

# TAXI NEWS

December 2016



## Licensing Office Move on 12 December 2016

Just a reminder that our licensing office will be moving from Weeley over to the Council Tax Offices in Pier Avenue (88-90 Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea, CO15 1TN). All telephone numbers and e-mail contacts will remain the same.

The move will take place on Monday the 12 December 2016 and there will be no office service available at all on that day. Our phones and e-mail will be cut off, we will have no computer access and will have nowhere to see any personal callers and no facility to take in or photocopy paperwork.

The Council's main switchboard 01255 686868 will take telephone messages for us on the day and we will get back to callers as quickly as possible after the 12 December.

The office will be closed again on Friday afternoon the 16 December from 12 noon onwards in order for IT work to be completed following our move.

Please also be aware that the Council Offices in Pier Avenue are only open to the public between 10am to 4pm Mondays to Fridays. This will mean that when we move into the offices there our reception times will be as follows:

Tuesdays & Wednesday 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon; and

Fridays 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Outside these times appointments will be needed, please note that these may not necessarily be able to be made for the same day as you ring or e-mail for an appointment, but we will certainly do our very best for you to try and do so.

There will be a phone inside the main front entrance lobby of Pier Avenue which will be designated for Licensing and marked up as a Licensing phone which when picked up will be a direct line to contact the Licensing Team.

There will be positives and negatives of our move for the Licensing service to Pier Avenue and while parking will unfortunately not be as easy or accessible as it currently is at Weeley Offices, it will mean that we will be much better placed to offer the advantages of upgraded technology that the

Council is introducing to its Clacton offices and for example it is planned that hopefully in the near future, we will have access to tablets in the reception area at Pier Avenue which means that instead of having to wait to see someone from the Licensing Team to drop an insurance certificate in for example, you will be able to simply scan your document in and it will be e-mailed straight to the Licensing e-mail in box. We are also looking at ways that taxi testing can be booked by you direct on line without needing to ring the licensing office.

### **Northbourne Road Garage Refurbishment**

Please be aware that in order to carry out necessary refurbishment to the Northbourne Road garage, the workshop will be closed for taxi testing on the 20/21-27/28 December 2016 and the 3/4 January 2017. This will mean that no scheduled tests will be booked for those dates, but does not mean that we will not be able to deal with any emergency change of vehicles such as putting a temporary vehicle on the road plated to cover while the main vehicle is being repaired after accident damage for example.

### **MPV Vehicles**

You will hopefully have read in our last newsletter that the Council has listened to the view of the taxi and private trades and the Licensing and Registration Committee has changed its policy on the removal of a seat from an MPV to permit ease of access and exit from the rearmost seats of an MPV. Copies of past newsletters are available on the taxi licensing page of the Council's web site [www.tendringdc.gov.uk](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk) for anyone wanting or needing to familiarise themselves with what the new MPV seating policy is. Alternatively you can always e-mail or ring the licensing office.

You will see that the old policy of seat removal has been replaced for those proprietors that wish to take advantage of it. The new policy requires clear and professionally made signage and marking strips/covering to be in place to highlight for customers the operating levers in the vehicle which lift, tilt, tip or move seats forward to allow your customers access and exit to and from the rear of the vehicle, well positioned exit window signs where appropriate and an internal device to allow the rear hatch door to be opened from the inside in the event of an emergency.

In terms of the exit and window signage and lever marking strips these can be brought from the Council for £4.50 for the set. The exit sign and lever strips/markings are florescent. You are not obliged to buy them from the Council however and if you are able to get them cheaper then please feel free to do so, but we have been able to purchase these at a special rate and are passing them on only for what it cost us to purchase them. A number of your colleagues have already purchased these and are using them. Again though if you are able to purchase the exit and widow signage and lever strips/markings at a cheaper rate then please feel free to do so. We will not however accept any 'homemade' signage or marking in vehicles however, so these will need to be professionally made.

### **Driver Badges**

We will be taking a report to the Licensing and Registration Committee on the 18 January 2017 which will recommend that names are put on the front of the taxi and private hire driver's badges. This is to help our licensing officers and anyone else like Police officers know who you are. When we are speaking with you out on the road or rank. It also assists with passenger safety and security. At the moment you will be aware that the driver's badges only show your badge number. Unless the Committee decides otherwise, we do not intend to put anyone's full name on the badge e.g. 'Mr John Smith', but just the initial(s) of the driver concerned e.g. 'Mr J Smith'.

If anyone has any comment on this proposal that they would like the Committee to consider we will be happy to put that to them as part of the report. Any comments would need to be made in writing and can be e-mailed to us using our [licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk) e-mail address or by letter. To be able to be included in the report, all written submissions will need to be received by no later than Thursday the 5 January 2017. The report and Committee meeting are both public and the meeting will take place at Weeley Council offices commencing at 7.30pm. The report will be available to view via the Council's website 7 days before the meeting.

### **General Advertising on Doors for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

We have had a number of calls from drivers and proprietors to ask what the position is regarding general or third party door sign advertising on taxi's and private hire vehicles. The details which have been circulated in previous taxi newsletters are available to view via the taxi licensing page of Council's website [www.tendringdc.gov.uk](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk) The policy details are reasonably self-explanatory but should anyone require any further clarification then please e-mail the licensing team at [licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk)

### **Driving in adverse weather**

We want everyone to keep themselves and their passenger's safe over the winter so we hope that the tips shown below might help a little in that regard.

Driving in adverse weather conditions requires additional care and attention and you should ensure your vehicle is adequately prepared. Consult your vehicles owner's manual for specific tips on driving your vehicle in poor weather, below are just some general notes intended to help you prepare for the winter.

#### **Vehicle preparation:**

We are sure that your vehicles are regularly inspected, serviced and in good working order, but in adverse weather, particular attention should be given to the following -

- Car batteries last approximately five years, and extra demand placed on them during adverse weather from the use of heaters, lights, and wipers can decrease their lifespan.
- Check the tyre pressure in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- Check the tyre treads depths. For winter driving it is recommended they have 3mm of tread and certainly not less than 2mm.
- Ensure that there is an adequate amount of anti-freeze, in both the windscreen washer bottle and radiator.
- Keep lights clean and check bulbs regularly so you'll be prepared for lower visibility and shorter days.
- Make sure wiper blades aren't worn and the vehicle has sufficient windscreen washer fluid in the reservoir so you can keep your windscreen as clean as possible.
- Dirty windows and mirrors can make it hard to see as the low winter sun hits. Make sure they are kept clean and free of ice and snow in colder weather. Ensure windows are clear and de-misted before setting off.

Driving in rain is the most common adverse weather condition. Despite this this, drivers often overlook the hazards of driving in rain:

- Reduce your speed.
- Watch for pooling water on the road, trying to safely avoid if you can.
- Even light rain will reduce your visibility, so use dipped headlights.
- Your stopping distance will increase. Leave sufficient space between you and the vehicle in front, you may need up to TWICE the normal distance for braking.
- Try to drive in the tyre tracks left by cars in front of you.

Drive with caution and watch for other motorists who may lack the skill or experience to drive competently.

### **Christmas Closure**

Please note that the offices will be closing on Friday 23 December 2016 and will not reopen until Tuesday 3 January 2017. If you have any documentation that is required by the office during these dates, please ensure that they are received before 23 December.

### **Finally**

The Licensing Team would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families all a very merry, safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Please keep yourselves safe and sound out on the roads and late at nights over Christmas when one or two of your customers may be a little worse for wear through drinking a little too much, or the weather may not be that good for driving. Without you being there at all times of day and night and in most weather situations to take the responsibility and stress out of driving when the weather is bad but there is that party to go to, or 'I want to go to the party and be able to have a drink safely', life would be a lot more difficult for the rest of us. So take care and thank you from us and on behalf of the public as well.

### **Licensing Team Contact Details:**

Email:

[licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk)

Or

[taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk)

Phone: 01255 686565

Fax: 01255 686343

### **Licensing Reception Opening Times**

***Pier Avenue, Clacton With effect from  
13 December 2016***

Mondays	Appointments Only
Tuesdays	10am to 12 noon
Wednesday	10am to 12 noon
Thursdays	Appointments Only
Fridays	1pm to 4pm

