

MINUTES of the meeting of Regulatory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Tuesday 11 December 2012 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor JW Hope MBE (Chairman)
Councillor RC Hunt (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: CM Bartrum, PL Bettington, BA Durkin, Brig P Jones CBE,
PJ McCaull, C Nicholls, FM Norman and GA Powell

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

50. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no substitute members present at the meeting.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

6. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES FOR 2012/2013.
Councillor GA Powell, Non-Pecuniary, The Councillor uses taxis on a regular basis.

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. APPLICATION FOR A TOWN GREEN AT THE GRESLEYS, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE

The County Land Agent presented a report in respect of an application for a town green at The Gresleys, Ross-on-Wye. He advised that there had been no objections to the application and requested that the Committee approve the application.

The Acting Principal Lawyer advised the Committee that the significant number test had been met. He added that a significant number did not need to be a substantial number and that in one previous case the significant number had been met by just four local residents.

In response to a question, the County Land Agent advised that there would be no cost implications to the Council and that the applicants would be legally bound to look after the green. He also added that once the land had been granted town green status it could not be reversed in the future.

Members did have some concerns in respect of the long term safeguarding of the green however it was noted that 35 residents had been involved in the application and it was therefore considered that their concerns in respect of the long term protection of the town green could be satisfied.

RESOLVED

THAT the land is registered as a town green.

54. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES FOR 2012/2013

The Head of Environmental Protection & Licensing introduced a report regarding an application for a 7% increase to the Hackney Carriage fares which had been received from the Taxi Association and other members of the trade.

The Committee heard from Mr Jones and Mr Lane, representing the Taxi Association. They drew the Committee's attention to the significant increases drivers had been subject to regarding licence fees, fuel, servicing and insurance. The issue of tariffs was also discussed at length, with it being noted that a number of operators now offered the reduced tariff 1 for night time bookings. It was further noted that a number of customers would now expect tariff 1 even if they had not made a prior booking, if this was not agreed by the driver, the customer would simply move to another taxi until someone agreed to take the reduced fare. Mr Rone's representation addressing the increased use of tariff 1 was also discussed with Mr Jones of the view that Mr Rone should attend the Taxi Association meeting to put forward his suggestion that the trade in general use tariff 2 at the permissible times.

Mr Jones also advised the Committee of an error in the report as he was named in appendix A as requesting the increase. He wished it to be noted that he had not personally voted for a 7% increase but that he was representing the Members of the Taxi Association who had.

The Committee raised concern with a comment from Mr Jones that taxis were not for the poor. Mr Jones clarified his comments and apologised for any offence caused.

Mr Shakeshaft, another taxi driver, was also given the opportunity to address the Committee. He advised that the proposed increase would result in a 4.7% increase over the previous 4 years.

Members discussed the application and noted that fuel costs had increased by over 50% in the previous five years. They also noted that a reduced public transport network had resulted in more people using taxis.

RESOLVED

THAT the Committee accept the proposed 7% increase in Hackney carriage fares.

55. REPORT ON REGULATORY ACTIVITY BY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & TRADING STANDARDS, HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICE

The Head of Environmental Protection and Licensing presented a report about the main regulatory activities of Environmental Health & Trading Standards service between 1 August and 31 October 2012.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the work which was undertaken by the Department.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be received and noted and that the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Team be thanked for the important work they were undertaking.