

TAXI UPDATE



Street Pastors have arrived in Brecon

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who have a genuine concern about their community. They are there to assist any individual who may be in need of support or assistance. Examples of assistance they have been able to offer so far, include:

- Using the knowledge of taxi drivers in finding people who have been separated from their group of friends.
- Offering basic first aid and water where necessary
- Clearing up glass so that no injuries can be caused
- Removing glass from the road ensures that it doesn't puncture vehicle tyres
- Giving out Taxi numbers to youngsters at the end of an evening
- Directing individuals to the taxi rank
- Issuing Flip Flops and spikeys to prevent further accidents
- Staying with an injured individual until an ambulance arrives

Brecon Street Pastors underwent extensive training, to ensure that they had the required skills to offer assistance where necessary. A total of 15 street pastors were commissioned on the 4th November 2016 and since then they have been patrolling the streets of Brecon on a Saturday night. Groups of 4 street pastors can be seen between 10 p.m. to approximately 4 a.m. Saturday night, to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets. Brecon Police fully support the work that is being undertaken by the Brecon Street Pastors and see their role as a key tool to tackle the issues around the Night time Economy of Brecon. As such they are keen that all Licensed Premises and Licensed Taxi's work with and assist the street pastors when necessary. If you need to contact Brecon Street Pastors they carry a Patrol Mobile which is **07754 384 386**.

Updated Vehicle Conditions

An update of the Conditions that apply to all licensed vehicles is proposed and the revised conditions will be open for consultation once they have been considered by committee. They will be available to view on the Council's website at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/licensing-trading-standards/taxis-and-private-hire-licences/> if you are unable to view the conditions on-line a hard copy is available on request from your local licensing office. The Consultation will run for 10 days and comments fed back to the licensing authority will be considered before final approval by committee and implementation shortly after. In summary the main changes are:

- Licence plates must be fixed on the rear of the vehicle, there will no longer be any discretion to permit plates in windows
- Exemption Certificates for Private Hire vehicles not to display the plate will apply strictly to executive car services only
- Conditions in relation to the use of CCTV are introduced (please note this does NOT make CCTV mandatory)
- Conditions in relation to the use of Trailers and Roof boxes are introduced
- Seat Dimension conditions will no longer apply and reliance will be made on manufacturer's recommendations and the registration document when considering seating capacity.
- The requirement to carry a Fire extinguisher is considered ineffective and we propose to remove this

Taxi Drivers, Private Hire Operators and Immigration Act 2016

Since 1st December 2016 all drivers who apply for a joint HC & PHV driver licence or a Private Hire Operator Licence must demonstrate that they are entitled to work in the UK, an original document such as a **UK or European Union Passport OR a birth certificate issued in the UK together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer*** will need to be presented on application and the authority is required to retain a copy of that document. This requirement applies to driver renewals also, however once the document has been presented it will not need to be re-presented on subsequent renewals, in practice you will usually be presenting these documents as proof of ID in order for a DBS check to be carried out. If an applicant has a time-limited right to remain and work in the UK then any licence can only be issued up until this date.

* For a full list of acceptable documents please check the procedure notes on the taxi pages of the Council website.

New Taxi Fares

Thank you to all those drivers who responded to our survey on Fares that was circulated by e-mail last month. The fares chargeable by Hackney Carriages in Powys were last reviewed in 2011 and while fuel prices are less than they were in 2011, it is appreciated that other costs associated with running a licensed vehicle will have risen. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gauge the appetite for a review and 58% of those who responded wanted at least some elements of the tariffs to increase compared to 24% who didn't want any change. Based on the responses received there was most demand for:

- An increase to the Flag for Tariff 1
- An increase to the Running Mile Rate for Tariffs 2 & 4
- Bring Forward the start time for Tariff 2 (currently midnight)

We have taken this into account and propose the following changes to the current tariffs:

- Increase Flag 1 tariff 1 from £3.40 to £3.60
- Increase the Running Mile Rate at Tariffs 2 and 4 from £2.20 to £2.40
- Bring forward the start time for Tariff 2 from midnight to 11pm

These changes will need to be reported to ~~Cabinet~~ and will then go out for a 14 day public consultation (via newspaper and the council's website). Any objections will be considered before final approval by ~~Cabinet~~ and implementation shortly after. Vehicle Proprietors may then wish to have their meters re-calibrated to reflect the changes agreed, however you are NOT required to re-calibrate your meter and may wish to retain the current tariffs, an up to date tariff card must be on display though.

New Duties under the Equality Act 2010

Under this Act, from 6th April 2017 it becomes an offence for a licensed driver who is driving a vehicle that is designated by the council as wheelchair accessible to:

- Refuse to carry passengers in wheelchairs
- Fail to provide appropriate assistance to passengers in wheelchairs or
- To charge them extra

Drivers who have a medical condition that prevents them from giving assistance can apply for an exemption. The authority will be designating any vehicle that it considers wheelchair accessible (usually via a ramp or lift) and has been licensed for a wheelchair seat; these vehicles will appear on a list that must be published. We will be publishing this list on the Council's website, it will show the make and model of the vehicle, whether the vehicle is licensed as Private Hire or Hackney Carriage and the name of the vehicle proprietor. Anyone who has a vehicle considered to be wheelchair compatible will receive a letter advising that they will be on the list of designated vehicles.

Some other Bits and Pieces:

- The penalty for using a mobile phone whilst driving has now doubled to a fine of £200 and 6 penalty points. A licensed driver may be referred to the Licensing Committee where there are more than two minor traffic offences
- Contacting drivers by e-mail is quick, inexpensive and efficient, if we don't hold your e-mail address then please make sure you provide it to us at the earliest opportunity, this way you will be kept better informed of any updates or planned changes that might affect you
- Please note that all our forms and conditions along with guidance notes to applicants are available on line at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/licensing-trading-standards/taxis-and-private-hire-licences/>
- We would like to maintain an on-line list of all licensed Private Hire operators and Hackney carriage Proprietors with contact details so that we can promote your services and for customers to ensure that they are using a licensed service. You can opt out of featuring on this list by indicating so on the application form next time you renew or licence a vehicle
- In our last newsletter we featured Safeguarding as an issue that may come to your attention during the course of your role as a taxi driver. For further information Barnardo's have produce a useful leaflet http://www.barnardos.org.uk/spot_the_signs_professionals.pdf Safeguarding is a serious and important matter and the Council is currently considering what more we can do to effectively raise the profile of this issue amongst taxi drivers who are so often the eyes and ears of the community
- Please remember not to leave your vehicle unattended on the rank. Only Hackney Carriages that are waiting/queuing for passengers should be parked in the rank. Any offenders may be subject to action either by parking enforcement officers or the Licensing Section, as appropriate

If you need to contact us regarding any of the above or need to speak to a member of the team regarding Taxi Licensing our contact details are:

Tel: 0845 602 7037 and ask for licensing in the relevant area office, Brecon and Llandrindod Wells or Welshpool. Email: licensingbandr@powys.gov.uk / licensingmont@powys.gov.uk