

Southfield Road, Loughborough,
Leicestershire, LE11 2TX

Ask for: Licensing

Contact Centre: 01509 634562

Email: licensing@charnwood.gov.uk

**To all; Drivers and Private Hire
Operators**

December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

****IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ****

HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the Hackney & Private Hire Newsletter for Charnwood.

Staff Changes - **Tanzina Ahmed** (Licensing Assistant) has left her position within the Council and we wish her well in her new post with NEBOSH.

The Charnwood Licensing Team have developed this newsletter, following a number of requests by the local taxi trade to keep them up to date with the latest legislation and Government/Council policy changes that affect you.

A BIG THANK YOU ! - 2020/2021 has been a tough year for all of us and the Licensing staff would like to thank you for your patience and facing the challenging times that life has thrown at us all whilst adjusting to the pandemic. We are beginning to see the return to some normality but the pandemic has spurred the Council on towards a more online presence, including Licensing. A number of the temporary processes brought in during the pandemic and initial lockdown have now become permanent.

The Licensing Office

There have been some key changes to the Council offices over the last 18 months with agile working (a mixture of home working and office working) and hot desking being introduced for all Council staff.

Licensing continue to be in the Licensing office 50% of the week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday (staff numbers allowing). This is to continue for the foreseeable future and will be when Licensing are able to produce licence documents, plates and badges. These can only be produced in the office.



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The Council continues to restrict the number of people allowed to enter the building, with no waiting area for customers. All customers are triaged as to whether they need to visit the Council Offices or can their enquiry can be dealt with via another method, i.e. online or electronically. Licensing moved the vehicle plate licensing process electronically via the licensing@charnwood.gov.uk email address during the first lockdown and this is to continue. The Combined Driver licence process is slightly different, with application forms and accompanying documents being posted into the building whilst the DBS is now completed via TAXI PLUS.

Licensing is in the early stages of working with the Councils IT section to help configure a new licensing database. It is hoped that people will be able to apply online via web pages once this is complete. The work is being done alongside our day to day work so will take time.

Biggin Street Hackney Rank

The Biggin Street rank is split into three and this can lead to some confusion over the order of the occupying positions and drivers taking passengers prior to the drivers actually in positions 1 – 3 at the front of the rank. Biggin Street rank is split into 3 - outside Champs are positions 1 to 3, the middle section alongside the disabled in the second part of the rank and this is positions 4 to 6 and the last section is the layby that ends near the shopping centre, i.e. T K Max.

The licensing section are led to believe that a number of drivers occupying positions other than 1 – 3 at the front of the rank (i.e. outside Champs), are not directing the public to the front three positions when approached and presumably are then taking the passengers themselves.

This is unacceptable and in breach of rank discipline. All hackney carriage drivers are to observe rank etiquette and advise passengers accordingly.

Dash Display / Air Vent Holder

On collection of your Combined Drivers licence and badge you receive a sticky pad dash holder which sticks to the dash of the vehicle and holds your second combined Drivers licence allowing the customers in the car to see that you are licensed. This sticky pad can be affected by the heat and condensation from the windows on the dash.

Below is an alternative way to use the sticky pad by attaching it to the cars central air vent (see photo below). The customers in the rear of the vehicle **MUST** be able to see it.



Counterfeit Goods

Notification has been received from VIP who provide the plate consumables for Charnwood Borough Councils Licensing section that a product is being offered for sale on EBAY and other sites that closely mimics most of the unique features of their own manufactured product (see sheet attached).

Please be aware that this product is considered to be a poor copy and does not fit with genuine VIP products.

Change of Address Form

A number of drivers have moved address and emailed into the licensing section to advise of their new address. A 'change of address form' is required to be completed by a driver on moving address. This form advises the driver to change their address on their DVLA licence and that they have 3 months in which to produce their newly addressed DVLA licence card to Licensing.

Change of Contact Details

Please remember to advise the licensing section should you change your telephone number or email address. This will help licensing keep you informed as to changes and ensure that you receive any correspondence required.

Jubilee Holiday - Calendar controlled Meters

This coming calendar year see's the addition of the jubilee bank holiday, celebrating the Queen's platinum Jubilee on the 2nd & 3rd June 2022. This will mean that all calendar controlled meters will need to be updated with the new dates in order for the meters to charge bank holiday rates on those given dates.

- **Cygnus meter** - Please liaise with your local Cygnus agent who will make sure that the meters are updated correctly.
- **Other meters** - N & J Pitts and Nottingham Radio Communications have advised the licensing section, that all hackney drivers have up to the end of April 2022 to have all meters reprogrammed with the new dates and a new certificate issued.

Once you have a new certificate please email a copy or photo of this to the licensing office via licensing@charnwood.gov.uk

Blue Lamp Trust Website.

The Blue Lamp are the current provider of Charnwood Borough Councils Safeguarding course and the practical driving test for new drivers or for existing drivers who are required to take a refresher.

The Blue Lamp have launched a new look 'Taxi Services' area on their website
<https://bluelamptrust.org.uk/taxi-driver-services/>

Drivers can now book and pay for all of their courses online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year!

Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19) taxis and PHV guidance

Guidance on actions that drivers, operators and owners of taxis or private hire vehicles (PHVs) can take to protect against coronavirus has been updated.

The updated guidance reflects the new rules on face coverings:

"The government has introduced new temporary measures in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) Omicron variant to slow its arrival and spread and to safeguard the NHS.

"Face coverings are now mandatory in transport hubs and public transport, including taxis and private hire vehicles."

Tax Conditionality (Tax Check Guidance)

The rules are changing for applications for:

- taxi driver licences
- private hire driver licences
- private hire vehicle operator licences
- scrap metal site licences
- scrap metal collector licences

From 4 April 2022, licensing authorities must carry out checks on applications from individuals, companies and any type of partnership to make sure they are aware of their tax responsibilities or have completed a tax check.

Further guidance is to be issued in January 2022 from HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) and we will aim to keep you informed.

- [Tax Check factsheet](#)
- [Changes for taxi, private hire or scrap metal licence applications from April 2022](#)

Patience please

Licensing would like to ask for your continuing patience when dealing with licence matters. Recently a number of staff have been on the receiving end of aggressive telephone calls. This is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The last 18 months have been hard for all of us and we appreciate that people are desperate to get back to what is perceived 'as the norm'. However, permanent changes have been made and I can assure you that I and my team are trying to keep you informed of those changes and keep you working.

On submitting information to the licensing@charnwood.gov.uk email address, you will receive the following automatic acknowledgment; 'We have received your email and a member of the licensing team will be in touch with you within 5 working days.'

Please be patient. Licensing is a small team that not only deals with the taxi trade but also pubs, clubs, betting shops etc.

All calls for licensing are to go through to the call centre on 01509 634562

Christmas Opening Times

Please note that the Council and Licensing Offices are closed from **1pm on Friday, 24 December 2021** until **8.30am on Tuesday 4th January 2022**.

***Best Regards and Merry Christmas from
the Licensing Team***

Stay Safe

