

**Report of the Service Director to the  
General Licensing Regulatory Board  
to be held on the 29 September 2021**

**Hackney Carriage Tariff increase**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report, is to inform Members of the further submissions received from the Barnsley Hackney Carriage Association asking the Council to increase the current Hackney Carriage Tariff.

**2. Background**

Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 gives the Council the authority to fix fares for Hackney Carriages.

When the Council makes or varies the fares for Hackney Carriages it must publish in at least one local newspaper a notice setting out the new table of fares and specifying the period of not less than 14 days within which any objections to the proposal can be made.

A copy of the proposed tariff must also be available at Council Offices for the public to inspect at all reasonable hours.

If no objections are received the new table of fares will come into effect on the expiration date of the period specified in the published notice. If objections are received then the Council must consider these and then make the decision to approve or amend the tariff accordingly.

**3. Current Position**

A request from the Hackney Carriage Association to increase the fares charged was first presented to the General Licensing Regulatory Board on the 8 September 2021. A copy of this request is attached to the report as appendix 1 and is accompanied by proposed table of fares to illustrate the request.

The board last considered and increased the Hackney Carriage Tariff in September 2019. A copy of the current table of fares is attached as Appendix 2.

Members considered the application received and felt there was insufficient evidence provided by the Hackney Carriage Association in support of their request for a fare increase.

Members made a request for further information to be submitted by the Hackney Carriage Association to support their application for an increase in Hackney Carriage fares.

In response to the request and discussions at the meeting the Hackney Carriage Association made four further submissions of information in support of their original application as follows:-

- 1) After tonight's meeting with the Drivers of BHCA the members proposed to seek a fare increase due to the rising cost of fuel, insurance and Taxi maintenance. We are also wanting to give the incentives for new drivers to come into the trade as we have a significant shortage and existing drivers to work longer and especially the night shifts at weekends.**

**Fuel has been on a rollercoaster over the last 2 years and now stands at £1.36 p/litre**

**a big increase from £1.12 pre pandemic equating to over £1.08 per gallon more.**

**Insurance for Public Hire Vehicles have risen by over 12% in the last year alone.**

**Maintenance of our vehicles are coming under increasing costs due to shortage of certain oils and parts due to imports and rising costs. The history of our fares in Barnsley are those of being competitive and we stand equal 295 out of 365 councils 1 being the highest fares. A 40p increase as we are proposing only takes us up to 236 which is still in the bottom third of the UK table.**

**In Barnsley our 2 Largest Private Hire Company's both charge above the Hackney rates and therefore are recruiting drivers due to the potential of higher earnings this is another reason for proposing an increase.**

**Further to the increase we are seeking to bring the night time Tariff 2 into effect from 8pm to encourage drivers to work the unsociable hours that the current night time economy requires and what we are all hoping in the future, "The Glass Works" potential..**

**Tariff 4 which was passed at our last fare increase which comes in at 3am. We would also like to propose that this Tariff is brought forward**

**to 1am. This proposal was a massive majority as more than half of drivers who don't usually stay out at weekends say it would give them the incentive to do so.**

**Therefore we ask the Licencing Board to consider the 3 proposals**

- 1. A 40p increase on the flag (from £3.80 to £4.20)**
- 2. Tariff 2 to come into effect at 8pm till 7am instead of 11pm till 7am**
- 3. Tariff 4 to come into effect at 1pm**

**Please consider all these proposals as we believe they are a fair and honest.**

**Regards Rob Taylor**

**BHCA Secretary**

**2) I am Robert Taylor. Secretary of BHCA I have been a Taxi driver in Barnsley over 25 years and can say that I know the trade pretty well. Our recent request was met with a request to submit further evidence. Well why do we need to when Councillor Kevin Osbourne reportedly said " I did a quick internet search and found evidence that insurance and fuel prices have only risen a small amount " so is that how you find out ?**

**What does he mean by that statement, is he going on his private car ? well I'm afraid he must be as Taxi Insurance cannot be bought online. It has to be through a broker. If he can submit evidence to state otherwise then here is his opportunity, Taxi insurance doesn't work like your private car insurance as it is done on an area basis and that's why it differs so much. Taxi Drivers have been having insurance rises over the past 7 years. I have never known it to come down even with a full No claims bonus. What evidence do they require a driver to submit ? All their accounts over the last 7 years to prove they are right ? We are independent Self Employed Drivers we receive no income off the council or any other body. If we don't work we don't get paid.**

**Fuel prices were £1.12 p/l pre pandemic and lowering. Since then they have risen to £1.36 p/l and rising, this may not look a significant increase to someone who covers 200 mile or less per week but to a taxi driver that can do double that and more then it is. With this extra mileage comes increased servicing and repairs. Having to buy a new car or a newer car to keep standards high, taking loans out to cover these costs and then forced to work longer hours if there is insufficient fares to be taken. We have no guarantee on how much money we can take in a day so we don't have an hourly rate which brings me on to your next reported comments. "Hoping to bring an increase in on a whim" and another reportedly calling us "Greedy " well I can answer both of them very easily. Bringing a fare increase is done democratically through meetings conducted with all our members, it is thought out, discussed and questions regarding a proposed increased is then asked to our passengers before we consider coming to the board, so we do our research, not through the internet I may add.**

**To call us greedy is an absolute disgrace to whoever reportedly said that and would like them to withdraw that statement, I would also like**

**to make it clear to the board about the 2019 increase. In 2019 we had a 8p increase on the first mile. Previous Board members had allowed the trade to keep the flag at £3.10 but shorten the mile. This made the first mile £3.72 as the meter started turning over at 6/10 of a mile, after we had a change in BHCA we decided to ask the board to go back to the mile and make the flag £3.80 as we couldn't have £3.72 as a flag due to our meters thus it equates to an 8p increase. This is the only increase we have had in over 8 years. So to call us greedy for this increase is nonsense and even the quotation of 10% isn't correct either, if that was the case then a £10 fare would increase to £11 correct ? Wrong it increases to £10.40. That is in fact a 4% increase, so to recap if you granted us a fare increase then it would be less than 4.5% since 2014.**

**Does the board think that we have just done this on the back of a very hard 18 months for the whole country, some of our members have now got other jobs and don't want to come back full time. Some have had to sell their Taxi business because they have had no income over the pandemic, some didn't qualify for SEISS grants so have been forced out of the trade, some have sadly died and others just don't want to do the job at night, at this moment in time we are losing drivers faster than we can recruit, I think the licensing officer could give you the numbers on that one, the younger generation does not want the job.**

**I am not saying to the board that your wrong to refuse the application but asking every driver to prove there own personal accounts is out of the question as every driver pays different amounts.**

**We ask drivers for there comments and suggestions then forward them to yourselves for you to decide the outcome of our proposals. We are not "Greedy" and we always consider the public when it comes to fare increases. We certainly haven't done this on the back of the pandemic and are definitely not wanting sympathy as taxi drivers have been one of the hardest hit industries over this period, we are fair and honest people trying to do our job....**

**Regards Robert Taylor  
BHCA SECRETARY**

**3) I am deeply disturbed by Councillor Bruff's comments stating that we the Hackney Carriage trade are "greedy". This comment coming from someone who was paid all through the pandemic or was allowed to work from home on full pay when the Hackney trade was on its knees with no income. As for the fare increase it is general knowledge that diesel has gone up from £1.12 to £1.35 per litre (10%) car parts, oil, mechanics fees , insurance etc. Have also gone up and are still rising.**

**We also still had to pay our council tests, licenses, medical fees and badge renewals although we had no income. We were not eligible for the council grants most self employed business owners got because the council said a hackney carriage was not a place of work.**

***The council does not pay our wages, we abide by their results. All we are asking is for an increase of 10% to bring us into line with the private hire sector such as blue line and city cabs.***

***I have been a hackney carriage driver for 24 years. If I work a day shift which consists of at least 8 hours I am lucky if I earn £50 This being £12.64 less than the minimum wage, then out of this we have running costs to pay, eg: diesel, licenses, insurance, repairs etc. Looking through the council wages list I see that the majority of councillors earn much more than myself and my wife earn between us with 2 Hackney Carriages.***

***We are not “greedy” people we just need to make the Hackney Carriage trade a viable business because as it stands our earnings are only just above what unemployed people get on benefits***

***We can not recruit drivers because they are better off on benefits than what they can earn driving a Hackney Carriage I am sure councillor Bruff and Co. Would not sit on Barnsley Hackney rank for 8 hours for £40 profit.***

***All we are asking is a small fare increase to cover the increases in running costs and to bring us inline with the private hire sector.***

***I think councillor Bruff owes the Hackney trade a public apology for her “greedy” comment in the Barnsley Chronicle when we as a trade had to weather the storm for 18 months and are still fighting to make a living wage.***

***Barnsley councillors are asking for proof that our costs have increased when it is plainly obvious that they have, they all have to put fuel in their cars, insure them, maintain them. They know the costs have gone up dramatically so it is common sense that a Hackney carriage costs have also risen incurring much more cost than a private vehicle.***

***Even with a 10% rise we will still be one of the cheapest Hackney carriage tariffs in the country at £4.20. As an example Sheffield Leeds £6.40, Doncaster £5.75, Bradford £5.30, Wakefield £5.20, London £11.40. We are not expecting to be compared with London but we still have the same running costs.***

***If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the above phone no. Or e.mail address***

***Regards***

***Shaun Jeffers***

***Chairman of Barnsley Hackney Carriage Association***

***4) To General Licencing Board.***

**Further to your request for more information I'd just like to throw some figures over to you to see what the Hackney Trade are up against, I am going to give you facts on the fares of our two main companies that operate here in Barnsley. The figures firstly incorporate a 2 mile fare which is classed as the average fare.**

**Blue Line.**

**First mile £4.20 Second mile £1.50 Total £5.70**

**City Taxis.**

**7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm (school run & work )**

**First mile £4.00. Second mile £2.00 Total £6.00**

**Between these hours**

**First mile £3.80 Second mile £1.80 Total £5.60**

**Hackney Carriage**

**First mile £3.80 Second mile £1.60 Total £5.40 \*\*\* cheapest**

**Then we come to the Night Rate.**

**Blue Line.**

**First mile £5.20 Second mile £1.50. Total £6.70**

**City Taxis.**

**First mile £5.70 Second mile. £2.70 Total £8.40**

**Hackney Carriage**

**First mile £4.60 Second mile £1.60 Total £6.20 \*\*\* cheapest**

**As you can see the figures show you that if you were to want a better potential wage then you would take your car and work for the company that can guarantee you work through telephone bookings, we on the other hand have to wait on the ranks and hope that customers come into town and want a taxi home or to work/school and no 2 days are ever the same.**

**The night time request is to bring the Tariff 2 in from 8pm again this is to encourage drivers to work at night when through the week there is little activity but the ranks still need to be covered and to encourage more drivers at night and at the weekends when it is more busy.**

**All we are asking for is to be able to compete, as we have drivers leaving the Hackney ranks to work for the above 2 companies. (Why wouldn't you?) The Licencing Board have no control of what these companies charge so they can increase them several times a year if they want without consultation or consequences but yet have a stranglehold on Hackney Carriages as we have to abide by the bylaws of BMBC. It's not as though we come "on a whim" every year as we don't and we certainly aren't "Greedy" We have to work unsociable hours and at weekends to make the wage we earn respectable, it's not a guaranteed or there every week or month so we can't plan too far ahead in case we get a massive repair bill.**

**When we requested the 40p increase it is not an hourly rate increase as quite often we don't get 1 job an hour and that job could be a £3.80 fare.**

**Drivers often have to put in excess of 60 hours a week to make a decent living wage and I can assure you that after fuel expenses it doesn't equate to the minimum wage.**

**It's not only our fuel, insurance and maintenance that's gone up it is also the cost of living too. Like Councillors we do have a house to run**

*children to clothe and feed, mortgages to pay and bills, gas, electric, water and of course council tax to pay.*

*We no longer have meetings with yourselves where we could present and explain things to the board who are unfamiliar with the way the Hackney Carriage Trade works as I have often found this to be the case in meetings in the past where we have had to explain to newly elected councillors, often with them saying “ well I never knew that” Hope this gives you a little more clarity and for you to consider our request for the 40p increase on our flag (starting rate only not on every other mile) If you would like me attend any of your meetings to explain any of the above or the other emails I have asked to be forwarded then I would be glad to do so.*

*Regards*

*Rob Taylor BHCA Secretary*

A copy of the additional submissions are attached to the report as Appendix 3.

#### **4. Proposal**

Members are asked to consider the information supplied by the Hackney Carriage Association in support of their original request to increase the Hackney Carriage fares and following the advertisement of the requested fare increase submit any views or objections to the Licensing Officer in writing no later than 14 days from the date of advertisement.

#### **5. Recommendation**

That Members consider the request and contribute to the consultation accordingly.

#### **6. Officer Contact**

Debbie Bailey

X 5696

