

To all; Drivers and Private Hire Operators

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

HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE TRADE NEWSLETTER

Please be aware that this contains important information that could affect you ... Failure to read this document could result in you not being aware of changes which may affect YOUR licence(s).

Staff Changes - Louise Kingham (Licensing Assistant) left her position within the Licensing Section on the 4th June 2023 and we wish well in her new post within the 'Business Support Grants' section within Charnwood Borough Council.

Paul Rush, Licensing Enforcement Officer has reduced his hours since January 2023 and now works the beginning of the week only. We wish him well with his flexi- retirement.

1. Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Online ID Verification – go live date confirmed

All drivers were advised via a trade email in August 2023 (please see attached) that Taxi Plus were returning to normal practices in regard to the Disclosure and Barring Service Identity Verification (IDV). We advised that we'd update you as to when this would be put in place for Charnwood. Please note that this change in verification has now been made for Charnwood Borough Council with effect from **5th September 2023**.

As mentioned in the attached previous trade email, this will mean the cost charged to drivers by Taxi plus, will increase by £5 + VAT (£6 incl. VAT) to cover the online Disclosure and Barring Service Identity Verification (IDV) costs from the **5th September 2023**.

2. Have you signed up to the DBS Update Service Registration?

Whilst sending out renewal letters to Combined Drivers, the Licensing Team have found drivers who have **NOT** maintained their registration with the DBS Update Service. Drivers have registered their DBS initially as required, but then failed to maintain registration.

What is the Update Service

Subscription to the DBS Update Service allows those with standard and enhanced certificates to keep these up to date online and, with the individual's consent, allows nominees (the Council) to check the status of a certificate online at any time.

Subscription to the service removes the need to apply for a new DBS certificate, reducing the cost and administrative burden, and reducing potential delays in renewing.

Why are you required to register for the DBS Update Service ?

Since the 1st April 2020, all new and **existing (renewing)** hackney carriage/private hire drivers with Charnwood Borough Council, are required to subscribe to the DBS update Service, within 30 days of receiving their Enhanced DBS certificate,

The Department of Transport 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards' introduced in May 2020, also recommended that all licence holders should be required to subscribe to the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Update Service and recommended that if not, the appropriate DBS checks are carried out 6 monthly.

Existing licensed drivers with Charnwood Borough Council (i.e., those renewing) their Combined Drivers Licence, should already have their DBS certificate registered with the DBS Update Service, since the 01.04.2020. Whilst you remain registered on the DBS Update Service and continue to pay the annual subscription (currently £13.00) you will not be required to complete a further DBS application form as part of your Combined Driver renewal application, or every 6 months.

Please note that a licence will not be granted or renewed in the absence of a current Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service Certificate or the ability for the Licensing team to check, through the DBS Update Service.

3. DBS Status Checks by Taxi Plus

Manually checking DBS update service subscription and registration, prior to renewal letters being sent is time consuming for licensing staff. Charnwood has now signed up for the 'status check' provided by Taxi Plus. Taxi Plus will run a fortnightly status check on Charnwood Borough Council drivers registered with them.

The fortnightly status check will return one of three possible results:

- Certificate Remains Current / Certificate Contains No Information and Remains Current
- No Match Found (this means the DBS Disclosure is no longer registered on the Update Service)
- Certificate is no longer current

Result of not maintaining your DBS Update Registration

Charnwood Borough Licensed Combined Drivers who have **NOT** maintained their registration on the DBS update Service will be asked to complete a new DBS application at their own cost every 6 months. Any driver who fails to provide a new DBS

certificate may have their Combined Drivers Licence suspended, until such time as a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Certificate is provided.

Licensing recommend that all Charnwood Licensed Combined Drivers complete their Enhanced DBS application and on receipt of the Enhanced DBS Certificate, register for the update service within 30 days, and maintain that registration. It is cheaper to do this than obtain a DBS Enhanced Certificate every 6 months as required under the Taxi Standards and Charnwood Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. A signed consent by the driver must be submitted to the Council at the same time as producing their original DBS Certificate to ensure that authorisation has been given for the update checks.

Biggin Street Rank Closure – 23rd and 24th October 2023

Charnwood Borough Council Street Wardens and Licensing have been contacted by Leicestershire County Council in respect of roadworks on Biggin Street for **23 and 24 October 2023**.

Due to the works, they need to suspend the three taxi ranks: outside Champs Bar/Loros, outside Paper Kisses/Headway/Age UK, and outside Next/JD Sports (adjacent The Rushes shopping centre). There's also a disabled bay outside Age UK that will be inaccessible due to the closure.

Please see attachments to this Charnwood trade newsletter provided by Leicestershire County Council for more information.

Any queries prior to the works, please log it via a call with Leicestershire County Council, customer services team on 0116 305 0001 or email highwayscustomerservices@leics.gov.uk, or you can log it through the County Council website web forms and they will reply once it gets to passed to them.

During the works, LCC operatives on site should be able to help – in the case they can't then again please call through to 0116 305 0001 and LCC will aim to sort any issues ASAP.

Please **do not** ring Licensing about this matter as we will refer you to Leicestershire County Council.

Door Signs

As part of the renewal fee for a vehicle licence, applicants are given 2 new door signs – these are to ensure that door signs are always in a good condition on the vehicle and that you have spare replacements as and when needed. It has been brought to Licensing's attention that some of the door signs on vehicles are not in the best condition. Can all drivers and operators please ensure that they check their doors signs and replace them, as necessary. Any additional door signs required can be purchased at a cost of £13 per sign.

Contact Details

It is a condition of your Combined Drivers licence that any changes to your name and address (page 17 of the policy) you **must** inform the Council in writing and return your licence(s) within 10 working days for the changes to be applied. If you email licensing@charnwood.gov.uk a member of the licensing team will send you a change of address form to complete and return.

Please ensure that if you change your telephone number (mobile or other) or your email address that you also tell us in writing, (an email is sufficient) licensing@charnwood.gov.uk

The Licensing Section cannot contact you to discuss your application or take payment if your details have altered – delaying your application.

East Midlands Airport tailgating

East Midlands Airport have contacted Leicestershire District Councils to ask if we can remind people not to tailgate on going into the car parks.

They have advised that this has become a problem and that it is also dangerous, if the barrier strikes the vehicle, resulting in a large repair cost to both hardware and software. They state they have spoken directly to companies and on occasions sent a bill but have asked for our help in getting their message out before someone or something is hurt or damaged.

Loughborough Pollution

Complaints have been received in Licensing concerning hackney carriages leaving their engines idling on Biggin Street.

All vehicles are subject to enhanced safety checks, 6 monthly, including emissions tests in line with the current MOT standard. Any licence conditions issued as part of a Licence can only apply to the safety standards of the vehicle and not in relation to a vehicle idling on a rank or outside of venues.

However on speaking to the Environmental Protection team the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 do enable local authorities in England to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to drivers who allow their vehicle engines to run unnecessarily while the vehicle is stationary. Pollution from vehicles can have a significant effect on local air quality and contributes to airborne levels of NOx and particulates. The purpose of the regulations is therefore to encourage motorists to have regard to the local environment and their contribution to it, and are normally applied as part of the Local Authority's strategy to tackle poor air quality. The regulations are not intended to target motorists who leave their engines running when parked for a few seconds but for more serious offenders e.g. coaches or heavy goods vehicles which park in busy town centres where there are air quality concerns.

Currently air quality levels in Loughborough are improving with town centre concentrations of NO2 around the area of the inner relief road significantly beneath the

Air Quality Objective levels. Therefore Environmental Protection have not have not introduced enforcement relating to engines being run unnecessarily.

Please be aware that concerns about a specific vehicle can be reported to the Licensing Section in writing via licensing@charnwood.gov.uk and the licensing team and Environmental Protection Team can investigate.

Thank you for your cooperation.

The Licensing Team.