

Door-to-Door Rally

David Beck,
Campaign Co-ordinator



On Tuesday 21 November 2006, the **London Private Hire DOOR-to-DOOR Justice Campaign** held a **Rally** at Red Lion Square in **London**.

The purpose of the **Rally** was to raise people's general awareness of the layers of discrimination involved against **Private Hire Drivers** in the road traffic enforcement practises on **red routes, bus lanes and local controlled parking zones**.

The **DOOR-to-DOOR Organising Committee** took every opportunity that arose in the 12 weeks leading up to the **Rally** to encourage a good, solid turn out from the industry itself. Everyone agreed this was our opportunity to raise some pretty serious concerns.

The **Campaign** sent letters out to over 500 operators, arranged venues **from one end of London to the other** to recruit further support. Unfortunately operator after operator applauded our initiative but ultimately could not attend as they were 'Too busy'.

For his part, **Steve Wright**, despite a series of personal set-backs, worked tirelessly faxing and emailing **LPHCA members**, which boosted attendance to a level that showed we meant business.

So, if you were not there on 21 November you missed out because as it happened the event was a tremendous success. The rally was a thoroughly professional and media focused **showing our industry from minicab to chauffeur, in its best possible light**.

There were **supportive speeches from major politicians and industry representatives and two expertly produced films that were made for the campaign detailing the precise problems encountered by our drivers and passengers**.

Most importantly, the **Rally** was covered by the **BBC's TV's London News, BBC Radio London and LBC** throughout the day, and a host of local newspapers. The **South London Press** ran a series of articles over the following weeks.

As a direct consequence of this and other actions, **Transport for London (TfL), finally committed itself to finding a solution for us on red routes within a stated timescale – by the summer of 2007!** The **Private Hire Board** are now formally monitoring TfL's progress to this end.

In the build-up to the **Rally**, campaigners left no stone unturned in making every **London MP, and the leaders of every council**, conscious of the great harm being done to members of the travelling public in general, and to this traditional form of **door-to-door** transport service in particular, through their policy of imposing fines against our drivers for nothing more than attending to the public's needs.

Next stage of the campaign

ENOUGH!

With **The Mayor and Transport for London** onside and **exemptions on red routes now promised for the coming months**, there is no doubt whatsoever that the **London Private Hire DOOR-to-DOOR Justice Campaign** has been a success.

The number of tickets being issued against our drivers will be substantially reduced, and the job of driving a **Private Hire Vehicle** will become that much more attractive as a means of making a reasonable living. Great news for all concerned - not least for those passengers for whom a **door-to-door** service had become a virtual impossibility - but we are not done yet...

Transport for London governs just 5% of **London's road network**. That's all the red-lined ones but if you have another look at the tickets your drivers have been getting and ask how many are being issued by **local councils**, without looking I can tell you it's going to be quite a few.

Councils are strapped for cash and are growing used to taxing motorists to boost the bank account and at the moment we are sitting ducks. Unlike TfL (who licence us) many councils don't appear, from their responses to our awareness campaign, to know or care much about us.

Fact is, the local **CPZs (controlled parking zones)** involve yellow lines, which we are allegedly allowed to pick-up and set-down on... but not to wait on. Unfortunately for this industry, and the passengers we cater for, we are a pre-booked transport service and waiting outside people's houses, shops, etc., is what we have to do.

Waiting happens for all sorts of reasons especially when boarding the elderly, the disabled, children and mothers with shopping or a buggy. For the sake of our drivers and customers, we need a change to the way councils interpret what constitutes waiting.

The truth is that a public transport service has to start somewhere and stop somewhere else. Over the years, councils have been able to get their heads round buses and their need for **bus stops, taxis plying-for-hire and ranking-up**. These services have been duly been accommodated. **All we're asking for is the same level of consideration that is appropriate to the services that we provide.**

Over the coming months **DOOR-to-DOOR** campaigners will be out there educating each of the **33 London Councils** as to what **Private Hire** is and the purpose it serves across **London**. We will be showing the films we presented at the **Rally** at Red Lion Square, and trying to win formal recognition.

The **local controlled parking zones** are just part of the overall picture. Let's not forget the number of **Licensed Private Hire Offices** obstructed by traffic restrictions right up to their doorsteps. **The Mayor** has stated to the **Private Hire Board** that he is prepared to look at **access to bus lanes** once the red routes thing has been settled, but he only controls a fraction of them. **Local councils** manage the lion's share, and we must be catered for from one end of **London** to the other, or life for our drivers is likely to get pretty chaotic.

To date, the **London Private Hire DOOR-to-DOOR Justice Campaign** has been successful without everyone's help. However, we're now going to need the active support of everyone in the industry to bring these councils to the table.

So far the only boroughs with sufficient numbers to make any difference are **Lambeth, Southwark and Newham** - and we are now meeting with each in an attempt to make some headway. We are however, still grossly under-strength in the other boroughs, with no one at all in 8 of them.

If, like us, you are concerned that this licensed transport industry must be granted freedoms sufficient to enable us to provide the services the travelling public expects from us, please get in touch with me on **07956 269 556**, or better still, email me at **david.forum@btinternet.com**. I look forward to hearing from you.