



## Message from Public Safety Committee Chair



### Making the Taxi Forum work for you

I am really pleased to have been elected Chair of Public Safety for another year and hope we can take forward more of the improvements to the service you have been asking for. I am sure you are all aware that the Licensing Team have been working hard to improve communication with drivers and operators, and, as well as this newsletter, we have a two monthly **Taxi Forum Meeting**. This is really important, as it is a time where we can hear your views and concerns, and consult you about possible policy changes. At the moment, we have representatives from the BBTLA and Private Hire Operators, but we are keen to also have representative private hire drivers who want to attend and give their views, but would also be willing to speak to other drivers to seek their views or feedback information. If you are interested in getting involved please email [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk). It is important your voice is included as we do try to bring issues and policy changes to the Forum before they go to Committee to agree, and do genuinely want to hear your views on them.

The Forum meetings are 11am – 1pm and dates for the next few are as follows;

Thursday 1st August 2019

Thursday 19th September 2019

Thursday 21st November 2019

Thursday 23rd January 2020

Thursday 12th March 2020

### Lobbying for change in the highest places!

As so many of the problem facing drivers relate to national decisions and need Government legislation to resolve (like cross boundary working and minimum licensing standards), we could just sit by in Bristol City Council and do nothing, but as Chair of PSP, I recognise the need to lobby politicians to do all we can to get the changes you are asking for. I have lobbied Thangam Debbonaire (MP for Bristol West which includes Central, Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill wards where many of our drivers live) and she has listened to your concerns which we have been passing on. In April she asked a question in the House of Commons about when the Government was going to implement Recommendation 11 of the Task and Finish Group which says that ***'Government should legislate that all taxi and PHV journeys should start and/or end within the area for which the driver, vehicle and operator are licensed.'***

The answer from the Minister was that ***'Government is considering carefully how the restriction of out-of-area journeys by taxis and private hire vehicles proposed might work in practice, with a view to legislating.'*** This means the window is open to try and end the cross border working that is so detrimental to Bristol drivers (but with no timescale yet). You can also make your views heard on this by asking your MPs to keep raising this issue. The more pressure that is put on, the more the Government is likely to listen and act.

Cllr. Ruth Pickersgill MBE

# Taxi Cop Update

*Please Note – in this article I refer to a Taxi as being either a Hackney Carriage (HC) or Private Hire Vehicle (PHV). These views are my own, and do not represent the position of any organisation or body.*



**Having just started my third year as your Taxi Cop, I wanted to share some reflections from the last two years rather than facts and figures of my results which appear elsewhere. It has been a steep learning curve – not just learning taxi law, but knowing in detail the standards of two separate Licensing Authorities and how the trade actually works in practice. Three things have particularly struck me; how difficult the working life of many of you is, how desperately the law needs to be updated, and how frustrating it is to know how to solve the issues but not being able to. Let me explain.**

You have to cope with challenging and vulnerable customers, who may not pay their fare or are abusive. You're very vulnerable to complaints (how I wish more vehicles had cameras in!) and I've come across false allegations. Many of you have issues with the provision and use of Hackney Carriage ranks and how Private Hire Drivers (PHD) can safely and legally pick up and drop off. Income is reduced by "Facebook lifts", plying for hire and the overall effect of overcharging. As I say to the new police officers that occasionally work with me, the VAST majority of drivers are decent, hardworking and conscientious and should be treated with respect. A key part of my work is targeting the very small number of bad and dishonest ones. For me there is a difference between the driver who makes an honest mistake and those that are negligent or wilful and I try hard to reflect that in how I deal with things. All of this within a trade which faces unprecedented pressures.

It's pretty much universally accepted that the law regulating taxis needs urgent and fundamental reform. I do feel sorry for the Councils who take a lot of understandable anger from drivers for "out of towners" and cross border working when they are not responsible for the situation and can't change the law themselves. I really hope that the future holds a complete overhaul rather than a tinkering of the legislation.

I've learnt how to effectively disrupt and prevent overcharging, plying for hire and unlicensed vehicles. However, knowing how to do it and having the time and resources to do it is a real issue. For example, incidents of plying for hire were reducing and HC drivers (HCD's) were reporting an increase in income. However, my time has been increasingly taken up over the last few months with investigations relating to drug supply/use, sexual assaults, and standards of driving which has reduced my capacity to catch "plyers", and its creeping back up. So I juggle to keep everything going and I do sometimes drop a ball (and I'm grateful to the drivers who have been so understanding!) A big challenge is to be seen as impartial and fair between HCDs and PHDs and there are inevitably some who think I target or favour one group over another. I don't of course, and each side have their own needs and issues. Additionally, I have three bosses – the Councils, the Police and the Drivers, who don't always agree even amongst themselves. All of which means I do a lot of juggling, diplomacy and I have to accept that I cannot do everything which I know needs to be done. I have an agreed priority list of work which helps me concentrate on the important things and of course I work closely with the Councils own enforcement officers. Although it's frustrating not to be able to do more, I am pleased with the good results we get. As you know, whether in uniform or plain clothes, bike or van – I can't be everywhere, but I could be anywhere...

My role has developed from its original brief and I'm proud of transforming it into a more community focused role to support you. The success of my WhatsApp groups has played its part and your enthusiasm and support has made it possible. So, although a large part of my work still involves investigating crime committed by and against drivers, enforcing traffic law and dealing with licence breaches, I now also support the trade by helping with planning for major events, public education, providing help and advice, getting unpaid money for drivers (£113 in the first week of this month), mediating in disputes and patrolling in the night time economy when the trade most needs me. I concentrate on those things that affect Public Safety. If you want to have a better idea of what I actually do then have a look at my Facebook page "**PC Quinton**" or join my WhatsApp group – **07469 400 832**.

But for all the challenges, this is the best role I have ever had. There can't be many jobs where pretty much every day you are thanked, complimented and appreciated! Drivers tell me that some things are much better since I started, and it would only be right to say thanks to the following;

- **Jonathan Martin, Bristol City Council for his support and guidance**
- **My (sadly former) Inspector Martin Rowland for his trust and backing**
- **Lily Thornell, South Gloucestershire Council for her incredible enthusiasm and company**
- **My loved ones, who put up with me working most weekends and never being off duty**

And finally but most importantly to you for your waves, smiles, messages, respect and the service you provide the public.

*Have a safe shift!*



# Attention Private Hire Operators!

Private Hire Operators - PC Quinton has been working on a project which may enable Operators to share details of runners, fraudulent transactions and abusive customers to prevent those individuals doing a similar thing to other Operators and their drivers too. If you would like to be part of that project, please send your details to [taxis@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:taxis@avonandsomerset.police.uk)



## Equality Act 2010 Designated Vehicles

**Last year we reported on the introduction of updates to the Equality Act 2010, and the introduction of a formal process for applying for exemption from carrying wheelchair passengers and assistance dogs.**

Two new policies were introduced as part of this change, and drivers were given the opportunity to apply for exemptions, if necessary.

These policies are now in place; however a final requirement to make them enforceable has finally been completed. The council is responsible for publishing a list of every wheelchair accessible vehicle licensed in Bristol. Once this list is live, enforcement for failing to carry passengers in a wheelchair can begin.

The list, known as the 'Section 167 list of Designated Vehicles', will be published on our website from Monday 24th June 2019, and will contain the name of the proprietor, and details of the vehicle in question. Anyone who owns a vehicle which will be included on the list has been contacted in writing.

### 'Can you help?'

Accessibility is key in any successful transport system. The licence trade forms an integral part of this, and in some instances, is a lifeline for those who have accessibility needs.

Would you like your wheelchair accessible vehicle to be advertised for those with accessibility needs? If so, we can help!

**Hackney Carriage Proprietors** - if you are interested in being added to an advertised list, please forward your name, vehicle licence number, and contact telephone number. We will publish your name, contact number, and the make and model of vehicle.

**Private Hire Operators** - if you have 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle, or 100, we want to hear from you! If you are interested in being added to the list, please provide the name of your Private Hire Operator company, and a contact telephone number. We will publish the name of your company, and your contact telephone number.

**Private Hire Proprietors** - if you are interested in being added to the list, please speak to your licensed operator and ask them to be added to the list, as detailed above.

Together, we can make Bristol one of the most accessible cities in the country. If you would like to send your information, please forward them to [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk).

## Fleet Services and Compliance Testing – Bring your plates!

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL  
PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE**



Please note when you attend Fleet Services for your compliance testing and MOT, you must ensure your vehicle is displaying its licence plates. Without your plates, the compliance part of the test cannot be carried out.

Fleet Services have previously conducted testing without the plates where possible; allowing drivers to return with their plates at a later time, however, this can no longer be done.

If your vehicle is not displaying its plates, Fleet Services will not be able to carry out the full MOT and compliance test.



## Licensing outreach – on the road

**The Licensing Team recently went out on the road as part of an outreach pilot to make the service more accessible to drivers.**

Using a Mobile Police Station alongside our Taxi Cop, PC Quinton, the team were able to meet with drivers who had concerns regarding anything in relation to their licence. Appointments were not necessary as this was a first come first served, drop-in event.

The next session will be held on **Tuesday 23 July 2019**, at the following locations;

**Bristol Temple Meads Station - 10:00-12:00**

**Pennywell Road - 13:00-15:00.**

We look forward to seeing you there!

## City Centre Taxi Ranks

**We are aware there is frustration and concern within the trade with regards to ranks in the city centre. We have been working with trade representatives and colleagues in traffic, and will continue to do so in order to find a solution.**

As and when any information becomes available, we will communicate with the trade as soon as possible.



## DVLA Service – change is coming



**As we previously reported, the way we process DVLA Mandates is changing.**

You will have noticed that recently, when renewing your licence, you will have been asked to generate a 'check code' from the DVLA website in addition to having a valid DVLA Mandate. This is because the service for performing checks was withdrawn by the DVLA. Since December 2018, checks have been made using a check code which allows us to view basic information about your driving licence.

We are pleased to say a new service is now available from the DVLA, and we are in the process of arranging its use here in Bristol. Once the service is in place, you will no longer be required to produce a check code, as we can once again use the DVLA Mandate that you complete every three years.

A date for launch is in the process, so stay tuned!

## Ashton Gate events

As you will be aware, as part of a Summer Series, Ashton Gate has this summer been the must-visit location for some of the biggest names in entertainment. The stadium recently played host to Rod Stewart, Take That, Spice Girls and Muse.

A traffic management plan was put in place as part of all events, including road closures, designated pickup points and drop off locations.

The feedback concerning the transport operation for hackney carriage and private hire was incredibly positive.

A further concert has also been announced at Gloucester County Cricket Ground; Tom Jones will be performing on **Saturday 13 July**. A traffic management plan will be put in place for this event also, including designated points for both hackney carriage and private hire.



## Disclosure and Barring Service Checks – apply early

The Chair of the Public Safety and Protection Committee, Councillor Ruth Pickersgill, recently highlighted the importance of applying for your Disclosure and Barring Service check as early as possible.

‘Act quickly on your driver checks letter, or risk not being able to work’ was the highlight of this article, reported in our March 2019 edition;

**‘IN THE MEANTIME we seem to have an increasing number of people asking for temporary licenses because their DBS forms have not come back. At the moment, drivers are given three month’s notice that the DBS is expiring- which in almost all cases should be long enough (you get a letter to say the dates when your checks are due and it suggests you apply for the DBS immediately). We need to get a clear message out to drivers that when you get a reminder, you need to do the DBS paperwork immediately as there**

**are often delays (particularly if you have changed addresses, been abroad etc.) We can’t just issue temporary licenses to drivers who have forgotten to send off their DBS forms, or have left it to the last minute before they get around to it. Help us to help you, and respond immediately to your reminder.’**

Please note this information remains the same; as the DBS service is ran by an external organisation, the Licensing Team have no control in respect of delays to applications sent to the service. Our advice remains simple; apply as soon as you receive your letter from us, this way we give the application as much as time as possible to be processed by the Disclosure and Barring Service. If you are in doubt with what identification to bring, use our guidance which is sent with the application form, and do not be afraid to bring as much evidence as you can with you in order for us to help complete your application.

## Blackboy Hill Toilet Facilities

**In the March edition of this newsletter we were happy to report that the toilet block at the top of Blackboy Hill had been reinstated for use by licensed drivers. The block is padlocked and the code to unlock was shared with the trade.**



We have been informed that the toilet block is sometimes being left unlocked after use, which can lead to the risk of security and anti social behaviour. If this continues we have been advised that they will no longer be available for use.

If you make use of this toilet block, please make sure it is locked again after use.

## Reporting Hate Crime

### What is Hate Crime?

Hate Crime is an incident or behaviour which is perceived by the victim or any person to be motivated by prejudice against someone due to age, gender identity, disability, religion or belief, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, gender or mental health.

### Where can I get help?

Stand Against Racism and Inequality, or ‘SARI’, is a Bristol based service user/community orientated agency that provides support and advice to victims of hate, and promotes equality and good relations between people with protected characteristics as defined by law. Most SARI staff have direct experience of dealing with hate motivated behaviour, and all staff have a clear understanding of and commitment to the objectives of SARI.

### What can I do?

To report a Hate Crime or incident, you can call a 24 hour reporting line on **0800 171 2272**, or complete an online referral by visiting **[www.sariweb.org.uk](http://www.sariweb.org.uk)**

Remember, in an emergency, contact the police on **999**.

## Diesel Exemptions for 8 seater vehicles

Whilst the policy currently states that diesel vehicles will not be considered for licensing, the service appreciates that the market for eight seater vehicles is incredibly limited at this time in respect of alternative fuel vehicles.

Eight seater vehicles form an incredibly busy part of the licensed trade, and as such, applications for eight seater diesel vehicles will be considered for exemption from the policy where requested.

If you wish to consider licensing an eight seater diesel vehicle, please email the licensing team in the first instance with your request, along with details of the vehicle and the reason why you wish to depart from the policy. Emails should be directed to **[licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk)**, or alternatively you can write to us on **Licensing (100TS), Bristol City Council, PO Box 3176, Bristol BS3 9FS**, or by visiting the **Citizen Service Point at 100 Temple Street**.

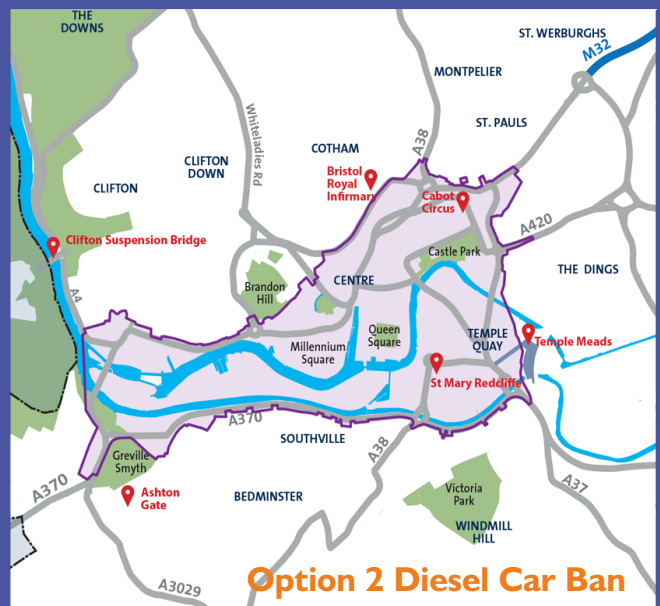
# Consultation on options for a Traffic Clean Air Zone for Bristol, have your say until 12 August

Bristol City Council is consulting on two options to reduce air pollution within the central area of the city, where the levels of pollution, particularly nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are particularly high and exceed legal limits. Air pollution is a danger to health. Breathing polluted air can cause breathing problems such as asthma and heart problems, leading to shortened lives. It's a problem for everyone, whether you drive a car, cycle or walk.

Poor air quality is caused by pollution from a range of sources, including cars and other vehicles. This is why these options tackle the number of polluting vehicles coming into central Bristol.

The proposed options are one element of the wider environmental plans for Bristol, announced by the Mayor of Bristol on Clean Air Day.

## The two options are:



## Option 1 Clean Air Zone (private cars not charged)

- A zone in which older, more polluting buses, coaches, taxis, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs, i.e. goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes) and light goods vehicles (LGVs, i.e. goods vehicles not exceeding 3.5 tonnes) would be charged. The following proposed charges would apply 24 hours a day, seven days a week and would be charged once in each 24 hour period: Non complaint taxis and LGVs would be charged £9, HGVs, coaches and buses £100.

Taxis and private hire vehicles would need to be a minimum of Euro 6 (Diesel) and Euro 4 (Petrol) to enter the charging zone without a charge.

Option 1 would also include:

- A 24 hour a day, seven days a week HGV weight restriction (for HGVs over 3.5 tonnes) on the worst polluted routes;

- All diesel car ban on Upper Maudlin Street and Park Row running from St James Barton roundabout to Park Street between 7am and 3pm, seven days a week. The ban would not apply to taxis, private hire and emergency vehicles;
- Bus and local traffic changes in the most polluting areas including an inbound bus lane on the M32, an inbound bus lane on Cumberland Road, and using existing traffic signals to control the amount of traffic entering congested areas with poor air quality;
- A scrappage scheme (up to £2,000) for private diesel cars. This would provide a grant towards a new vehicle or an alternative mode of transport (e.g. bus travel or purchasing a bike).

The scrappage scheme does not include taxis and private hire vehicles, however the consultation provides an opportunity to say whether this should be considered as an additional measure.

## Option 2: Diesel car ban

Banning all diesel cars from driving in a specific central area (small zone) from 7am to 3pm, seven days a week. This would not apply to taxis/private hire or emergency services.

Other measures, including a scrappage scheme, could also be included.

For both options 1 and 2, improvements to buses and taxis would be proposed using Government funding to

meet the compliant Euro standard (Euro 6 for diesel vehicles and Euro 4, 5 and 6 for petrol vehicles). The government funding would be provided as part of the Implementation Fund set up to put the project in place – as this would be part of a bid it is dependent on that bid being approved by the Government.

A number of drop-in sessions are being held. They provide the opportunity to discuss the options in more detail.

## Drop-in sessions

### Barton Hill Settlement

43 Ducie Rd, Barton Hill, BS5 0AX

Thursday 11 July, 2.30–7.30pm

### Easton Leisure Centre

Thrissell St, Easton, BS5 0SW

Monday 15 July, 3.30–7.30pm

### Hope Chapel

Hope Chapel Hill, Hotwells, BS8 4ND

Monday 22 July, 2.30–7.30pm

### Marksbury Road Library

Marksbury Rd, Bedminster, BS3 5LG

Wednesday 24 July, 2.30–7.30pm

### Malcolm X Community Centre

141 City Rd, St Pauls BS2 8YH

Tuesday 30 July, 2.30–7.30pm

### City Hall (Vestibule)

Just off Park St towards main entrance,

College Green, BS1 5TR

Tuesday 6 August, 2.30–6.30pm

For more details about these options, and to let us know what you think go to:

[bristol.gov.uk/trafficcleanairzone](http://bristol.gov.uk/trafficcleanairzone)

## Consultation on Traffic Clean Air Zone options

Bristol City Council is consulting on two options for a **Traffic Clean Air Zone** to control the effects of vehicle pollution



Clean Air  
for Bristol



To find out more about the options and let us have your feedback, go to: [bristol.gov.uk/trafficcleanairzone](http://bristol.gov.uk/trafficcleanairzone)

## What would you like to see?

The Licensing Team aim to improve communication between the council and the trade.

Remember, this is your newsletter!

If you have something you think would be useful, or would like to see included in future issues, or you have a good news story or information you want to share, please get in touch at [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk) with the subject 'Newsletter'.

### Previous Newsletters:

The Taxi Newsletter is a good way for the Licensing Team to communicate with the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage trade. Past issues of the newsletter are available on our website:

[bristol.gov.uk/licences-and-permits/taxi-forum](http://bristol.gov.uk/licences-and-permits/taxi-forum)