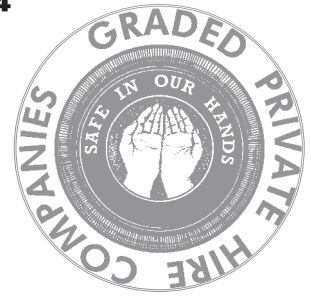


PRIVATE HIRE NEWS

SUMMER 2004
ISSUE 28



**The news magazine of the Graded Private Hire Companies
Incorporating the London and Southern Private Hire Car Associations**

Welcome to Edition 28 of Private Hire News. It is clear from feedback gained from members on my first round of visiting all LPHCA Graded Members, that Private Hire Licensing is now having a massive impact on the industry in London.

The arrival of Vehicle Licensing has and will continue to have the most profound impact on everyone and the LPHCA office has never been contacted as much as it has in recent weeks.

The message board on the website is also receiving more and more interesting posts and is becoming a very heavily visited part of our website.

Vehicle Licensing was never going to be an easy exercise and there have been considerable teething problems. These problems culminated with an official letter from the LPHCA to The Public Carriage Office after receiving a deluge of member's concerns.

Our letter and a comprehensive response from Ed Thompson and Alan Matthews are published in this edition of Private Hire News with an important information sheet from The PCO and more views from me on behalf of members.

We must give The PCO and SGS UK the opportunity to smooth out teething problems and the industry must also be given the time to adjust to the latest requirement in the Licensing Process.

As a trade association we do however have a heavy responsibility to avoid an adverse regulatory impact and we will be

forthright with our comments to protect the interests of the industry we represent and the necessary level of essential service provision we provide to Londoners.

Whilst the quarterly publication of the magazine is useful for communicating information to members the fastest method however is now via the message forum board on our website. Sadly faxes don't always arrive, emails bounce and post goes missing, so the Internet and in particular our message board is fast becoming the best way to get the information quickly to members.

Any member who needs help setting up an Internet connection or help with a website please let the office know as we can usually point you in the right direction.

Other hot topics this month are driver medical requirements, appeals, and news on our Legislation awareness seminar in conjunction with Landor Conferences.

This issue of Private Hire News is so full of Industry News the hoped for Technology Special has been set aside for another issue however we have put in systems information from our regular systems advertisers Auriga and ROCS.

Talking of Grading covers new rules from The Home Office on employment of foreign nationals and the responsibilities that fall on Operators as the potential employer of such employees.

The Department for Transport has issued a consultation document on what has been considered by some as a loophole in the wording of The Private Hire Vehicles

(London) Act 1998. As a direct result of feedback from members we have been aware for some time of this problem, which could lead to amendment in the Act.

This consultation is very important and sets out the potential difficulties that will be ongoing and that ultimately could be exploited to create the nightmare scenario of a 'half licensed' industry.

The LPHCA will be responding possibly after a full meeting of members but we should emphasise that operators may of course respond in their own right and we accept that different members may have very differing views on this subject.

In our last issue we looked at the nonsense of new rules for vehicles in Dover and the more we see of some local authority regulations the more our conclusion is what a mess Taxi and Private Hire regulations are in throughout England and Wales.

In the article Local Democracy or Local Bureaucracy? We touch on the problems that are created outside London for members just because they are on the wrong side of a border that may have been drawn up by politicians a long time ago. I think its time for changes outside London and clearly that is a view widely shared by our members in the provinces.

As always there is a lot in this edition of Private Hire News including Eddie Townson's Private Hire Board contribution, we hope you enjoy our efforts.

STEVE WRIGHT

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