

LICENSING COMMITTEE

31 AUGUST 2011

Present :- Councillor Barrie Cook (Chairman)
Councillors Mary Blandon, John Bouckley, Nick Cope,
Christopher Garnett, Pauline Hazell, Mike Hogg,
Margaret Kimberley, Michael Lilley, Colin Mudie and
Ann Quarrie

5. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

6. Passenger Assistance Training

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Protective Services on a proposed amendment to the condition which requires holders of licences for new hackney carriage disabled accessible vehicles to have completed a Passenger Assistance Training (PAT) course, to include all other drivers of those vehicles. The amendment was being sought to eliminate a potential loophole in the wording of a previous Committee decision and to prevent drivers who use the new plates from refusing to carry wheelchair customers on the grounds that they do not know how the ramps work or how to secure a wheelchair properly, or actually doing so without being competent. It was highlighted that the amendment would also increase the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis in Colchester at certain times.

Mr Saunders (Chairman of the Colchester Hackney Carriage Association) was in attendance and responded to questions from Members of the Committee and confirmed that the Association supported the proposed amendment.

RESOLVED that –

(i) condition (iii) (c) be amended to read “all proprietors and drivers driving the 18 new plates, Hackney Carriage Plate numbers 114 onwards, should attend a PAT training course and that the pass certificate be lodged with the Licensing Authority for retention with their driver record”. Full compliance is to be achieved within three months from 1 September 2011.

(ii) With effect from 1 September 2011, any **new** proprietors or **new** drivers of the 13 plates which require the vehicle to be wheelchair accessible (also referred to as wheelchair protected) in perpetuity, must attend a PAT training course within three months of acquiring or using such a vehicle and lodge their pass certificate with the Licensing Authority for retention with their driver record.

Councillors Hazell and Kimberley joined the meeting at this point.

7. Request to increase waiting time charged by Hackney Carriage Vehicles.

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Protective Services regarding an application from the Colchester Hackney Carriage Association to increase the amount which Hackney Carriage Vehicles are allowed to charge their customers for “waiting time”. Mr Saunders, Chairman of the Hackney Carriage Association explained that the Association had held a ballot amongst its drivers (on various ways that fares might be increased) earlier in the year and it emerged that increasing the “waiting time” fare to £16.00 per hour was the preferred option. Mr Saunders informed the Committee Members that there had not been an increase in the “waiting time” fee in Colchester for 15 years and that the increase from £12.00 to £16.00 per hour was more in line with Hackney Carriage Vehicles elsewhere in the country. Mr Saunders and Mr Stevens (Licensing Enforcement Officer) responded to questions from the Committee regarding the programming of taxi meters and the calculation of Hackney Carriage fares.

RESOLVED that the increase in the fare Hackney Carriage Vehicles are allowed to charge for “waiting time” be increased to £16.00 per hour. This decision will come into force once the Council has carried out the prescribed public advertising of it.