

Environment & Culture Directorate

Director: Michael Hainge

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

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16th July, 2009

Dear ,

UPDATE FROM LICENSING TEAM AT THE COUNCIL

Since our last letter to the taxi trade I would like to update you all on the following:

1. New Email Address

We have a new email address for correspondence. It is now taxi-licensing@herefordshire.gov.uk. This is a specific email address for taxi licensing queries which will allow all correspondence to be addressed by members of the taxi licensing team in a more efficient manner.

2. Draft Taxi Licence Conditions

A new draft version of the "Private Hire / Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions" has been drafted for your comment. Copies can be downloaded from the internet at www.herefordshire.gov or can be emailed to you if you email us at taxi-licensing@herefordshire.gov.uk. Alternatively, we can post out a paper copy with a self addressed envelope if you so wish. We welcome your comments on this document within eight weeks from the date of this letter, i.e. by 11th September 2009. It is my intention to take your comments to the October Regulatory Committee for their consideration.

3. Taxi Ranks

Commercial Road in Hereford: Further to our last letter to you, I am informed by our Highways Department that improvements to the Commercial Road taxi ranks are well underway, with the road traffic order currently awaiting approval by our cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation, Councillor Wilcox. Once approval has been given I have been told that the work is earmarked for the end of August. It is hoped that the relining and designation of new ranks will significantly increase rank space at night time, yet also allow the public to park for short periods of time near to some of the takeaways. When these ranks are designated I will also be requesting the Police and our Civilian Parking Enforcement Officers to check on the situation at night time to ensure that the public do not park on taxi ranks in the evening and at night.



Certificate No. 4392

Working in partnership for the people of Herefordshire

Bath Street Offices, Bath Street, Hereford. HR1 2ZF

Herefordshire Council

Main Switchboard (01432) 260000, www.herefordshire.gov.uk

NHS Herefordshire

Main Switchboard (01432) 344344, www.herefordshire.nhs.uk

Bewell Street in Hereford / Tesco's: Tesco's have been approached by the Council to release part of a redundant wide pavement at the junction of Bewell Street / Victoria Street to allow for a new feeder rank to relieve pressure on the congested Bewell Street. To date we have been unable to gain Tesco's agreement to do this, although we are still pursuing the matter. In the meantime I understand that the police and the Council's Civilian Parking Enforcement Officers have been jointly patrolling the road and have reminded both private and licensed vehicles of the parking and waiting restrictions that exist along this road. I understand that both the Police and Council's Parking Team have been generally pleased with the co-operation shown by taxi drivers who appear to be complying with the parking regulation orders here. As such there has so far been no need to issue any penalty charge notices and I am informed that the general feedback from the Police is that the situation has improved. I acknowledge only too well the difficulties historically associated with Bewell Street and hope that these can eventually be resolved if the Council are permitted by Tesco to improve the rank space here.

4. Wheelchair Access Training

If you read the draft conditions you will see that condition 7.11 proposes that all drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles must obtain approved training by a set date. This is to ensure the correct handling and safety of wheelchair bound and disabled passengers which I am sure you will agree is of great importance to our community. All drivers who participate in this course will be issued with a new dual driver's badge that will have a wheelchair logo to allow members of the public to be sure that that the driver is competent to do so, thus instilling confidence.

The Licensing Team are therefore liaising with Social Services and, presuming this requirement remains in the final version of the conditions, we hope in the future to offer a Council run and approved half day training course in Hereford at cost price. This is likely to be a two hour course at the Castle Green Training centre falling in the region of £10, to be run by Nick O'Sullivan who is the Health and Safety officer for social transport. Some of you may already know Nick as he provides the training for the employees who drive the Council vehicles.

Please could you let us know if you would like to participate as soon as possible either in writing, via the telephone or by email to our new email address, taxi-licensing@herefordshire.gov.uk In the meantime we will keep you posted on any further development of this course.

5. Renewals

Within the current and draft conditions it states that all applications received by the Council after their expiry date must be treated as though they are new applications. In many cases an existing vehicle will not meet the high standards required for new licences and therefore the Licensing Team will need to refer late renewals to the Council's Regulatory Committee for consideration. It currently costs a driver £150 to go to committee. To overcome this burden and avoid additional expense you should therefore submit your application form *prior* to expiry, even if you are still awaiting other documentation, e.g. a test certificate, CRB or medical. In such a case however, I should remind you that the licence cannot of course be issued until all documentation has been seen and approved by Licensing staff.

6. Access to Licensing Staff

I am also aware that a number of drivers are booking surgery time at Garrick House to simply collect or submit taxi forms. Can I remind you that the staff at the Council's various 'Info Centres' are trained to assist the public in the majority of cases, in particular for taxi applications and renewals. It will save you time to use these info centre staff, as you do not have to arrange an appointment and you do not have to drive to the surgeries held at Garrick House.


Herefordshire's Info Centres are based at:

- The Hereford Centre in Garrick House in Hereford,
- Corn Square in Leominster,
- Swan House in Ross on Wye,
- St Katherines in Ledbury,
- The Bromyard Centre in Bromyard and
- The Kington Centre in Kington.

Finally, some of you might be aware that I am currently reviewing the accessibility of the Licensing staff to the taxi trade, following complaints from the trade. I am hopeful that there be improvements in this area and I should be able to report back to you on the outcome of this review in the near future.

I hope that the above letter keeps you informed and ask that any comments on the draft conditions are received before 11th September.

Yours sincerely,



M. A. WILLIMONT
ACTING REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & TRADING STANDARDS