

This last point illustrates the key issue that the Council is faced with when providing taxi rank spaces in busy retail areas such as Rhyl and Prestatyn. Demand to park at the kerb side in town centres is high and demand will always outstrip supply. Accordingly, it is the job of the Council, as highway authority, to ensure that there is a fair provision of spaces for all, whether this is for disabled parking, loading for businesses, taxi ranks, parking bays for shoppers or bus stops, for example. It is also essential that certain stretches of road, and junctions in particular, are kept free of parking to ensure that traffic can flow freely and safely.

I have copied Roly Schwarz into this email so he can update you on the status of the above proposal for the interim taxi rank.

SO THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION THOUGHT, **NOT GOOD ENOUGH**, WE HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR MORE RANKS FOR THE PAST 12 MONTHS due to the 'temp' one at the old bus station being messed about, SO WE TOOK PICS OF A STRING OF TAXIS TRYING TO GET ON THE 4 CAR TAXI RANKS, COMPOSED THE HISTORY, AND SENT IT TO THE DAILY POST. OF COURSE IF THE DAILY POST DOESN'T USE THE STORY – WE'LL GET THE MESSAGE OUT BY OTHER MEANS!

Thanks to the Journal for putting in our Press Release on 2nd Nov.

THANKS JOHN & BAZ

Thanks go to John and Baz for taking pics of private cars and commercial vans parked on taxi ranks in Rhyl. The pics have been sent to Licensing and in a letter to Graham Boase, as follows:-

On this next page you will see evidence of vehicles, other than hackney carriages, using taxi ranks in Rhyl. This Association is seeking an urgent remedy for this, as the problem seems to be worsening, in contravention of Section 64 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

As you know, rank space is not meeting the demand, and any abuse of ranks seeing to be tolerated by the Council does not lend itself to a working partnership with the Council. Can we please see some enforcement in this area?

We await a response...

**For your information, the only vehicles permitted to be on a taxi rank are:
TAXIS and PCV's when dropping off or picking up of passengers; if it would have caused an obstruction to park elsewhere, or other compelling reasons to drop off or pick up passengers. (S64)**

Nov 2011

Another official complaint has been lodged with DCC due to the letters and emails below not being answered. Some date back from 20th September.

Date	Method	Subject
20/9/11	Email to G Boase	Road Safety Act 2006, Section 52
23/9/11	Email to G Boase	Alleged Breach of Hackney Carriage Byelaw – Mr. XXXXXXX
23/0/11	Email to G Boase	Licensing Committee and Acceptance of the Association
24/9/11	Email to G Boase	Local Transport Act 2008 The Quality Partnership Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2009)
20/9/11 (Resent 3 rd Oct	Email to G Boase	HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS – QUEEN STREET, RHYL
1/10/11	Letter to G Boase	APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES TO DRIVE HACKNEY CARRIAGES/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES – CRB CHECKS
7/10/11	Email to Your Voice	COMPLAINT - HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING SERVICE
21/10/11	Letter to GB	1. HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE TESTING 2. ABUSE OF RANKS

3rd November 2011

Dear Sirs,

COMPLAINT

You will see from the table above several communications from this Association to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services, and your department remain unanswered.

Not only is this in direct conflict with Council Customer Service Standards and Statement, it looks very much as though requests for information from this Association are being ignored.

As you can appreciate, Members of the Association have asked questions in a bid to ensure they provide the best service possible and to ensure the Council is acting in accordance with the relevant legislation lest Members fall foul of the same.

I view this blatant disregard for public service as offensive and entirely unnecessary.

I trust this complaint will be investigated fully, thus allowing previous enquires and requests to be answered by return.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. D. Bloor

Chair

cc. Mr. Mehmet
Mr. C. Bundy
Mr. S. Goodrum

The next day, Mr. S. Goodrum, Corporate Complaints Officer responded:-

Dear Mr Bloor

I write in relation to your email below.

Please accept this email as confirmation that your complaint has been received by Denbighshire County Council and referred to the council's complaints process accordingly.

It has been recorded at stage 2 of the complaints process and referred to the service for investigation. As per the policy, it is the Council's intention that a response will be provided within 25 working days. You should therefore expect a response on or by Thursday 8 December 2011.

In the meantime, should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or John LL Williams, Customer Relationship Manager.

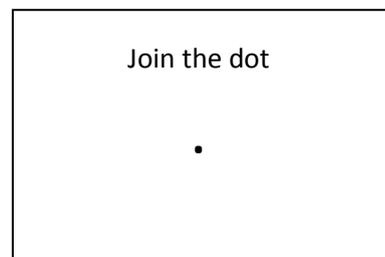
If you need to contact us again regarding this matter, please quote reference E276768.

Yours sincerely

Steven Goodrum

Corporate Complaints Officer
Customer Services

A favourable response – we'll see how it goes.



That's it for now, any more and we'll let you know. (LL)