

# *Tendring District Council*

## *Taxi News*

*June 2021*

### **Licensing Team**

We would like to inform you of a few changes that have happened within the Licensing Team recently.

We are sad to say that the Licensing Manager, Karen Townshend has moved to a new position within the Council, but pleased to say that Michael Cook has temporarily filled her position until a person has been appointed as Licensing Manager permanently.

During the time where Michael is covering the Licensing Manager position, Chloe Blackwell will be providing assistance with Licensing Enforcement.

We are also fortunate to have Marie Bryce join us on a temporary basis, part of her duties are to include helping Chloe with the driver and vehicle applications.

### **Reception**

You may have read or seen that the Council offices have started to open to the public on certain days/times of the week. Please note that this is for signposting only and that the reception staff will be unable to help with your applications and documents.

The Licensing Team are still working from home the majority of the time so please do not come to the offices unless you have been specifically requested and been given an appointment time as you will not be seen.

### **Applications/Documents/Payments**

As you are aware the Licensing Team have been working from home with an officer/s attending the office once a week, to ensure that any essential printing is completed. This practice is to continue for the near future, but will be reviewed at regular intervals and drivers will be notified through a newsletter of any changes.

In the meantime, we are able to accept applications for vehicles grants, change of vehicle, temporary vehicle and renewal applications. Applications will need to be submitted via e-mail ([licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk) or [taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk)) payments can be made over the telephone using either a credit or debit card.

Please ensure that the email document is no larger than 25mb as these are unable to pass the Council's email security system.

For drivers who still wish to post their applications/documents please ensure that these are sent via Royal mail **and not through the post box located at Pier Avenue** as this is not monitored regularly and may result in unnecessary reminder letters being sent. All post received through Royal Mail is scanned to the team by TDC in order to reduce delay.

Any paperwork you are waiting for will then be sent to you as soon as practicable and any delays should be minimal.

### **How to pay fees**

Please ensure that you either pay online using the TDC website, or please phone the office on 01255 68 6565 to pay over the phone. You will need your invoice number for both methods of payment.

If you are unable to pay by credit/debit card then cheques can still be posted to the Licensing Team via Royal Mail. Please note that cheques are taking approximately 4 weeks to be processed.

**Please do not post any cheques or cash through the post box located at Pier Avenue**

### **Driver Grants**

We are currently working towards an appointment only system to allow for new drivers to undertake suitability/knowledge tests. Those who require tests will be contacted directly as soon as we have this up and running.

### **Vehicle Grants**

We have been aware of a few occasions where drivers have purchased a new vehicle without checking the current seating regulations and have been disappointed to find that we have been unable to licence the vehicle the number of seats they requested.

Please can I ask that you check these regulations before purchasing a vehicle and if you are still in any doubt or have any questions you contact a member of the Licensing Team who will be happy to offer any assistance.

The regulations can be found on the Council's website.

### **Driver Medicals**

Since the COVID restrictions have been in place, it is appreciated that medical appointments are difficult to book with your own GP. As a current medical is still required as part of the conditions for a driver licence to be granted it has been agreed that you are able to use any company that are registered to undertake medicals. There are several within the Essex area which can be found by carrying out a search on the internet. If a medical is not submitted when required then your licence will be suspended and you will not be permitted to drive as a taxi or private hire driver until a current medical is submitted.

### **Driving and Parking Around Schools**

We have received a number of complaints recently that vehicles including taxis are parking outside schools within the zigzag areas and not respecting the rules of the road at school crossings. Please be aware that parking attendants and Police do regularly patrol these school areas and if you get caught parking illegally or not stopping for school crossings then you are very likely to receive a fixed penalty ticket or points on your driving licence.

### **Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Driver Conditions**

We have had a number of recent examples of licensed drivers failing to adhere to their HC/PH licence conditions. The specific condition, which relates to our recent examples is Condition 17 of the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Dual licence and Condition 12 of the Private Hire Licence, which both state the following:

**“The driver shall notify the Council in writing within a period of seven days of any caution/conviction (whether criminal or motoring) being imposed upon him or her during the period of this Licence or within a period of seven days of any fixed penalty offence (as defined in Section 51 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1998) being endorsed upon his or her driving licence during the period of this licence.”**

Please can we ask that in the event of receiving a criminal or motoring caution or conviction (this includes fixed penalty notices for speeding offences), that you notify the Licensing Team as failure to do so is a breach of your licence conditions and not will it go in your favour at a potential Committee hearing.

### **Smoking in Taxis**

I would apologise for bringing this topic up again but unfortunately we still to this day get regular reports of drivers smoking in their vehicles and so I take this opportunity to once again clarify the law in regards to smoking.

It has been an offence since 2007 under the Health Act 2006 to smoke or allow smoking in enclosed public areas including work places. As a licensed taxi is classed as a workplace it is irrelevant that it may be your own personal vehicle; it is still legally a workplace at all times during which a vehicle licence is in force.

As authorised officers, we are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to anyone who is seen to be smoking, allowing another person to smoke, or failing to display non-smoking signs in their vehicle.

Repeated breaches will call into question whether you are regarded as a ‘fit and proper’ person to hold a taxi licence and will likely result in you being requested to go before the Licensing Committee where you could potentially have your licence revoked.

Please take note and refrain from smoking in your taxi, it will do nothing other than cause unnecessary hassle to you and us.

### **Government guidance for taxi passengers**

For passengers travelling in taxis or on public transport during the coronavirus outbreak, please use the following link to find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

### **Vehicle inspections**

Upon completion of your taxi mechanical test, please ensure you are provided with a copy of the full inspection sheet. If you are applying for a new vehicle, you are required to submit this document as part of the vehicle application.

### **Transfers of vehicle licences**

A licence must be transferred with the vehicle from one owner to another. This must be done as a complete transaction where the already plated vehicle is transferred completely with its plate from one person to another. If proprietors need to be removed or added to a vehicle licence a transfer application must be completed and submitted to [licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk)

### **Keeping the Licensing Team informed**

In line with the requirements you must inform us, by emailing [licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk), of any changes that can affect your licence with us. Please ensure you are informing us if any of the below occur.

- Medical changes; all licence holders must advise the licensing authority if any pre-existing medical conditions have deteriorated or his or her health has changed in any way that may affect the licence holder's fitness to drive.
- Accidents; if at any time, a licensed vehicle is involved in any kind of accident, regardless of how minor or who was at fault, the driver must inform the council of the accident; this can be done by telephone or email. You may be requested to produce photographs of the damage within 24 hours of reporting the accident.

Thank you for reading this edition of Taxi News.

In the meantime, please keep safe and drive safe.