

Essential Reference Paper 'C'

RECEIVED 8TH APRIL 2014

Hi Oliver,

Thanks again for the discussion this evening; I found it to be very positive. I hope you found it of practical use too! As promised, here's a flyer regarding the taxi course that you might want to investigate. Apparently more LAs are requesting this qualification before granting school runs, so it would have several benefits to the drivers. As I said, there's no cost to the student.

Kind Regards

SEE ATTACHED NVQ FLYER.

RECEIVED 16TH APRIL 2014

Hi Oliver,

Thanks for setting up the meetings, as I am a new driver I think I missed the invite but think these 'surgery' type meetings between yourself and the drivers are an excellent idea as there seems to be a lot of rumour, half-truths and misinformation circulating between (and possibly created by) the drivers (as you can see from my experiences in the email chain with Chris over Ware station) and I'm sure these meetings will help provide clarity and direction as well as building better relationships.

My issues I'd like to be considered after a short period in the role are: -

Ware Taxi Rank

When I first applied I was told that the rank at the station was available for me to ply for hire, but since being plated I am not sure that this is the case. When trying to rank up there I have been subject to verbal abuse and threatening behaviour as well as unscrupulous tactics by Amwell Cars drivers to make it nigh on impossible to trade freely by the rules in this area. This restricts me to using just one taxi rank on this side of the area, which in turn means always running back empty from Ware to Hertford. It also facilitates poor service levels for customers in the area as they are manipulated into Amwell Cars office and required to wait when I am sitting on the rank ready for hire. I have two suggestions to relieve the situation and enable a better service for Ware based customers.

1. Provide a clear signage on the Ware station rank with communication to be sent to all plated drivers that this will be operated as a full time rank and illegal parking around the rank is not acceptable
2. Creation of a 2nd rank in Ware possibly at the end of Star Street or in Amwell End to service weekend evening customers, which I believe would also help clear the streets of trouble which so often seems to be the case outside the Navigator.

Limit Number of Licenses

After working for a short period in the area I believe that the number of licenses in issue outweigh the demand for service in the area. To provide some substance to this statement I would add that with the exception of the hours from 10pm - 3am on a Thursday to Saturday it is impossible to gain enough in takings to meet the minimum wage. I think to complement this and ensure high standards of carriage throughout East Herts this could be brought into force alongside things like a dress code / vehicle age limit / vehicle cleanliness standards / customer service standards etc. I have witnessed on more than one occasion customers be unwilling or hesitant getting into vehicles because of either the condition of the car or the driver.

Illegal Parking & Plying for Hire Outside of Regulations

Besides the illegal parking at Ware station, there is also an issue during the late / night periods where drivers are trying to short cut driver queues on the taxi rank by either: -

- a) Parking legally and plying for hire
- b) Parking illegally and ply for hire

I understand that b) is totally unacceptable from your point of view, but my understanding is that a) is also against the Hackney Carriage bylaws. This is causing a huge amount of animosity amongst drivers and can see this possibly boiling over at some point, given that the some drivers perceive that they are being cheated by other drivers resulting in those playing by the rules losing custom to those shortcutting the system. Could some clear direction being given to all drivers as to what is acceptable here? My fear is that if drivers can just park anywhere rather than being required to return to the rank we would have chaos and a free for all when trying to pick up. My idea here would be to require all drivers to return to rank, but maybe create an additional rank in the Parliament square area.

Drivers from Out Of Area

There are a number of drivers that travel some distance to come into Hertford to work the rank during the day. Given the minimal takings that are available during the day there is a significant amount of what I believe to be speculation, but what is being pushed forward as fact as to how this can be profitable given the added expenses of the additional travel. To either confirm or quash this speculation, are there additional checks that can be made on drivers to ensure that vehicles are not dual plated to different areas (or lift the restriction of dual plating), and that takings are not being supplemented by undue benefits, or cheating of customers with inappropriate fares. I think there needs to be visibility of a level playing field for all drivers here, as I have already witnessed incidents where drivers have almost come to blows over this and the above issues. It may be that if the professionalism and number of drivers is improved this issue may not be so much in the forefront of people's minds.

I hope you don't mind the lengthy email. I wanted to try to provide you with something with some substance rather than just have a general whinge. I'm happy to discuss in more detail if you would like to call me whenever is convenient. Other than that I'm happy to get involved with initiatives like this you may hold in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss.

Regards,

RECEIVED 1ST MAY 2014

Subject: Advertising your own Taxi business

Hi Oliver

I spoke to you on the phone today about window advertising.

As I mentioned on the phone, I have just purchased an 8 vehicle. I would like to be able to advertise my company/number in the back and backside windows. As a solo trader I can't afford to keep buying magnetic signs that do have a tendency to come loose. They also damage the sides by scratching the paint work of the car. I am trying to make a living, as are many solo traders.

As I mentioned magnets damage the surface, and sign writing on the vehicle also leaves marks when you finally have to remove the signage.

There are quite a few cars that are travelling around Hertford on a Friday and Saturday night that already have their company and phone numbers displayed in their back window, a lot of Foxholes cars have stickers on their back windows.

I can understand advertising that restricts the view in the rear window, but now days these signs are transparent and we are the only council that doesn't allow signs in windows. also if they are not allowed, then surely all taxis out there that do have them on should have them removed, and I 1st enquired about this over 6 weeks ago, and they still have it in their windows.

Apologies if this email isn't as clear as I explained on the phone.

Many thanks

PS you did mentioned to change a ruling it needs to go before a council meeting to change the ruling, at the moment I'm one magnet down, is there any immanent meetings due, or will I have a fare wait before I can be told a yes or no?