



Olympic Planning Meetings

The LPHCA has now attended several meetings with Roger Silvers, the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) Client Manger for Taxi & PHV, these regular meetings are ongoing and cover such matters as security, picking up and setting down, parking, accessibility, planning and communication with the Industry.

The third sub-group meeting to specifically discuss communications to the Taxi / PHV industry during the Games will be at TfL in Southwark at the end of March followed by the full Taxi and PHV Working Group scheduled in April at Canary Wharf.

Representatives from TfL /the Public Carriage Office, the Taxi Industry, Licensing Enforcement Officers, GoSkills, Department for Transport and other Trade Associations will be present.

As the 2012 Games is billed to be the most Accessible & Green ever, the LPHCA will work closely with the ODA and others to provide Private Hire's viewpoint in these areas.

To enable this to happen we will get Members involved in engagement with the ODA by hosting several small meetings (probably on the Thames) and Operator Tours. We will also continue to invite the ODA to attend our main members meetings held at St Pancras and Heathrow.

Most Licensing Fees for London Frozen

Last month, Transport for London's Board approved changes to taxi and private hire licensing fees to come into effect from 1st April 2010.

The fees to be frozen at 2009 rates include:

- Private hire licence application and inspection fee
- Private hire operator licence application fee
- Private hire operator five-year licence fee

All funds generated are used to cover licensing and administration costs.

For Private Hire Operators, changes to the fee structure for removing or adding operating centres will also begin from 1st April. The fee payable for removing an Operating Centre from a Private Hire Vehicle Operator's licence will increase from £25 to £50, and the fee for adding a new centre will increase from £25 to £200. These fees have not risen since 2001 when Operator Licensing began, and reflect more accurately the significant costs involved in processing the licences.

John Mason, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "Every penny that TfL receives from license fees is spent on providing the services we deliver and I am committed to providing the best quality service whilst reducing back office costs. This is why I felt that we should freeze most license fees this year and work hard to find savings instead."



Private Hire in Bus Lanes

The Private Hire Board's 'bus lane committee' met with representatives from London Councils in December to present the case for access to bus lanes.

Patrick Raeburn presented a five minute outline to London Councils, which had been formalised and agreed

previously. John Griffin and Steve Wright fielded questions with Patrick who was supported by David Beck.

The presentation was very successful to the extent that Councillor Colin Smith from the London Borough of Bromley was so enthused that he alluded to facilitating a trial in his Borough. Like many others Councillor Smith is miffed at the bus lanes being empty whilst Licensed Public Transport like Private Hire is caught in traffic.

Cab Enforcement Unit London Action

The Metropolitan Police's Cab Enforcement Unit, part of the Transport for London (TfL) funded Safer Transport

Command, kindly invited the LPHCA and other groups, including Trade Unions and Taxi Trade Association Representatives to join them on a recent observation and dialogue night in London's West End. The Cab Enforcement Unit also invited John Mason (Director) and Helen Chapman (Head of Business Services & Development) TfL – Taxi & Private Hire to accompany the Unit.

The specific aim of the visit was to look at the working practices of Licensed Private Hire and Taxi services, in particular with regard to Night Clubs. Whilst there is often touting activity close to Night Clubs both the trades have taken steps to protect legitimate drivers and operators doing business safely and lawfully.

Chief Superintendent Joe Royle of the Unit and Martin Low (Director of Transport) at Westminster City Council were there to hear from Private Hire as well as the Taxi (Hackney) side of the story.

There was some good 'best practice' going on with Private Hire Operators but clearly the need to educate some drivers on where and how to park lawfully is required, given the constraints on parking in the West End.

Prior to the official late night event a visit was made to the Embassy Club, where Platinum Members Chequers Transport are based. Phil Alexander showed in real time how useful a 'cordoned off area of a licensed premises' can be when disseminating a large group of people from a Club, particularly in regard to health & safety and the prevention of touting.



ROUT THE TOUT



FREE member's helpline The LPHCA has financed a free helpline for members with Croner Consulting one of the biggest consultancy companies in the U.K. Full details of how the helpline works has now been sent to all members with a membership card. Any members who have not yet received a membership card, please contact us.



Charity Tribute to Laurence Levan

Following Laurence's sad passing, featured in the last edition of *Private Hire News*, Terry Walsh, who worked 'for' or more accurately 'with' Laurence at Central London Private Hire, as a tribute took part in the 'Macmillan Sahara Hiking Challenge' on 27th February for nine days.



The fund raising trip was dedicated to the memory of Laurence and to help Macmillan Nurses who *wonderfully look after terminally ill Cancer Victims*.

Terry walked a total of 110 kilometres across the Sahara desert from Ouarzazate (called 'the door of the desert') to the other side and beyond to raise money for the charity.

Those who wish to donate to this special charity, please log online to www.justgiving.com/terry-walsh to donate. Terry has already surpassed the target of £2,300 raised.

Whilst in the middle of the Sahara, Terry put up a set of stones in memory of Laurence who in his words he said: 'I believe whilst Laurence lived no one was an orphan'.

This fund-raiser shows the close bond between people in Private Hire – 'well done' Terry.



Other Fund-Raisers

The Platinum Members Fund Raising Committee met in February to plan two other great events this year.

There will be two evening events this summer, one early evening, one late night in London.

The early evening event, will be a special night-out on one of the fabulous *River Thames Cruise Boats*, which will include an excellent meal, cabaret and dancing.

The late night event, (which we think we'll call the last man standing night), will be at the famous *Embassy Club* in Old Burlington Street, Mayfair. *This will not be for those who like their cocoa at ten and to be tucked up in bed by eleven!*

Members and Special Guests will get early E-Alerts and good notification about these events, which will be detailed further in Edition 50 of *Private Hire News*. *Please book early to avoid disappointment.*



LPHCA Golf Day Fund-Raiser 2010

The very successful inaugural *LPHCA Golf Day Fund-Raiser* last September is being repeated again on Tuesday, 14th September 2010 at Elstree Golf Club.

As last year the event was completely over subscribed please contact Jules as soon as possible on 020 8358 6683 to reserve a team or book places in a make up team.



Platinum Meeting



The next Platinum Members Meeting will be on Wednesday 31st March on the Hispaniola Boat on the Thames at 10.30 for 11.00 start.

For those who are not yet Platinum Members, you can come along to find out about the work that we are able to do beyond basic LPHCA Membership.

If you want to attend, *the meeting is nearly full*, so please log in to the Members Area on our website www.lphca.co.uk to register your place.

Online VAT Filing News from Hill Wooldridge

(Industry Accountants for the LPHCA and some members)



Businesses that meet the new rules for online VAT filing are being sent letters by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) informing them of the changes.

Under the new rules, businesses that have an annual turnover exclusive of VAT of £100,000 or more, and all businesses newly registered for VAT on or after 1st April 2010, no matter their turnover, will need to submit their returns and payments electronically as from 1st April 2010.

Once a business has to file online, it must carry on doing so even if its annual turnover dips below the £100,000 mark later on. The requirement to file electronically will also cover any nil and repayment returns.

For those businesses that do not fall into either category, the option to submit paper returns and to make payments by post stays in place, although the arrangement is to be looked at again between now and 2012.

New businesses without a full year's VAT history may be told that they will have to submit online if HMRC calculates that their turnover will be *more than £100,000*. This means that some businesses which have *not yet reached the £100,000 turnover threshold* could still be told to *file electronically*.

Need an Industry Experienced Account? Ian Park of Hill Wooldridge is Institute of Chartered Accountant Qualified and has worked with the LPHCA and Members for nearly 40 years. You are unlikely to find a more industry experienced accountant! Call 020 8427 1944 or contact the association for more details.