

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 20 April 2015

**Portfolio:** Public Protection  
**Subject:** **Review of Hackney Carriage Fares**  
**Report of:** Director of Community  
**Strategy/Policy:**

**Corporate Objective:** A safe and healthy place to live and work

**Purpose:**  
To set the level of the Hackney Carriage Tariff for the Borough for 2015/16.

**Executive summary:**

The Fareham Hackney Carriage Association is consulted each year to ascertain if they wish to revise the tariff and this is carried out through the Taxi and Private Hire News Letter that the Council produce on a regular basis. Any request is reported to the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee for recommendation to the Executive.

This year, as well as considering a request from some representatives of the taxi trade to increase the tariff, the Committee were asked to consider adding a line to the tariff to allow drivers to charge a fee for credit/debit card transactions.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**

That the Executive:

- (a) agrees to freeze the Hackney Carriage Tariff for 2015/16 (as set out in Appendix B); and
- (b) does not agree to the introduction of a line to the Hackney Carriage Tariff permitting drivers to charge a fee for credit/debit card transactions.

**Reason:**

To consider the recommendation made by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee at its meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**Cost of proposals:**

There are no costs associated with this decision.

**Appendices:**

**A:** Taxi Newsletter. 41 - July 2014

**B:** Current Taxi Tariff

**C:** Responses from the Trade

**Background papers:**

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

**Date:** 20 April 2015

**Subject:** Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

**Briefing by:** Director of Community

**Portfolio:** Public Protection

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This Council is the licensing authority for hackney carriage operations within the Borough. In order to carry out this function the Council is permitted to fix rates or fares within the Borough that relate to the time and distance travelled. This also extends to other charges in connection with the hire of a Hackney Carriage.
2. The ability to fix the tariff or fares within the Borough is contained within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
3. This Council reviews the Hackney Carriage tariff on an annual basis following consultation with the Trade. The objective is to set a maximum tariff that reflects any variation in operating costs.
4. A regular newsletter is sent to the Trade informing them of current issues and matters of interest. An article was included in the Newsletter 41 of July 2014, which reminded the Trade of the need to inform the Council if they wanted a tariff alteration to be considered. (Appendix A of the report).
5. There were 4 individual responses from the trade that indicated that they wanted the tariff increased; these responses can be seen as Appendix C of the report. Response 2 represents 75 licensed vehicles.
6. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee discussed the option of increasing the tariff, but concluded that the tariff should not be increased due to recent reductions in fuel costs. The Committee felt that any increase in the Tariff would not be received well by customers when fuel costs had recently been reduced significantly.
7. One of the trade responses raised the issue of charges for credit card payments, as the payment provider passes on a charge to the driver/vehicle owner in each case. The charges may vary from provider to provider. Legally the payment recipient cannot charge an additional fee higher than that charged to them. Some drivers add this charge to their fare, although this isn't currently allowed as it is not covered by the tariff.

8. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee discussed the option of amending the tariff to allow drivers to charge an additional fee for credit and or debit card payments. Members expressed concern that there is a lack of clarity surrounding the fee charged by each of the payment providers with each provider charging a different fee. Members felt that the lack of clarity surrounding the additional fee could cause confusion for customers, it could cause annoyance and frustration for some customers and possibly result in confrontation between the customer and driver. Members also expressed concern that the additional fee is not easily regulated. The Committee concluded that the Tariff should not include provision to charge an additional fee for credit/debit card payments.

## **PROPOSAL**

9. The consultation results were discussed and debated by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee at its meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015, in the presence of Trade representatives.
10. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee concluded that the Executive be requested to freeze the Hackney Carriage Tariff for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix B of the report and that the Tariff should not include provision to charge an additional fee for credit/debit card payments.

## **Reference Papers:**

None

July 2014  
Issue: 41

# Taxi & Private Hire News

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

If you feel you are being discriminated against for any reason the Equality and Human Rights Commission is there to help you. They can be contacted for advice and guidance. The number for the helpline is **0845 604 6610**.

## **Contact Us**

If you have any comments regarding this newsletter, ideas for subjects to be covered or any other issue regarding taxis, private hire or related matters please contact us by email at [regulatory@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:regulatory@fareham.gov.uk) or by phone on 01329 236100.

Further information regarding Taxi and Private Hire can be found on our website at [www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)

### Tariff

We have not received any requests for a tariff change this year. Please contact us within one week of receiving this newsletter if you would like the Members to consider a change to the tariff.

### Rank Etiquette

Please remember that when you are on the rank passengers should be directed to the front of the rank. Whilst the public can choose which vehicle/driver they want to use, casual people who turn up at the back or middle of the rank should be told where the front of the rank is. We have had reports recently that drivers are not doing this and it is causing bad feeling. If we get repeated complaints about particular drivers we will consider taking them to Panel.

### Passenger Numbers

Just a reminder, the number of passengers you are licensed for is the number you can take. It does not matter if an additional passenger is a baby in arms, they cannot be carried. A good way to remember this is heartbeats, ie if it is human and has a heartbeat it counts as a passenger.

### Abolition of the Tax Disc

From 1 October 2014, the paper tax disc will no longer be issued and required to be displayed on a vehicle windscreen. Vehicle tax will still need to be paid but with DVLA having a digital record of who has and has not paid, a paper tax disc is no longer necessary as proof that vehicle tax is paid. The vast majority of motorists pay their vehicle tax with latest figures confirming that over 99% of motorists' tax their vehicles on time. Most on-road enforcement action is now based on using Automatic Number Plate Readers. These cameras use the number plate rather than a visual inspection of the tax disc. The police also have access to DVLA records via the police national computer. There are significant savings for fleet operators and other businesses from not having to handle the administration of tax discs.

You can check the tax status of any vehicle including those abandoned at [www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax](http://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax) For further information go to [www.gov.uk/dvla/nomoretaxdisc](http://www.gov.uk/dvla/nomoretaxdisc)

### Parking on the Rank

Please do not park on the rank. If you need the toilet you are permitted to leave your vehicle on the Library rank for a maximum of 10 minutes to use the facilities. You are not permitted to leave your vehicle on any rank for any other reason.

### Osborn Road South

Carriageway resurfacing works on Osborn Road South from the junction with Osborn Road to the junction with West Street, Fareham.

The works are programmed to start in August 2014 and are expected to last for 2 nights, during which time the road will be closed to through traffic from approximately 20:00 to 06:00hrs. The road will be open during the daytime.

Please note these timescales are weather dependant. Any changes to the scheduled date will be made clear on the yellow sign boards where the work is taking place, and on <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport> and you can also call 0845 603 5633 to check when work is being carried out.



True Vision launches free Hate Crime App for smartphones

The free downloadable app works alongside the full web facility at [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk).

The App can give basic information about what a hate crime is and can link directly to an online facility to report hate crime and incidents directly to the police force where the crime took place.

Users can also share the app with friends by email and sms

# FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

## TAXI FARES (INCLUSIVE OF VAT)

| DISTANCE  |                      | 23.30-06.00 hours   | Christmas Day,   |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
|   |                      | Christmas Eve, Boxing Day<br>(6am-midnight) & New Years<br>Eve 18.00-24.00<br>All other Bank Holidays | Boxing Day (midnight -<br>6am only) & New Years<br>Day |
| For the first 190 metres or part thereof minimum charge   | <b>£2.20</b>         | <b>+50%</b>   | <b>+100%</b>   |
| For each succeeding 190 metres or part  | <b>20p</b>           | <b>+50%</b>   | <b>+100%</b>   |
| <b>WAITING TIME</b>   |                      |   |  |
| For each period of 60 seconds or part   | <b>20p</b>           |   |  |
| <b>EXTRA CHARGES</b>  |                      |   |  |
| Passengers picked-up at Fareham Station:  | <b>60p surcharge</b> |   |  |
| For each article of luggage carried outside passenger compartment   | <b>10p</b>           |   |  |
| For each dog (except assistance dog)  | <b>10p</b>           |   |  |
| For each person in excess of two  | <b>10p</b>           |   |  |
| <b>A MAXIMUM CHARGE OF £45 MAY BE MADE AGAINST ANY PERSON FOULING THE VEHICLE</b>   |                      |   |  |
| All complaints must be made in writing to:  |                      |   |  |
| The Licensing Officer, Regulatory Services, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 7AZ or email <a href="mailto:Licensing@fareham.gov.uk">Licensing@fareham.gov.uk</a> |                      |   |  |
| <b>HACKNEY CARRIAGE NO. 000 TO CARRY 4 PERSONS</b>  |                      |   |  |
| <b>SEAT BELTS ARE PROVIDED FOR ALL PASSENGERS IN THIS VEHICLE YOU ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO WEAR THEM</b>  |                      |   |  |

## APPENDIX C

### Response 1

A number of Council Licencing Departments throughout England have made a statement on their tariff card concerning the payment that Hackney Carriage Drivers or Companies will add to the fare to cover additional expenses incurred by accepting card payments. Locally Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight have adjusted their tariff card. The problem is that the cost to the driver or company varies so to put a specific amount or percentage on the tariff card might not cover the costs for everyone.

Would you be kind enough to confirm the need for an additional statement on the Tariff Card?

If needed could the statement be generalised rather than specific, for example, the same statement as Southampton City Council, which is

‘CARD PAYMENT – If payment is made by credit or debit card, a sum not exceeding that permitted by law shall be added to the fare’ **or**

‘CARD PAYMENT - Additional charges may be made in accordance with The Consumer Rights (Payment Surcharge) Regulations 2012’.

Some of the Associations members are convinced that a statement is required to keep the trade acting legally.

### Response 2

As per your recent newsletter I request the following alterations to the tariff :-

1. Pull off Charge to be increased to £2.40 for 1st 190 meters.
2. Scrapping of the 10p charge for dogs other than assistance dogs.
3. Additional Charge for pick-ups from Fareham Station to be increased to £1.00.
4. Charge for extra passengers over 2 increase to 50p for each additional person.
5. Charge for items of luggage (not shopping bags) carried outside the passenger area to be increased to 50p per item.
6. Additional item added to Tariff - "**Card payment** – If payment is made by credit or debit card, a sum not exceeding that permitted by law shall be added to the fare"
7. Soiling Charge - Maximum of £50.

All other charges to remain the same.

In order to justify the above & in my capacity as Managing Director of Radio Taxis (Fareham) who operate in excess of 75 Hackney Carriages in Fareham I would like to make the following observations.

When we had the last large tariff increase in 2008 Radio Taxis suffered a significant loss of business in 2009. Part of this could be put down to the start of the recession, however we believe the major detrimental effect on our business was due to the large tariff increase in 2008. Smaller annual or every other year increases would be more acceptable to customers and have less effect on your business. (nobody notices 2/3p on a loaf of bread/pint of milk but a large 20p increase would be noticed by a large number of people)

Contact: Ian Rickman



A 20p increase on the pull off charge would take account of inflation over the last six years and would bring us in to line with both Gosport and Portsmouth at £5.60 for 2 miles. (we are at present at £5.40 as detailed in the July issue of PHTM, which I can supply you a copy if you wish, this lists all Hackney Tariffs in England and Wales)

Very few taxis charge 10p for dogs - if they indeed take them. (We are bound by law to take assistance dogs for which there is no charge) it seems a rather trivial amount to bother with and should be removed. Note neither Portsmouth or Southampton have this charge.

Fareham Station Pass was £239 in 2010 (was around £200 in 2008) - for 2014 it was £311 !! So has increased by 55% - 60p to £1 would just cover this.

10p per extra passenger over two, it has been this for donkeys years - with the extra wear & tear carrying 4 people on Saloon Cars 50p is justified - this would also help the multi-seaters out with their significantly higher running costs.

10p per item of luggage - same as above in terms of time it has existed - but 50p per item only to be charged for items of luggage in the boot/hatch area.

No Charge for shopping bags. (Note 50p is only a half a cup of tea these days or a third of a cup of coffee!)

More and more customers want to pay by credit/debit card this wording covers any Government laws that may be passed in the future.

Soiling Charge increase takes account of inflation between 2008-2014.

These are obviously the maximum fares allowable - if certain parts of the taxi trade in Fareham do not want increases they are quite at liberty to continue charging the old tariff as it is would be less than the new charges.

### **Response 3**

I would like the trade to consider a tariff increase for this year!

### **Response 4**

We would like to confirm in writing that we believe there should be an increase in taxi fares this year.

Our reasons for this are twofold. Firstly the cost of fuel and living has gone up since fares were last raised, and secondly we are concerned that there will be a repeat of what happened last time - namely that we held off for so long that when rates were finally raised it was by such a large amount that it came as a shock to customers and hit them hard and therefore use of taxis was reduced as a result. In our opinion it would be preferable to raise rates regularly but by small amounts. We believe the ideal amount to raise fares at the moment would be between 2 and 3 per cent to match the increase in the cost of living over the last year.