

PRIVATE HIRE NEWS

SUMMER 2008 ISSUE 43



**The news magazine of the Licensed Private Hire Car Association
incorporating the London Private Hire Car Association**

Welcome to edition 43 of **Private Hire News**. Since we last published the **Association** has been very busy. We have attended the **Coventry** show, where we met many members on the **J&M** stand and we also got the opportunity to meet lots of our advertisers.

As well as attending **Coventry** the **Association** has also made trips to **Manchester, Luton** and **Scotland**, all this, in addition to the usual meetings with the **Public Carriage Office**, the **Private Hire Board** and several **London** members.

The **Association's Platinum Committees** have also been meeting regularly and an update is published elsewhere in this edition of **Private Hire News**.

An event we did not attend however, was one that we wanted to speak at and in early March we requested this to the event organisers. That meeting was the **Parking and Enforcement Task Force Conference** at the end of June.

In our email we said we would like the opportunity to speak at the event on the difficulties that **Private Hire Vehicles** face when **Picking Up, Setting Down** and **Parking**.

We saw this conference as an ideal opportunity to enlighten those we feel are indiscriminately ticketing **Private Hire Drivers** lawfully doing their work.

We wanted to point out that the appeals process is expensive, time consuming, bureaucratic and unfair.

After many emails and phone calls to the organisers, most of which were not returned, just a short while before the conference we received a voicemail to say that our subject was 'not right for this conference' but perhaps we would be able to speak there next year.

Well they may not want to hear what we have to say at their conference this year but they will be hearing from us very loudly and we are covering this in our 'Please let us do our job' Article highlighting 'The Failure of Local Parking Management and its Ticketing System' for our industry.

Some good news is that **London's** new **Mayor Boris Johnson** has continued where his predecessor **Mayor Ken Livingstone** left off by permitting **Taxis** and **Private Hire Vehicles displaying Red Route Signage** to stop at night to allow passengers to use cash machines on **Red Routes**.

This is to address concerns about the safety of **Taxi** and **Private Hire** customers using cash machines at night. **Transport for London** will conduct a six month trial and full details are elsewhere in this edition of **Private Hire News**.

Outside London our trip to **Manchester** followed problems for **Platinum Member Cresta Cars** with their **Local Authority** bizarrely proposing to congestion charge **Private Hire** whilst exempting **Taxis**.

Having experienced the same scenario with the first **London Mayor's Transport Strategy** we were able to advise **Cresta's Paul Meek**, who has recognised the benefits of the trade communicating nationally.

It took us over a year and much activity to convince the **GLA** that **Congestion Charging** a mode of **Public Transport** that actually reduces congestion was a folly. **Paul** quickly involved the media; drivers and others.

I travelled to **Manchester** to meet **Paul**, prior to leaving having posted views on the **Manchester Evening News'** website forum.

Our earlier work probably made the **Manchester Authority's** position untenable as well as unbelievable and I am delighted we have been able to support **Paul's** fine efforts, which has quickly culminated in a **U-Turn** by the **Local Authority**.

The serious problem of **Private Hire** not being treated equitably by **Local Authorities** highlights why we need to work closely with members throughout the country who often share the same

bureaucratic and operational problems wherever they operate.

The **LPHCA's** belief before licensing in **London** was that **32 Boroughs** making **32 sets of regulations** would be dire for **Private Hire** in the capital and the success we are having on **Red Routes**, controlled by one authority (**The GLA via TfL**), compared to the difficulties we are having dealing with the 32 sets of parking policies from the various boroughs shows why.

Yet another illustration of the benefits of a 'City Wide' rather than 'Local Authority' regulator is demonstrated by further good news from new **London Mayor Boris Johnson** who has listened to our plea for 'Zero Tolerance' against illegal touts.

Mayor Johnson has acted quickly following his election and our letter to **London Assembly Member Roger Evans** in which we stated how 'dismayed that the serious offence of 'illegal touting' merits a 'three strikes and you're out' policy.

The letter followed our **4th March** meeting where members unanimously rejected the 'get caught three times before losing your licence' recommendation.

Further details of the **Mayor's 'Zero tolerance'** to touting approach appears in this edition of **Private Hire News**. The good news from **TfL** and the **Mayor's Office** continues with the confirmation that the long awaited **branding signage** is now approved and these details are also in this edition.

The touting issue remains and we are having dialogue with all parties, with our legal team seeking clarification on allegations from members that events where passengers being carried for reward are avoiding the requirement for licensing for drivers and vehicles.

The final piece of news is that we are holding a 'Road Show' followed by our **AGM on Tuesday 7th October** at the **London Heathrow Marriott Hotel**. This will be in conjunction with **Private Hire News Advertisers** and **Platinum Sponsors** and we look forward to seeing you there.

Steve Wright, MBE
Chairman

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