



WYRE FOREST TAXI DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION



88 THE BIRCHES
STOURPORT ON SEVERN
WORCESTERSHIRE
DY13 9NR
TEL: 01299 822222

29 January 2007

The Licensing Department
Wyre Forest District Council
Planning, Health and Environment Division
Duke House
Clensmore Street
KIDDERMINSTER
Worcs.
DY10 2JX

Dear Sir

Having studied the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance 2005, which was approved by the Department of Transport in late 2006, we are calling for a return to the licensing conditions effective prior to October 1 2005.

The conditions prior to October 1 2005 were; any new licences should be for wheelchair accessible vehicles and existing licences should be "like for like" on renewal.

The Department of Transport is advising local authorities to license a range of vehicles and exercise caution when specifying purpose built London style vehicles.

There is as yet not an agreed specification for a fully compliant wheelchair accessible vehicle and caution from a health and safety view when licensing van conversions must be taken. The risk assessment for these high sill height vehicles must be higher than a saloon car.

Our research indicates that the majority of users would prefer to travel in saloon cars and enclosed are some letters supporting this.

Once again we cannot understand the reluctance of Licensing Officers to recommend this review of licensing conditions as the Government's "u-turn" on accessibility is obvious.

continued/...

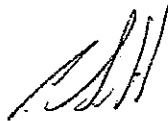
To return to pre 2005 conditions would allow the travelling public the choice of vehicles that they are entitled to, and it would be wrong to remove this freedom of choice. It would also remove the crippling expense of purchasing these purpose built vehicles for operators and in the long term save jobs and continue to supply an acceptable number of Taxis on ranks both day and night.

Yours faithfully

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
WYRE FOREST TAXI DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION



R G POWELL
CHAIRMAN



R K SOUTH
SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Encs. Letters of Support



worcestershire
county council

Wyre Forest Council,
Kidderminster,
Worc's..

20th October, 2005

Re: Proposal to use black cabs only

Dear To whom it may concern,

Further to your above proposal to use only 'black cabs' we would like to make an objection of behalf of our client group.

We are an Elderly Resource centre and use Central taxis on many occasions and due to the special needs of our clients we need to utilise a mixture of cars. By offering 'Black cab' only means that many of our clients may not be able to use the service. Another concern would be the cost of these cabs, a price increase in fares would discourage our clients who are on a low income.

Yours faithfully,

Julie Jones

Julie Jones
Clerk

The Grange
162 Sutton Park Road
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY11 6LF

Tel 01562 756820 • Fax (01562) 756822



Age Concern Wyre Forest,
(Charity Number - 259537)
Tulip Tree Centre,
Castle Road,
KIDDERMINSTER,
Worcestershire,
DY11 6TH.

19th October 2005

W.F.D.C.
via David Watkins

Dear Sirs,

We are often consulted by our membership on transport questions, and we consult them on their needs. Apart from the few wheelchair users, members always prefer saloon cars - ease of entry & no high step. Our members would very much prefer a mixed fleet of Taxis.

I hope that you will take their wishes into account.

Yours sincerely

Frances Dudley

Information Officer
Frances Dudley
Age Concern



Ashwood

Residential Home for People with Learning Difficulties

34 Woodfield Crescent,
Kidderminster,
DY11 6TU.

☎ - 01562 741455 Fax 01299 896531

To Wyre Forest District Council

20th October 2005

c/o David Watkins

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my dismay regarding your attempt to enforce an all wheelchair cab fleet of taxis for our area.

It is my belief that an extra 10 wheelchair cabs were to be provided. This proposal by the taxi firms seems to be entirely reasonable. A mixed fleet of cars and cabs would continue to serve our community very well indeed.

Some of the service users at Ashwood will not use wheelchair cabs at all – some have difficulty getting in and out of them. We respect their preference.

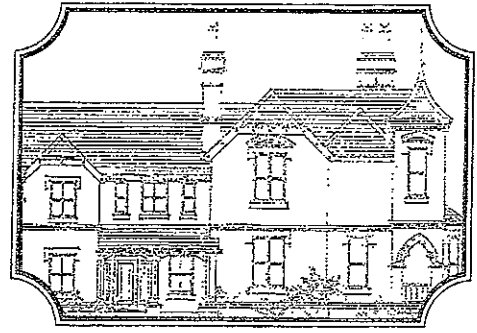
Wyre Forest District Council should listen and respect public / consumer opinion instead of dictating to them.

Paul Sankey

Registered Manager

Proprietor – Mr Michael Coulson

V02/07



Mariantonia House

REGISTERED RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

17, Comberton Road, Kidderminster,
Worcestershire DY10 1UA

Tel: 01562 69445 Fax: 01562 864042

For the attention of;

Mr. G. Scrocca,
P&P Central Taxis,
14G Paddington House,
New Road,
KIDDERMINSTER,
Worcestershire.
DY10 1AL

Dear Mr. Scrocca,

RE: WFDC PLAN TO ENFORCE CABS IN FAVOUR OF ALL CARS;

It has come to our attention, that all cars currently being used by Kidderminster Taxi fleets are in danger of being forced off the roads in favour of cabs. Although we appreciate that cabs are indeed both convenient and necessary, we feel that the council does not have the right to take away the choice of the general public in this way. We cater for a number of adults with varying disabilities and have used a taxi service on many occasions.

Our main concerns regarding these proposals are simply that our service users are unable to access the larger vehicles and in some cases it has taken months of confidence building to even get them into a car.. It is less daunting for them and they actually feel safer. Elderly people find them difficult to get into and out of, surely the council must know this? We can only assume that these proposals are money orientated as opposed to important issues, such as 'Personal Choice' and more importantly.. 'Health & Safety'?

It would hinder our work a great deal if these proposals were to go ahead. We ask that you do all you can to stop these changes taking place. Decisions should be based on public choice.

We thank you in anticipation for taking the time to read this letter and wish you success in your endeavours.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs. Emanuela Magro.
Registered Care Manager,

MARIANTONIA HOUSE.

Rocky House

23.10.2005

To whom it may concern,

RE: change of taxi services to cabs only

I write with regard to the above which is of great concern to me and my residents, If the law that only cabs are allowed it is going to be very difficult for some of my clients to access this service of which we use very frequently , in fact on a daily basis.

I do understand that you may have to work in line with legislation but surely not all cars need to be cabs and you could still keep a mixture of both cars and cabs as not to discriminate against people who are unable to use this type of vehicle.

I feel that you would see the taxi service suffer greatly as I am not the only home with these concerns.

I do hope that this matter gets resolved with an outcome to suit all.

Yours faithfully



Caterina Giannini
Manager/ Proprietor

25 Birmingham Road Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 2BX
Telephone/ Fax : 01562 864067

Lorne House
14/15 Lorne Street
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY10 1SY
Phone 01562 630522
Fax 01563 631074



20-10-05

Re: Proposal to use black cabs only

Dear to whom it may concern,

Further to your above proposal to use black cabs I would like to make an objection on behalf of my client group.

At Lorne House we care for people with Learning Difficulties and have clients which have mobility problems, and have in the past had problems with clients getting into black cabs. My clients use Central taxis on a number of occasions and have been happy with the choice, by introducing 'black cabs' only means that my clients will not be able to use the service. Another concern of mine is that my introducing 'black cabs' the price of fares would increase, as my clients are on a low income would not be able to afford the fares.

Yours Faithfully

Mrs B Saporito

From: "Nigel Dotchin" <Nigel.Dotchin@dft.gsi.gov.uk>
To: "Mark Kay" <Mark.Kay@wyreforestdc.gov.uk>
Date: 16/01/2007 18:02:57
Subject: Re: Accessible taxis

Dear Mark

Thank you for your e-mail of 15 January, seeking clarification on the statement in the Best Practice Guide about accessible hackney carriages.

As you know, the Department did announce in 2003 its intention to introduce regulations for accessible taxis and tabled a possible scheme. Ministers are aware that, since then, the absence of a decision and uncertainty as to the Government's plans is causing difficulties for the the industry and local licensing authorities. We have therefore been asked to look at how best to take forward the commitment to increase the number of accessible taxis, which may or may not be by national regulation.

Consequently we have been in informal discussion with some key stakeholders before going back to ministers. In the meantime, as we have indicated in the Best Practice Guidance, licensing authorities are encouraged to introduce taxi accessibility policies for their areas.

The proposal by Wyre Forest DC in its deregulation plan to only approve purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles or converted vehicles would appear to be in line with this advice. The proposal permits a wide range of accessible vehicles which are to be phased in. It is not uncommon for a licensing authority to remove a quantity limit and adopt a higher quality threshold (ie accessible vehicles) in its place.

We recognise that national guidance on technical standards for accessible taxis would be welcomed by licensing authorities and it would be our intention to consult on this in due course. There also appears to be a consensus that disabled people favour a mix of vehicle types - whether wheelchair accessible or saloons. The challenge is of course how to ensure that this mix materialises. One solution is the one adopted by your authority - ie for all hackney carriages to be either purpose built or adapted vehicles, with the saloon market met by PHVs. Whether hackney carriages could provide a mix of vehicles is something that we need to explore, since one of the arguments from disabled groups is that hackney carriages should be accessible to all. These issues were flagged up in my e-mail to Trevor Owen. The section in the Best Practice Guidance on accessibility draws a distinction between accessible taxis and PHVs, but does not attempt to define accessible taxis - they could include saloon vehicles.

The Best Practice Guidance also makes the point that, under current legislation, licensing authorities have a wide range of discretion over types of vehicles that can be licensed and that they should seek to meet the the varied needs of their community in specifying the types of taxis to be licensed.

I hope this helps.

NIGEL DOTCHIN

Head of Transport Disability Strategy
Mobility & Inclusion Unit
Department for Transport
Licensing and Environmental Committee